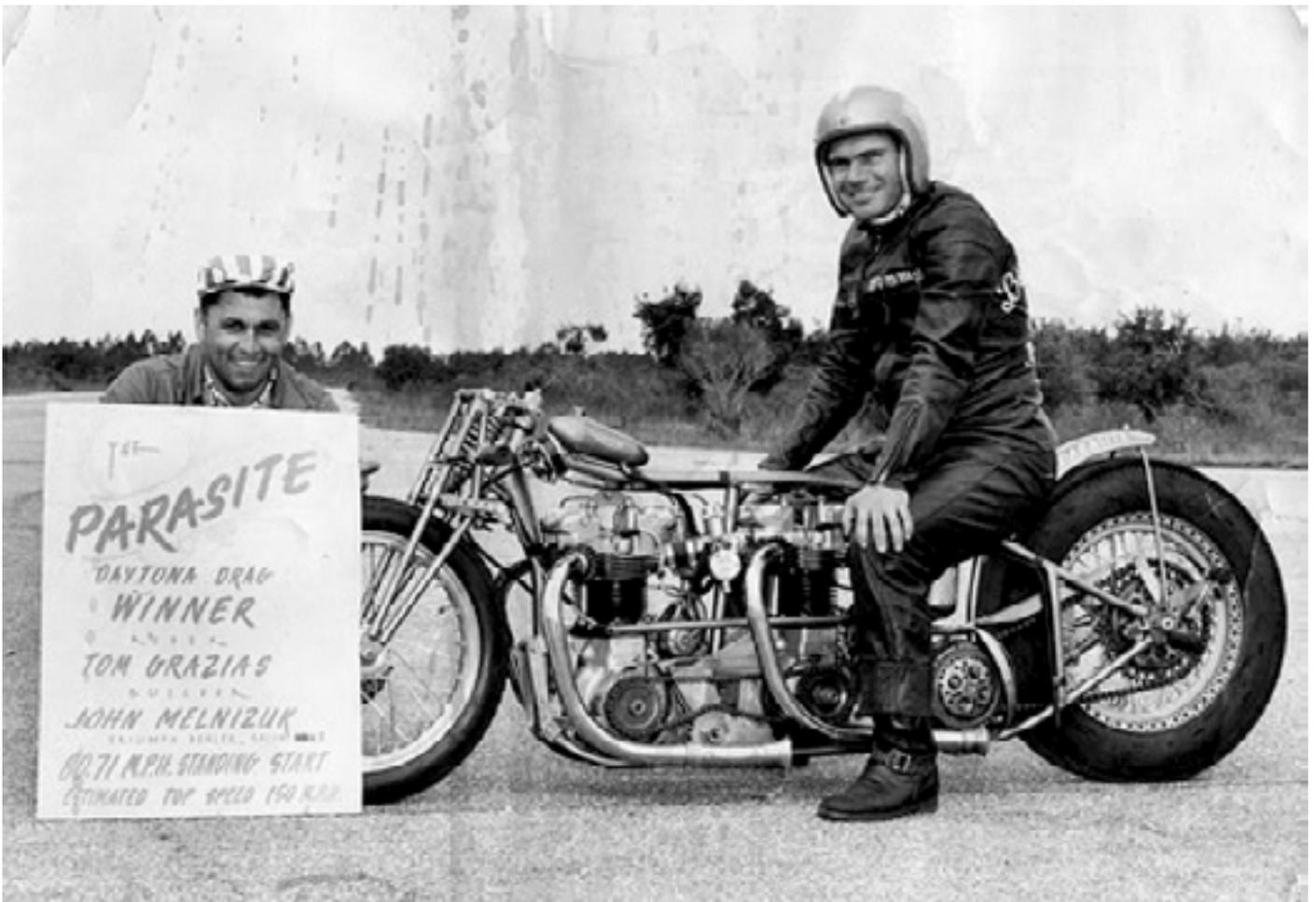


Bush Chatter

Autumn 2018

A bike named Parasite



The legendary 'Parasite' – T110 twin-engine dragster built by John Melnizuk Sr. and raced by Tommy Grazias, and later John, who coaxed a top speed of 150 MPH out of the beast. In 1959, The Parasite won Daytona running a 10:42 ET at over 142 mph in the quarter mile, and making the front page of the local newspaper, ABOVE. For more see Page 3.



PO Box 2071 Mildura 3500



Norton

Catering and lead rider roster for 2018

	Catering	Lead Rider
April 29	Graeme & Rhonda Brown	Al Tarr
May 27	Trevor Scholar	Frank Piscoineri
June 24	Peter Hammond	Allen Ball
July 29 AGM	The Master Chefs	Peter Christian
Emergencies:	Cyndie Kempton	Member of Events Committee TBA

**Please advise unavailability as early as practicable for a replacement to be organised.*

Coming events

5 May	Bike display Lutheran School 9.30am - 2pm. Contact Jack 0408 528 091
19-20 May	The Mildura Meander (Members should support this one)
2-3 June	HART rider training. Info in all bike shops or call Sy Nunan 5021 1111
9 June	Display at Wentworth Airport fly-in (TBA)
10 June	Display at Ulysses Rally (TBA)
July	Hattah Scrutineering Display (TBA)
29 July	AGM
September	Visit to Swan Hill (TBA)
October	Visit to Broken Hill (TBA)
17-18 November	Bendigo Swap Meet. (TBA)

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• **Well autumn is here...**warm days and cooler nights. The days are great for riding, and the nights for sleeping. And, we got our daylight savings hour back! All-in-all autumn is hard to beat as a favourite time of the year. Trust this newsletter finds everyone well, and enjoying their two-wheeled fun. Hard not to really. And remember, our meetings are always the last Sunday of the month, and our mid-month rides on the second Sunday.



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A bike named Parasite

The story of the Parasite is a tale of two engines, conceived in casual discussion and created by two friends whose dedication and innovation propelled a one-off motorcycle into the Daytona Drags record books...

It all started in the winter of 1958 when John Melniczuk Sr., a Triumph Dealer and owner of Bauer Cycles of Salem, NJ, and Tommy Grazias, a fellow racer, first toyed with the idea of building a twin-engine dragster. Both had been racing T-110 Triumphs and the thought of taking the engines from each and building one dragster was too tempting not to try.

John would design and build it and Tommy would race it, and the best place to showcase such a motorcycle was the upcoming Daytona Drags.

The bike would have to be ready to contest Daytona by March of 1959.

In the late 50s, the two-engine dragster concept was unheard of and John and Tommy spent hundreds of hours over a two month span designing, building, redesigning and rebuilding the motorcycle.

Without the advantages of modern aftermarket and factory race parts, each part had to be fabricated by hand.

The modified Triumph frame was hand built by John and included a girder fork front end brought back from England in a suitcase by Triumph Corporation's Rod Coates.

The half quart gas tank was made of two bicycle headlight shells and an empty can.

The rear rim was reworked from an old Indian rim drilled out to save weight.

Due to the horsepower created, most of the transmission gears were removed leaving only second and third.

Finally, the drag slicks (not available at the time) were created from recapped Indian tires.

But difficulties often follow the exhaust of innovation.

It's All In The Timing

The bike was first tested, running only one engine, on Jericho Road, an old backwoods road know for drag racing.

Timing both engines had become

increasingly difficult. John worked tirelessly at it, breaking chain after chain.

His first thought was to run the engines as a single four cylinder.



What he got was a four-cylinder slingshot snapping chains straight up into the air.

Then one day it came to him—the engines had to be timed as one. During the frame modifications, John ran into difficulty with the rear section braking and had to add gussets to strengthen it under the load of two engines.

After working through all of these setbacks the bike was starting to come together.

But before heading to Daytona they needed to race the bike in some local competitions. So they loaded the bike into Tommy's station wagon and set sights on Indiana where they claimed their first victory.

The \$100 prize money, however, went even faster. For all proceeds went to the Pennsylvania State Police who stopped them for driving over 100 mph on their way to Indiana.

What's In A Name?

One evening in the old, rickety shop of Bauer Cycles, John, Tommy

and a group of racing friends were sitting around trying to come up with a name for the bike.

Each took turns rifling through an old dictionary searching for a single

word to describe the unique, twin-engine monstrosity.

Finally, around the letter P, someone said they had found it. The room grew silent as he read it aloud: "Parasite, an organism living in, with, or on another organism."

That was it, one engine living off of the other. The Parasite had been born.

Daytona, Meet The Parasite

Winter had faded into spring and Daytona was calling.

In March John and Tommy made their annual pilgrimage down to Daytona Beach to compete in the Daytona Drags held at the municipal airport. But this time they had the Parasite with them.

It did not disappoint. The Parasite won Daytona running a 10:42 ET at over 142 mph in the quarter mile, and making the front page of the local newspaper. The daydream of last winter had become a reality.

Continued next page

A bike named Parasite

Smoking Leather Pants

John and Tommy raced the Parasite for several more years throughout the eastern United States.

Time and again it took top honors wherever it traveled. But it was also known for some heinous wrecks such as the infamous crash at Vineland Speedway in New Jersey.

The famous oval, known for starting the careers of such legends as A.J. Foyt, included an extension used for drag racing. Because the drag strip extended off of the half-mile oval, there was a hump just past the 1/8-mile mark.

That day, for some reason, Tommy shifted into third gear at the hump instead of after the hump. This sent the bike into a high-speed wobble, hurling Tommy and the Parasite down the track in a ball of black smoke.

Tommy actually reached the speed traps before the Parasite and earned an equally scorching distinction in the local paper whose morning headline read: "He Slid Down the Track in Smoking Leather Pants."

Tommy eventually married and stopped racing the Parasite.

John took over and ended his stint with a best ET of 10:33 at 150.23 mph.

In 1964, John sold the bike to Don Hyland of New England who took the bike to England and ran it in several exhibitions races.

Return Of The Parasite

Although John Melniczuk Jr. was only 13 when the Parasite was sold, he remembered every detail of the bike and its short but memorable history.

In the 1985 John Jr. decided to find the Parasite. With only a name and a geographical location (New England), John Jr. set out on a ten-year journey to reunite with the estranged Parasite.

He scoured Triumph shows across the country armed with a few photographs asking attendees if they had seen the bike.

Finally, one evening, the phone rang, "I know where the bikes at," the voice said.



John had finally tracked down the Parasite, but its new owner didn't want to sell.

Many people had tried, but he had always refused to part ways with the Parasite – that was until John's first-hand stories of the bike's creation, racing heritage and victories compelled him to sell it and return the Parasite to its family.

John Jr. contacted Guy, Tommy's son, and the second generation of the Parasites' family made plans to purchase the bike in New England and return it for a secret unveiling for their fathers.

So, in December of 1990 under the guise of a Christmas party, the Parasite was unveiled to John, Tommy and all of their old racing friends.

When the Parasite was uncovered, it brought a tear to Tommy's eye.

"That thing almost killed me," he smiled.

The Parasite had returned.

Over the next several years John Jr. began the tedious process of gathering parts to return the bike to its original glory.

By the turn of the century, the Parasite was restored and has been featured at the AMA Heritage museum's "Race bikes of the Past" exhibit as well as several other motorcycle showcases.

**Master builder/
restorer John Melniczuk in his Cedarville, NJ Showroom, ABOVE, and BELOW, John Jr. racing his own T110 Triumph dragster.**



2017 Meander memories...

The email was simple and direct. G'day Grant, long time no see! Just just a few shots from the last Meander. That's me and Doc Dunn from SA BSA Club at Lindermans! Cheers Ian (Smythe).



Me too! I wanna ride a motorcycle...



Wanted to Sell

- NORTON Model 7 Dominator crankshaft and conrods. Fully reconditioned. Complete Norton Dominator gearbox minus clutch. Serial #GB8 2418. Will listen to realistic offers. Call Adam on 5023 0977.

- 1987 Harley Sportster XLH 883 DLX. \$7000. Red plate eligible. Ring Danny Curran 0418 303 964.

- 1984 Suzuki GSX250S. Reg 4386H. \$2000 ono. Roger Moser 0428 413 323. See RIGHT.



SWAP! 11/1992 BMW K1100LT – all it needs is some Ken Chapple magic to get rid of the ABS lights, and a new correct battery, to be a good bike. I spent about \$3000 at PITSTOP getting the engine going properly. She is almost roadworthy, and is now eligible for Club plates. SWAP for a good 250cc four-stroke dirt bike – XL, XR, XT, DR, KLX or similar. Year not so important, but not PE, CZ, Husky or similar two-stroke. Would consider other similar bikes, but swap bike must be clean and neat, good goer, and in good nick, easily able to get Rec Rego. Contact John – 0411 349 290.

Wanted to Buy

- SUNBEAM S7 1950 gearbox to tailshaft coupling or bushes. Also gear indicator bezel that goes between gearbox and gear lever. Please contact Paul Dunn 0408 999 120.
- CB450 HONDA Twin Leading shoe front drum and backing plate and linkage. Complete. 0407 364 692 or email dougo294@hotmail.com.
- MOTORBIKE trailer. Call Nicky on 0417 629 875
- MOTORBIKE trailer. Two or three bikes for club runs. Phone Ian on 0428 242 613.

Services

- Can do small panel beating jobs on motorcycle metal body parts. Geoff Needham 0437 006 882.

Regular events

Regular Club Runs

- **Monthly meeting rides leave from Hudaks on 15th Street opposite Centro at 10am. The run finishes at the Mildura Scout Hall in 12th Street, Mildura.**
- **The mid-month ride leaves from Hudaks on 15th Street opposite Centro at 10am on the second Sunday of the month. Turn up with a full tank. Many more events listed on our website at www.shmc.org.au**

