

SOLEX OZ

MAY 08 NEWSLETTER

NEWS

Nick and Jan D. from Adelaide are currently touring the UK in their campervan picking up two wheel treasures to bring back to the colonies. They have already collected some fascinating machinery including three Solexes. They have picked up another 45cc for my collection and two rare beasts, a Micron and a Flash for their growing collection. I am sure these will be the first of these models in OZ.

RECENT EVENTS

On Saturday May 10, we had our frostbite run starting from South Melbourne and riding the bayside trail to Green Point at Brighton Beach. Overcast with a light breeze it was perfect weather for this layback ride. At Green Point, we had relaxing coffee and discussed all things Solex before returning to the smoke. The speed demons, led by messes Mark McK and Andrew McD. took to the Beach Road for a scorching return to South Melbourne whilst the balance, including Frances, Peter, Ern, Don S. and Geoff, resigned themselves to a more demure return along the scenic beach track. However, in true nursery rhyme fashion the "tortoises" arrived home only to find the "hares" had become hopelessly lost between St.Kilda and South Melbourne arriving well behind the dream team. Participants were, Mark McK. "2200", Don S. "4600", Frances McD. "5000", Peter H. "3800", Andrew McD. "3800", Ern M. "Pli" and Geoff S. "330". Thanks to Frances McD. and Don S. for the great photos, that appears on our photo page and to Francis for yet another brilliant photomontage.

COMING EVENTS

Our next run will be on Saturday June 14. As usual, details of this run will be distributed the week prior.

The July run will take place on Sunday July 13. Ted C. has invited us to join the Citroens on their annual Bastille Day run to Williamstown where we can enjoy French pancakes and typical French hospitality.

TO RESTORE OR NOT TO RESTORE

Of all the Solexes on our frostbite run, the one to draw the most admiring glances was Mark McK's highly original 2200. This bike has a true patina, slightly faded paint and original French owners name plate, it is just how you see them in rural France now-days.

Although a restored Solex looks great with its shiny black paint and glistening chrome, they are rarely seen in this condition. Most were ridden for years without ever having been washed, cleaned or serviced. The French have wonderful term to describe an original looking piece of machinery: "dans son proper jus", (in its own juice). However, having said that, a restoration is very much a personal choice and having Solexes in various conditions just adds to the charm and variety of these fabulous bikes!

MODEL OF THE MONTH “1700”

The “1700”, introduced in 1959 and almost identical to the previous “1400” model, had one very important improvement, a centrifugal or compound clutch! On previous models, when stopping, it was also necessary to stop the motor because of the direct drive. The new clutch allowed the rider to wait at lights or crossings with the motor running, this made the ride so much easier and sales soared. One other modification had to be installed, *a cooling fan*. Because the Solex 2 stroke motor was air cooled by air flowing over the barrel whilst in motion, the new “1700” would have over heated when stationary. Therefore, a set of cooling blades were mounted on the magneto flywheel and air was directed over the barrel via cut out on the flywheel cover. The clutch and fan were incorporated on all subsequent models.

These landmark machines are reasonably rare overseas, but here in OZ we are lucky to still have good numbers. This was, in part, due to the Salvation Army importing many “1700”s new and used by their officers to ride around large areas of the country for the collection of funds and to spread the “word”. For some reason the Solex was unsuitable for this, work and many were stored for many years, un-used and are now appearing in various country areas.

We have more than 25 of these great bikes in our club, some running and others currently being restored. My own runner is No: 1752472 and according to the French Forum, Cyclogalet, who list the first and last of each model, is currently the earliest known example of the 500,000 produced.

The “1700” has great character, having the older tubular frame as well as the luxury of a clutch and although is quiet and sedate to ride it one of my favorite mounts for a relaxing late afternoon ride.



TIT BITS

We have had a great response from our Solex friends overseas including Franck Meneret and Bryan Hollinshead in France, Geoff Mathews and Brian Colter in the US and several others. Our small newsletter appears to attract quite a bit of interest. In addition, we would love some contributions for our newsletter; it was great to get an update last month from Don S. about the Venus Bay Run. Please send your items to us for inclusion in our up coming newsletters to: solexoz@gmail.com By the time you read this, Ern M. will have run his first motor rebuild workshop and we look forward to feedback from this. If you are looking for that hard to find part send an email to Bertrand in France. Ern and I have had great success with this seller, and his postage is very reasonable, Bertrand’s email address is: macfly85@wanadoo.fr We look forward to seeing you on our next run on June 14,

Best wishes to all and keep on buzzing, Geoff.



VELOSOLEX RUN TO BRIGHTON 10 05 08