

David Adams

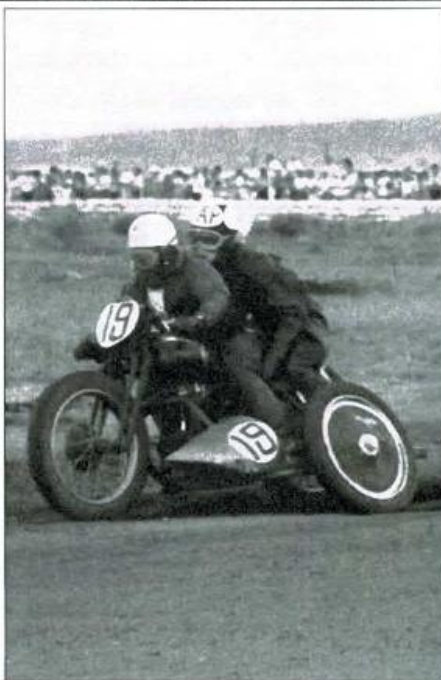
Each year at our annual Gillman Speedway Classic Championships meeting we honour a former rider and this year our tribute rider is former South Australian Sidecar Champion David Adams.

Although he's been resident here in Adelaide for almost 50 years, Adams was born in Broken Hill and started his speedway career there before moving to Adelaide in his early 20s.

To a lot of people, because of its distance from the capital cities, and its relatively low population, Broken Hill hasn't generally been thought of as hot-bed of speedway action, but it does have a long history dating back to the 1920s, and has produced a significant number of leading competitors, especially in Sidecar racing.

The first regular speedway racing was held on a third-of-a-mile track built around the Jubilee Oval by Adelaide based Speedways Limited, and the first ever meeting was staged on Saturday 16 June 1928, with track officials supplied by the newly formed Broken Hill Motor Cycling Association, with which each motor cycle club in Broken Hill was affiliated. The Oval had been used by the Broken Hill Football Association for Aussie Rules matches since 1900, and only six months before the speedway started, Donald Bradman made his first appearance in the New South Wales Sheffield Shield team there when the team played a match against Broken Hill, on their way (by train) to Adelaide to play a Shield game against South Australia.

It is believed Speedway at the Jubilee Oval finished with some Midget Car (Speedcar) racing in the late 1930s, but by the time Dave Adams was a teenage schoolboy in the 1960s, the bikes were racing again, on a half-mile track run by the Silver City Motor Cycle Club, and he quickly had a couple of speedway idols in "Tiger" Bath and Colin "Spotty" Burke, who had a garage on a corner near his home.



Dave's first speedway idol, Colin "Spotty" Burke in action at the Broken Hill track in 1958

In 1970 it was announced the recently formed Broken Hill Stock Car Club intended to establish a quarter-mile speedway circuit on the outskirts of the town. It took time, however, to build the venue and the first meeting was not held until Sunday, 8 September 1974, but when it opened one of the riders on the programme was 21-year-old David Adams.

Dave left school in 1967 to start a painting apprenticeship and then at 18 he went into the mines, working underground for five years, "for the dollars, like most in those days", and the extra money he was earning enabled him to purchase a Triumph speedway sidecar from former Sydney Showground rider Jack Belshaw, a policeman who had been transferred to Broken Hill.

That first season, 1974/75, saw him riding at Broken Hill, and also Mildura, with passengers Bill Fraser and Malcolm Bermingham.

Soon after he started riding he saw Riverland youngsters Ken l'Anson and Peter Noll beating some star riders on a 500cc Suzuki, including winning the Australian 500cc Long Track Championship at Tailem Bend in December 1974, and decided that was the way to go and purchased a bike from Adelaide rider Milton Lewis.

Adams and Bermingham rode the 500cc Suzuki in the Australian Big Track Championships at Morgan in May 1975 and finished second to l'Anson/Noll in their heat of the Junior Championship but were unplaced in the final which was won by Kevin Taylor with l'Anson second.

During his second season, 1975/76, he was getting known to fans in the north of the state, riding at Renmark and Mildura as well as Broken Hill, and by the end of the season

he and Mal Bermingham were the second backmarkers at Mildura, on a 110 metre handicap, only starting in front of track record holders Daryl Rolfe and Lindsay Buchecker who were on 130 metres.

At Easter 1976 they rode in the South Australian Track Championships on the half-mile track at Port Pirie. They qualified for the Junior final but were unplaced, but riding a 750cc Suzuki in the Unlimited class they finished third in the final behind Terry Rooney/Peter Menz and Kym McConnell/Don Mullins, after they had beaten Rooney/Menz in their heat race.

By 1977 Adams had moved to Adelaide, and had another Broken Hill resident, Michael "Blondie" Shepherd, as his new passenger. Shepherd worked as a baker in Broken Hill and finished work early Friday mornings to travel to Adelaide to race at Rowley Park Speedway every Friday night.



David Adams and Mal Bermingham on the ex-Jack Belshaw Triumph at a practise session prior to the new Broken Hill Speedway opening in September 1974

After riding together at the Morgan Mile track in early October, they made people sit up and pay attention in their first appearance at Rowley Park at the end of the month, when they won the Stars Scratch Race heat/final double at the opening meeting of the 1977/78 season.

Meeting six, on 2 December 1977, was the first feature event of the season, the prestigious Don Willison Memorial Pairs, and Adams and Shepherd were paired with first year rider David Parker and his passenger Peter Menz.

Parker was the current SA Champion passenger with Kym McConnell, but McConnell had moved to Solos for 77/78, so Parker took over riding. With only a few meetings under his belt, and Adams in his first season at Rowley Park, they were not expected to be in contention for the Pairs Title, but Adams scored 13 (paid 14) points, and Parker 10 (paid 12) for a total of 23 (out of a possible 30), to be the surprise winners by one point from Lyndon Schlein/Geoff Curtis (17) and Greg Schlein/Wayne Bennett (5), and Bob Caslick/Russ Meyer (13) and Geoff Baran/Keith Simpson (9), with Lyndon beating Caslick in a run-off for second place.

Parker was only on 500cc Suzuki, but Adams had soon found out his 500cc Suzuki was not suited to his bigger build and he was now on a 750 he built with help from Len Bowes when he moved to Adelaide.

In February the Australian Championship was held at Rowley Park and Adams/Shepherd were selected to take part in what was an historic, and very memorable, meeting.

Historically it was the first time the championship was held over the traditional World Solo Championship format of 16 riders over 20 heats. It was a brave move by the promoters – no promoter had been willing to do it in the past – but the risk paid off in spades with a thrilling meeting that saw run-offs for first and second, and third and fourth, and cemented the format as the standard ever since.

After the 20-heats, Queenslanders Keith

Sewell/Paddy Kuhnert and Victorians Ken Walker/Jamie Walker were tied on 12 points, and locals Deane Taylor/Peter Menz were tied with Northern Territorians Lyndon Schlein/Geoff Curtis on 11, and the meeting had been full of controversy with Sewell, Taylor and Schlein all losing points through exclusions.

Ultimately 23-year-old Sewell, running his first-ever National Championship, only 18 months after switching from Solos, won the championship, which further impressed that the 20-heat format was the correct format as he would not have even been in the line-up had any of the previous formats used. He was not in the original selections from his state, and it was only three days before the event that he received his summons to Adelaide as a late replacement for Graham Young, who had blown his Kawasaki at the Exhibition Speedway in Brisbane the week before and was unable to effect repairs in time.

The final placings after the run-offs were Sewell first, Walker second, Taylor third and Schlein fourth.

The meeting was just as memorable for what was happening off track as it was on the track. After heat nine the ETSA main fuse blew, every second light went out, and all power had to be turned off for ten minutes before the meeting could resume. A few heats later there was another delay when there was a fire in the Torrens Road office. And in the pits there were arguments, protests and counter-protests, accusations of a rider trying to pay off other riders, and rumours of another couple of riders using illegal fuel. It was all happening!

Amidst all this mayhem, Adams and Shepherd made an impressive debut in the big-time, finishing in a four-way tie for sixth place, with locals Tom Atherton/Gordon Atherton and Sydney's Doug Tyerman/Greg Griffiths and Doug Robson/Dennis Potts, who all scored 8 points. Adams beat all three of the other 8 pointers, but his points came from just four rides as he was a non-finisher in his third ride. The third of the Atherton brothers, Gibson, with Don Morris as passenger, finished fifth on 10 points.



The podium for the 1977/78 Don Willison Memorial Best Pairs at Rowley Park. left to right, back row, David Adams, David Parker; front row, Michael Shepherd, Peter Menz.

An unusual aspect of Adams and Shepherd's selection in the national championship was that they had not yet contested a state championship, with the South Australian Championship not until the following month.

For the State Championship Dave had a new bike, built by the state's leading moto-cross sidecar rider Phil Franklin, and powered by a GS750 Suzuki. Franklin said at the time "the reason for this motor was because it has had so much success in moto-cross and I know its versatility and potential". Franklin built up the frame and Jon Hawkins (of Hawkeye Heads fame) worked on the motor and in less than a week, the whole project was completed. Then it only remained to see how it handled. Not many specially constructed machines are an immediate success, but they took the bike to Broken Hill, the week before the state title, and took out the Broken Hill Championship with five wins from five starts.

Disappointingly, after the great success of the Australian Championship, the Rowley Park promoters chose to run the SA Championship over a knockout format of heats, quarter finals, repechages (strangely held after the

quarter-finals), semi-finals and a final. First and second from the Australian Championship three weeks earlier, Keith Sewell and Ken Walker, were back but with an extremely hot day and night, there was only a poor crowd on hand to see Sewell/Paddy Kuhnert pass Deane Taylor/Peter Menz to take the title with Adams and Shepherd an impressive third on the new bike, and Doug Tyerman/Greg Griffiths from NSW fourth.

Later in the month, and the following month, Adams/Shepherd contested the long track meetings at Port Pirie and Morgan.

At the Easter speed carnival at Pirie they won the SA unlimited sidecar championship and at Morgan they rode in the Morgan Centenary Cup Sidecar Spectacular, staged over twelve heats, and finished third with 20 points, behind Deane Taylor/Fiona Duncan, who were unbeaten with 24 points, and Clarry Jones/Steve Benson on 23.

His championship win at Port Pirie enabled him to emulate his childhood idol, "Spotty" Burke, who won at least six times at Pirie in the 1950s and 60s.



Left to right, David Parker, Kym McConnell, Phil Franklin, David Adams, Blondie Shepherd

In his preview for the opening night of the 1978/79 Rowley Park season, Bruce Harris, the motorcycle writer for the Adelaide evening newspaper, predicted Adams would be one of the stars for the coming season., and he did have a promising start to the season when he returned to Broken Hill for a Pairs Championship meeting and won four races, all in new track record times. But at Rowley a mix of bike problems, track problems-with some races cancelled due to the condition of the track-and meetings where the Sidecars were not programmed, there wasn't much success in the early part of the season.

It wasn't until mid-December before he had any notable success when he scored 9 paid 11 from 4 rides as part of a 4 man "Australian" team in a sidecar test match against New Zealand, but the truth of it was the NZ team were totally outclassed, with their outdated bikes no match for the local riders.

So there was little at that stage to suggest the outstanding form they were going to show in the coming months.

Just under two weeks after the NZ test match they travelled to Bendigo for the annual Boxing Day meeting and took out the Australian Track Championship, and from there they continued on to Sydney for the New South Wales Championship at the famed Sydney Showground.

Sydney fans were renown in those days for not rating anyone from outside NSW, so they didn't give any thought to the Adams-Shepherd duo, who I'm sure most of them had never heard of, but they caused what Sydney journalist Peter White, himself a former sidecar passenger, called "the upset of the decade at the Sydney Showground when he whisked away Doug Tyerman's NSW title from under the noses of ten local,

four interstate and one overseas ace", while fellow Sydney journalist Peter Baker reported "the days of local sidecar riders being unbeatable around the Sydney Showground are well and truly past".

Adams/Shepherd scored a superb maximum in the 20-heat title, and after they had beaten defending champion Tyerman in their first ride on the track, the championship was virtually decided by heat 11 when they came from behind to defeat five-time champion Doug Robson.

Peter White reported: "Robbo took command of the race for two laps with Adams sniping away at his rear wheel. The third and last lap was a classic. Adams ranged up on the outside of Robson on the bullpens turn but no one seriously believed the Old Fox would drop it so late in the race. Out of the turn, Adams went for the doctor and the near-impossible happened — he rode straight around Robson and literally scorched down the main straight to greet the chequered flag. It was a great race ... and an incredible ride from the hitherto virtually unheralded South-Aussie which had the crowd hollering and stamping for more".



David Adams and Blondie Shepherd on their way to winning the New South Wales Championship with a maximum score. Photo from the Meyer collection courtesy of James Baker.

After Sydney Adams returned to Adelaide but only for a few weeks before he was back in Sydney for the Australian Pairs Championship on 3 February and the Individual title the following weekend.

Adams/Shepherd and Deane Taylor/Steven Lewis were selected as the South Australian team for the Pairs, and after Adams' showing in the NSW championship, were considered the favourites by many, but their challenge was virtually over before it started when Taylor/Lewis crashed heavily in their first ride and both were rushed to St Vincent's hospital with broken right legs.

Adams was able to continue on in the event with local reserve rider Warren Sullivan taking Taylor's place, but he only managed six points, well below his NSW title-winning form. The championship was won by the home-track heroes Doug Robson and Doug Tyerman, the first-ever all New South Wales victory in the Paris Championship, by a single point ahead of Victorians Clarry Jones and Ken Walker.

The individual star riders in the Pairs meeting were Keith Sewell and Doug Tyerman, and they continued their form the following weekend when they were equal top-scorers with 14 points in the Individual Championship, meaning a run-off was required to decide the national champions — and except for one momentary lapse it was quite likely Adams and Shepherd would have made it a three-way run-off.

Adams/Shepherd finished fourth, with 11 points, behind Sewell, Tyerman and another Sydney rider, Warren Sullivan (12), but they beat both Tyerman — the only ones to do so — and Sullivan in the heats. Unfortunately, however, they dropped a massive three points when they broke the tapes in their third ride, a heat they most likely would have won as it was won by their reserve replacement, Glenn Innis.

Ultimately Queensland star Sewell retained his championship, although this time with Neil Gould as passenger, after winning a sensational run-off with Tyerman.

Tyerman needed to beat Sewell in heat 17 to at least get a run-off, and for a second week in a row (after a similar race in the Pairs) he came from behind to do so, so would have had every confidence he could win the run-off, however it wasn't to be a happy ending for the New South Wales veteran.

Sewell was again first away from the gate with Tyerman chasing hard and looking for another booming pass but he hooked a rut going out of the pit turn on the last lap and turned over, leaving Tyerman and passenger Ray Murray sprawled on the track with Tyerman suffering concussion and a broken jaw in two places.

There was no time to think about what might have been however, as they were back in Adelaide for the South Australian Championship just a week later.

Keith Sewell was back to defend his title, plus current Northern Territory champions Lyndon Schlein/Geoff Curtis, WA Champion Dennis Nash, Victorian number 2 Clarry Jones and 1977 Australian champion Ken I'Anson.

In all there were 28 nominations, and the title was again run over a series of knock-out races leading to a final of Sewell/Neil Gould, Leigh Wingard/John Gertig, Schlein/Curtis and Adams/Shepherd.

Sewell led for two laps and looked set to retain his title, but with a lap to go hit a rut and lost control and was passed by Adams. Sewell gave chase but Adams held the lead to take the last Sidecar Championship to be held at Rowley Park. After a torrid duel Wingard, who had the fastest race time of the night, finished third ahead of Schlein.

The next feature event on the calendar was the Don Willison Memorial Best Pairs the following month, but Adams/Shepherd and their partners Brian Schultz/Geoff Greatz had a dismal night and finished last of the six teams.

Adams/Shepherd were soon back on the winner's podium however, when they shared the Broken Hill Championship with Clarry Jones/Peter Marriage a fortnight later.



The well-known Frank Midgley photo of David Adams and Blondie Shepherd enjoying a victory lap after winning the last ever South Australian Sidecar Championship held at Rowley Park.

Adams and Jones tied on 14 points, Adams beaten by Jones, and Jones beaten by another legendary Broken Hill duo, the Kemp brothers, Robert and Grant. There was no run-off however, as Jones had suffered two broken ribs when a mini bike hit him in the chest during his Clarry the Clown stunt act. He, in effect, forfeited the title but Adams refused to accept the trophy under the circumstances and the Championship was announced a draw.

On 6 April 1979, Rowley Park closed its gates for the last time and Adams/Shepherd won their scratch race heat, but the last race win, in the final, went to Leigh Wingard/John Gertig ahead of Mick Tucker/Dave Allmond, with Adams/Shepherd third.

At Easter they again won the unlimited class at Port Pirie, and in July they paired with Clarry Jones/Peter Marriage to win the Top of Australia Sidecar Best Pairs Championship in Darwin, by one point ahead of Keith Sewell/Neil Gould and Phil Kerr/Jan Lea.

The Darwin meeting had extra significance because it was the last meeting together (for the time being) for Adams and Shepherd.

Shepherd got married and retired from racing, and he was replaced on the Suzuki Cornell machine by David Parker, who said recently "Even though I did ok riding sidecars on

speedway, I preferred long track and chased meetings all over the place. I was always good friends with Dave and so was happy to hop on with him when Blondie retired".

Although he didn't manage to win the last Sidecar race at Rowley Park, Dave did manage to win the first one at the newly constructed Speedway Park at Virginia.

The new speedway was the best purpose built speedway stadium in Australia when it opened, but unfortunately the track surface was never very good and came in for a lot of criticism from competitors and spectators alike. At one stage there were so many complaints that Manager Jim Niemann resigned, although he did return to see the season out before quitting for good.

The first Sidecar feature event at the new venue was the South Australian Championship on 14 December, but the weekend before that Adams and Parker travelled to Melbourne to contest the Victorian Championship at the Western International Raceway. They had a good meeting, but the local Walker brothers, Ken and Jamie, had a better one and took the title with an unbeaten 15 points, their third Victorian title in a row, and a new track record. Adams/Parker were only beaten by Walker, in

the final heat, and also beat the old record, to finish runners-up.

Back in Adelaide it was Brian Schultz and Geoff Graetz who won their first South Australian Championship, with 14 points, ahead of Leigh Wingard/John Gertig and David Adams/David Parker on 12 points. Wingard, who had won four of his rides, including beating Schultz in the final heat, but dropped three points for a tape exclusion in probably his easiest ride, then won the run-off for second place.

Schultz and Graetz were determined not to lose their new-found status as SA1, and travelled to Bendigo for the annual Boxing Day meeting and won the main event with Adams/Parker runners-up.

The 1980 Australian Championship was held in January at the Avalon Raceway, near Geelong, and Ken and Jamie Walker repeated their earlier Victorian Championship success with a 15 point maximum. As it turned out the championship was won in the first heat when they scored a narrow win over WA's Dennis Nash/Denis Mortimer, as Nash/Mortimer also won all of their remaining rides to finish second overall with 14 points.

Third on 11 points was David Adams and David Parker. It was career best national championship result for Adams, and for Parker it equalled his third place with Kym McConnell in Perth in 1977. Adams dropped points to Walker and Nash, but also to former

national champion Graham Young, and Queensland champion Paul Penhaligon.

While it was Speedway Park copping all the flak over track conditions the most serious injuries for the season occurred at one particular meeting at Murray Bridge in early February with five riders/passengers suffering serious injuries. Dave Adams was amongst them, sustaining a fractured shoulder blade and ribs, but he got off relatively lightly compared to the others.

His first meeting after the injury was the annual Don Willison Memorial Pairs at Speedway Park a month later, and he showed no ill-signs from the injury as, despite having three Australian champions in the line-up, he was the top individual scorer with 13 points, recorded the fastest heat time, and supported by Tom Atherton/Warren McCourt (6) the team won the meeting by one point ahead of the Victorian team of Ken Walker/Jamie Walker and Clarry Jones/Peter Marriage.

Adams/Parker continued their rich vein of form two nights later when they took out the highly regarded Mildura Sidecar Spectacular ahead of Ken Walker and Keith Sewell, and then a fortnight later scored maximum points in the 1980 Riverview Speedway Championship at Murray Bridge, taking the title ahead of Nipper Crabb/Jack Pettman (14) and Leigh Wingard/John Gertig (13).

Dave Adams / Chris Fraser World Champions 1965

Rider: Dave Adams
(Broken Hill)

Passenger: Chris Fraser
(Broken Hill)



*The dreams of kids!
They might not have become World
Champions but Dave Adams and
Chris Fraser both won multiple
State and Australian Long Track
Sidecar Championships, and Dave
won a couple of Speedway State
Championships as well.
More importantly they are still
mates today!*

The final feature event of the season was the Australian Best Pairs Championship at the Newcastle Motordome in April, and once again it was the Walker brothers who triumphed – but this time four of them as Ken and Jamie teamed up with their other brothers Rob and Clint.

The Walker brothers displayed true class but the title went right to the wire when a steward's decision several minutes after the chequered flag fell on the final heat decided the outcome and avoided a run-off against the South Australian team of Dave Adams/Dave Parker and Tom Atherton/Warren McCourt.

The South Australians displayed the best teams riding of the night and had recorded the maximum 20 points in their first four heats, but only managed a further four points in their final two heats, with mechanical difficulties in those last important heats.

In the final heat the Walkers needed a maximum five points to clinch the title. While Rob Walker stormed to the front, Ken found himself at the back. Ken and NSW's Mark Treloar then exchanged third place before Treloar flashed over the line in front of Walker. If that result stood a run-off would have been required, but the chief steward, Ray Cowling, excluded Treloar for boring in the last turn and the final scores were Victoria 25 points — Rob Walker/Clint Walker (14) and Ken Walker/Jamie Walker (11), South Australia 24 — Dave Adams/Dave Parker (13) and Tom Atherton/Warren McCourt (11).

The following season, 1980/81, was to be David Adams last season and it wasn't a happy one.

The Speedway Park track come under increasing criticism and, in part, led to Adams retiring at the end of the season.

The season started badly for Adams and Parker when they crashed in the pre-season practice meeting.

Parker was not seriously hurt but Adams was reported to have a punctured lung and suspected crushed vertebrae, although it didn't turn out to be quite as bad, instead escaping



Mr. Value: Dave Adams of South Australia.

MR. VALUE

Dave Adams (Adelaide)

IF I was a promoter staging a big sidecar meeting there's one bloke I'd have at the top of my invitation list every time — big, burly Dave Adams from Adelaide.

Because this bloke is a wholehearted, 100 percent trier. He's got the goods as far as riding ability goes too which means he's a good each-way bet to put the pickings on the board wherever he appears.

Dave is a former NSW Champion and a rider good enough to win the Australian if he can get the breaks. This year he finished third at Avalon behind Ken Walker and Dennis Nash. Next year I hope he cracks it because the effort he puts into his riding and his career certainly warrants it.

(Mr. Value last year: Lyndon Schlein and Clarrie Jones.)

Sydney journalist Peter White had a high opinion of Dave Adams - he wrote this in Revs Motorcycle News in 1980

with fractured ribs and bruising. Following that, and other crashes, the Local Speedway Control Board gave the Speedway Park manager an ultimatum to improve the track within two weeks or face the loss of their licence for bike racing.

The track did improve for the first two meetings, and at the next Speedway Control Board meeting the matter of the licence was discussed at length and it was decided that it would be allowed to continue but monitored on a week to week basis.

But it was too little, too late for Adams and Parker, who had lost a lot of interest in racing there. Parker said he was retiring because of the "inadequate" track surface — "I have a great respect for the Racing Drivers' Association and you can't blame them. The problem is just an overall ignorance of what a bike track should be," — while Dave Adams said "I don't want to ride out there again unless the track is changed or greatly improved. It's lowering the standard of speedway."

With doubts over the Speedway Park track the South Australian Sidecar Championship was moved away from Adelaide for the first time in its history and was allocated to Whyalla for 20 December.

With Parker not willing to ride, Adams was able to entice Blondie Shepherd back temporarily, and after six weeks on the sidelines he returned to action at Murray Bridge for a meeting in preparation for the state title, and at Whyalla he was straight back to top form winning his first four rides to go into a heat 20 decider with Brian Schultz and Geoff Graetz who were also unbeaten. Surprisingly both were beaten in the final heat by Tom Atherton/Warren McCourt but Schultz finished second and Adams third, which meant Schultz/Graetz retained the title with 14 points, ahead of Adams/Shepherd 13, with Atherton/McCourt (12) third after a run-off with Dennis Tickle/Martin Boyle.

Despite a lack of regular racing, second place in the state title qualified them for the Australian Championship meetings in Perth, and in the first meeting, paired with Schultz/Graetz, they went very close to taking the Pairs Championship at Bunbury, losing again by just one point, this time, in a shock result, to the Tasmanian duo of Henry Bishop and Darryl Howell.

The South Aussies had the teams riding down to perfection once they hit the front but Adams suffered several flat tyres which hampered their progress. They were still a point clear, however, of Tasmania going into their last heat against the Western Australian combination,

but Adams had machine trouble and came out on the spare Keith Sewell outfit. Schultz won the race from Dennis Nash (also on a borrowed bike), but, after several attempts, Barry Farley got around Adams for third. The three points earned by Schultz gave SA a four point lead but a maximum 5-1 win by the Tasmanians in the very next heat gave them the championship. The final scores were Tasmania 24: Henry Bishop/Greg Lillico (12) and Darryl Howell/Terry Bond (12), South Australia 23: Brian Schultz/Geoff Graetz (16) and David Adams/Blondie Shepherd (7).

The following week saw hometown heroes Dennis Nash and Dennis Mortimer win the Individual title at Claremont Speedway after a sensational last heat clash with Queensland's Keith Sewell and Neil Gould.

Before their clash in the vital heat 20, Sewell was undefeated on 12 points, while Nash had 11 after going down to South Australian Champions Brian Schultz/Geoff Graetz in their first appearance. The start saw Sewell away best-as he had been doing all night-with Nash right on his tail. Into Pits Bend for the final time Sewell drifted a little wide and Nash brought the crowd to its feet as he charged underneath Sewell to hit the front. Nash held the Queensland champion out wide as they exited from the bend, and Sewell got sideways in the heavy dirt and flipped his machine, with Gould clipped by a following bike and hospitalized with a crushed vertebrae and fractured left shoulder blade. With Sewell excluded, Nash had no trouble winning the rerun to take the title with 14 points. Sewell's 12 points were still enough to give him second place ahead of the South Aussies Schultz/Graetz and Atherton/McCourt on 11, with Schultz beating Atherton in a run-off for third. Tasmanians Bishop/Howell were fifth on 10 points while Adams/Shepherd were tied in sixth place with the NT's Barry Watson/Greg Smith on 9 points.

Adams made his only Speedway Park appearance for the season later in the month in a Sidecar Spectacular (won by Schultz/Graetz) but didn't really fire and was eliminated after two third places in the knockout heats.

His final appearance was at the Easter Port Pirie meeting, where he and Blondie Shepherd finished third behind Tom Atherton/Warren McCourt and Craig Saunders/Don Morris in the Australian Unlimited Championship, before he announced his retirement and sold his bike to Alice Springs rider Greg Schlein.

He gave his reasons for retiring as the cost of running and maintaining a machine and the poor condition of the Speedway Park track for sidecar racing, which had caused him to lose interest in the sport.

Back on track

That wasn't the last time we would see David Adams on track however.

Almost 30 years after he retired Adams found his Suzuki bike under a lemon tree in Alice Springs, and the current owner, former leading Tennant Creek rider Brian Carragher, gave it to Dave to restore. Over the next 21 months his childhood friend Chris Fraser painstakingly restored it to its former glory in Broken Hill, before it was again sent to Jon Hawkins (Hawkeye Heads) to prepare the engine ready for Dave to return to the track at the 2010 Gillman Classic meeting.



Back on track, left to right Chris Fraser/Trevor Woolcock, David Adams/Dale Grigg and Peter Menz/Andrew Menz in the 2010 Gillman Classic meeting. Photo by Ken Hurley

Dave Adams quits

South Australia's top sidecar speedway rider, Dave Adams has retired from speedway racing.

Dave Adams' retirement was a headline story in the Adelaide evening newspaper!

Fraser, whose passion for motorbikes was sparked at a very young age, inspired by his brother who was one of David Adams' first passengers, was a long track championship winning sidecar rider himself during the 1980s and 90s, and always wished that he could have raced against Dave and he got his chance when he also rode in the Classic meeting on another restored bike, the one he started his sidecar career on around 1983 after switching from a promising Solo career.