



Rae Fidock

Interview Excerpt 5 February 2017

Oral History Project

Reliving the past: Stories from our communities

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Interviewee: Rae Fidock
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Date: 5 February 2017
Transcription: Helen Thompson



Rae Fidock
Minore Speedway

In this interview Mrs Rae Fidock talks about her experiences building and running the Minore Speedway with her husband at their family farm “The Retreat”, near Dubbo. Mrs Fidock also talks about her memories of seeing Queen Elizabeth II when she visited Dubbo in February 1954, and again in February 1992.

This recording created on 9th June 2017 is part of Macquarie Regional Library's oral history project "Reliving the past: stories from our communities". Each recording contributes to the developing story of life in the Dubbo area.

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(I): So when did the speedway open?

(S): The Western Speedway opened on the 30th April in 1972. A meeting was held of interested drivers some time prior to the opening of the Speedway, and the Minore Speedway Club was formed, to help run the speedway meetings. Steve Cross was elected the first President of the Club, and I was the first Secretary, and Ian McPherson from Narromine was the first Treasurer.

We held the opening meeting of the Western Speedway at Minore on the 30th April, 1972. It was often called the Minore Speedway, but the track was registered as the Western Speedway. The racing that day started at 12 noon, and there was \$200 in prize money on offer. About 30 cars from Gunnedah, Parkes, Forbes, Wellington, Narromine and Dubbo took part in the 20 event program. There was plenty of thrills in front of the crowd, and in one race Johnny Web rolled over twice at 50 miles an hour, and luckily walked away without a scratch! (laughs)

The Western Speedway Programme for the 30th April 1972 recorded that Ralph Mann was the Chief Steward, Ted Holsgrove and Garry Taylor were the Flag Marshalls, Steve Cross, Pat Tinson and Toby Daniels were the Pit Gate Marshalls, Ross Allen was the Commentator, and Richard Kirby was the Time Keeper. Kirkby's Jewellers had a big lovely jewellery store in Dubbo at the time.

We were joined by several drivers from Gunnedah at the opening meeting. They were in the process of opening a speedway there too. Barry and Gail Holden were the promoters or owners. Barry Holden, Barry Lawritzen and several other drivers often came to our meetings.

It was a massive job organising everything, and making sure the day ran smoothly. Things like someone to run the kiosk, people to man the entrance gate and collect the money,

working out a program for the day's racing, what kind of cars would we get for the opening meeting, how would we divide them into various classes which would give everyone a fair go.

We ran a couple of practice days leading up to the opening, to iron out some of the problems. For example, flagmen had to be found and learn the meaning of the different coloured flags. Flag marshalls who knew the race rules, and who could deal out appropriate penalties when required, and keep the drivers in line.

And Ross Fidock had to learn the tricks of watering the track and keeping the dust down, without making the track slippery and dangerous. Then he had to learn how to water and grade the track after each meeting using the old green grader, roll it, mostly using our neighbour Vince Bloink's truck, which I think had bogey wheels on the back, and get it all prepared for the next meeting. Ross usually drove the water truck. He had the best knowledge of where to put the most water on the track in between races, having built the track from scratch. As the promoter and owner of the speedway, and also the licence holder, he had many responsibilities.

We decided to use the flag colour system of the Production Sedans at Liverpool Speedway. CAMS and some other racing organisations, had a different flag colour system.¹ I made the flags on the sewing machine, and Ross attached them to the flag sticks. They were quite big. The checkered one was the hardest. I had to cut black and white squares and sew them all together.

We found that Mr Albert Palm had a PA system he hired out. Albert was great! He used to bring his P.A. out, and he would help with lap scoring, or any way he could. His daughter Kerry used to come and help out too. And she often helped me with the lap scoring up in the tower.

We inquired about a commentator for the opening meeting, and someone suggested Ross Allen, a school teacher from Merrygoen. He was just magic at behind the microphone, and really brought the scene on meeting days to life.

¹ Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS).