

In the Beginning... well, 60 Years Ago

Keith Finlay, former President of Motorcycle Touring Club of Victoria (1980s), contacted me with a folder of Club memorabilia about 5 years ago. It turned out to be pure gold, a folder containing newspaper clippings from the very formation of our Club. Below are a few newspaper clippings I have retyped.

Scooter Club Opens Soon. A club especially for motor-scooter owners is being formed in Melbourne, with Jim Egan, of Stewarts Motor Cycles, as organiser. Its first meeting will be a free picture night at the Shell theatre, corner of William and Burke Sts., at 8pm on **October 14th** [1955]. Tickets are available from Mr Egan. After the films have been shown, office bearers will be elected and a committee formed. The idea behind the new club is primarily social, with social functions, get togethers, film nights and lectures, and sporting events for all owners, whether men or women. Women, in fact, are going to be regarded as very important members, and there is a big field among those who already own scooters. There will be more, too, as the scooter becomes fully appreciated as safe, clean, and reliable transport, with unapproachable advantages in convenience and economy.

Scooters off to a flying start. Melbourne's first scooter club seems to be getting off to a good start. Nearly all tickets have been taken up for the first meeting, picture night and supper – all free – at the Shell theatre, Burke St near William St. Some tickets are still available J.S. Egan or S Farendon at Stewarts Motorcycles. The films to be shown include the prize winning “Back of Beyond” and “50 Years of Powered Flight.” Experts Reg Sweet and Farendon will explain what fine vehicles scooters are, and the advantages of being a member.

Don't miss this scooter outing! The newly formed Motor Scooter Association of Victoria will hold its first run next Sunday, starting at 2.15pm, from the Argus Office, 365 Elizabeth St. Any scooter owner is invited to attend. The association was formed this week following a picture night for enthusiasts last Friday at the Shell Theatre. Office bearers so far elected are: R. Sweet, President; J. Bush, Vice President; G. Hageman, Treasurer; and J. Murphy, Secretary. Mr Murphy's telephone number, after business hours, is WX6971, and he can supply any information. It is expected that more members will be enrolled from Sunday's run, so election of a Committee has not yet taken place. The first official all-day picnic run has been planned for November 6.

Motorcycle News section of the Argus, Friday (28/10/55) noted (with picture): Shirley Becker and Pat Villarroja were among the many motor-scooter fans who had their first organised outing last weekend. [ie **Sunday 23/10/55**] On the same clipping is an advertisement for a Heinkel 4-stroke scooter for 295 pounds.

A-scooting you'll go! [Argus, Nov 4, 1955] The new Motor Scooter Association of Victoria will hold its first official outing on Sunday with a run through the Dandenongs. It may be attended without obligation of membership, but you'll almost certainly want to join. Distance will be approximately 75 miles and some riders are expected to join en route. The start will be at 10am from outside the Argus Office, 365 Elizabeth St., travelling by Canterbury Rd to Vermont, The Basin, Sassafras, Olinda, through the State Forest to Nathania Springs, thence to a picnic ground between Kallista and Belgrave (bring cut lunch). The afternoon section will take in Belgrave, Emerald, Monbulk, Silvan Dam, Mt Evelyn, and the return to Melbourne will be via Montrose, Croydon, and the Maroondah Highway.

Have you got a scooter? [Nov 12, 1955] The Motor Scooter Association will hold another run to the Mornington Peninsula on Sunday. All scooter owners are invited. Assembly point is outside the Argus office, Elizabeth St, at 10am. But those who wish to join at other points should ring Mr J. Murphy (WX6971) after business hours.

Meet 'Em Here Tomorrow! The Motor Scooter Association will hold a 50-mile run to Hurstbridge and St Andrews tomorrow, starting at 1.45pm from the Argus office, Elizabeth St. Distance will be 50 miles, and anyone interested in joining should attend. The Association will hold its first weekend run on December 10 and 11 to Walhalla. Those wishing to make the trip should pay 10 shillings deposit tomorrow so that accommodation can be arranged, or telephone the secretary, Mr J. Murphy, at his

after hours number, WX6971. Club membership is growing rapidly. There was a big attendance at last Sunday's run of 110 miles.

Girls go for scooters in a big way. [Motor Cycle News, by John Williams, the Argus, Friday Dec 2, 1955] Australian girls have "gone for" motor scooters in a big way. They have always been conservative about motor-cycling. In fact, the girl rider has always been a rarity, regarded by her fellow-women as both odd and eccentric. But the scooter has changed all that. When the formation of a scooter club was under discussion a few weeks ago, I went to the preliminary meeting. There were girls everywhere – not just pillion passengers but real, enthusiastic riders. I talked to Mrs Jack Murphy whose husband was later elected President. "It's my scooter five days of the week, and I don't know how I'd get on without it, living on the outskirts of Box Hill," she said. I use it for shopping, social calls... all my travelling," she said.

One third of the members of the Scooter Association are girls, all of them keen as the most died-in-wool motor-cycle clubman. Last week the sales manager of one of the leading Elizabeth St agencies told me that more than a quarter of his firm's sales since June had been to women and girls. Why is it that girls who never gave a thought to motor-cycling have fallen for scooting in such a big way? One reason is that it's so easy – three lessons are the average learners' time; five exceptional. Controls and gear-change are simplified. They even look simple. Few girls can afford cars, but neither the price nor the running and maintenance costs of a scooter will put a serious dent in a girls pay packet, especially when set off against the high cost of daily fares and the economical weekend fun it provides.

Scooter Trip at Week End [The AGE, 21/2/56] The Motor Scooter Association is organising a 200-mile trip this weekend to Inverloch via Wonthaggi. Sunday morning will be spent in rehearsing figure riding for the Box Hill Mardi Gras on March 12th.

The scooter's a toy no longer. If anyone needs proof the scooter is not a toy, but a serious travelling machine, the Easter programme of the Motor Scooter Association gave it. The riders covered a total of 400 miles over their camping holidays at Wangaratta, including a visit to Albury and the Hume Weir. On Friday night they encountered heavy rain, and the scooters successfully negotiated flood waters 18 to 24in deep. There was only one spill, and this was unconnected with road conditions, happening when one of the 11 girl riders fell asleep while riding. With hired tent equipment, a truck to carry the luggage of the 26 members of the party, and café meals, total cost to each member for a full Easter holiday was not more than 5 pounds a head, including petrol. The previous weekend, the Association had its first night trial, through the Dandenongs to Sassafras, returning to Melbourne via Vermont. Doug Burnand (Lambretta) won the trophy, a silver table lighter in the form of a scooter.

Rode with death. [The Herald, 14/5/56] Rome. About 110 lb of gunpowder strapped on the carrier of a motor scooter exploded from the engine's heat near Bari, southern Italy, today and killed the rider, Luigi Bruno, 18, a fireworks maker.

Scooters to Celebrate [The Argus, 19th October, 1956] The Motor Scooter Association will celebrates its first birthday today. On Sunday, members of the club will have a membership drive around the suburbs, and they will be recognisable not only by their scooters, but also by the blue, white-trimmed jackets with initials "M.S.A.V." The M.S.A.V. is a touring and social club and details of its activities are available from the secretary, Mr J. Murphy, WX6971 (after 6.30pm).

Important Job for Scooter Association [2/11/56] The advent of the Olympic Games in Melbourne produced an unusual problem for the Olympic Photo Association – how to get urgent and irreplaceable negatives and photographs from the Central Distribution Pool in many Games venues to the main Olympic Stadium through the dense traffic. The answer was provided by The Motor Scooter Association of Victoria which answered a call for couriers published in the newspapers. The Secretary, Mr Jack Murphy, has drawn up a roster which provides the ample number of riders for day and night duty during the full period of the Games. Scooters provide the perfect answer owing to their ability to get through the heaviest traffic with ease.

Ben Warden, Secretary

