

Seniors Road Racing Results at Mac Park

By Laurie Fox

ONCE again the Mount Gambier Motor Cycle and Light Car Club's annual seniors' road races at McNamara Park for riders of 45 years of age and over proved to be an outstanding success, possibly eclipsing even the high standard of previous years.

With more than 120 competitors, including riders from New Zealand, Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales, as well as the strong Victorian and South Australian numbers, and a wonderful variety of machines ranging from 1908 to the latest, the outcome of the event was never in doubt.

In order to cater for everyone, the 31 event program included rider age group races, bike class events, a combination of both scratch and handicap contests for sidecars.

Many of the fields also included concurrent classes to ensure fair opportunities for all.

Looking at the bike class events, the first was for the older period one and two machines and 125s, with separate awards for each.

On a modern 125, David Anderson from the Victorian Hartwell club was not too troubled to keep Lindsay Urquhart's magnificent period two 1926 1100cc V-twin Anzani at bay in the group's first race on Saturday with Ron Matthews on a period four 125cc special third ahead of Dave Mason on a 125 Honda and Ted Dexter from Adelaide with his pre-war 500cc Manx Norton, a wonderful mix of machinery.

While the second race for the class on Sunday brought another win for Anderson, Urquhart continued to enthral spectators with his big Anzani ahead of Mason, David Gazley on a 125 Honda and David Morse on a beautifully prepared pre-war 250cc Velocette.

Onlookers were also captivated by the efforts of Ian Corlett from Adelaide and local John Wilkinson on their pre first world war Triumph and AJS bikes respectively.

The class for up to 350cc classic machines also had one race each day, both keenly contested.

After a lap in the lead on Saturday, John Inkster on a rare 310cc Aermacchi had to give best to Adelaide's Richard Metcalf and his 350cc 7R AJS, the two circulating closely to the flag while Victorian Ian Glover came through for third on his Ducati followed by Tony Tildesley from Adelaide and local Rick Vassallo, both on 350cc Hondas, and Hartwell's Peter Ross with another superb 7R AJS.

The first three were the same in Sunday's race with Vassallo fourth ahead of Adelaide's John Whallin on a DBS B31 350, local Adrian Wright on a CB72 250cc Honda, and Ross.

There was a big field for the over 350cc period three classics with plenty of keen competition.

Metcalf led Saturday's race for a lap on his 500cc Manx Norton but was headed, firstly by Bob Jolly on a similar bike, and then by Laurie Turnbull on his wickedly fast ES2 Norton to finish in that order ahead of Mac Park veteran John Maher on a 700cc Norton, Hamilton's Les Toohey with a 500cc BSA, Peter

Hinton from NSW on a 500cc Manx and Bob McDonough on another ES2, the latter four in a tight group after a race long tussle.

While he led throughout in Sunday's race, Metcalf came under strong pressure from Hinton after half distance and only just held on to score from Hinton while McDonough and Jolly also fought hard for the minor place with McDonough just holding on.

Maher was fifth followed by Toohey, Urquhart on a period three Anzani, and Victorian Michael Panayi on a 750 Manx Norton.

The combined periods four and five post classics also catered for several inbuilt capacity classes and there were many keen tussles throughout the big field.

Race one saw the first three, Frankston's Roger Gunn on a 1000cc Suzuki, Mick Neason from Wagga on an 1100cc Suzuki, and Dave Mason with a 750 Ducati, in the same order throughout to finish ahead of Preston's Rex Wolfenden on an 1100cc Honda, Martin Pearson from Hartwell with a 500cc Suzuki, his clubmate Terry Morris on an LC350 Yamaha, Paul Walker on a 400cc Yamaha and local Andy Baird on his 900 Ducati.

Sunday's race brought a turnaround with Neason an all the way winner from Wolfenden, who just headed Mason on the last lap, Pearson, Gunn, who gradually slipped back from an early second, Morris and Walker.

The class for modern bikes was also well supported with more than 20 starters in each leg.

Mount Gambier club member Graeme McLaren was outstanding, winning both the Saturday and Sunday legs with his R1 Yamaha 1000 from clubmate Karl Schmidt on a 600 Honda, who finished very close in the second leg, Allan Henry with a 998 Ducati, Paul Coleman on a GSXR Suzuki 600 and Cafe Racer Club's John Snoad on his 600 Suzuki.

Others to finish well up in a very fast class were TZ250 mounted David Anderson, Neil McCartney on a Ducati, John Maher and Bob Jolly on Saturday and McCartney, Anderson, Maher and Triumph pilot Steve Kerr on Sunday.

There were also five rider age groups, also run with one leg each day.

The over 60s had a field of 21 with John Maher and his Norton fighting out each leg with Lindsay Urquhart and the later of his big Anzanis.

Adelaide's Tony Tildesley brought his 350cc Honda into third on Saturday followed home by Ron Matthews on a Honda 100, Keith Jolly from Hartwell with a 500 Suzuki and B31 mounted John Whallin.

On Sunday Mount Gambier club member George Bennett improved on his first race seventh to place his 600 Honda third ahead of Jolly, Matthews, Adelaide's Fred Greeneklee on a 600cc JAP and John Imrie with a 250 Bultaco.

Bob Jolly had no great trouble to head the first of the 55 to 59 years group on Saturday, beating Paul Walker, the Hartwell duo of David Sinclair on a TZ350 Yamaha and James Key with a 400 Kawasaki and Marcus De Caux on a 750 Yamaha.

While Jolly repeated his win on Sunday, Key claimed second ahead of Walker, De Caux, Wayne McDonald on a 400 Honda and Sinclair.

There were three capacity classes for the 45 to 54 years age group, up to 400cc, 401 to 600cc and 601 to 1100cc.

David Anderson dominated the up to 400cc section, beating Terry Morris and his Hartwell clubmate Karen Webb on both days.

Adelaide's Malcolm Haines just made fourth ahead of local Bill Fielding and Steve Warnes from the Levis Club on Saturday while on Sunday Warnes just pipped Haines for fourth followed by Ian Glover and Rick Vassallo.

Karl Schmidt had the 401 to 600 class at his mercy, winning both days from Victorian Paul Coleman, Chris McCausland from Queensland and Hartwell's Martin Pearson while Adelaide's Stephen Miller and Steve Kerr were next best on Saturday and reversed their order on Sunday.

In the 601 to 1100cc section, 750 Kawasaki mounted Clive Hughes had no peer, finishing safely ahead of Allan Henry with a 998 Ducati on both days.

Rex Wolfenden filled third on Saturday ahead of Mick Neason, Neil McCartney and Dave Mason while on Sunday the minor place went to McCartney ahead of Wolfenden, Neason, Roger Gunn and Andy Baird.

The solos then turned to their cup events where the combined age of rider and machine was the determining factor.

The 45 plus cup brought a clear win for Schmidt from Graeme McLaren, Allan Henry, Paul Coleman and McCartney while in the 75 plus cup Gunn led all the way to just score from Mason, Baird and Malcolm Haines.

Paul Walker made the winners' circle in the 90 plus cup, finishing ahead of Michael Panayi, Bob McDonough and John Inkster while the 100 plus cup quickly developed into a race long tussle between Bob Jolly and Les Toohey, Jolly just holding on to win with Richard Metcalf third ahead of Ron Matthews and John Maher.

Lindsay Urquhart capped off his weekend with a resounding victory on the big Anzani in the 115 plus cup while Ted Dexter, David Morse and Keith Jolly battled for the minors, swapping places regularly before finishing in that order.

For many followers, the sidecars capped off a great weekend of action.

Both groups had two separate scratch races before combining for three handicaps.

The faster section comprised period four and five machines and modern outfits.

The first scratch race brought a terrific struggle between Hartwell's Barry Horner on the magnificent Irving Vincent and his clubmate Bill Stoyel with his period four 1000cc Honda, Horner getting ahead after a lap and going on to win but never more than one second clear of Stoyel.

Graeme Wagland was third followed by Max Hooper, Clive Carter and Calvin Merlo.

The struggle continued in race two but this time Horner finished a little further ahead of Stoyel with Hooper third ahead of Wagland and Merlo.

For the older period two and three models, the first race for the other sidecar class was disappointing in numbers with only two starters after other entrants encountered troubles in practice.

Even so, the action was keen, with the two never more than a second apart and changing places regularly in a genuine battle for first, Ted Dexter and his 750 Norton finally coming out best from David Wain on a 650 Tri-Ariel.

With the two missing machines back in action for the second race after urgent repairs and the addition of a late entry from one L. Fox on a 570 Norton, the field of five provided a better race but with Dexter and Wain again going hammer and tongs out in front to again finish closely in that order while, some way back, Fox gradually came through from his back row start to just head John Whallin's 500 BSA for third, the two clear of Graham Rowley on his pre-war 500cc BSA.

For the three handicaps the two fields, with the exception of Fox, were grouped together.

In the first, where limit rider Rowley completed a lap before the back markers started, the field closed up remarkably to see Stoyel just a tyre's width ahead of Whallin at the flag with Rowley a bare length ahead of scratch man Horner for third.

Slightly revised handicaps for race two brought an even closer result with Wain using every atom of power he had after catching Rowley on the last lap to just nose across the line ahead of the fast finishing Hooper and three others, Wagland, Horner and Stoyel, only one second behind and the rest little further back.

With only five starters, the final handicap looked a little disappointing at first but still produced some exciting last moment action with Hooper, Wagland and Horner all swallowing up Dexter and Wain with less than a quarter of a lap to go and Hooper hanging on to beat Horner by half a second with Wagland the same margin further back just ahead of Wain and Dexter in a great finish to two days of magnificent racing.