

Albury Bicycle Club

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The modern bicycle evolved from an 1817 German machine propelled by the rider pushing himself along with his feet on the ground. The *Albury Banner (AB)* in an 1883 “Wit & Humour” column, defined a bicycle as “a slender, graceful, arrangement with two wheels, turned by two cranks, one seated on a little saddle operating the machine with his feet.”

In 1885 a bicycle invented by John Kemp Stanley looked quite like a modern bicycle – two wheels of the same size, a rear wheel connected and driven by a chain propelled with pedals.

An *AB* article in September 1873 demanded “that young gentlemen practising on bicycles should in future take the carriage way in preference to the footpaths.” The same newspaper reported that a Grand Temperance Fete in Albury on New Year’s Day 1874 included a bicycle race with two competitors, won by J House.

In March 1877 the *AB* noted that a high-wire performer in Dean Street’s Market Square announced “that ‘for any reasonable consideration’ he will ride a bicycle in mid-air 80 feet from the ground on a telegraph wire” – it’s not known if he performed the stunt.

The first Albury Bicycle Club was formed at a meeting at the Albury Hotel on July 6, 1883. John O’Connor was elected captain and it was resolved “that there should be a club uniform of dark-blue serge, with a navy blue and white band round the arm.”



Albury Cycle Agency in Townsend St in the late 1890s. Included in the photo are Fred Blacklock left, Jim Scanlan fourth from left and Alf Fuller fifth from left

Two weeks later, the club's first event was a ride to the White Horse Hotel at Bowna (now under Lake Hume) for lunch and return, a round trip of about 40 km.

The club is not mentioned again in the *AB* until August 1891 when an article reports that "the lately-formed Albury Bicycle Club has been making good progress, and the club is now in good working order." This would suggest that the original club folded before being resurrected in 1891.

The newly formed club prospered in the 1890s, holding annual carnivals and regular club rides and competitions. Proprietors of the Albury Cycle Agency, Fred Blacklock and Jim Scanlan were active club members.

It appears though that interest waned. At the AGM of 1899 there was a plea "that the members would take a more general interest in the well-being of the club."

Then there is no further mention in the newspapers until in February 1904 the *Border Morning Mail* reported that a motion had been carried to form an Albury Bicycle and Motor Club. Then after 1911, there was no more mention of a local bicycle club until the late 1930s.