



THE WORM REVIEW

20 October 2005

BY the time you are reading this cars will be on their way to the 2005 worm weekend at Narooma. I won't be there this year but I will be certainly be thinking of the weekend. 50 cars will be at the weekend and 14 cars are doing the week-long Worm Wander leading up to the weekend. 96 worm lovers will be sitting down for the Saturday night dinner. Hank Verwoert has done a terrific job organising. We are all indeed fortunate that Hank was waiting in the wings to step into my shoes after I announced my retirement last year. The future of worm weekends looks assured.

203 Memories

THE late Colin Tiller spent a lot of his early life on a farm in the Otways. He flew Spitfires during World War 2 and in 1954 bought a new 203. His son Chris found some notes about his father's Peugeots when sorting through papers after his father's death. This is an edited version of those notes.

In 1954 I acquired the beautiful 203C. We loved it, from the time Harry Johnston of Canada Cycle & Motor demonstrated its ride and handling on the cobblestones in West Melbourne.

The car was delivered in red primer paint and by selection was painted in Cressy Blue. There were, I recall, only 6 cars in the Dec. '54 delivery and I was lucky.



An escape

ON our first day in France in 1990 on our way to the Peugeot Centenary we were looking for our booked accommodation in Mulhouse and somehow got trapped in an inward spiral of one-way streets. We ended up in this square in front of the cathedral. It was packed full of cars, stalls and people. There was some sort of festival on. We kept moving slowly and by putting one wheel up on the bottom step in the bottom right of the picture managed to escape through some cloisters. Probably very illegal but everyone was occupied with the festival and we were not noticed. Four Peugeot 203s should be noticed and a Peugeot 403 SW in this post card from Guy Nolleau.

*Coles Motors, Fred, Eddy, and son Geoff were Peugeot agents in Colac. The Coles became good friends. Eddy Cole drove a black 203 which I suspect might be with a club member Gordon Miller.***

The specifications of the 203, from memory, gave a creditable top speed of 73 mph in overdrive. I remember one could not achieve 2500 ft/mm piston speed in overdrive so I understood the long design-life of the 1290 cc engine. I carried out all maintenance myself and in return was rewarded with faultless

service. The ride was quite remarkable on any surface, including 'off-road'.

In 1957 with about 55,000 miles up I sold the 203 taking a 1951 203 with sun-roof and modified engine as part payment and acquired land preparatory to building a home in Macleod.

After serving in the RAAF on Spitfires, I enjoyed the responsive and predictable control of the 203. While 1.29 litres seems puny beside the 27 litres (V.12) of the Rolls-Royce Merlin, each performed admirably in its design function. The car was very neat, safe, economic and



Interesting details on a 203 cabriolet. Photo J Brine



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reliable road transport whereas the aircraft was developed as a Metropolitan Interceptor Fighter. The history of each vehicle is adequate testimony to the skill and expertise of the designers and builders.

My interest in car races, hill climbs and rallies was always strong and of course I was keen to follow the Peugeots in the Redex, the toughness and durability demonstrated by the number and percentage of finishers, no less impressive than the winners.

One of my flying colleagues, had owned over 2 dozen pre-Nuffield Riley cars of various designs and he was astounded at the handling and point-to-point ability of the 203, he called it the "Limpet".

In 1990 I acquired a 1955 203C with 29,000 miles from Richard Mason, but after stripping it to bare metal realized that as a T.P.I. it would be difficult for me to complete the restoration so my son Chris now has it ***.

** Yes that is correct. Ed Cole was the first owner of GRM203. I am the third owner. Of interest is that GRM203 was also a Dec 1954 delivery. Alan Banks has Fred Cole's early 203.

*** Chris has completed the restoration, another midnight blue 203, and we will see it on club runs soon.

203 colours

I OFTEN get asked about 203 colours and I often get comments from France about the range of colours on Australian 203s. French 203s had a very limited range of colours. In 1948 and 1949 you could have burgundy or grey. In 1950 you could have black, beige or burgundy. From 1951 to 1956 you could have black, grey or blue. Four colours were available from 1957 till end of production in 1960.

In Australia things were different. I suspect that early 203s were imported fully painted. Later however 203s were imported with only the red undercoat applied. My 1954 203 left the factory in its undercoat according to Peugeot records. So I say that you can paint your 203 any colour that was current in the 1950s. This excludes metallics and definitely those candy colours. There have been a few two tone paint schemes on 203s. In my opinion 2 tone doesn't work on a 203 as there is no moulding or natural break line at the rear for the change of colour. If you are considering a colour for your 203 keep in mind that 203s can get very hot in Australian summers. Light colours reflect the sun better.



A project

RECENTLY I was asked to help identify a vintage Peugeot here in Melbourne. I determined that it was a type 177 from about 1928. It has an Australian built body. In the 1920s there were punitive duties on complete imported cars. Even Rolls Royces had locally built bodies. The shock was under the bonnet. It had had an engine transplant and further looking underneath showed that the complete drive train had been transplanted. Open drive shaft in place of the torque tube and a crown wheel and pinion instead of the worm drive back axle. The wheels are correct Michelines for beaded edge tyres. I am aware of engine transplants into European cars. Mostly the transplants took place during WW2 or soon after. Parts would not be available and if you could make a Chev engine fit then you were still mobile. By one of those interesting coincidents of life I have since been told of 177 running gear here in Melbourne. Engine, gearbox and worm back axle. The torque tube is missing but the drive shaft is there. So if there is someone out there with a big Peugeot heart and an even bigger bank balance there could be a project. I can pass your enquires on.

Fuel Prices

THE price of petrol is not a problem for this 404 SW. At a field display of old machinery if France.
Photo G Harrison.



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