



THE WORM REVIEW

14 September 2005

LAST month I wrote about my first drive of a Peugeot, in 1967. I began by saying "In 1967 I was driving a '62 Falcon and was content. It did need a lot of steering, and no synchro on first was a bit inconvenient sometimes, and it did tend to drive backwards after pot-holes, and it did blow all over the road in a crosswind, but then I thought all cars were like that."

This prompted an email from our youngest son (a 1967 model also) in London asking to explain the backwards and sideways tendencies of the Falcon. I explained that the Falcon, as did many other cars, had plain semi elliptic springs at the rear – just like a cart. The back axle was only located by the springs. I then tried to explain that a side push on the car from a cross wind would deflect the body sideways relative to the back wheels and rear-wheel steering followed. I also explained that when one back wheel hit a pot hole the front curve of the semi elliptic spring straightened out and the rear half curved more so the back axle was no longer at right angles to the centre line of the body and there was more rear wheel steering, often very vicious rear-wheel steering.

My son digested all this and I then had to explain the Peugeot rear suspension.



My son and his wife spent two weeks recently on Corsica where they found this magnificent 203 roll top. Registered in the South of France, the 203 was on a rally in Corsica. It is a very early, probably 1949 model. Note the two boot handles.

1995

THINGS French were not exactly flavour of the month 10 years ago. There was the question of French A bomb testing in the Pacific. I was on the way to the bank then when I spotted a lady with a placard, a clip board and a pen. I tried to avoid eye contact but she locked on to me. "Are you against French atom bomb testing in the Pacific?" she said, "Will you sign this petition?" I commented, pen in hand, "I drive a French car you know, I am in a dilemma." "I haven't heard of a French car called a dilemma," she said.

Brake shudder

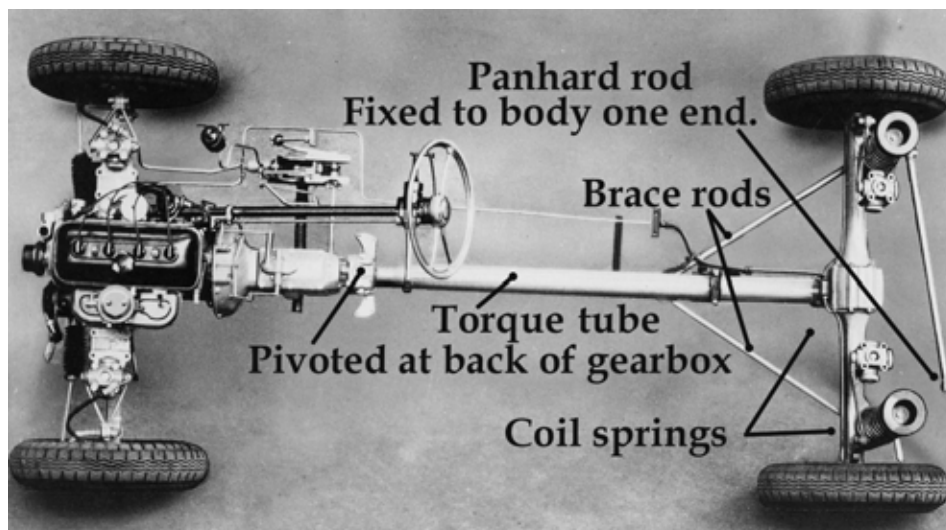
AUSTRALIAN 203s are fitted with locally made wheels with snap in hub caps rather than the bolt on hub caps used on French cars. Shuddering brakes can be a feature of Australian 203s. They don't do it all the time. When GRM203 was shuddering I sometimes told my passengers it is the ABS brakes. The shuddering doesn't seem to affect stopping, but, I will admit, it was annoying.

A 203 owner reported that he had machined the back faces of the wheels on his 203, where they bear on the brake drums. This changed the brakes that made his car almost undriveable to brakes with no shudder at all. The theory is that if this inner face of the wheel is not flat, tightening the wheel nuts will distort the brake drum and, with an uneven drum radius, the brakes will shudder.

I was measuring up some household glass that needed to be replaced when I thought why not get a hexagon of plate glass cut at the same time so that I could lay it over the inner face of the GRM203's wheels to check for flatness.

I then wrote ...

Maybe you owe your life to the 404 rear suspension. We were driving back from Wilsons Promontory after some days camping there with the 404 well loaded with camping gear on a pack rack and three children on the back seat. Baby cells didn't exist then and you were in a big carton that I had cut down and fitted between the back of the back seat and the back of the front seat. We came up to a slight hill in light bush when a car came over the hill on the wrong side of the road. I took to the bracken beside the road (probably at 90 kph at least) and had a very bumpy ride over ruts and branches hidden in the bracken. I was in full control of the 404 all the time and got back onto the road. I am absolutely sure that if I had been in a Falcon I would have lost control and probably rolled.





THE WORM REVIEW

After a bit of experimenting I found that a trickle of machine oil on the inner face of the wheel showed the high spots very clearly when the plate glass was placed in position. The high spots that would bear on the brake drum were nowhere near the wheel studs. So that the tension developed in the wheel stud when the wheel nut is torqued to the recommended 45 ft pounds would tend to distort the brake drum. Rather than find a big lathe I had some shim washers machined 1.5 mm thick and fitted them over the wheel studs between the back of the wheel and the brake drum. No more shudder.

203 back axles

203s break back axles. Usually at a most inconvenient location like at the entrance to a major freeway in peak traffic (has happened). They break at the splines at the worm end of the axle. The fix is to change the axles to late 403 axles with fine splines. GRM203 had this



Peter Menere winning the 1962 Mobil economy run.

modification when it was restored in 1991. If your 203 still has coarse spline axles then you should have a spare. I have about 7 coarse spline axles collected over the years. They are of no use to me.

Last month I advertised the axles in the PCCV magazine. I got one reply.

I have tried to pass them on over the years with no interest. I am silly enough to keep them for the time when someone will come bleating to me that they have broken a back axle when your lack of response indicates that I should dump them. One pair of axles has rubber protective caps over the wheel studs which makes me suspect that they have never been in a car.

Kiwi mail

MICK Zeewoldt from Nelson New Zealand has emailed me.

I have just bought a 1955 203 in Auckland and had it trucked down to Nelson in the South Island. It needs a bit of work but drives beautifully. In the next couple of years it will have some rust cut out of it's doors and give it a repaint.



in Perth. I am the little guy hanging out the window in one photo.

My Dad was a Dutchman and had two sedans, a ute and a van (we had a bakery) He was obviously keen on them. He died when I was six and I feel great getting a car he was passionate about. I even have most of the tools he used on his 203s.

I grew up in Western Australia. I have been in NZ for 17 years. The reason for buying a 203 is that my Dad had them when I was a kid and I wanted something different. Friends and people have never seen one and think it is a cool car, I have to agree. I get some stares when I drive it thru town as well, especially when I open the door.

Attached are some pictures of my Dad's collection of 203s in the sixties



This 1952 203 Dar!mat is for sale in Europe for €40,000.00 (AU\$65,000.00!!). Perhaps wishful thinking. The same car was sold in USA for AU\$24,000.00 about 18 months ago. Have a look at www.carclassic.com and note the bits missing from the engine bay and the scruffy carpets.

The Worm Drive Register is for all worm drive Peugeots in Australia. It reproduces some parts and knows who has parts, reprints manuals, and keeps in contact with owners of older Peugeots overseas. Back copies of the Worm Review can be downloaded from <http://worm.rkweb.org> Gordon Miller 28 Olive Ave, Mount Waverley Vic 3149 Ph 03 9807 3586 (9am-9pm), pwdr04@ultramode.net Paul Watson 5 Beatrice St, Glen Iris, Vic 3146 Ph 03 9889 2721, paulandnola@bigpond.com