

Stuart McDonnell

My mother brought me into the world in February 1951 at the Richmond Childrens' Hospital. My family, 2+2, lived at 22 Loxley Road, Ivanhoe until around the middle of the year 1952 when we upped stakes and moved to a tiny town in called Hansonville in north-eastern Victoria, located at the cross-roads between Greta and Moyhu. My father had bought the corner store that was also the local post office and telephone exchange.

My second bike was purchased in time for me to transport myself to the Hansonville Primary School. This bike, a single speed steel frame jobbo, was initially too big however this situation was quickly addressed by my father by mounting blocks of wood on the pedals. This bike was my main form of transport for getting to school, rain, hail or shine, and recreation including the transportation of my dog in a 2 wheeled cart made from an old pram and attached to the bike by wire around the seat post. It was on me to keep the chariot going and one thing that sticks in my mind is fixing punctures in tubes with car vulcanising patches. My love affair with bikes was "put on the shelf" by my first car, shared with my sister, and the move to Melbourne in November 1968 to commence my career with the Australian Public Service.

In 1971 I moved to Alice Springs to advance my public service career and to realise a dream of living "out bush". My work caused me to live, work and travel extensively throughout the NT and these circumstances together with raising 3 children kept me off the bike until 1996 when an older English gentleman rekindled my interest and a Giant CFM2 became my pride and joy. I still have this bike but sadly not my first one. Needless to say given the formula $N+1$ this bike has been joined by many more.

In more recent years bikes and cycle touring have been my connection to a global cycling community and hosting touring cyclists in my home in Alice Springs has created friendships all over Europe, Asia, South America and the USA