



Brett Mitchell won the "Best Bike 1930-1960" trophy at the Mannum ride day display for his family owned 1951 Vincent Comet.

## Motorcycle Ride Week

• 4-9 October, 2020 – South Australia

# SA shows the way

**Report** Rob Elliott and Diana Waters **Photos** by various MRW entrants

**Retired engineer**, Ivor Paech, doesn't just have an affection for vintage small aircraft, he has a passion for them. So much so, that he's part-owner of a private airfield which accommodates a substantial collection of fully operational planes. When plans for a South Australian 'Festival of Motorcycling' were being drawn up, Robert Elliott, one of the committee arranging the event, hit on the idea of one day's rally being a ride which stopped in at the private airfield, at Old Noarlunga. Although the FOM ultimately had to be scaled back due to the advent of the COVID-19 crisis, the visit to the airfield remained on the program because it was a fully outdoor venue.

Rally participants gathered, on the allotted day, at the Model Aero Club's field, south of Adelaide, then continued south to Old Noarlunga. At the airfield, the Lions Club served morning tea to an appreciative and substantial gathering of leather-clad riders. Ivor's collection started with a Tiger Moth, a later version of the famous Gypsy Moth bi-plane. Later, Ivor fell in love with, and subsequently bought, a Steerman from the US. Both bi-planes are Second World War military flight-training aircraft, sometimes ignominiously relegated to crop-dusting duties post-war. Ivor's Steerman was bought as a wreck, after it had crashed while being used as a banner-towing plane, in California. In a manner not unknown



Travelling across the River Murray by ferry added to the picturesque atmosphere of the Mannum day.



# RALLY REPORTS RIDE WEEK SA



Ivor Paech with his Tiger Moth training plane and a group of MRW would-be pilots.



Otto Muller's Adler at Mallala.

in motorcycle restorations, Ivor took the engine to his work-place, restoring it there in his spare time. The fuselage was restored inside the house Ivor bought specifically because it had external double-door access to the lounge-dining room. The lure of working on a plane's fuselage indoors was irresistible to Ivor's mates, so the task became something of a social event.

The Veteran and Vintage Motorcycle Club's annual swap meet, traditionally held at Balhannah in the Adelaide Hills, was incorporated into what had become 'Motorcycle Ride Week' instead of 'Festival of Motorcycling'. The V&V invited other motorcycle clubs to set up promotional marquees, for free, to display their members' bikes and sell regalia. What a difference that made – a carnival-like atmosphere was generated. The added colour and palpable enthusiasm for motorcycling, more than made up for a lower than usual

turn-out of sellers and buyers from Victoria, who couldn't come, of course, due to the closed state borders.

There were five ride-days in addition to the swap meet one. Each one catered, via different culinary modes, for the gustatory needs of the entrants, with, variously, a barbecue provided by the Triumph Riders Club at the race track at Mallala, and a sit-down two-course meal at the Middleton Hotel, arranged for the Southern Vales rally/ride, led by the BSA Owners Club. The ride day at Mannum was specifically designed to cater for veteran, vintage, small bikes and scooters, with a separate ride for larger more modern bikes. There were two routes; one for the older and smaller bikes and a longer one for the rest. Both routes involved river crossings on ferries, which added novelty to the already picturesque ride route. A display of motorcycles of all eras was held on the Mary Ann Reserve, on the river bank

next to several historic paddle-steamers. Trophies were awarded to bikes classed according to vintage. The local Lions Club put on a barbecue and the Mid-Murray Council very generously supported the event by closing off the reserve to the public. They even provided chairs for the event!

There are always breakdowns when bikes are of a vintage as early as 1906

but, surprisingly, the oldest bike on that day's ride, an FN single, was successfully repaired at the roadside using nothing more sophisticated than a bit of wire and a thump with a bit of wood on an oil-pipe union, to get bike and rider back on the road to complete the whole 80km journey. All rides were organised with non-club members in mind, with ride leaders introducing >



Checking out the bike display at the National Motor Museum at Birdwood.



Velo preparation at the Mallala Track Day.



Husband and wife Indian aficionados Phil and Carolyn Jenner on the lawns of Mary Anne Reserve.



## RALLY REPORTS RIDE WEEK SA



ABOVE A huge variety of bikes were on display at Mannum, from Rob Elliott's 1925 Norton (foreground) vintage Nortons to classic Bultacos.  
BELOW The display of bikes at the swap meet was judged by People's Choice.







Leon Mitchell carrying out repairs at the morning tea stop at Mannum on his 250cc FN. A bit of wire goes a long way.

the ride at the start, explaining the route and the process of following corner marshals' directions. Wednesday, however, principally aimed at sidecar riders, was not a good day to introduce anyone to club rides. Rain bucketed down right from the outset. You can plan some things but not the weather, especially in an Adelaide spring! Glorious one day, miserable the next. Only 15 of 127 entrants for MRW turned up at the start that day. The sole interstate entrant, from Queensland, made the most of it on his BSA outfit, but his Queensland "wet-weather gear" of jeans and jacket, weren't up to it and he ended up "as wet as a drowned rat". The decision was rightly made to cut the ride short to any avoid further drenchings.

The fine and warm weather on Track Day at Mallala Motorsport Park was a complete weather contrast. The Triumph Riders' Club led the uneventful ride from Port Adelaide to Mallala. The track day itself was hosted by the Ducati Riders Club of SA and the Historic Motorcycle Racing Register of SA. The MRW entrants could register for two track sessions, take a walk through the pits, talk to the owners and riders or just sit back and watch as the riders tested their skills and bikes around the race track. Local historic racing identities, such as Murray Johnson, Joe Ahern and Peter Heles, welcomed the MRW crowd and entertained them with blasts around the track on their Manx Norton, Suzuki XV650 and CZ factory replica race bikes. At the other

end of the age spectrum, Ty Lynch, Australian Superbike contender clocked 215km/h around the track on his Yamaha YZF-R6! From the thump of the British singles to the scream of the Japanese and European 2-strokes, it all thrilled the crowd. The sound of the bikes doing their laps, along with the 'aroma' of exhaust fumes, added to the high-octane ambience. The enthusiasm of race riders was evident as they demonstrated their skill by speeding around the track on machines of various vintages and makes.

The Norton Motorcycle Club took care of Day 3 of Motorcycle Ride Week and plotted a route to include some of their club's favourite roads through the Adelaide Hills. Tight and twisty roads, stretches of bitumen with top-gear sweeping curves, picturesque vistas of rolling hills covered in orchards and vineyards, and lush valleys of eucalypts – the ride had it all. Bikes joining the ride included everything from a 1925 Norton Model 18 to a current model Indian FTR1200. Once at Birdwood, the group was escorted into the impressive National Motor Museum facility and given an introduction and history lesson on the museum, after which they were free to explore all the wonderful vehicles and displays.

OBA's generous promotion of Motorcycle Ride Week and tolerance of the myriad changes wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic is hugely appreciated. Thanks also to all the contributors of information for this article. ■

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