

Australia's Best  
Selling Bike  
Magazine

JULY, 1981

\$1.75\*  
NZ \$2.00\*

# two wheels

Full Test Of  
The V Bomber  
Yamaha Hits The Target!

**BATHURST**  
What Really  
Happened?  
What Of The  
Future?

XV  
750

**ENDURO  
COMPARO**  
Yamaha IT175  
Suzuki PE175

YAMAHA



DAYTONA SPEED WEEK  
1981

We Test The Gilera cbA Moped  
Off To The Centre Rally!

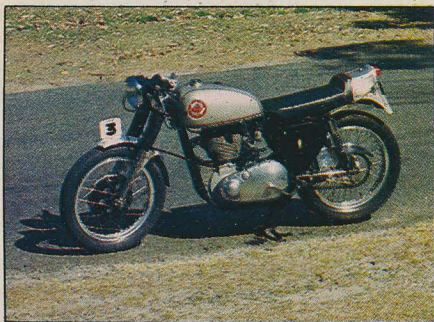
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Relax, it cost only \$25,000...



Bathurst: The good, the bad, the ugly...



BSA Gold Star - pity it died.

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Freelance contributors are welcomed by this magazine and submissions should be addressed to The Editor, TWO WHEELS, 142 Clarence Street, Sydney 2000. Submissions must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return. The publisher accepts no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or transparencies.

**Annual subscription rate to addresses in Australia \$21.00. Other countries \$A24.00**

**Back copies:** Gr Floor, 154 Clarence St, Sydney. Photostat service inquiries to Julia Cullen, 5th Floor. **Advertising:** National Advertising Manager, John Miller, 142 Clarence St, Sydney 2000. Phone 29-3761, 29-5606. **Melbourne:** 150 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, 3000. Phone 662-1222. **Adelaide:** THE ADMEDIA GROUP PTY LTD, 24 Kensington Road, Rose Park, 5067. Phone 332-8144. **Brisbane:** GEOFF HORNE AGENCIES, P.O. Box 247, Kenmore, 4069. Phone 202-6229. **Perth:** CLIFF THOMAS, ADREP Advertising Representatives, 62 Wickham St, East Perth, 6000. Phone 325-6395. **New Zealand:** RON COOK, Sun Alliance House, 42-44 Shortland St, Auckland, GPO Box 486. Phone 30311. **London:** PETER HOLLOWAY, Ludgate House, 107 Fleet St, London EC4A2AL. **Japan:** Bancho Media Services, 15 Sanyeiicho, Shinjuku-Ku, Tokyo 160. Phone (03) 359-8866. Telex BMSINC J25472.

Printed in New Zealand by Comprint. Published by Murray Publishers Pty Ltd, 142 Clarence St, Sydney 2000. \*Recommended Price.

**DISTRIBUTORS: GORDON & GOTCH (A/SIA) LTD, MELBOURNE. MURRAY PUBLISHERS PTY LTD, SYDNEY.**



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# THE LEGEND LIVES ON

# Bathurst On The Box

**BRIAN WOODWARD** voices the disappointment many of us felt at the shabby way TV treated the Easter races.

Each year our sister publication WHEELS covers the Hardie Ferodo 1000 from Bathurst. It is a long and tedious race yet it captures more of the public's attention than any other car race. On TV at least.

A few years ago, intrepid and articulate Steve Cropley covered the Hardie Ferodo from his armchair. He watched the entire race, from start to finish on the idiot box.

It seemed like a good idea to do the same thing for the most important single weekend of motorbike racing in Australia.

Up until the time the Women's Weekly TV guide was dropped in my lap, it had never occurred to me that the programmers at all the TV stations would be so damned short sighted that none of them would give the most important and spectacular events in the Australian bike racing calendar more than a few miserly seconds on the news each evening; and then only about the riots, not the racing.

To be fair, Channel Seven did manage a report of sorts purely because Pretty had managed a two race win on the Saturday.

Channel Two, champion of the underdog, state-owned TV and supporter of minorities led the afternoon with a repeat of "The Road To Wembley". This was followed by a Rugby League Preview. Then came the 1978 Grand Prix (repeat, of course). Even Aunty ABC isn't that slow) and a Table Tennis Exhibition from China. This was followed by 1978 Rugby and the remaining Saturday drivel.

Channel Seven led the afternoon with "Morgan the Pirate", starring Steve Reeves, followed by the VFL in Melbourne. Then came "Great Mysteries of the World".

Channel Nine started the afternoon with "Ethiopia — the Hidden Empire", the 1981 Daytona 500 (which wasn't bad viewing) and "Numero Uno — Argentina", about Argentinian athletes.

Channel 10 amused us all with "Lazy Acres" (circa 1959), then "Let's Go Greek" and "Tarzan Triumphs". Then came "Western Sierra".

Sunday was no better with the ABC featuring "In Your Garden", a repeat of Four Corners and tennis. Seven had a

musical movie followed by "The Triumph of Robin Hood". Nine had "Daktari" followed by a movie about a Catholic priest who founded a home for Mexican orphans. Channel 10 led the silly stakes once again with a Jerry Lewis movie followed by "Drag Racing-Wheels of Fire".

Saturday night Seven gave a respectable but all too brief report on the day's racing in the Sports News.

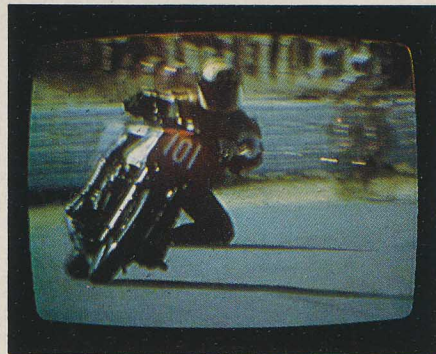
Sunday night all the TV stations could talk about was the riots.

Employee of the Electorate, Bill Crabtree made extraordinary statements about riot police and banning bike racing.

It was all too hysterical for words.

The ABC and Channel Seven both had cameramen on the spot. One photographer I spoke to several days later said that the ABC cameramen didn't cover the racing because their (sic) expensive equipment might have been damaged by hooligans. What crap!

Channel Seven has probably more experience than anyone at offering first rate film from Panorama. Cameras on the circuit, in choppers and long lenses on towers.



Given a little imagination and promotion, either channel could have had a huge crowd of can-clutching Norms getting excited over Pretty's ride or the dramatic dingle on day one.

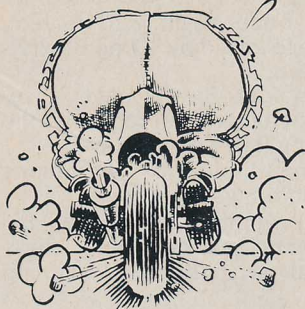
Not covering the Bathurst meeting was a crime. The ABC, particularly, cannot justify its lack of coverage.

Perhaps the most important statement I heard about the entire weekend's racing came from a man who has seen more races than I've had hot dinners; car races that is. David McKay is one of Australia's three doyens of motor racing and writing. It was his first ever Bathurst bike meeting. He said that it was beautiful and elegant. Car racing hides the skill and movement of the driver inside the tin box, but on a bike, the expertise of the rider is there for all to see. He was very, very impressed. He doesn't own a TV station. Pity.

As TV station programmers tuck themselves into their Volvos tonight and worry about falling ratings, perhaps they might give a thought to Bathurst 1982.



## The Seat Of Power



With Phil Dickie

## Another Bathurst...

ON AN Australia Day weekend more than 10,000 'bikies' descended on Canberra and camped in a paddock. The organisers consulted the police, the police were unobtrusive and sensible, and there were no incidents worth a headline or even a paragraph.

Last Easter around 10,000 'bikies' went to Bathurst to camp on a mountain and watch a race. Event organisers and police were not interested in talking to the 'bikies', the police were classically heavy-handed and flat-footed, and there was a gawdalmighty 'riot'.

Same 'bikies', different place and attitudes. Different events too, but the Canberra crowd looked more 'bikie' and went thinking angry political thoughts. The only logical conclusion to draw from this little comparison is that things to do with Bathurst are more to blame than things to do with 'bikies', for the annual Easter fracas.

If you read newspapers or watch television you probably don't know what happened. Be warned that this is a background story and not a blow by blow account — see elsewhere in this issue.

At last year's Easter meeting a drizzle of missiles landed on the police compound and a few arrests followed. Rupert Murdoch told us that 'bikies' at

Bathurst had rioted and there were two deaths... in the small print it was explained that competitors rather than 'bikies' or police had died.

The Motorcycle Riders Association (MRA) then launched an ambitious campaign to pacify the mountain and prevent repeats of the silly, but damaging headlines. Damaging to us because they cost lives by perpetuating the myths that make casual homicide so painless for some motorists — "it was only a motorcycle, the rider was one of a minority group who all behave like animals all the time."

Letters were sent in September to the police, the Auto Cycle Union and Bathurst Council seeking co-operation or at the least recognition. Follow-up letters were sent in December seeking replies to the first letter. Would you believe that the police and the ACU 'had no record' of the original letter — I don't believe it, it's a statistical absurdity.

In late March four MRA representatives checked over the mountain with Chief Inspector Miller and the Bathurst Council men. The ACU declined the opportunity to get involved. By all accounts Chief Inspector Miller was the main force behind a non-compromise that saw the MRA placed at the remote end of the campsite. Not unnaturally, given their ambition to make police life easier, the MRA had wanted to camp near the police compound where any trouble always starts.

Tent city was well under way by Saturday afternoon. I had trouble finding the MRA tents, like everyone else who was interested, and it didn't seem quite the crowd-puller it was planned to be.

General facilities were terrible as usual; Pat, husband of Julia who graces these pages, was constructing an elaborate irrigation system to divert the overflow of a tap on a tin shed called ladies. The police compound faced the only block of flushing toilets across a seemingly huge expanse of open ground. Roads, tents,



— DICKIE —

bikes and bodies covered every other square inch. Every junior amateur marching girl team in Bathurst was making a mint selling hot dogs, some from brick pagodas far exceeding the sanitary blocks in architectural splendour.

Accounts of how trouble started differ. The official version has it that the police stood in a thin blue line inside their stockade, falling bravely until they could see the whites of hostile eyes. Then they began the first of a series of baton charges into the crowd, 'arresting offenders'. Other versions have the baton charges starting sooner. I know that the process of arrest was at times indiscriminate and that some police lacked control over their right arms and mouths.

A couple of hours of this was enough for even the most enthusiastic hooligans and police to tire of their ritual game. But innocents were among those hurt or locked up and the 'completely human' image we want to promote wasn't helped by the next morning's news. (Most of the journalists responsible were on the turps in town and modified the police statement into a story.)

The first batch of headlines suggested a repeat of previous disasters. Then, amazingly, the police role came into question. Were they even responsible in some way? The lame, inane, and

totally predictable posturing of the ACU spokesman was quite rightly forgotten. By their fine handling of the press the MRA started to retrieve a reputation that had been dented on the night by their inability to mobilize numbers or diversions in the right place at the right time.

To top it all off, Police Minister Crabtree announced plans to make Bathurst worse next year by giving the police better weapons. He also had to concede an inquiry into the night's events which should make some police feel a bit uncomfortable.

The police blamed boredom and booze and got it about a quarter right. If their actions on the night aggravated the situation their preparations were nothing short of hopeless. The only suitable space for a battleground was right in front of their compound, floodlit and wide open. Senior officers seemed totally unable to comprehend that some motorcyclists might not want trouble either. So they did their utmost — it seems — to frustrate any plans these motorcyclists had made for improvements. The great majority of us are ordinary and legitimate citizens going about our ordinary and legitimate business. The others are generally no worse than sections of a football crowd or, dare I say it, the backbenches of any Australian parliament. To my mind, if they continue to treat me and my mates as animals they have no right to act surprised and affronted if some of my mates behave like animals in their presence.

In the longer term, start with the admission that there are hooligans on two wheels and there are hooligans in blue uniforms. Motorcyclists and police, both in search of a better public image, will have to face up to the problems in their own ranks eventually.

\*



— DICKIE —