

# CENTRESTAND

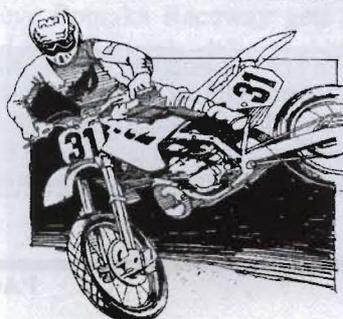
JUNE 2005



## let those who ride decide

The journal of the Motorcycle Riders' Association of SA Inc. Printpost approved No. PP:530028/00014

**IN THIS ISSUE :** News.....Letters.....Samrats Runs.....Rallies  
Road Safety Issues.....Helmet History



**M.R.A.**  
**MOTORCYCLE RIDERS'**  
**ASSOCIATION OF SA INC.**

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**COVER PHOTO:** The new SAMRATS banner, flanked by Coordinator Matt Stevens, Bryan White and other SAMRATS. Ain't it something?

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**MRA SA Inc. is a member of the Australian Motorcycle Council (AMC)**



## EDITORIAL

At last we have incontrovertible proof that at least two people other than the editorial team read *Centrestand*: two letters to the Editor already, and it's only June! Maybe only contentious issues drive people to respond.

The observations made in *Letters* highlight two basic elements governing our society. One is that people tend to gather together to form societal groups which require some sort of organisational structure to maintain functionality; the other is that people can't seem to help being people, with all their independent opinions and imperfections, leading, in our society's case, to the bureaucratic model with which special-interest bodies such as the MRA have to contend.

Without being a part of this social construct, the MRA, Ulysses, the Motorcycle Task Force, the gun lobby group and all other such bodies would cease to exist, for we have come into being not only as a consequence of those individual opinions and interests, but because we are, in the first instance, a part of the collective whole. The sophistication of our society allows us to make independent choices provided those choices don't jeopardise the welfare of the whole or the social structure.

This means that the MRA, like the other groups, needs to understand how to work within the structure in order to be effective. This often means treading a pretty fine line between conservatism and activism, knowing when to hold back and when to drive forward, yet all the while remaining assertive while establishing and maintaining lines of communication.

The first seven years since MRA SA's founding in 1979 were spent in establishing the recognition of motorcyclists in the public consciousness as a legitimate road user group (and a threatened species) with particular safety needs and an inalienable right to be a part of the food chain, and learning how to play society's game of Snakes and Ladders. The focus was on activism and, having made ourselves known, if not welcome, we then focussed on consolidation and progression within the structural parameters.

The upshot is that we have more options and more resources now. We exist as a recognised entity (that is, motorcyclists as a focussed group), we have the choice of activism or a deliberative approach, and we have networks, both within the motorcycling community and outside it.

This doesn't mean we can afford to be indulgent or self-satisfied, for we are only where we are through tenacity; if we relinquish our grip for a moment, we will be done (or undone). But we still have to play the game.

Ride on, read on, and write in

**Peter Mount**

The problem with people who have no vices is that generally you can be sure they're going to have some pretty annoying virtues.

*Elizabeth Taylor*

## THE SPOKE'N WORD

### New Federal Transport Minister

The Agriculture Minister, Warren Truss, has been promoted to the transport portfolio in a Government reshuffle following John Anderson's resignation from the front bench. Mr Truss, who is also the incoming deputy leader of the Nationals, also picks up regional services from Mr Anderson.

The promotion comes as a surprise, because current Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs Minister, Peter McGauran, had been tipped to take Mr Anderson's portfolio responsibilities.

The reshuffle was prompted by the resignation in June of Mr. Anderson from the Government front bench and the leadership of his party. Mr Anderson cited health concerns for the change.

### Pocket Power

Miniature motorcycles, pocket bikes, monkey bikes – whatever you call them – have become immensely popular since their introduction a year or so ago. They look like the real thing and, with a price tag of only \$400 - \$800 and a top speed of 65-70 kph, are both fun to ride and affordable (see December 2004 *Centrestand* for a discussion on pocket bikes).

They are not street registrable as they do not comply with Australian Design Rules (ADRs) or the definition of a motor vehicle under the Act, but this hasn't stopped people riding them on the road, as to date there have been few alternative areas to play with these toys.

Enter Bruce McPhee. Bruce has recently opened a dedicated pocket bike track at Pooraka, and expects about 200 enthusiasts to take advantage of the safer and recreationally-orientated facilities. "There's only been a track at Port Gawler, where they have been allowed to ride occasionally," he said.

The minimum age to ride is eight, and riders must have their own insurance, pocket bike, safety gear and parents. Many families make a day of it, with more adults than kids having a go.

Valentino Rossi started his career in Europe on a pocket bike, where the sport has been popular for many years. The Pooraka track will host the Adelaide round of the Australian Championships later this year. "We believe Pooraka Raceway gets the sport off the streets and onto the track. It's a real buzz," Bruce said.

The track is at 30 Research Road, on the old go-kart site, and is open every day from 10 am to 8 pm. For more info call Bruce on 0418 856 774.

Check out your pocket bike purchase carefully, though. The ACCC is monitoring them for potentially poor-quality brakes, steering, throttle control and footpeg strength.

### Tas M/c Strategy

Motorcycle riders and the Tasmanian Government are at loggerheads over a plan to increase the learner age for motorcyclists under the Tasmanian Motorcycle Strategy. However, the Tasmanian Motorcycle Council (TMC) has supported most of the other initiatives contained in the document. Much of the new strategy is aimed at younger riders.

"We strongly oppose the learner age being increased from 16 to 17," TMC spokesman Shaun Lennard said. "It is totally unnecessary and will disadvantage many young Tasmanians travelling for education or work."

Infrastructure, Energy and Resources Minister Bryan Green said the one-year increase would make a difference in "how they conduct themselves on the road". He claimed it would also mean a consistent approach with licensing for car drivers.

Mr Lennard said a restriction on the size of motorcycles available to novice riders would have addressed the problem. "The new power-to-weight scheme combined with expected changes out of a current review of rider training should result in a significant reduction in learner casualties," he said. "High-performance 250cc two-strokes will no longer be an option for learners."

The public will be able to comment on the proposed age increase after the release of a Regulatory Impact Statement.

Motorcyclists have formed a significant percentage of the state's road fatalities over the past three years. So far in 2005 three motorcyclists have been killed and a high rate of serious injuries recorded.

Under the strategy, a safety levy of \$15 a year will be introduced with the money to go towards safety initiatives. "We are concerned that \$405,000 of the safety levy is directed at the administrative costs of implementing changes to the learner system," Mr Lennard said. "Many of the state's 30,000 motorcycle licence holders will object to the use of the levy for this aspect of the strategy."

Mr Green said the Motor Accident Insurance Board would provide \$500,000 towards extra training for older motorcycle riders. It would also provide funds for a public education campaign for motorcycle riders and drivers, promotion of safe riding practices and of

refresher courses and installation of warning signs at motorcycle crash sites.

The strategy would increase education by introducing a six-month learner licence period and a more stringent pre-learner course.

*Courtesy The Mercury*

### Thefts Down (but not much)

Motorcycles account for one in every 13 vehicles (7%) stolen so far this year in Australia, with more than one-fifth of motorcycle thefts occurring in Western Australia, compared to WA having only one-tenth of all vehicle thefts and 11% of total registrations, according to the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NMVTRC). South Australia, although recording a 3% reduction, still had a proportionally higher rate than the national average.

The NMVTRC recently launched a new public education campaign about motorcycle identification that targets the owners of off-road machines. Fewer than one in five off-road bikes stolen in the last 12 months were recovered. The campaign includes advertising in *Australasian Dirt Bike Magazine* to highlight the absence of adequate identification on motorcycles or their components.

The NMVTRC has developed a joint work program with the Australian Crime Commission to establish a central repository of intelligence and expertise to deal more effectively with the problem of theft. One of the areas of focus will be the illicit parts market, which has become more attractive as rebirthing becomes more difficult through improved compliance and better whole vehicle identification.

### Front Numberplates (again)

VicRoads has called for tenders for the testing of motorcycle front numberplate decals for application and retention characteristics along with readability following accelerated weathering routines consisting of exposure to UV, salt spray, high pressure water, grit impact and thermal cycling.

*Trust the Vics – always in the forefront of technology when it comes to motorcycle safety...Ed*

#### SA Data

Total registrations (as at May 31):	1,419,018
Cars, trucks etc:	1,157,872
Motorcycles (all types):	30,500
Licences	
Total:	1,060,671
Motorcycle (Full):	147,207
Motorcycle (>250cc):	11,866
<i>(Info courtesy Neville Gray)</i>	

## LETTERS to the Editor

### SA M/cycle Strategy on Track

Dear Editor

It was with some sadness and despair that I read Peter Mount's veiled attack on the Motorcycle Task Force (MTF) in the March 2005 edition of *Centrestand* and I wish to reply to this unfortunate rhetoric.

In 2003, the state suffered its worst motorcycle fatality numbers for many years and motorcyclists were copping it from SAPOL in particular, with no real plan to curb this devastating trend coming from the government of the day.

With the backing of the Ulysses Club, I set about attempting to set up a government/rider interface committee, something Peter had been advocating for many years. I directly approached the MRA SA Committee, seeking help for this onerous task with the idea that the two associations could jointly set about making this happen. I was disappointed to be virtually shunned by the Committee and never received a formal reply to my plea for help. Isn't the MRA supposed to be doing this stuff?

To cut a long story short, the Motorcycle Task Force was eventually formed and set about producing the SA Motorcycle Safety Strategy, which would be the blueprint to the motorcycle fatality and serious injury rate in the state, again something Peter has been advocating for many years.

You now tell us that the MTF has been hijacked by the bureaucracy! Let me give you an example to refute this rubbish: During the review of the Draft Strategy, SAPOL was insisting that the inclusion of front numberplates (FNPs) was paramount. The riders' delegates gave this suggestion a universal "thumbs down" and SAPOL withdrew this demand. This is not how a so-called "bureaucracy" works!

Nowhere in the Strategy is the need for "lights on" ever mentioned. The need for "lurid clothing" that Peter mentions is in fact the need for "approved safety clothing". (We are opposed to the "Daytime Running Lights" (DRLs) campaign for all vehicles being advocated by various governments and join the Australian Motorcycle Council in opposing this initiative.)

Learner Approved Motorcycles (LAMS) will be implemented in SA in the very near future and will be a mirror-image of the successful NSW model, where a power-to-weight ratio limit of 150 kW/tonne and a cut-off of 660cc will be used. This is a vital part of the Motorcycle Safety Strategy. Do you think that learners should be riding Fat Boy Harleys, as they come in

under this power-to-weight ratio, being relatively low power and high mass machines? I think not, and the rest of the delegates on the Task Force do not think so either.

The MRA has a delegate on this Task Force, Les Dicker, who is held in high regard by the other members and who was part of this unanimous decision.

Peter, you further mentioned that the MTF meetings have been deliberately moved from evenings to daytime in an effort, I assume, to remove the possibility of a second MRA delegate attending these meetings. We tried both daytime and evening meetings and always got a better attendance at the daytime meetings. Again, a democratic decision was made to hold the meetings during the day.

It is unfortunate that the recent change of Ministers for Transport has seen a delay in the release of the Motorcycle Safety Strategy and LAMS. There are several quite exciting and revolutionary (for SA) ideas in the pipeline from the Task Force at the moment and time will see these plans being released. In the meantime we seek the universal backing of all riding groups, without the petty sniping that has wrecked the promotion of motorcycle safety in the past.

So come on, Peter. You have had your chance to get a working group up and running in the past – we ask that you give us a go and report positively on the work of the Task Force. I sincerely hope that the government members of the Task Force do not read *Centrestand* – what would they think?

Neville Gray  
National Vice-President, Ulysses Club Inc.

*Thanks for your comments, Neville. I'm sure that your elaboration on the MTF's activities will be of considerable interest to our readers, along with clarification of those editorial points. You're right about the damaging effect of "petty sniping". Although never having occurred in SA, it was of considerable detriment to national rider groups in the late 80s.*

*Also by way of clarification, in contrast to your view of being 'virtually shunned' by the MRA Committee, the Committee actively supported this initiative by the Ulysses Club, spent considerable time in Committee discussing the issues and how best to support the initiative, and made sure of our vocal presence at every public meeting where we could assist in getting up and going what would eventually become known as the Motorcycle Task Force. In effect, the MRA supported another motorcycle organisation which had a good idea without worrying about issues of jurisdiction –*

*and isn't this what the MRA should also be doing, as a means of, as you said, representing riders' interests?*

*It is heartening to be reassured that motorcyclists and those who appreciate motorcyclists' safety concerns are driving the Safety Strategy forward, and that the MTF is united in its vigilance regarding issues that have no positive bearing on rider safety, such as FNPs and DRLs.*

*There is no dispute regarding the value of the MTF. As you noted, the MRA has been striving for the establishment of such a body for many years, with mixed success, the main problem being funding of initiatives. Let's hope the state government will find the resources for the initiatives contained in the Strategy with minimal delay, and that the Strategy will have the positive effect on motorcycle crashes that is anticipated...Ed.*

### Another Perspective on Bureaucracy

Dear Editor

Around 1988, I spent a number of years and a lot of money fighting the confiscation of private, legally owned firearms. My activities included local TV appearances, pamphleting, newspaper ads and many, many meetings with and letters to politicians.

Along with numerous gun organisations and individuals, I also did a personal presentation to the "Select Committee on Firearms".

My conclusions:

- a. Governments are set in their agendas under heavy influence from higher up.
- b. They neither understand, nor care about what the private sector want.
- c. Involving us in "advisory groups" appears to be primarily to:
  - discover who their opponents are;
  - note their arguments so as to effectively counter them; and
  - effectively distract and exhaust us.
- d. Unfortunately, we need to have our say at every opportunity and so be involved in this "consultation". Just don't expect a lot from it by itself.
- e. We need to treat our fight as very long term and work behind the scenes as they do on re-educating the public and affecting voting patterns.
- f. Try to find allies in the government and Public Service ... mavericks and bike riders.
- g. Accept that we are an unwanted minority (not politically correct) as are gun owners, fishermen, four-wheel-drivers etc. The issues we groups are individually fighting for are really the same – freedom of choice and freedom from heavy-handed bureaucratic control - so we need to foster

identification with one another and cooperate and support each other.

- h. Our opposition are a cynical bunch of bastards with a very superior opinion of themselves and a low opinion of us. Though they cloak themselves with the trappings of gentlemanliness they are the opposite.

Thanks for the work you do on our behalf. Remember that those who would curtail our freedom are not gentlemen, so stick to your guns and don't worry too much about your reputation.

Andrew Offe.

*It is evident from your experience with your gun lobby group that you are familiar with some of the difficulties representative organisations like the MRA encounter, Andrew. The trick is being able to change gears when we must and not let the wheel ruts get too deep. Thanks for your contribution...Ed.*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Motorcycle Riders' Association of South Australia Inc. will be held on Monday 26th September at 7.00 pm at Somerset Hotel, Bridge Road, Para Hills.

All the positions of the Association listed below will be declared vacant and the 2005 -2006 Committee will be elected:

<b>President</b>	<b>Membership Secretary</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Minutes Secretary</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Editor 'Centrestand'</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Stock Control Officer</b>
<b>Publicity Officer</b>	<b>Road Safety Officer</b>
<b>Register Liaison Officer</b>	
<b>SAMRATS Coordinator</b>	
<b>General Committee Representatives (8)</b>	

All financial members of MRA SA Inc. are eligible to stand for election to one or more of the positions. Nominations should be in writing to the Secretary of the Association prior to the beginning of the AGM.

All members and friends are invited to attend the meeting.

NOTE: The President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer are the Office Bearers of the Executive Committee of MRA SA Inc.

Kathleen Stevens, Secretary

**A conscience is what hurts when all of your other parts feel so good**

## 2005 TOY RUN

By Paul Morgan

The organisation for the 2005 Toy Run is off and running with the following people taking up committee positions: Kathleen Stevens, Peter Mount, Todd Kimber, Fiona Kimber, Harald Lindemann, David Vaselli, Brenton Matiske, Bryan White, David Povey and Les Dicker.

Last year saw a record number attend the event. The run from Glenelg went very smoothly with only a few hold-ups, thanks to the SA Police manning the intersections instead of, as in previous years, having them computer controlled which, due to the speed of the run, threw them out of sync.

The only problem we heard of was the Adam Internet bus being in the run. This year the bus will not be taking part.

This year there will be a BBQ selling egg/bacon and sausage sandwiches and cold drinks. This will be set up on the median strip at Glenelg near the front of the run. All proceeds will be going to St. Vincent de Paul.

Just a reminder, the run is Sunday, December 11, leaving Anzac Highway Glenelg at 11 a.m.

## RALLIES AND SAMRATS RUNS

### July

2-3 **FTMA Back to Basics Rally** 8364 4377

15-17 **MRA Radiata Rally** Mt Gambier  
South-East MRA. Frank 8765 1030

30-31 **Rhynie Pub Run** Aiden 8346 4071

### August

12-14 **Alz Mallee Rally Sedan**  
Meataxe 8540 2172. Sleaz 8535 4281

19-21 **Wombat Rally** Warnertown. Mark 8364 4377

### September

9-11 **Ghost Town Rally** Silverton  
Sylvana 8088 1192

16-18 **MRA Bushpig Rally** Crystal Brook  
Mid-North MRA. Greg 8865 2120

24 **SAMRATS Quorn Run** Route TBA

### October

14-16 **MotoGP** Phillip Island. Tag along with SAMRATS Matt (0431 683 130) and Bryan (0419 818 448). Staying trackside again

30 **WIMA Pink Ribbon Run**

### November

13 **SAMRATS Five Ferries Poker Run** Povey  
Motors 140a Tolley Rd St Agnes 9 a.m. Leaves 10 a.m. \$10 inc. badge. Hands \$5 ea.

26-27 **CMA No Show Rally**  
<http://www.geocities/noshowrally/>

26-27 **Cavendish Rally** Victoria. Grant 03 9742 6668  
Stumpy 03 5465 3859

### December

11 **MRA TOY RUN** Departs Glenelg 11 a.m.  
Entry by toy or gold coin

**SAMRATS**

By Bryan White

We are very impressed at the support that SAMRATS has and believe this social ride group is heading in the right direction. It appears that more social gatherings and events will be on the cards. All suggestions from the people who attended discussion meetings and rides have been taken on board and we will be organising some exciting events in the near future. If you know of any rides with other ride groups don't be shy, let us know and we will post them for everyone. Also, If you have any pictures of our rides send them on to me at [runssa@mrassa.asn.au](mailto:runssa@mrassa.asn.au) and I will post them for you.

**Clare Run**

Well, how do I start this little report? The SAMRATS Clare Run on April 30 was eventful! The run was very well attended by 28 bikes and a couple of pillions, and the weather held off all day until the very end and even then it was only a light isolated shower.

We all headed out of Barry's car park at 10 a.m. sharp and headed down Main North Road to Clare. It wasn't until we came out of Kapunda to Eudunda it came undone for Alex. About 2 km from Eudunda Alex came unstuck from his bike while travelling at around 90 kph on a sweeping left-hander. First aid was on the scene immediately as SAMRATS has first aid personnel on hand. Alex was taken to hospital for an overnight stay with a fractured collarbone and lots of bruising. The cause of the accident is unclear at the moment but it was not due to speeding or reckless riding as we were riding in a group. I am sure all SAMRATS wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him back as soon as he is able.

After caring for Alex and making sure he was taken safely to hospital, most of the group rode on and caught up to the lead riders who had stopped at Robertstown, where we regrouped and rode to Burra for a quick petrol stop and then on to lunch at the Clare Hotel which was very good and reasonably priced too.

After lunch we cruised though the Clare Valley on the way back to Adelaide. Riding through Gawler, what sounded like a dry chain turned out to be two out of the three rear wheel bearings on my Blackbird seizing up! I was off to work on Sunday and got new bearings and seals. I work for Gardner Bearings so it was a cheap repair. I can't really complain though. It's the only thing that has needed repairing other than a faulty regulator in over 110,000 km.

So when you get new tyres make sure that they re-grease the seals because they will fail, water and other gunk will get in and who knows, you might get stuck in the middle of nowhere.

## MRA Mid-North Register **BUSHPIG RALLY**

Crystal Brook

September 9 – 11

Call Greg Stevens for info – 8865 2120

It was a great ride apart from the Alex's incident but he will be back.

SAMRATS also unveiled our NEW BANNER. WOW! It looks fantastic. It is highly visible - just watch Turn One at the MotoGP Phillip Island this year as it will be on display there for all to see. All the SAMRATS going this year might even get their mugs on TV. It will also be at the start of our runs and events during the year.

We also have SAMRATS badges which are very cool.

The pictures are on the MRA website, so have look at them along with the new banner at <http://www.mrassa.asn.au/gallery/>

**Mannum/Aceh Run**

Thanks to everyone who was on the SAMRATS Mannum ride and also to those who turned up to support the Network for Tsunami Aceh Incorporated (NTA) "We ride for the children of Aceh". The weather on the weekend? In a word, "**PERFECT!**"



**We Rode for the Children of Aceh**

There are some run badges left over if you would like one (\$10) please contact me at [runssa@mrassa.asn.au](mailto:runssa@mrassa.asn.au) The money is for a good cause. Thanks to everyone who has sent in photos for the web site they are now posted and can be seen here: [http://www.mrassa.asn.au/gallery/view\\_album.php?set\\_albumName=rallies-runs](http://www.mrassa.asn.au/gallery/view_album.php?set_albumName=rallies-runs)

Roger Mann has asked me to pass on this letter:

First on behalf of the Network for Tsunami Aceh I would like to thank the Motorcycle Riders' Association for working with us to do the ride to Mannum yesterday. It was a good day and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. We made about \$500 on the day

which may not be a lot but it represents sponsorship for two children for almost 12 months. Also could you please pass on to your members that we have more Aceh Run 2005 Badges if anyone would like to buy one or more.

Again thank you very much and please pass this on to all who attended.

**Roger Mann**

Acting President, NTA Inc.



Seen at the Great Escape Rally 2005

**MRA Great Escape**

The pictures from the 2005 MRA Great Escape Rally and the Swagman rally are posted on the MRA website. Just click on the link. If you haven't been on a rally these pics should give you an idea of what goes on.

[http://www.mrasa.asn.au/gallery/view\\_album.php?set\\_albumName=rallies-runs](http://www.mrasa.asn.au/gallery/view_album.php?set_albumName=rallies-runs) If you want to go along to one of the upcoming rallies just click on the link <http://www.mrasa.asn.au/html/ralliesruns/> They are FUN!



Vicki, Meataxe and Friends



In the MRA Tent at the Great Escape Rally 2005

**Phillip Isle Run**

We would like to invite anyone who is or is thinking about riding to the MotoGP at Phillip Island in October to make it a SAMRATS run and come with us. This would be perfect timing for anyone who hasn't been before to ask about costs, what they need to take, etc.

The route we have planned has been done in such a way that all riders of any degree of riding ability will get there OK and enjoy the total experience.

As we will be providing lunch, we need to know who will be coming, so please RSVP to SAMRATS on the MRA website.



Cooks recycling yesterday's BBQ at the Great Escape Rally 2005

Piodreved the frsit and lsat ltretes of ecah wrod in a snectene are lfet in tehtr croecrt pacle, you can mix up the ohetr lrtetes in any oderr and the wrdos wlil siltl be raed nrlamloy. Tihs is bceusae we raed wdros as a wlohe, not as idnviauidl ltretes. *mmm...dunno about that...Ed.*

## Everything You Knew About Helmets

The first serious motorcycle helmet designed to reduce brain injury was developed by a young bloke from Port Pirie, SA, Hugh Cairns. As a neurosurgeon, he tried to save the life of Lawrence of Arabia after he crashed his Brough Superior SS100 in the UK.

When Colonel T. E. Lawrence was fatally injured in a motorcycle accident in May 1935, one of the several doctors attending him was a young neurosurgeon, Hugh Cairns. He was moved by the tragedy in a way that was to have far-reaching consequences for all motorcyclists.

During the Second World War, Cairns recognised the unnecessary loss of life among the dispatch riders of the British Army. In 1941, his first and most important article on the subject was published in the British Medical Journal. He observed that 2279 motorcyclists and pillion passengers had been killed in road accidents during the first 21 months of the war, and head injuries were by far the most common cause of death. Most significantly, however, Cairns had only observed seven cases of motorcyclists injured while wearing a crash helmet, all of which were non-fatal.

His 1946 article on crash helmets charted the monthly totals of motorcyclist fatalities in the United Kingdom from 1939 to 1945. The real decline in the number of fatalities took place after November 1941, when crash helmets became compulsory for all army motorcyclists on duty.

His article concluded:

"From these experiences there can be little doubt that adoption of a crash helmet as standard wear by all civilian motorcyclists would result in considerable saving of life, working time, and the time of hospitals." Not until 1973, however, 32 years after his first scientific article on the subject, were crash helmets made compulsory for all motorcycle riders and pillion passengers in the United Kingdom.

As a consequence of treating T. E. Lawrence and through his research at Oxford, Sir Hugh Cairns' work largely pioneered legislation for protective headgear for motorcyclists, and subsequently in

the workplace and for many sports worldwide. Over the ensuing decades, this research has saved countless lives.

Although the advantage of adequate head protection during combat has been recognised for more than 2000 years (*remember the Greeks and Romans and English jousting tourneys?...Ed.*), the public sector has been slow to adopt similar measures and develop legislation in this regard. The 1975 rescission of laws mandating the use of safety helmets by motorcyclists in the USA, for example, contributed to a 40% increase in motorcyclist fatalities.

Although the forces motivating introduction of adequate head protection have undoubtedly been numerous, landmark events and subsequent studies and reports have been required for the institution of such measures. One of these landmark events was the death of a motorcyclist in the Dorset countryside in England on May 18, 1935 and the subsequent involvement of a young Australian neurosurgeon.

### Sir Hugh W.B. Cairns

Hugh William Bell Cairns was born in Port Pirie in 1896. He attended Balliol College, Oxford, as a Rhodes Scholar in 1919 and went to the Royal London Hospital as a surgeon in 1921, focussing on the new field of neurosurgery. He went to Boston on a Rockefeller Travelling Fellowship in 1926, where he received training as assistant to Harvey Cushing, on whom he was to religiously model his operating style for the remainder of his career. Trainees came from abroad to learn the skills Cairns had brought back with him.

When the Second World War commenced, Cairns became the Ministry of Health's advisor on head injuries and consulting neurosurgeon to the Army with the rank of Brigadier. Aside from other notable achievements, such as initiating the first clinical trials of penicillin for Howard Florey (*another South Aussie...Ed.*) and devising and training the mobile neurosurgical units deployed in WWII, Cairns is best remembered for his work on the prevention and treatment of head injuries. As a result of his work, the death rate for in the British army from such injuries was lower than in any other army.

*Author unknown. Lifted and doctored from the Web*

**ROAD SAFETY ISSUES** By Les Dicker

The speculation by some people about the South Australian Motorcycle Safety Strategy is quite understandable given the long-term habit of governments of all persuasions ignoring the various voices of motorcycle groups. Also the changing of cabinet portfolios by governments from time to time is detrimental to any consistency of response to our lobbying.

The current Minister of Transport is the third in the life of the present government. All these factors delay any positive actions that we may wish to see implemented.

Hopefully there will now be a period of stability and we will see the new minister implementing the Strategy. This and other issues may, however, take a back seat as we approach the next state election when all the politicians will become mainly concerned with being re-elected. The next Motorcycle Taskforce meeting may give us more idea as to the progress of the SA Motorcycle Safety Strategy and also the possible introduction of a Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme similar to that in NSW and ACT. I may be able to give out some details of these issues after that meeting.

For many years it's been common practice for drivers to ignore the give-way rule whenever it involves a motorcycle. Most trips around the built-up areas require us to make many swerve-and-recover manoeuvres to avoid being killed or injured by this driver activity. However, there's a trend that I now see on a daily basis where many drivers are ignoring the give-way rule irrespective of the vehicle approaching. I've seen many drivers turn into oncoming semi-trailers and 4WDs as well as other smaller vehicles! This problem is particularly bad at roundabout intersections where many drivers refuse to give way to vehicles already on the roundabout. No doubt the authorities are aware of this lethal habit by drivers but they may consider it too hard to correct!

Will the new anti-hoon laws governing overly-loud stereo systems in vehicles mean the police may have to confiscate some of the Gold Wings and BMWs that I've heard riding around with loud music playing?

The 6th edition of The Driver's Handbook on Page 115 defines a road user as a "driver, rider of a motor bike or bicycle, passenger, pedestrian, or user of a wheeled recreational device or toy".

The long-awaited wet weather has finally arrived and brought with it all the usual problems. Regular maintenance will mean that you are aware of any wear and tear. Brakes, chains, suspension, lights and electrics all need to be in good order and condition. If you need new tyres on your bike just be aware that they need to be properly scrubbed in before they can be used

to full effect. This is even more important in wet and slippery conditions, and it is harder to do in wet weather. Of course, the wet weather clothing that you have must also be fully functional; after all, there's nothing worse than riding around saturated from head to toe.

Ride safe and dry

### Creation Theory

On the first day God created the dog. God said, "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. I will give you a lifespan of 20 years." The dog said, "That's too long to be barking. Give me 10 years and I'll give you back the other 10." So God agreed. On the second day God created the monkey. God said, "Entertain people, do monkey tricks, make them laugh. I'll give you a 20-year lifespan." The monkey said, "How boring. Monkey tricks for 20 years? I don't think so. Dog gave you back 10, so that's what I'll do too, OK?" And God agreed. On the third day God created the cow. God said, "You must go to the paddock with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer. I'll give you a lifespan of 60 years." The cow said, "That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for 60 years. Let me have 20 and I'll give you back the other 40." And God agreed again. On the fourth day God created man. God said, "Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. I'll give you 20 years." Man said, "What? Only 20 years? Tell you what, I'll take my 20, and the 40 the cow gave back and the 10 the monkey gave back and the 10 the dog gave back, that makes 80 years, OK?" "OK," said God, "You've got a deal." So that is why for the first 20 years we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves. For the next 40 years we slave in the sun to support our family. For the next 10 years we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last 10 years we sit on the front verandah and bark at everyone. Life has now been explained to you.

**Half the people in the world are below average**

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