

Weekend
MAGAZINE

Bikes thunder in



A man and his machine burble into the campsite under the welcoming banner.

forward and the walking frame didn't move with me," he said. "I thought I've got to get better and get back on two wheels."

Only 18 months after the accident, Mr Sayer again had his hand on the throttle and feet on the pedals, riding solo.

Disaster struck again a few months later. "I was sitting at lights and a gentleman ran into the back of me and that of course broke my lower back." That injury landed him in hospital for only one month.

Mr Sayer was also involved in organising the very first rally and commented on the changing scene over its 20-year history. "It is now more in keeping with the age of the people," he said. "What's that Marlon Brando movie 'Born Free'? (Editor: actually 'The Wild One')."

"It's not that style of rally — that's what's regularly thought of the rally, a group of bikers — but it's not; it's more conservative," he said. "It's unusual, I think the most we've had is someone fall off a motorbike on the way home. He just bent the forks but no injuries."

While a few "ralbags" attended the rally, most were characters with stories to tell.

The rally gets most rowdy in the Saturday night bullring event. "We have a few drinks and try to show everyone else how well we can ride," Mr Fraser said.

"They see how long they stay on before falling off, going through mud and up trees. No one gets hurt, just a bit of a headache the next day, but there's plenty of aspirins."

This year the exuberance started early, with Jeff Maher — under the influence of Galliano and port brewed for the rally — doing burn-outs on the Friday night. The

activity took its toll on his 'famous James' motorbike, and Saturday was spent replacing the burnt-out clutch.

Self-confessed fanatic Daryl Rosser said the event had mellowed a lot in the past three years. "It's more social than just getting out there and getting pissed. They used to tow people with their bikes years ago. They would tie rope on the back of their bike and tow people along the ground and drag people through mud and fire and stuff."

After all the activity on Saturday, formalities take place on the Sunday. Trophies are awarded for the oldest bike and rider, best ridden by a female and best BSA to name just a few.

Just 150 people attended the first rally but last weekend's event attracted more than 500 bikes and 1000 people. Hundreds of regulars turn up every year and this year there were six who have attended every one.

The rally is the biggest and probably most successful British Bike Rally in Australia, according to Melbourne BSA Association president Roy Armstrong. Many people travelled from Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia and one even came from Norway this year. Gunnar Skare travelled to Dunkeld after hearing about it at the International BSA Rally in New Zealand last month. A regular at many British bike rallies across Europe, he travels 12,000 km every six months attending them.

Geriatric Bikers Association riders also turned up on their shiny machines, showing they weren't too old to have a good time. When asked if they would join in the bullring, GBA member Colin Thompson said, "We'll be burnt out, yes."



A loaf of bread, a glass of port and thou, beside me in the wilderness, Oh wow! BSA Club members and their families yarn in the dappled shade of the campsite.

RIGHT: A man and his machine. Roger Tonkin of Westgarth with his 1970 Velocette Thruxton 500 cc motorcycle. The rally attracted enthusiasts from all over Australia and one from as far as Scandinavia.



RIGHT: A-grade motorcycle racer Bill Sayers, 45, from Minyip proudly displays his 1936 Empire Star BSA with sidecar. He bought it from Doug Fraser, who was at the first British Bike Rally.



Yarning about the latest great runs on their bikes are (from left): Ken Aitken, of Kinglake; Kalvin Donald, from Croydon; Chris Kay, also from Croydon; and Roger Tonkin, of Westgarth. All are BSA Club members.