

JACKIE CLARK'S FAMILY IN CAMPERDOWN

The following article has been provided by historical society member Clive Allen-Paisley, 1st cousin 2 generations removed of Jackie Clark. Over a period of more than 20 years Clive's great interest in Jackie has resulted in a large collection of material.

Jackie's paternal grandparents, John and Maria (nee Bishop) Clark emigrated from Gloucestershire, England in the early 1840's with their five children, including eldest son Adolphus, Jackie's father. Another four children were born from 1845 to 1855 while they resided at 'Leura', with the family believed to have been the first Europeans to live in the vicinity of the later surveyed town, Camperdown. John Clark was manager at Manifold's Dairy Station on the north eastern edge of Camperdown, now known as 'Werna', which John Manifold later leased to Adolphus Clark. Jackie's maternal grandparents, Richard and Margaret (nee Casey) Davis married at the Camperdown Presbyterian Manse in 1861. His mother Mary was born in 1862 and her brother Richard in 1863, after the death of his father. Margaret then married James Paisley, their eight children all born in Camperdown.

The Story of Jackie Clark (Kangaroo Rocket) Camperdown Farmer's Boy to World Famed Cyclist by Clive Allen-Paisley

John Adolphus Clark (Jackie) was born in Camperdown on the 1st March 1884 to Adolphus and Mary Clark, nee Davis. Adolphus was a farmer in Camperdown, who leased land from the Manifold family.

Some descendants of Mary Clark's brother Richard Davis still reside in Camperdown. They are the descendants of Mary's brother Richard's (1864-1949) sons, John & Norman Davis. Great grandchildren Tony and Ian (Jack) Davis and Andrew and Robert Belyea, seven great great grandchildren and three great great great grandchildren.

In 1935 Jackie was a guest presenter for the Sporting Globe Newspaper, Melbourne and he described the starting point, in Camperdown, for him to become a world famed track cyclist and six day rider.

"More than 35 years ago, when as a boy I was working on my fathers farm at Camperdown, Victoria, I had visions of becoming a jockey. In addition to my great love of horses and the fact that I was of diminutive build I was fascinated by the thrills of racing.

Fate decreed otherwise!

One day while strolling along the main street of Camperdown, I saw a lady's gold watch in a tuft of grass on the side of the footpath. I was only 12 and on handing it to my mother, she said "Take it to the police station, it's loss is sure to be reported."

I duly handed it over to the Officer in Charge, who insisted on giving me a receipt for it.

Judge my surprise a couple of days later when I received a letter from the daughter of a well known squatter to call around to the police station. There was waiting for me a nicely worded letter of gratitude and two sovereigns. To me they seemed like a fortune. Instead of keeping the money my mother suggested that I should supplement and purchase a second-hand bicycle.

It was a bit of a "mangle" but I got no end of fun out of it. I had gone to horse racing meetings in the district and cherished the idea that one day I might become a jockey, but the bike had a rare fascination for me and my thoughts turned to becoming a champion cyclist.

Having mastered the bike I became too venturesome and indulged in stunting. Cyclists who compete in the "Warrnambool" will recall the hill on the left as you enter the town (Camperdown) from Colac.

On a nearby paddock I decided to do the "toboggan" act. Helter skelter I went down the hill, there was no brake on my bike and losing my pedals, when I hit a rut, I went down at hurricane pace and skittled a dozen pigs eating at a trough. I emerged a mass of bruises.

Thrill of First Win

I began my racing career at the age of 14. One of my first wins in open company was at Dunkeld. What a thrill I got out of it! Many old-timers paid me a tribute and dubbed me the "boy wonder."

Later on, when my parents transferred to Shepparton, I was a regular competitor at district carnivals. My victories stimulated me to seek bigger game in Melbourne.

1904 "Austral" Wheelrace

"A few months before the 'Austral' I got into a good training school. The Richmond city reserve was our training headquarters. I had set my mind on winning an 'Austral'. Jack Walsh was a fairly good rider and hotel keeper at Fitzroy who took a special interest in me as did Dan Charlston.

To be perfectly frank I had set myself out to get a good mark in the big race and because of this I did not ride too seriously in some of my country engagements knowing that I would "murder" my handicap if I were successful. I was only 19 but I had been well schooled. Patiently I waited for the publication of the handicaps. It seemed an age and then suddenly one day I nearly jumped with joy when I learned my mark was 150 yds. Then I trained with vengeance realizing that I needed every ounce of energy.

What a great talent appeared – Lawson (U.S.A.) worlds champion 1904: Thor Ellegaard (worlds titleholder in 1901-2-3: Walter Rutt (Germany), Don Walker, Geo. Morgan, Geo. Farley, Ernie Pye, among others. The prize money was 500 pounds [\$80,000 in 2019] of which the winner was to take 400 pounds [\$64,000 in 2019].

In my heat, I applied the pressure from the outset, winning by 20 yards in 4min 10 sec with Ivor Lawson (U.S.A) scr. coming third. Ivor said to me "Say, lad you made me ride like the Hades all the way. Who taught you to handle a bike?" drawled Lawson.

"I'm just a lad from the bush- trying my luck in the big race." I replied modestly.

Then came the momentous third semi final, which I won comfortably. I did not hustle myself wishing to conserve my energy for the grand final later in the week. Because of my impressive riding critics hailed me as a "cert" for the grand final later in the week. Their comments stimulated yet unnerved me because they said that in spite of my lack of experience I rode brilliantly and showed marked generalship.

Supported to Win 20,000 pounds

"The public had supported me to win 20,000 pounds,[\$3,183,580 in 2019] while I had invested 40 pounds [\$6367 in 2019] to win 1,000 pounds.[\$159,179 in 2019]

Suddenly one day I was alarmed when a rather gruff-looking fellow said to me: "Look here Clark, You're only a bit of a kid – you have no hope of winning the Austral, but if you care to link up with so-and-so's camp, there will be some ready money for you." "I don't care a----- for you or your combination," I replied with some heat. "I am out to win. I have trained for this race and I will win it if I can."

You can realise the feeling of a mere 19 year old going out to his mark on the big night at the Melbourne Exhibition where more than 25,000 people had gathered to see the grand final.

It seemed an age from the time that we came onto the track and were placed on our marks. A few tense moments, the starter's whistle, and then the roar of his gun. The 1904 'Austral' final was in progress. All tension left me. Never before was I so self-composed. Despite my youth and inexperience I felt that I would win. Our bunch worked well together. At the end of the fourth lap - the track was five to the mile - the field was bunched. There was nothing eventful until nearing the bell, when a rider deliberately charged into me and ripped five or six spokes out of my back wheel!

Then the fateful last lap.

Best was leading and I was on his wheel, with Thomas and McGibbon right behind. I could hear the whirr of the wheel behind me and once into the back stretch I fairly stamped on my pedals and shooting like a rocket, I gained the lead, swept round the Aquarium bend at hurricane speed and coming into the home

*stretch shot over the finishing line four lengths clear. My time of 4min 16 sec was a **record** for the race, beating the previous best figure of 4min 19 3/5 sec made in 1900.*

Pandemonium broke loose. I was frantically cheered by the huge crowd. As I looked at my damaged back-wheel I thought how lucky I was to win. Don Charlston who built it for me said "Why, you were that good that you could have won on one wheel." My life's ambition had been realised and I was now placed on the road to success. Experts and newspaper critics praised me to the skies, but though I felt elated, I realised that I was standing alongside a precipice - a false move and I was to be hurled into oblivion."

1905

The scene was the Adelaide oval where the League of South Australian Wheelman were conducting the third and last day of its summer meeting of 1905. The day was very hot with the temperature over 100 degrees. A man approached two boys leaning against the picket fence watching the riders doing their preliminary run prior to the commencement of the afternoon's racing. He stood for a while and then said to one of the lads "Sonny, could you tell me which of those riders coming is Clark?" "Sure mister," the boy answered "Here he comes now, the little burly bloke with the red and blue jacket, and gee sir, can he ride. He's just a certainty for the Adelaide Wheelrace today – get a few bob on him, sir if you can." The man smiled and after a little while departed, and the lad turning to his pal, said, "Fancy a bloke not knowing Jackie Clark – I wonder does he know what day it is."

Jackie started the day winning the Rutt Handicap from the 40 yard mark.

The Adelaide Wheelrace proved a magnificent race with Lawson, then Ellegard trailing him, took the lead 150 yards from home. It was then that Jackie showed his sprinting powers by going past both the world sprint title holders up the straight, winning by inches.

1906

Jackie was promoted to scratch mark by the handicappers and to prove he was not unjustly penalised, and in his own words: "*At the age of 21 I won the Australian one mile championship. What a thrill I got as I flashed over the line. This was accentuated when I won a five-mile international scratch race defeating the two German ace riders Rutt and Mayer.*"

Off to U.S.A.

"By hard work and I presume natural ability, I gradually climbed the ladder of success. But like most young sportsmen I had the itch to travel- to gain experience and perhaps wealth.

Floyd McFarland who in 1905, tried to induce me to go to America under his wing, renewed his proposition with the result that I decided to enter into a contract with him. Then following, the boat trip to America. I could not get there quickly enough. Reaching the Salt Lake City board track, where the sport was booming, I was heralded as the "Kangaroo Rocket" and the American cycling promoters and officials gave me a wonderful reception.

By clean living and correct coaching, it did not take the Australian boy long to get used to the changed conditions and fast board tracks.

It was not long before I was put back to the honoured mark of scratch with Iver Lawson and Frank Kramer." [Jackie had graduated to world class.] You have know idea how proud I felt when I took my place on the line with these aces.

"I decided it was better that I should study their tactics and generally size them up rather than adopt wild tactics to crash into the limelight- perhaps at the expense of my reputation.

Gradually I gained confidence and the sporting writers paid me some nice tributes referring to my "nippy" sprint and my heady riding. Against America's best I made a good showing and the experience I gained was worth much to me."

Thrills and Risks of 6-Day Cycle Races

"Well do I remember when I was sailing for America in 1906, my then manager and racing partner Floyd McFarland, said to me one day: "Say Jackie, what about trying your hand at six-day racing when you get to the States?" I nearly fainted in the thought of having to ride for a week almost on end.

"Do you think that I am a six-day clock, just to be wound up to go?" I said in astonishment. "That's exactly what I mean—you are a machine and I darn well know it," replied the American. I then turned the conversation to other forms of riding, but each time McFarland returned to the topic. He had been planning big things for me."

"Only those who have witnessed the spectacular six-day races staged on the indoor tracks in U.S.A. and, Europe can appreciate the thrills provided by the cycling aces, the "iron men" of the track. A six-day race is one that calls for a rare combination of speed and endurance powers, necessitating months of hard and serious training for a weeks cycling grind that saps up one's physical and mental energy and calls for strength of character as well as ability."

"Apart from any natural ability I possessed I firmly believe that my healthy life on the farm as a youth stood me in good stead."

FIRST TASTE OF "SIXERS"

"On my arrival in America in 1906 from Australia, I began to concentrate on six-day racing, for which good money was offered in prizes as well as big appearance fees."

"Showing good form in America on the track. McFarland decided that my colleague, Ernie Pye and I should ride as an Australian team in 1906 New York Six-Days' race."

Having undergone a searching preparation, we gave a great account of ourselves. Eddie Root and Joe Fogler, winners of the 1905 event, were again victorious. and covered 2292.2 miles during the week. McFarland and Walter Rutt were third and we were sixth. The first six teams, covered the same mileage, which meant that six of us engaged in the final sprint, which went to Root.

I became a 'headliner' and promoters starred me as the "Kangaroo Rocket." My stocks soared high when, in November of 1909, I won the 24-hour race staged on the Buffalo Cycle Velodrome, against a select field. I was more or less at a premium—especially later on when I downed Frank Kramer, prince of American peddlers in track events."

"Then came the memorable 1909 event."

1st New York

"Shall I ever forget it! Originally I teamed with my old colleague Floyd McFarland and among those we opposed were Walter Rutt (Germany) and John Stoll (Holland), who, the previous year, were runners-up to McFarland and Moran. Because of falls and other mishaps McFarland and Stoll dropped out, with the result that Rutt and I were permitted to re-team. This meant that we were penalized a lap which called for furious and heady riding. But we were equal to the task and before the final day we had regained that and went on to win the big money."

"The New York sports palace - Madison Square Garden - fairly shook with applause and 30,000 people yelled themselves hoarse with excitement as I flashed over the line a winner,. In my final sprint over the line, I was half unconscious....I appeared to be deafand could hear bells ringing....perspiration rolled off my forehead in big beads....and then from the roaring crowd I was carried shoulder high to the dressing room. I was still in half a trance."

"You son of a gun. Didn't I tell yer on the boat coming from Australia in 1906 that you were a machine, and would be a six-day rider." "These were the words of my manager, and team-mate. Floyd McFarland. They re-echoed and re-echoed and then I tumbled asleep. I had used up every ounce of energy.

When I awoke sometime later I found, that someone had "souvenired" my racing singlet with the kangaroo emblazoned on it. I was concerned because it was my mascot. But it turned up the next day. McFarland had loaned it to a girl who attended a sportsmen's ball that night to celebrate the end of the big cycle race, and which I did not attend."

1st BERLIN

"Offered a princely sum to go to Berlin in 1910. Walter Rutt and I cleaned up things by winning in great style and covering 2330 miles 154 yards, as a comparison with 2660 miles 176 yards in New York the previous year."

2nd New York

"Riding with tons of confidence and dash, McFarland and I were fancied for the 1910 New York "sixer" in which Walter Rutt (my former partner) teamed with the Dutchman, Stoll."

"It was one of the most dramatic six-day races ever staged at "The Garden." In the third day five of the twelve teams had been lapped. There was constant jamming all day. Rutt and Stoll were two laps in arrears, while McFarland and I were a lap behind. This caused consternation."

"With the withdrawal of McFarland and Stoll the following day. Rutt and I were permitted to amalgamate. Then the fun began. By frantic riding I was able to gain half of the lap McFarland and I had lost but Walter Rutt was feeling the strain, and could not carry on."

"On the fifth day - between midnight and 6 a.m.- we treated 10,000 onlookers who were dozing in their seats, to some of the most frantic sprinting ever witnessed in a six-day race."

"Rutt and I got the whips out. Riding of all varieties was furnished - from fast sprinting down to stalling, and even almost pushing riders off their wheels at 6. The fun started at 1 a.m. when we stampeded, and gained a lap on the rest of the field, and again in the morning at 6.00. We were thus able to draw on level terms with the leaders. At times the sprinting was so fast and furious that the lap scorers became confused. Paddy Hehir, another Australian, who associated with Alf Goulette, the Tasmanian was doing a great job. They were in the front division."

"In the last few hours before the race finished, we rode ourselves to a standstill and in the final sprint, the Root-Moran combination won narrowly from Rutt and myself."

"Do not think me over-boastful when I say that I was now recognized as one of the best six-day riders in the world. Money was coming in plentifully, and, we lived the life, enjoying things as they came, and remembering we would not always be young."

1st New York

"The sport was booming and the six-day races had a big public appeal attracting thousands from all sections of the community. The 1911 New York "Sixer" was a fair "corker." There was a classy field, including Frank Kramer who was linked up with Moran, while I had Joe Fogler as my team-mate. By consistent riding Fogler and I kept our rivals at bay, and having gained a lap lead midway through the week's grind, we stalled off the opposition. I remember Frank Kramer's face as I sprinted with him. He realised that he was up against a tough proposition but we stalled off his challenges."

"In the last few hours Kramer tried to make up lost ground but we were not to be denied, and were acclaimed the winners."

"The demonstration was remarkable. In spite of the fact that I had beaten America's idol Kramer, onlookers lauded me as if I was one of their own."

"I got a great "kick" out of the victory, much more than I did when Rutt and I won the 1909 event and the Berlin race in 1910."

Track Racing

Jackie was not only riding sensationally in the "sixers" but was also doing the same on the shorter competitive races on the velodrome tracks of Salt Lake City and Newark New Jersey.

So good that in a one mile handicap Jackie broke McFarland's world record , reducing it from 1 min 49 sec to 1 min 48 2/5 sec. That Jackie was right on the spot was shown by the fact that two more world records came to his credit. In competition he chopped a half mile out in 53 2/5 sec and two miles in 3 min 41 2/5 sec. At the latter part of the season he was hampered considerably by two bad falls.

In season **1907-8** we find Jackie back in his native land doing great things on the new board track. He was boomed as the "Star" and his riding throughout the months fully justified that he was not over boomed. He clearly demonstrated the improvement a couple of seasons in America had made. Among his many successes were the One and Ten Mile Championship of Australia and the Gold Stakes all of which were run in Melbourne.

Jackie then returned to the States. At Saltair in August he established another **world record**-half mile in 50 2/5 sec.

Early in **1909** with his coach McFarland, Jackie went to Europe to fulfil engagements. He first met Victor Dupre (who a couple of months later in the season won the world's sprint crown) but was defeated. World champion of 1905 Gabriel Poulain was his next opponent and Jackie, showing better generalship, won in two heats of three. In an International sprint race against the best sprinters of Europe he gave them all a shock by out-sprinting them. Victor Dupre and Vanen Born were then decisively defeated by Jackie in a triangular match event. In the final of the Grand Prix De Hiver, Jackie was forced into second place. It was said that Jackie was a victim of teaming.

On his riding in Europe the Australian Boy was considered by sporting writers to be one of the fastest sprinters in the world. At the finish of a six day race in Berlin, Jackie, at the request of the Crown Prince of Germany, rode a few exhibition laps. He was then conducted to the Royal Box and presented to the Prince, who congratulated him on his success in Europe. The Prince then made a request for an extra meeting to be put on as he wanted to see Jackie in action. The management complied with the request. The Australian lad, highly honored, rose to the occasion and sprinting in brilliant style won two scratch races. He was then presented by the Prince with a souvenir of a pair of gold cuff-links set with diamonds.

Back in America, Jackie, as in the previous two years, was having a great battle with Kramer for the Sprint Championship. At the end of the season, there was only one point separating their scores, with one race to decide, a Five Miler. Kramer then drew the referees attention to the rules governing championship events, which stated that those races where, if possible, to be run in heats with semi-finals and only four left in the grand final. No doubt Kramer was fully alive to the great help McFarland was to Jackie in events in which both were competing, especially over a distance of five miles.

A long argument followed much to the disgust of the crowd. It was finally settled by Kramer's appeal being upheld but Jackie refused to race with the result that Kramer again wore the crown. In a team's match race, McFarland and Jackie, against Kramer and Fenn, saw the Kangaroo Rocket run out a clear winner.

To top up a wonderful season, Jackie, teaming with Walter Rutt, won the prestigious New York Six Day race completing 26660 miles [4,280k] in the six days.

Europe called for Jackie again and riding at his best accounted for several European champions in sprint events. He teamed with his New York partner (Rutt) and was successful in the Berlin six day race, riding 2332.5 miles [4280K] in the six days. Jackie then decided to have a spell and rented a country house in France. He put on a stone in weight, all due to the country air and French frogs. In fact it was said that Jackie grew so 'Frenchy', he raised a conventional moustache and was addressed as Monsieur Clark.

Perhaps the most important event for Jackie in the **1910** season was his facing the altar in holy matrimony which resulted in a tie.

As reported 'In the presence of the members of the family and a few close friends, A J Clark the popular cyclist and Miss Rena Bray, daughter of C. F. Bray, were married at the home of the bride's father, 441 South Fifth East street, Wednesday evening at 7.00 o'clock. The Rev. Francis Burgette Short officiated. The bride was attended by Miss Hattie Lowe as bridesmaid and Floyd McFarland acted as best man. A reception and wedding supper was given to a large number of the friends of the young couple immediately following the ceremony.

At the close of the bicycle season the young couple will leave for the east on their wedding tour which will be continued abroad this winter.'

A short spell then back to the track. Getting rid of the extra weight, he was soon at his top and this proved one of his most successful seasons. He defeated Major Taylor in two out of three thrilling match races. In a four cornered race against Lawson, Taylor and Gordon Walker, Jackie secured the winning number of points.

A one mile handicap from scratch mark in the fast time of 1min 48 sec was a good effort. In a championship of 10 miles run a Salt Lake City, Jackie showed he could win without the aid of McFarland. Pye, who was evidently teaming with Lawson jumped to the front at the beginning of the next to last lap with Lawson tacked on his wheel. Just after the bell lap, Lawson made his bid – it was then that Jackie put on one the finest sprints seen at salt Lake City. He went around Lawson and won by over a length.

While at the top of his form Jackie decided to have an attempt at world record breaking. His first attempt was an attack on W Sangster's 15 year old record of 1 min 14 1/5 sec for two-thirds of a mile flying start unpaced. Jackie reduced it down to 1 min 12 sec. In the one mile flying start unpaced the "Rocket" rode at an even pace throughout, covering the journey in 1min 52 sec (world record). Ivor Lawson's world record of 23 4/5 sec for the flying quarter was his next attempt but he failed by one-fifth of a second. On the same program he scored a meritorious win, a two mile handicap run in 3min 42 4/5 sec.

So wonderful was Jackie's riding that he was tipped to down Kramer at Newark in a Continental race but was defeated by inches only. Two days later he had his revenge on the American in a five-mile paced event. Back at Salt Lake City he defeated Lawson in straight heats of a match race; then in a six hour teams' race at Newark, Jackie defeated Kramer in the final sprint. His victories over the American speed king were not flukes as was proved in the Five Mile Championship. The Aussie boy going so fast that Kramer could make no impression on him in the finishing straight. In another attempt on the flying quarter mile Jackie again failed by one-fifth of a second. He finished the season by winning two six day races, one teamed with Ernie Pye at Buffalo and another at New York teamed with Joe Fogler.

In **1912** Jackie returned to his home land and competed in a six-day race in Melbourne. Teamed with Reggie McNamara they finished in third position. At carnivals held in Sydney, Jackie had several victories in match events. Back to the States, Jackie was a bit off colour for a while but as the season went by his riding improved and altogether he won 18 races for the season, 11 at

Newark and 7 at Salt Lake City. He was successful in reducing the World's record of 33 4/5 sec for one-third of a mile to 33 sec.

“Following the Melbourne six-day race in January, 1912, I returned to the land of golden opportunity U.S.A. I continued to meet with success. I had amassed a fortune of more than £20,000, [\$3,183.580 in 2019] which was invested in real estate. This sum represented my winnings over several years, which had multiplied by investment. I had visions of sitting pretty for the rest of my life. Then came the world war . . . the Wall Street panic ... my money vanished like smoke in the wind . . . from the wreckage I was able to buy a small hotel . . . I was financially broke but my spirit was not ... I decided to start all over again.”

Jackie's riding in **1913** was as brilliant as in former years. He won many events of different types. In the One Mile National Championship he sprinted sensationally to defeat Goulett and Kramer. In two match races with the Denmark Champion, Ellegaard, some great racing was witnessed with Jackie the winner of both. He finished third in the American sprint title. Another visit to Europe followed in **1914** with the usual success. Among the riders he defeated was Leon Hourlier, considered to be one of the best European sprinters.

Back in America , Jackie scored a notable victory over Walter Rutt in a match race; then Kramer , Fogler and Goulett were all in turn defeated in similar events. Just when things looked promising for him winning the sprint crown, he had the bad luck to have to undergo an operation for appendicitis.

Most Popular Cyclist in U.S.A

In **1915** “The Evening Star” newspaper, based in Newark, New Jersey, the centre of cycling in U.S.A, conducted a competition which was to decide who was the most popular rider as voted by the general public.

The Cyclist Popularity Contest was reported-:

Jackie Clark the ‘Australian Rocket’ bore his honors with blushing modesty, as he drove away from the “Evening Star” in the Overland Speedster, the auto which he had won In “The Evening Star Cyclists’ Popularity Contest.

Hundreds who had gathered to witness the presentation, cheered loudly and scores ran along beside the machine until its speed defied their efforts. They gave one final hurrah as the car swung round the corner into Halsey Street.

Branford Place was crowded with enthusiastic spectators and the police had great difficulty clearing a pathway for Jackie and his prize auto. An Evening Star photographer had the time of his life getting a place of vantage amid the surging throng and then holding it long enough for a snapshot of the winner and his car.

The presentation was made by George D Smith general manager of the “Evening Star.” It was accompanied by a brief informal address in which Mr. Smith congratulated Jackie Clark and expressed the hope that he would derive much pleasure from the trophy which the affectionate regard and untiring efforts of so many friends had won for him. In reply Jackie Clark said: *“I thank you most sincerely.”*

Earlier in the day he had sent to “The Evening Star” the following letter:

“I wish to thank you for the Overland Speedster put up by yourselves as a prize for the most popular cyclist at the Velodrome which was won by myself through the aid of my many friends who arduously worked in my behalf. I wish to express my appreciation to the fans and public in general for my success in this voting contest, which I consider an honor to win. I am delighted to know I have so many friends and can assure them my constant aim has been to give the public my best efforts in the race at the Velodrome, which I also propose to do in the future.

“Thanking you for such a magnificent prize and again thanking all my friends . I remain, respectfully yours,- Jackie Clark”

Admiring friends sent wreaths of flowers and great bunches of big, red American Beauties. When these were placed in the auto they encompassed Jackie all round and made him appear to be a veritable bower of roses.

The vote for Jackie Clark in the contest was 170,213, Frank L Kramer the American champion cyclist second prize winner had 168,678. Thus Jackie won by the margin of 1,535 votes. Third place-getter got about 9,000.

[Frank Kramer had been national sprint champion for about 14 straight years and a legend of the sport. For Jackie to be a more popular cyclist than Kramer with the general public says something very special about Jackie Clark the cyclist and/or the man]

During season **1915**, Jackie, although not perhaps as brilliant as in former years, was still a power to be reckoned with. By finishing second to Kramer in the Grand Prix of Newark Jackie showed he was not far below his best. He defeated many top-notch riders in heats and semi-finals.

After **1915** Jackie did not train with the same regularity and had put on weight, consequently his riding was not up to his standard. In 1920 Jackie returned to Australia and he made a comeback at Sydney. He gradually reduced his weight and his speed increased. Towards the end he was showing a little of his form that made him famous. In scratch races he was giving Alfred Grenda some hard contests and several times defeated him. Jackie retired a couple of times but then made comebacks. Jackie totally retired from cycle racing after the 1922 season, aged 38.

Jackie said of this period of time:-

“Having retired from active racing, to take up business, I still felt that I could not give up all interest in a sport which had resulted in my making and losing small fortunes. Because of my long association with cycling—especially as I was an experienced six-day rider my services were freely sought by sports editors to write comments on highlights in cycling. I was engaged as a special sporting commentator for leading American journals on six-day and other events.

It was a new experience for me. but I can tell you that I relished every moment of it. I was seeing cycling from a new angle, and I got a thrill out of watching the sport and of giving vent to my feelings in quite a different atmosphere from what I was accustomed. I was able to get a "close-up" of the riders, was able to watch their various moves and the tricks that they employed, tricks of the track that I found necessary to use against my wily rivals when it came to a battle of speed and wits.

Because of heavy financial losses, estimated at nearly £20,000, in real estate and other investments, I found myself in a precarious position. Once again sport was a panacea for my frayed nerves and my premature grey hair. And so I decided to return to Sunny Australia in the hope that I would be able to swell my very slender bank account. When I returned to Sydney in 1921 I found that the sport was booming on the sports ground there. Alf Greg Cecil Walker. Hans Ohrt (U.S.A.) and other stars were taking part. I had been in retirement for a few years, and I was forced to embark on a long and intensive course of preparation. I tried all the way over the boat. To my surprise, and that of other experts, I seemed to have regained my brilliance of years before, and once again "The Kangaroo Rocket," as I am known, became a power to be reckoned with. I won handicap and scratch races, cleaning up many younger rivals. It gave me great joy.

Jerry Halpin, former N.S.W. champion, who had returned from the Olympic Games at Antwerp in 1920, had turned professional, and he was matched against me. Now, Halpin was a brilliant sprinter, who was deprived of victory at Antwerp because of an incorrect decision by the track stewards. Once again I felt a return to youth, and I was elated when I defeated my younger rival. I continued to ride for a while and then went back to America, quitting active sport forever.

Many consider that 1913 was my greatest year. And I really believe it was. I seemed to be racing at the top of my form and because of my success plenty of lucrative contracts came my way.”

World Records

Jackie had a brilliant world-class professional cycling career and to me this is highlighted by the number of World Records that he achieved during his career.

They were summarized in an article in the Salt Lake Tribune, Sunday, August 7, 1910. with the headline and photo of Jackie -:

“Jackie Clarke After All World's Records”

The article listed Jackie's World Records which were -:

<u>Distance</u>	<u>Time</u>
<i>1/6th mile unpaced</i>	<i>50 1/5th sec</i>
<i>2/3rd mile unpaced</i>	<i>1min 12sec</i>
<i>1 mile competition</i>	<i>1min 48 3/5th sec</i>
<i>2 mile competition</i>	<i>3min 38 2/5th sec</i>
<i>3 mile competition</i>	<i>5min 41 2/5 sec</i>
<i>4 mile competition</i>	<i>7min 56 3/5 sec</i>
<i>10 mile competition</i>	<i>20min 21 sec</i>
<i>25mile competition</i>	<i>56min 13 1/5sec</i>

They also stated *“It will be noticed that the only worlds' record not held by Clark are the ¼ mile record held by Ivor Lawson, ¾ mile record held by Frank Kramer and the 5 mile record held by Ivor Lawson. Clark is confident that he will have these three records before the present season close.”*

Also Jackie had a wonderful 6 day racing record. The 6 day races being the most grueling of the events on the cycling tracks.

6 Day Races Wins

1909 December 12th New York 6 day 24hrs per day. Team Walter Rutt 2660 miles (4280.9k)

1910 January 3rd Berlin 6 day 24hrs per day. Team Walter Rutt 2332.5 miles (3753.8k)

1911 January 14th Buffalo 6 day 9 hrs per day race. Team Ernie Pye 1251 miles (2013k)

1911 November 11th Buffalo 6 day 8hrs per day race. Team Hill Covered 1075.3 miles(1730.5k)

1911December 16th New York 6 day 24hrs per day. Team Joe Fogler 2718 miles (4374.2K)

1913 January 15th Berlin day 24 hrs per day Team Alfred Hill

Jackie was a great draw-card. His brilliant riding, personality and sportsmanship were features that made him popular with the sporting public wherever he competed.

Post Cycle Racing Career

It is harder to document Jackie's post racing pursuits. As is natural, when you are at the top of your profession, as Jackie was in cycling, newspapers document this very precisely but when you are back to civilian life this of course diminishes.

In December 1922 it was reported in The Sydney Sportsman -: “Jackie Clark has again retired from the cycle game. Clark has gone in for selling Studebaker cars in Newark (New Jersey U.S.A) and reports good business. “Jackie holds the record in the way of retirements, even beating some of our local riders.”

Jackie told us in the Sporting Globe in 1936 -: *“I got what little money I could from the wreckage [financial crash] and started business in a country hotel - better known as a roadhouse. I was able to get along comfortably and many of my friends who knew me on the track patronised my place on the weekend runs.*

Since that period I have recovered some of my losses only to receive more setbacks, but I have enjoyed every moment of my life. If I had my life over again "I'd do the thing most men do and go where most men go"- as Adam Lindsay Gordon so aptly put it."

Another pursuit that Jackie followed was as a boxing manager and brought several boxers out to Australia to fight. Also in the 30's Jackie was promoting and managing a cycle track in Sydney.

On 1st October 1952 the Sporting Globe reported that:- "Jackie's half mile record of 50 2/5 sec still stands. Jackie has recovered from a serious operation and is back at home at Inglewood, California."

Jackie Clark passed away in Santa Barbara, California, U.S.A.
His obituary, printed 22 Dec 1958 in the Santa Barbara News Press:

JACK CLARK

"Jack Clark, champion bicycle rider, died at his home, 2801 State St., this morning. "Mr. Clark had been ill for the past two years. He was born in Camperdown, Australia, March 1, 1888, and at the age of 16 became Australian champion. At the time of his death he was world champion for the sprint. "Mr. Clark moved to Los Angeles in 1944 and to Santa Barbara in May of this year. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Josephine Clark.

Jackie had re-married after his first wife, Rena, and Jackie divorced.

I hope you have enjoyed reading about the "Camperdown Farmer's Boy" and if you happen to have any stories or any more details, however related, I would really enjoy hearing from you.
My email is cliveallenpaisley@gmail.com and Mob: 0405959111



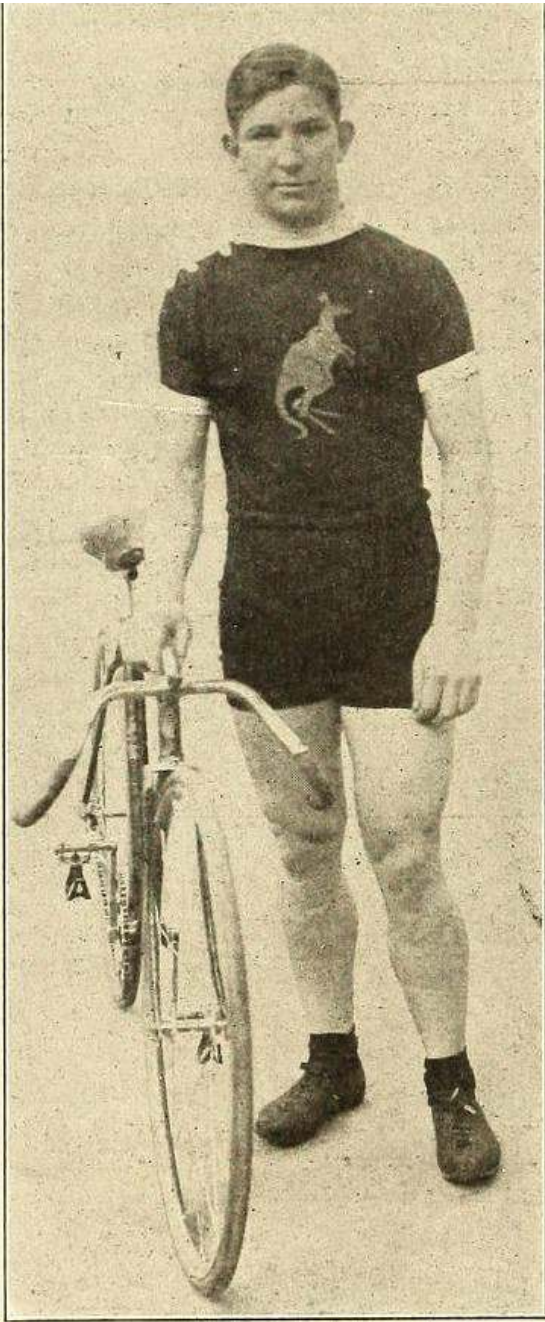
Clark







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"JACKIE" CLARK

