

TASMANIAN MOTORSPORT HALL OF FAME

IAN TILLEY (Inducted 2013)

When Ian Tilley was born in 1938 at Campbell Town it was almost inevitable he would take up motorcycle racing, as his father Bill was one of Tasmania's top riders.

His first experience was a ride on the tank of an Ariel bike being tested by his father after which Ian was taken to the Valleyfield airstrip for a race meeting, enjoying the sight, the noise and the smell of the bikes.

Ian commenced a motor mechanic apprenticeship at age 15 and with the money earned he bought, restored, rode and sold numerous bikes before he got his car licence.

He worked part time for champion rider and car yard owner Peter Thurley and when Thurley traded a 1952 350 cc Gold Star BSA, Ian bought the bike and prepared it for his first race meeting at Quon Hall.

From there he raced at Baskerville, Symmons Plains and Longford and made numerous trips to the mainland to compete at circuits such as Phillip Island, Winton and Darley at Bacchus Marsh, before retiring from competitive racing in 1975 due to business and family commitments.

During his 17-year racing career Ian rode a number of different bikes, including a BSA, 350 Manx Norton, 250 Yamaha TD1A, 500 Matchless G45 and a Norton Domi racer.

He rode bikes for Ike Chenall and was sponsored at times by Yates Brothers Motorcycles on his 250 Yamaha and a factory 350 Ducati in 1966 and 1967, proving to be a consistent winner.

Ian's successes included winning the 350cc Tasmanian Tourist Trophy at Longford in 1961 and three Tasmanian 350cc championships in 1962, 1963 and 1965.

He also held the 125cc lap record at Symmons Plains on a Honda and established 125cc speed record, also on a Honda.

In 1988 Ian came out of retirement for one last ride, when he was invited to compete in the Mike Hailwood Memorial Race at the Winton Historic meeting.

While he enjoyed the occasion, he also decided to hang up the leathers for good.

From 1967 to 1995 Ian ran a very successful business in Launceston under the Sport and Road banner, importing Yamaha motor cycles, and supported a number of riders at times during their careers, including three-times Australian superbike champion Malcolm Campbell.

Ian joined the Tasmanian Motor Cycle Club in 1955 and was elected to the committee the following year.

Over more than 40 years with the club, Ian held the positions of president, secretary, competition secretary and was public officer for the club at the time of induction.

In recognition of his outstanding service to the club he was awarded life membership in 1975.

Ian is a member of the Motorcycle Tasmania control body on both the general committee and the executive, and was a TMCC representative on the Tasmanian Motor Racing Club as well as at Australian Race Promoters Association meetings.

He has also tried his hand at preparing race cars, including Rob Davies very successful Toyota Corolla and at the time of induction was still keeping himself occupied building and maintaining historic motor cycles.

Profile by Barry Oliver