

Solexoz

NEWSLETTER # 23, NOVEMBER 2009

NEWS

This month saw the 50th Anniversary of the Solex "1700"; this milestone was celebrated on Sunday October 18 at Como Park, Melbourne. We shared this important day with the Citroen Clubs who were also celebrating two other important anniversaries; 90 years of the Citroen Car Company and 75 years of one of the all time great automobiles, the Traction Avant. ABC radio presenter John Faine was asked to select the most interesting Solex on the day, with member Frank being presented with some excellent French wine for his entry by John.

We had one of the best turnouts of 1700's ever with eight present. A special thanks to Huw for coming all the way from Canberra with his 1700 and Bryan and Joe coming from Bendigo. Geoff was away in North Queensland and missed this event, the first he has ever missed. Andrew kindly took Geoff's 1700 along for the display. As well as the 1700's there was a good display of other Solex models bringing the total to eleven on the day. Big thanks to Ted for inviting us to share this wonderful day and for his on going support. Solex members present on the day were; Bryan, Joe, Huw, Frank, Ern, Frances, Andrew, Peter, Ted, Helen and Don S, with apologies from Geoff and Don D. (See Frances's great photo page).



What a great line up of Solexes.

WEBSITE IMPROVMENTS

You may have noticed our website has had a bit of a makeover recently; this is due very much to the efforts of Joe. He has added a gallery of photos as well as some of the technical section. The big news is that Joe has been working with member Peter in Germany to get our "SOLEXOZ FORUM" up and running. Over the next week or two, we will be able to logon and ask and answer questions, place ads and generally become more diverse in our communications with each other. This is a very exciting development for our club and we will let you know very shortly how we can all benefit from access to this new forum. Brilliant work Joe.

SOLEX SAFETY?

Riding a Solex is a very safe form of transport, with a slow top speed and inbuilt stability but there can be situations where unforeseen problems can arise. I have listed below a few safety reminders to try to minimize these risks and help us get the most from our Solexes.

REFUELING YOUR SOLEX

Because of the 2-stroke mix we use in our Solexes, we are unable to ride into a service station and fill the tank safely. The need to decant and mix fuel and fill our tanks using funnels can involve some risk. To minimize dangers we should always follow safe practices when re-fueling. One major problem when handling a volatile fuel is its low flash point or ease of ignition, obviously we should not smoke or be near a naked flame of any sort when re-fueling. However, a more insidious risk lies in the often unseen presence of static electricity.

You may remember your school science experiments using a plastic or Perspex rod rubbed vigorously under your arm building up a static charge that tries to find an earth and often giving off a spark. This same charge can build up when using plastic containers and funnels with the flow of fuel, creating small a small spark and ignition.

We should always use a metal fuel container to store fuel, metal is much less prone to static build up, also when buying fuel at the service station always put the tank on the ground when filling it so it can ground any built up charge.

A metal funnel should be used when decanting from the container to the Solex tank.

You could fill your Solex 99 times without a spark being present, but on a day of low humidity and a build up of a static charge there is always a chance of fire.

TYRE CONDITION

The condition of your Solex tyres can be a safety issue and should be checked carefully when servicing takes place. Although the tread on our Y type tires has a very long life, the sidewalls of the tyre are susceptible to cracking because of their low resistance to UV rays.

These cracks, over a long period of in-activity or exposure to sun light, weaken the sidewalls and can cause blowouts. This is not such a problem on a rear tyre but a front tyre that blows can case the casing to delaminate and become caught up in the roller and lock up the front wheel culminating in the rider doing a swan dive over the handle bars (not recommended).

Cracking can also develop when tyre pressures are too low; always check that your tyres have at least 28 psi or 2 bars before a ride.

BRAKES

The brakes on our Solexes are not much better than on a standard cycle. But at 30 km/h. with a combined weight of approximately 90 to 120 Kgs. It is most important that they are 100 efficient. The later Solexes that have a rear drum brake are less susceptible to reduced performance due to rain and moisture than the all caliper type brakes.

Regularly check the brake block rubbers for condition and replace when worn or hard. Also, check that the alignment of the pad and the rim is correct, if not, a dramatic loss of efficiency will be evident.

The brake surface area of the rim attracts oil and brake rubber residue, this will act as a lubricant between the pad and the rim and reduce braking efficiency. A regular wipe of the rims with a solvent such as Carby Clean, Mineral Turps or Thinners will remove this residue.

I hope that the above is not too alarming, but to enjoy our Solexes we need to have total confidence and this can only come from safe and sensible operation.

LOOKING BACK

What a difference 10 years can make, Peter reminded me recently that he attended several Citroen events at Como over 10 years ago on his Solex and was the only one there. On another occasion, he met Don D. on his Pli and the two pondered whether there were any other Solexes in Australia. Don also remembered one Citroen event when he saw a display of about 6 Solexes put on by members of the Citroen Car Club of Victoria, he had hoped at the time that this may be the beginnings of a Solex Register but, unfortunately nothing came of it.

About the same time, Don S. kept several Solexes at his holiday home at Venus Bay that he and Deirdre rode when on Holidays. Also at about this time Bryan had acquired 3 1700's in pieces that he intended to restore but sold them in 2002. These same 1700's now reside with member Martin W. just outside Ballina on the north coast of NSW.

At the recent 1700 birthday bash at Como Park, Peter looked at the line up of Solexes with pride and realized just how far our SolexOz group has progressed.

As SolexOz approaches its third anniversary, it is worth noting that our group in Australia now has 32 members owning 92 Solexes, of which 74 are in running condition. We have 28 "1700's" and 23 "3800's". In addition, there are six early models (clutch less) owned by just three members, Shayne, Ted and Geoff, and six of the very rare Pli models.

COMING EVENTS

DON'S STICKY BUN RUN

Our next run will take place on Sunday November 15, this event, organized by Don and Deirdre, will be a relaxed mystery tour around the tracks and lanes of East Malvern and Chadstone culminating in Coffee and Sticky Buns back at Don's Le Chateau. This promises to be a very enjoyable day. Final details and start point will be sent out during the week prior.



Well that's all folks; see you on next weeks run.



1700 50th Celebrations
at
Citroen Concourse

