

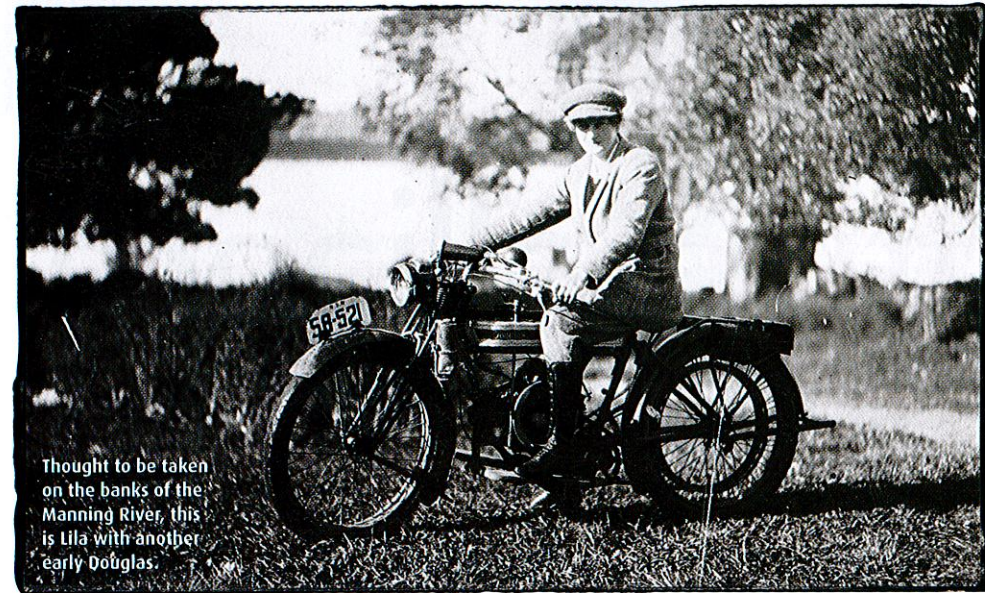
LILA FRASER

Miss Autumn Leaves

Story Peter Smith Photos Ray Hespe



A studio photograph of Lila Teale with her prized Douglas.



Thought to be taken on the banks of the Manning River, this is Lila with another early Douglas.

Sometimes to research a good story you might have to travel afar, other times there is one which presents itself right under your nose. A fellow member of the Taree & District Classic & Vintage Club, Ray Hespe outlined to me some information and later supplied copies of newspaper articles relating to his grandmother Lila Teale nee Fraser.

From what I can gather, during the mid 1920s there were motorcycle races held at both the Taree Showground and the Old Bar circuit. This second mentioned race track closed in the early 1960s and is not to be confused with the present day track located in the same area.

One newspaper article gives a very detailed description of a mishap endured by Miss Fraser and I quote from *The Manning River Times*, 6 May, 1925 which reads, "Motor Cycle Accident. Lady Rider Severely Injured. A serious accident happened on Taree Showground on Friday afternoon, when Miss Lila Fraser, a lady motor cyclist who recently came over from Tamworth, was severely injured. She was racing around the track practicing for the races which were to have been held on Saturday in one of which she intended competing. When opposite the grandstand on the last lap, the machine appeared to get out of her control, went straight through the oval fence and collided with a tree guard on the outside. The machine continued roaring on the ground until someone raced over and stopped it. The young woman, who was bleeding badly from a wound in her right leg, was picked up and a car was sent for to take her M.R.D. Hospital.

"The right leg was operated upon immediately after her admission to hospital, and a compound fracture was found to have been caused by the accident. A small bone in the face and another in the left foot were also fractured. One post of the oval fence was broken off at the bottom and another split. The machine escaped with very little damage".

It appears she spent a considerable amount of time in hospital as it was reported in the same newspaper on the 5th September, 1925, "Miss Fraser, who was injured off a motor cycle at Taree, has now left M.R.D. Hospital and is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. J. E Sladden, at Wynter Street". Other articles indicated that Mr J.E. Sladden was the

President of the Taree Motor Cycle Club as well as having a motorcycle dealership in Manning Street, Taree where he was an agent for Triumph, Indian and New Hudson. One advertisement states that he had four models in each make in his show rooms. This seems a considerable 'floor plan' for a country town in those early years.

Whilst Miss Fraser was still in hospital a benefit social was held in July at the St John's Memorial Hall and a total of 13 pounds 15 shillings was raised. It was also in the newspaper of the 25th July, 1925 that she wrote to the club thanking them, for making her a Life Member. It was mentioned that at this point of time she had been in hospital for 12 weeks and was expected to be there at least several more weeks. As mentioned previously it was reported in early September that she eventually leaves hospital.

Like the *Demtel Man* says, "Wait, there's more." *The Manning Times*, 27th March, 1926 reads as follows: "Another Accident - Miss L. Fraser, who had a leg badly smashed in a motor cycle accident on Taree Show ground and was some months in hospital, met with another accident at Wauchope on Thursday. It appears that she was riding a motor cycle along the road, when she had a fall and sustained severe cuts and bruises about the face and body. A number of stitches had to be inserted in the wounds. Miss Fraser has recently been doing some canvassing work on the Hastings".

Unfortunately at this point of time there is little further known of her motorcycling activities other than that she later moved to Sydney, married and worked in a motorcycle and tractor dealership. The motorcycle side of the business is believed to have been a Douglas agent. She is also believed to have ridden at the Newcastle Showground and that being the case possibly also Maitland. She died in Sydney in 1957 aged 94. ■

T.T. ENTERPRISE

Specialising in Magneto rebuilding, Smiths Speedometer drives, Smiths drive cables and Velocette and Advance gears.



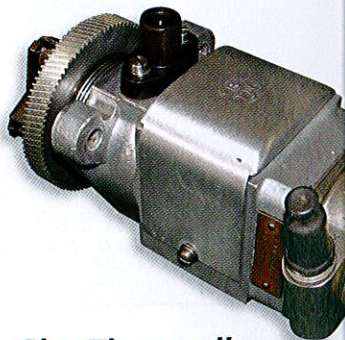
Tim Thearle has been involved with classic bikes for the last 38 years having restored Velocettes and other British makes - now specialising in

- Smiths speedometer drive repairs and replacement (incl: right angle drive front and later rear wheel drive gearboxes)

- Speedometer and Tachometer cable replacement (all makes)

- Magneto rebuilding: including high output coil rewinding/condenser replacement/remagnetising service

- Engine/gearbox/cycle repairs (specialising in Velocette)



Give Tim a call

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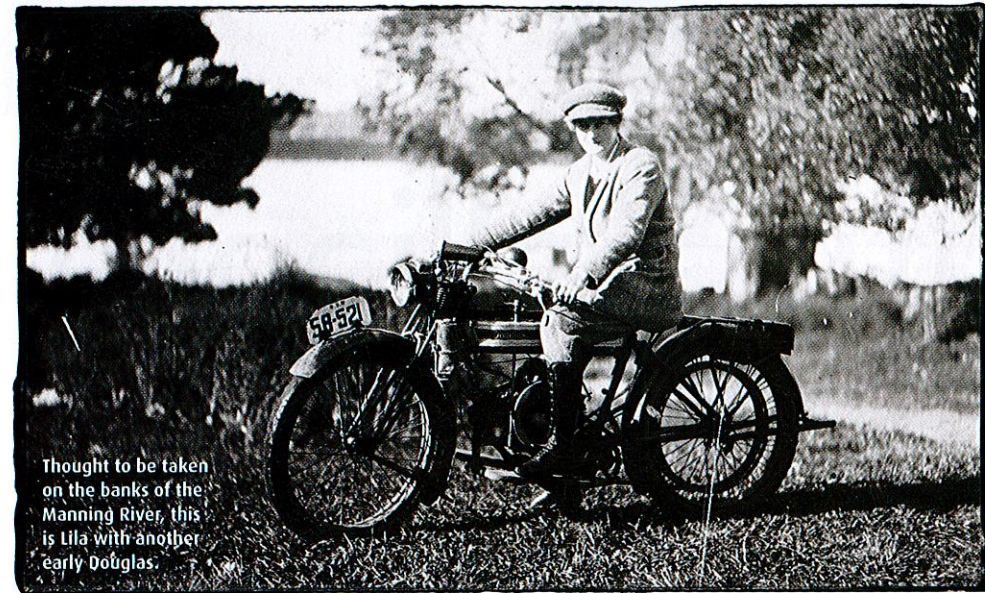
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