

Geoff Shugg's Riding History

I often wonder about other MSR members' riding background and what bikes they have owned, so I thought I would write something about myself.

My interest in bikes started when I was 15 years old and a school mate gave me a ride on his Vespa. We went down to the road works that was the new Monash Freeway under construction. I went home and told my parents I wanted to use my paper round money to buy a motorbike. Of course my Mum said "No!" But with Dad on my side, she agreed to me getting a mini-bike. Dad said, "I wonder if old Seth down the road still has his bike?" So we went and knocked on his door. "Yes, it's still in the shed but I haven't started it for a couple of years." So he gets it out, a BSA Bantam 125. He tickles the carby, (you young blokes wouldn't know what that means), gives it a few kicks and away it goes. (Try that with modern fuels.) I handed over \$175 and got the bike, a leather jacket and a pudding bowl helmet.

My Mum protested that it wasn't a mini-bike. (They sure look like it when you see them now.) I used to ride it around and around the backyard and on my grandparents poultry farm. As it turned out, my grandmother had a bike in her youth, a 500 JAP. She worked for Dame Nellie Melba as a gardener and rode from South Belgrave to Coomb Cottage in Coldstream, which was a decent ride in the 1920s.

My Dad also had a few bikes when he was a young fella: a 350 Matchless, a 350 Triumph, and a 1000 Matchless. He tells me they used to have drags on Boundary Road Mordialloc, and when he went in to get his licence the cop said, "I've seen you riding around for years so I know you can ride." So just wrote the licence out for him.

Back to the BSA. It was my first bike and consequently my introduction to motorcycle mechanics. The gearbox had three gears and after I pulled it apart and put it back together it also had three neutrals. So I pulled it apart again and put it back together. All okay. I painted it purple with house paint and after about a year I sold it for \$100.

Next I bought a Kawasaki 100 G4TR Trail Boss. It had high and low gear ratios. I used to ride this a lot with my mates on their Honda Daxs and SL70s, around the paddocks where the Fountain Gate shopping centre is now. That bike was a two stroke with rotary valve induction. I burnt a hole in the piston after using the wrong spark plug, so a rebore and new piston were required, but I didn't seat the circlip on the gudgeon pin properly and it came off causing destruction of the rotary valve. I ordered a replacement from Japan but it never arrived, so I stuck the old one together with Araldite, gave it one start, and traded it in on a new Honda SL125.

When the Kawasaki was out of action my Dad came home one day and said there was a bike in bits for sale next to his work, a late 1960s Suzuki 118 street scrambler. So I bought it and in a couple of hours I had it going. I rode it for a while and then sold it for a small profit. I've never seen another one since.

About this time I also bought a BSA C11 250. It was a challenge riding it around the paddocks with its rigid rear end.

The Honda was soon stripped of all its road gear. A big bore kit was fitted, together with a power pipe, lower gearing and knobby tyres. I used to ride it at Cranbourne Sandpits and Tynong North along the power lines.

At this time I got my car license and bought a HD Holden Premier. It was lowered with a warm motor and was good for 110 mph (miles per hour).

I went to pick up my mate one Sunday morning to go trail riding. He said don't bother loading his bike as he had broken the clutch cable the day before. I said, "Don't stay home. You can come on the back with me." So he did.

We met up with some other mates at Tynong North and another guy that I hadn't met before on a Bultaco trials bike. We headed up to the quarry with my mate on the back and after a few minutes I noticed that the guy on the Bultaco hadn't arrived so I told my mate to get off and I'd go and look for him. I found him back down the road. He had come off and face planted the ground. His chin guard had cut right through his top lip leaving it hanging from one side. I gave him my clean hanky to hold

over it and went back and got the others. I then arranged that I would go and get my car while my mate takes my bike and goes to the Mill Valley Ranch to get help for him.

I got the injured guy in the car with one of the girls to aid him and headed to the Mill Valley Ranch. As it turned out, my mate was already coming back with help in tow. He came around the corner and we collided head on. He flew over the car landing about 20 feet behind breaking both his legs in four places. The help that had arrived with him raced back to the phone and called an ambulance which took three hours to arrive. They took him to Moe Hospital where they said they couldn't help him and so they took him and the other injured guy to Dandenong Hospital. My mate was then transferred by chopper to Box Hill Hospital and, after about a week, back to Dandenong Hospital. He remained in traction for about three months.

My car and bike were both smashed up. I fixed up the car and traded it in on a two year old HQ Monaro. The bike had bent forks, front wheel and frame but the motor was still good.

I bought another bike from Geoff Taylor that was set up to run on methanol. It went like hell but had no torque due to the lightened flywheel, so I put my good motor in it. Not long after this I met my now wife and, doing the boyfriend/girlfriend thing, bikes took a back seat. I still rode a bit with her brother.

Other bikes I had before I got married were a Honda XL175, a Honda XL350 which I swapped for a scuba tank, (which I later traded in on a new 4x4), a Montessa Cota 247 trials bike, and a new Honda TL125 trials bike.

In 1981 at age 25 I decided it was time to get my bike licence and bought a new Kawasaki KLX250 for \$1300. Next I got a Suzuki DR500, then a Honda XL350 and a Suzuki GSX1100. Many other bikes came and went for various reasons, some just to do up and sell.

I've always had an interest in trials so I bought an Italjet T250 and joined the Oakleigh Motorcycle Club and competed in the Clubman class for a couple of seasons until in 1989 I flipped the bike coming out of ravine and broke my leg and was in plaster for three months.

It wasn't long before I was back on road bikes. A couple of years later I got the bug and went back to trials. I got a Yamaha TY250 and won a few events in the Clubman class.

Money seems to always dictate that I sell my current bike to buy my next one. Wanting to ride to work, I sold the trials bike and bought a Kawasaki GT550 from a mate. This was a great bike but eventually I wanted more power and I got a Suzuki GS850 which had more grunt but the 550 was a better bike.

I bought a Kawasaki Z650 from a girl at work for \$350 which I promptly resold. After that I didn't ride for a couple of years. Then I decided I needed something just to ride around town so I bought a Hyosung GV250, joined the Ulysses Club, did one ride, and got rid of the Hyosung. I traded it in on a BMW K1200RS and not long after I joined the MSR.

I had a few issues with the BMW including a burnt out clutch which is a big job to replace. After fixing it, I traded it on my current bike, a Suzuki DL650 V-Strom which has now done 50,000km.

Bikes that I have owned are:

2x BSA Bantams	1x Honda XL 175	1x Suzuki GS 850
1x BSA CLL 250	1x Honda SL 350	1x Suzuki GSX1100
1x BSA M21 600	1x Honda XL 350	1x Suzuki 118
1x Kawasaki 100 G4TR	1x Dot Mineralli 175 trials	1x Italjet T 250
1x Kawasaki KL250	1x Yamaha TY 175	1x Bultaco t 350
1x Kawasaki KLX 250	1x Yamaha TY 250	1x Montessa Cota 247
1x Kawasaki GT550	2x Suzuki TS 250	1x Motobecane 50
1x Kawasaki Z650	1x Suzuki PE 250	1x Hyosung GV250
2x Honda SL 125	1x Suzuki DR 500	1x BMW K1200RS
2x Honda TL 125	1x Suzuki DL 650	1x 1928 700 V-twin JAP motor

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