

75c\*

# Cycle

AUG/SEPT '76

AUSTRALIA

## TESTS

KAWASAKI  
S3 400

V.

HONDA  
CB 400

SUZUKI  
TS 185

SUZUKI  
GT 550



## Full Bathurst Coverage



# QUEENSLAND ROAD SAFETY MOTORCYCLE RIDING SCHOOL

Phil Hunt Reports

The first lesson I learned at the the first night of the first Queensland Road Safety Council's Motorcycle Riding School was that I had forgotten how hard it is to ride. Especially when it is your first try.

The school is the result of many months' planning, pressuring, and politicking by members of the Q.R.S.C. Two years ago, when talking with Neil Kent for CYCLE, he hinted that council (of which he is secretary) considered that existing facilities for instruction of learner riders were inadequate. Supported by enthusiastic staff members the first course of practical instruction for motorcycle learner-riders started quietly on Wednesday evening, 2nd June, at Lutwyche Shopping Village. So quiet was the launch that CYCLE Australia was the only member of the motorcycle media represented.

There were only twenty students in this first course. A ratio of one instructor to each student. There were two reasons for keeping the numbers small. One — the instructors were also new to the game and the first course is very much designed to be a test-bed for the future. Two — the Q.R.S.C. planned this first venture as a pilot programme to test the feasibility of the course. After just one night Neil Kent was confident that larger and better advertised courses were a certainty. The news can only be good for Queensland's motorcycling population.

Watching the wobbling and dab-the-foot steadying I made a mental note to suggest to John that he

might try out for the job of instructor. Apart from the psychological help such a move would be, the Queensland Road Safety Council is on the look-out for experienced riders ("fanatics" — Neil Kent) who will help to man future courses. Experience is a major pre-requisite, the other is an eagerness to pass on that experience. The course is planned to make the actual teaching task as simple as possible — so a Dip. Ed. is entirely unnecessary.

The difference between the planned Queensland syllabus and the Canadian format mean that the Queensland version is for less advanced students. While Queensland students are told the theory of things like stepping off at speed, or lifting the front wheel, Canadian students get actual practice in these techniques. This is not to suggest that the Queensland

school is deficient. The aim is to train students to the point of gaining a rider's licence, along the way instilling some knowledge and theory or defensive riding principles, so that they may live long enough to learn about stepping off or doing wheelies. Doubtless some riders will bemoan the fact that such a course has little to offer an experienced rider, and, of course, this is true. Nevertheless experienced riders can learn much about motorcycling by offering themselves in instructional roles.

The course covers the theory and practice of the following:

- Balance and braking (without the engine)
- Starting and Stopping (under power)
- The various controls (clutch, gear lever, throttle, etc.)
- Slow riding
- Pattern riding

**There are 20 bikes. All 125 cm<sup>3</sup>. All trail machines. I go and sit on a Kawasaki. It has 3.9 kilometres on the odometer.**

**"We got them at the right price, too," Neil Kent informs me.**

**An interested and concerned motorcycle dealership in the State has been only too willing to assist and as a result there are twenty 125 cm<sup>3</sup> trail bikes donated free from Honda, Suzuki, Kawasaki and Yamaha. All a student needs to bring is themselves and an approved safety helmet. The instructors are encouraged to see that for the most part the students arrive in suitable motorcycling clothing, even though tonight they only plan to peak out at 5 km/h. Naturally there are no motocross boots, but likewise there are no minis or stubbies.**

Emergency Braking (on various surfaces)

Coping with Obstacles (eg., How to ride over a gutter)

Out-tracking (How to avoid a pot-hole at speed)

Road Hazards.

Clearly such a syllabus provides more than is necessary to qualify for a licence in Queensland (or any other State), yet few motorcyclists will disagree that it provides basic knowledge that all riders ought to have before being let loose on the road.

The cost to the student is \$30. In return they receive four nights and two days of instruction. The nights include demonstrations, lectures,

"This takes me back. It's just like we saw in Canada."

I ask Neil Kent if it is identical to the Canadian course.

"The syllabus is slightly different, but otherwise it is pretty much the same. They've had good success with their course, mainly because it is run by motorcyclists for motorcyclists. Our intention is, once the bugs are ironed out, to step out of the night-by-night organisation and let the instructors run the whole thing. The Road Safety Council will provide the equipment, notes, and generally keep tabs on the teaching to make certain the standard remains high. But these instructors, and the ones which will be added as the course grows, will run the school."

I wonder what's in it for the instructors.

"Well the pay isn't real good," Neil admits, "in fact we pay them nothing. But at least they get it every week."



Demonstrating braking to a stop.

films and practice, around the car-park of Lutwyche Shopping Village. The two days provide on-road experience for students in two supervised safety runs.

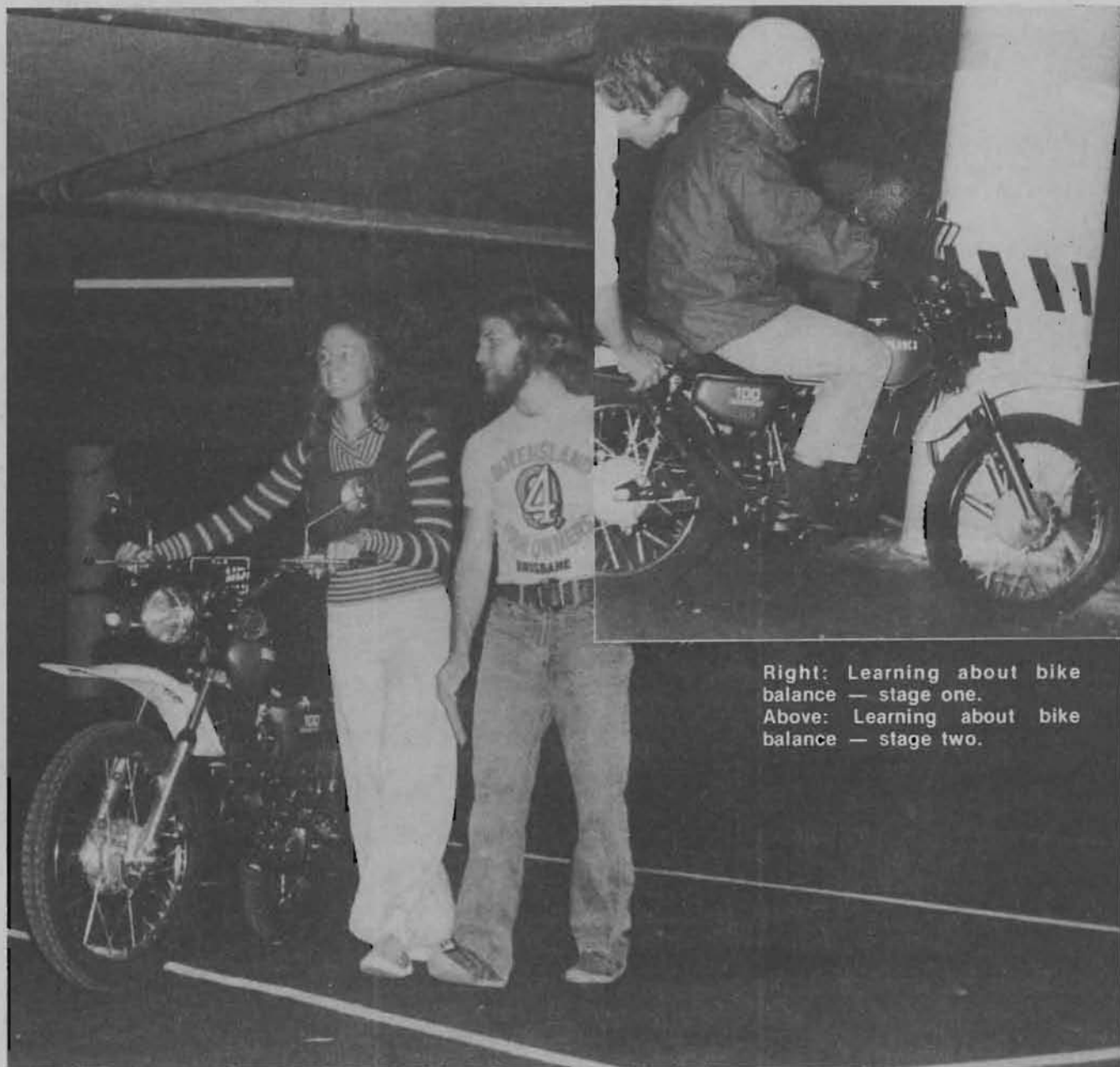
The school is a great first step in

"Well, just give her more practice. The more practice the better."

"For her maybe, I've lost half a stone already." The method for teaching bike balance is to have an instructor PUSH the student around on the machine, steadying them if they totter.

doing something positive about the growing alarm over motorcycle deaths on Queensland's roads. Motorcyclists in this State are doubtlessly pleased to see the government attacking the problem at its roots. It is likely that a graded licence system may follow with minimum qualification periods

Harry wanted to learn to ride a bike. He was just 17. His mate, John, owned a Kawasaki 750. John had ridden it for 35,000 kilometres over 14 months without one scary moment. Harry asked if he could learn on John's bike. John said yes. Harry died three kilometres later. John is having trouble with his conscience.



Right: Learning about bike balance — stage one.  
Above: Learning about bike balance — stage two.

before graduation to a larger machine. It would have been easy, and certainly less costly, to introduce the licences before the courses of instruction. In these troubled economic times, it is certainly refreshing to find a government department getting its priorities in order first and then worrying about the cost.

She's about 18, with long blonde hair, and her jeans give her hips quite a squeeze. But despite all the obvious attractions I am looking at her for other reasons. It's the way she's steering the Honda 125 . . . rather as if she is trying to trace Raquel Welch's outline on the ground with the front tyre.