



THE WORM REVIEW

February 2008

October 2008 will be the 60th birthday of the 203. It only seems yesterday that we celebrated the 50th. The panorama at the bottom of the page will remind us of the 50th gathering at Batemans Bay in 1998. Hank Verwoert is planning the Worm Weekend for the 60th on banks of the Murray River. Get your 203 in top condition for the 60th and if you are restoring a 203 make sure that it is finished by October.

Reliably eccentric

Dawid Botha in South Africa has sent me the following story about a 404. A little bit tongue in cheek but all 404 drivers will recognise the eccentricities.

It may be that Peugeots always were a little wayward – perhaps none more so than the 404 I bought in my early twenties. Yellow, with 92 000 miles on the clock. A definite don't-you-park-it-in-front-of-the-house, what-will-the-neighbours-say yellow. Even at a purchase price of R250, the mechanic thought it was a bad buy. But he did agree to prepare it for roadworthy. This only involved cutting out to replace a rusty floor panel and attacking a ball joint with a hammer for a further R250. I bought the car in summer. Winter brought out its eccentricities. The mildest eccentricity was loose wiring in the steering wheel boss. Hit a bump in the road and the horn would blow, and a plume of smoke would curl languidly from the boss. I lived with this oddity; it only bothered others, such as the traffic cop I followed on my way home. The third or fourth time the hooter blew he nearly fell off his bike. The second eccentricity was apparently electrical. After a rainy night outside, the Peugeot would start without fail. Equally unfailingly, the engine would



Cuba is full of older cars due mostly to the USA trading embargo. There are a few Peugeots among mostly American cars, usually modified to use available parts like lenses etc.

cut out after about a kilometre. It would then reliably restart but only after I had smoked a cigarette, never before. This, too, was never fixed, it also only bothered others banked up behind me in the morning traffic. And besides, it gave me time to take my right shoe off, and wring out my sock.

You see, the Peugeot had a ventilation system. The piece de resistance of this system was a vent, outside against the windscreen. The permanently open vent inhaled air. It also sucked in rain water overnight. This water lay in wait for you in the ducting under the dash. Directly above the accelerator was an outlet duct. Take a left-hander, and the Peugeot pissed on your accelerator foot through the right-hand duct. Torrentially, like a Rottweiler marking territory – and with absolute reliability.

The Peugeot's eccentricity was not confined to wet winter mornings. Occasionally, at the end of a summer's day, it would not start. Mike the mechanic had the answer to the Peugeot's summer malaise. You opened the bonnet. Protruding from the firewall was a cast iron construction, something between an anvil and a shoemaker's last. You hit this, just once. You slammed the bonnet. The Peugeot would then reliably start. I do not know why a 404 was fitted

with an anvil/shoemaker's last. And I don't know why giving it a karate chop – always just one – would wake the engine.

Twenty years later, a cabdriver plausibly explained why, on a wet winter morning, the 404 would start, stall after a kilometre and restart only after a smoke. Bolted to the top of the engine was an air cleaner housing, shaped like a Le Creusot 24-egg frying pan. The cabbie's explanation was that, during a wet night, moisture would condense in the pan. During the first kilometre's drive, heat rising from the engine would vaporise the water. The water vapour would mingle with the fuel. The Peugeot would stall. Smoke a cigarette. Just time enough for heat, still rising from the stalled engine, to cook off the remaining water. The Peugeot would then, reliably, go. The cure, said the cabbie, was to stick a sock in the air cleaner inlet pipe the night before – and to take it out in the morning. The cure was offered too late. I had sold the Peugeot after three years, and only one further – truly vicious – attack upon the ball joint. By then, it had appreciated to R750. The Peugeot required little beyond routine servicing. Whatever it did, it did reliably. I wouldn't buy a Toyota: no standard irrigation system, no optional sock. No mystery. by Wouter Scholtz





Almost a full hand

A peripatetic email correspondent who manages to have two summers each year, one in Adelaide and the other in the south of France, sent a photo of a 203 coupé taken in a super market car park in France. I passed it onto Guy Nolleau in Paris who knew the owner, Pascale Gueneau. Contact was made. She sent me pictures of her Peugeot collection. She has every body style of 203 except a cabriolet and commercials. She has looked at several cabriolets but have found them to be recent conversions from sedans.



A departed friend

A friend moved on just before Christmas. He was 94. His had been an interesting life. Born in England, educated in Belgium, landed in Normandy on D day, a lawyer, he moved to Kenya, became a marked man during the Mau Mau troubles, escaped from Kenya with only a brief case in an Italian biplane that sprayed him with engine oil and, incidentally, was a co-driver in a 203 in the first East African Safari, then known as the Coronation Rally.



I bought this pin on eBay expecting it to be a normal sized pin. When I received it I was surprised to see that it was 6 cm wide.

A 404 for \$2300

Sounds reasonable does it? But maybe not for a 1/43 model. A recent eBay listing was for a very rare 404 die cast model made in South Africa. Start checking those 404 models that you have had on your shelf for years.

GRM203

In the last Worm Review I wrote that my 203 had been sold interstate. I can now report that the registration number lives on. GRM203 is the registration number on my new 207 touring.



Paul Watson's 403 is being treated to a new engine. Paul is steam cleaning the underside of his car. This pictures combines the best angles for the car and Paul. Mike Jolley picture.



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