

APPENDIX 1

**A BRIEF HISTORY AND GENEALOGY OF
ADELAIDE MOTORCYCLE CLUBS**

by

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“There is over 120 years of history here. Someone has to tell it” (Will Dulaney)

In 1890, two years after the first reliable motorcycle was produced, motorcycle clubs were formed and have been thriving ever since. In 1924, the American Motorcycle Association was founded, quickly dubbing any non-affiliated clubs “outlaws”. Thus, a black and chrome counter-culture was born, destined to be an international phenomenon.

The outlaw motorcycle clubs of the years 1924 – 1947 were largely comprised of groups of guys and girls with a desire to escape the humdrum by riding collectively on club runs or by testing their skills at organized motorcycle races. But, from the beginning, they have been bound by a love of bikes, the treatment they receive as riders and an overall lifestyle associated with motorcycle riding. This near mythical bond between rider and bike still exists.

In America after World War II, returned servicemen swelled the ranks of outlaw motorcycle clubs. In 1947 at an annual race sponsored by the American Motorcycle Association in the small town of Hollister, California an incident occurred which was to dramatically change the image of the outlaw biker. Basically, Hollister was ‘taken over’ by riders (and some locals) whose partying could not be controlled by the local police. The media became involved, printing a picture which was to shock middle class citizens of the United States.

The President of the American Motorcycle Association was keen to distance itself from the ‘melee’ and reputedly declared that “Ninety-nine per cent of motorcyclists are law abiding citizens and the actions at Hollister are a result of outlaw motorcyclists and non-motorcyclists.” Several outlaw motorcycle clubs embraced the one percent image and the one percenter club was born.

After Hollister, media created the image of the “motorcycle menace” which resulted in the terms outlaw motorcycle clubs and one percenter clubs merging as well as internationally exporting the culture of the one percent motorcycle club...most notably, the movie *The Wild One*. So, most of the one percent motorcycle clubs formed in America between the late 1940’s to 1960’s.

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Australian motorcycling history paralleled American motorcycling history in the early years. Australian motorcycle clubs pre *The Wild One*, the Australian Movie *Stone* and then the Vietnam War were largely groups of guys and gals who rode together for fun and escape from the daily grind of life.

The first Australian outlaw motorcycle clubs, however, were also influenced strongly by the Mods and Rocker movement in Britain, which was a part of the international youth rebellion movement characterized by late 1960’s to mid 1970’s ‘youth culture’. It was not until 1963 when the first self-proclaimed one percenter club was born in Australia – The Gladiators Motorcycle Club based in New South Wales.

Arguably, Adelaide was always and still is considered by many of those in the motorcycle scene as the Bikie capital of Australia. Why is unknown. There are places with much better weather conditions conducive for riding. There are towns and cities where there are many more working class suburbs from which the majority of club members' come. For whatever reason, Adelaide bikies had a strong and vibrant presence dating back to the 1920's. As noted above, where there are motorcycles, there are clubs and Adelaide certainly was no exception.

Like all outlaw motorcycle clubs, Adelaide's clubs started out as core groups of mates who lived in particular shared locations or suburbs and who were largely of similar ethnicity. These pre-outlaw motorcycle club groups were riders who embraced the essential requirements of a love of motorcycles, the dislike of the treatment they received as riders by other road users - particularly cars (called tin tops or cages), and a commitment to a biking lifestyle. A love for partying and debauchery added to this mixture made the early Adelaide clubs no different from the outlaw motorcycle club scene in other countries.

The early Adelaide clubs were about having fun with likeminded people. Police and politicians had little interest in them as the members were unquestionably free of the crime problems which seem to plague the one percent clubs of the modern era.

By the late 1960's , there were several such clubs which had formed in and around Adelaide. Some of these included:

- The Elizabeth Motorcycle Club – so named because the majority of members lived in the suburb of Elizabeth.
- The Filthy Few Motorcycle Club – who were from the outer suburbs (especially Salisbury) of Adelaide and who were comprised of riders of Dutch, Swiss and Belgian descent.

These early clubs, along with several others, evolved into what would be considered outlaw motorcycle clubs in the American scene between 1970 and 1972. They were not as yet, one percenters. They were still not identified as a police problem and had little, if any connection to crime other than the consumption of the illegal drugs of the day – marijuana and LSD.

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The Elizabeth Motorcycle Club evolved to become the Iroquois Motorcycle Club.

A founding member described the reason for choosing the name as it was the name of a particularly fierce American Indian Tribe. The Filthy Few Motorcycle Club evolved to become the Mandamas. The Undertakers Motorcycle Club was mainly comprised of riders of Italian descent and was based around the Hindley Street area of Adelaide. The Barbarians Motorcycle Club – who rode British and Harley Davidson Motorcycles and were from Gelenege located in the South of Adelaide. There were

also other clubs around like The Mob Shitters who came in from the Eastern States in the late 1970's.

So, from 1970 until about 1980, the scene was still a relatively family oriented club scene. Patches like the American style one percent clubs were worn; however, there was little evidence of the clubs being a police or political problem with one exception... Port Gawler.

By today's standards, the incident was pretty tame. However, a dispute had developed between several of the clubs due to an underlying festering issue about defections. It was agreed to meet at the beach at Port Gawler to "settle" the dispute... meaning fight it out. As was the custom until later years, a remote spot was chosen where the 'blue' could take place out of the public eye. It appears from court records that most, if not all of the Adelaide Clubs were involved. This was to be the first shooting which occurred in the Adelaide outlaw motorcycle club scene. A man known as 'Barry Bullshit' was shot in the chest by a shotgun during the fracas. There were many versions of the events which occurred at Port Gawler. But, the bikies weren't talking and the truth of the matter will probably never be known.

The importance of the Port Gawler beach shoot out is that public pressure forced the police to form a squad aimed at policing bikies. Thus, the Anti Bike Club Task Force led by Detective Sam Bass was established in 1972 (Incidentally, he is now an Adelaide politician.)

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In the 1980s, four of Adelaide's outlaw motorcycle clubs were patched over to become one percent clubs. The Mandamas became the Gypsy Jokers. Depending upon who you believe, either the Barbarians and/or Iroquois became the Hells Angels and the Undertakers and/or Mob Shitters formed the core of the Rebels MC. Also during this period, two out of state one percent clubs arrived on the scene. These were The Finks MC, and the Bandidos MC.

The Bandidos MC eventually decided not to pursue their efforts to establish a club presence in Adelaide after a prolonged war in the late 1990's. .

With the arrival of the larger one percent clubs came a change in the club scene and the Adelaide outlaw motorcycle clubs slowly disappeared or more correctly, amalgamated. The one percent clubs are now the target of police and politicians as organized crime entities.

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Today's one percent clubs keep their numbers carefully protected. However, a chapter generally functions with about 25 full members before it is considered wise to create another chapter. The smallest Adelaide chapter is a minor club which is comprised of a (very tough) 12 members.

Entry into the clubs is, on the whole, much like it was for the outlaw motorcycle clubs. First, you have to be a rider. The counterculture attracts individuals for various reasons and each of the clubs has its own 'take' or image presented to the larger biker world and society in general. Each club has a clubhouse which holds an open night where people who are non-members are allowed to come and party. As well, each club normally has a 'club pub' where members hang out. If one wishes to

join a club, they must first become what is called a 'hang around' – frequenting open nights at the club house on a weekly basis and attending the club pub. It is best to wait till a member approaches you, unless you have good reason to approach an individual patched member.

Once contact has been established and friends made, the person interested in joining must find a sponsor. A sponsor is a full member of the club who puts their reputation on the line to say that the applicant is 'staunch' enough to be a member of the club. The sponsor brings the applicant's request to the club. The clubs are participatory democracies and therefore, a vote will be held by all full members of the chapter whether to allow the applicant to become a Nominee or Prospect, the term depending upon the particular club. If the applicant gets a majority vote, they then are entitled to wear a version of the full three piece colours which define the club on his riding vest.

The next year is tough for the Prospect or Nominee. He is expected to the bidding of any full member ranging from building fish ponds for members, getting drinks doing errands, etc. A prospect does the hard yards during this phase of entry. Voice stress testers, meeting the Nom's family by some members of the club delegated to do so, street toughness tests, and the ability to ride and repair motorcycles are all part of the testing procedures. At the end of the Nom's trial period, the chapter takes a vote on his being allowed to become a full member. To gain entry and pass over from Nom status to Full Member status, there can be no objections, although abstaining from the vote is allowed.

As a full member, the former nom receives his full set of colours which are called his "originals" and is allowed to join the club in voting and most other privileges, the exception being an office bearer. Normally, one is not allowed to be an office bearer for three to five years. The clubs are clubs with the usual office bearers in most cases - President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Sergeant at Arms. One notable exception is the Finks MC whose only office bearer is a Sergeant at Arms.

The dilemma facing the Adelaide clubs is that the criminal elements of the clubs have come to hold sway and that those who wish to enjoy the lifestyle of the outlaw biker are subject to extreme police measures and political targeting. Measures proposed to eradicate the clubs are resisted by the clubs in their entirety as the members are protecting their lifestyle. The most effective policing strategy would be to utilize legislation aimed at minimizing and subsequently weeding out the criminal elements of the clubs. There is strong support for this sort of action from both current and past members.

Thus, rather than bulldozing the clubhouses, introducing versions of Canada's new legislation called colloquially as 'prove what you got' (how did you get your assets) and introduction of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) style laws which can be pursued through civil action would allow the club members who simply want to pursue their counterculture lifestyle to flourish without all the hassles with police and politicians.

Internationally, some clubs now use psychological testing procedures to determine if a Nom wishes to join to "become a man" or if he is a man and wants to join for the lifestyle purposes. That is, is the Nom joining as he thinks it will make him a feared and respected member of his society or is he joining to be part of the club and what it stands for – motorcycling, partying and brotherhood.