



NEWSLETTER # 38 FEBRUARY 2011

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Welcome to our February newsletter. This month we feature an excellent article by John about the trials and tribulations of restoring a Solex 1700, including very good progress photos. Also in this issue, news from our South Australian friends, recent and future events and of course Frances's wonderful photo page.

RECENT & FUTURE EVENTS

Our February Run was our annual Maribyrnong River and Boathouse Run. This is always a favorite with attendees and this year was no exception with 14 members attending. The weather was almost perfect for riding with a cool breeze and light winds with only a light shower whilst we enjoyed our morning tea. The River Trail is one of the best and smoothest tracks, it is very scenic and features some excellent broad curves through lovely settings as well as some good high speed where the "immense power?" of the Solex can be un-leashed. We had two first time riders join us this month including John's Wife Kath having her first ride ever on a Solex, initially a bit tentative but was soon charging along with great flair. Brendan was also on his first ride and took to the Solex like a duck to water. Judging by the smiles and excitement I am sure we will see both Kath and Brendan on future runs.

Participant were; John and Neil on 1700's, Frank on the 4600, Frances on the 5000 and on 3800's we had John, Kath, Libby, Peter, Andrew, Brendan, Tiby and Geoff. Also joining us were Ern and Graham with less exciting modes of transport. Apologies came from Joe, Bryan, Ted and Dom.

MARCH, Don's Anderson Rail Trail will take place in March with two tentative dates selected. We hope to run this event on Saturday Mar. 5 but as this trail is very dependent on good weather Don has also selected a backup date the following week Saturday Mar 19 if the Weather is not suitable on the 5th. We will be starting at Anderson and riding this spectacular Ocean Trail through to Wonthaggi and return. Don has also offered overnight accommodation at his holiday house at Venus Bay for anyone wishing to stay over until Sunday. We will send out further details closer to this event.

APRIL, Neil's Geelong to Queenscliff Rail Trail Run will be held on Saturday April 16. This run was one of our best attended and most popular events last year so please mark it in you Diaries now.

Joe has suggested we should have a social night and meeting sometime soon. I agree entirely, this is something we have never contemplated but would be a great thing to do. Joe also suggested we could show some Solex DVD's including Don's Solex race that he participated in whilst in Holland a few years back, sound like fun. Please let us have your ideas and suggestions for a venue so we can on and do this.



BIKES & PEOPLE

Our SolexOz friends in South Australia have gained another member, Pascal, who has visited John to see his growing collection and is now actively looking for a Solex. Pascal has wonderful memories of Solexes in France and surprised and excited to find them here in Australia. This now brings our S.A. numbers to at least 6 and includes Nick and Jan, John, Huw, Brian and Pascal. We believe there are many others yet to come forward. We hope to have a combined run midway between Adelaide and Melbourne sometime in the future.

Ted is making good progress on his 1948 45cc, this lovely old bike has retained most of its original paint and lovely patina. It will be an identical sister bike to Geoff's 1949 45cc. Both have 26" wheels and represent the original production model of Solex. It will be great to have two rare and historically important Solexes together on a future run.

Hans from down on the Mornington Peninsula is close to getting his 1700 running and keen to participate on his first run soon, he has asked for a bit of help with tuning which I hope to assist with very soon.

After restoring and assisting in 5 1700's rebuilds, Neil has just finished his beautiful 5000 resto this week and is now testing and running it in. Done in original Orange and finished to Neil's usual high standard, we are looking forward to see this on the next Run,

Geoff has un-earthed a 1700 that has been lost to the club for a several years, this has now re-surfaced in Clifton Hill. This very original and running 1700 is very complete and rides nicely. This 1700 is now for sale to anyone looking for an original early round frame Solex with a very nice and original Patina. Contact Geoff for details on 0403 359876.

Ern and Frank both have 3800's for Sale, Frank's is a very original low kilometer bike that has spent most of its life in a museum in Brisbane. Call Frank on 0418 588625. Ern's 3800 is fully restored and looks superb, call Ern on 0419 427246. Graham has a fully restored Blue 5000 available which is beautifully done and rides really well, call Graham on 0419 009300.

Member Phil from Mont Albert has recently undergone Heart Surgery and is now well on the way to recovery, we wish Phil a speedy recovery and back on the Solex 2200 soon. Ern heads into hospital next week for an operation on his foot that will keep him off the Solex for about 6 weeks, best wishes Ern. Tiby & Tara are awaiting the arrival of their third child later in February, best wishes to you both.

MY 1700 RESTORATION by JOHN

Upon inspection of my new acquisition, it was obvious that a total strip down was in order. The wheels and frame were very rusty and the spokes needed re-lacing. I decided that all the frame components would need soda blasting and all the chrome parts re-chroming. The bike seemed too far gone for being an original runner. When stripping down the frame, it is quite surprising just how many components there actually are. The spokes were simply cut out of the rims using side cutters. Whilst waiting for the frame and chrome bits to be done, I kept myself busy by cleaning up and rebuilding the brake components, front hub and pedals. The rear hub was not done because it was going to be replaced with a 3-speed unit. The frame was the first arrive back and even though it was etch primed after soda blasting, it was obvious that there was a fair amount of pitting to be filled. This was done with filler primer which took about 2 weeks of "after work" labour but the results were worth it. Neil had kindly offered to help with the re-spray by using his equipment and teaching me how to paint with a compressor – he didn't have to ask twice. He also showed me how to do the pin-striping. He is a wealth of practical knowledge and is pleased to pass this on. My new found skills were very satisfying.

Meanwhile Peter had managed to locate what I believe to be the original engine with most of the ancillary bits – which I duly purchased from him at the swap meet. I also purchased some other parts I needed at the swap meet. A strip down revealed all in good order except a scored barrel. Once again, imposing on Neil's good nature, we rebuilt the motor using new bearings and a good barrel and piston set purchased from Geoff. A test run was done on the workbench and all seemed well. Around this time, the chrome bits were finished and further reassembly was possible. The wheels were re-laced by Frank – a job well done and Geoff came to the rescue with more much needed parts such as tyres.

Finally, the bike was ready for a test run. It was s#*thouse – no power, stalling, spitting fuel! I must have checked the points a dozen times and even swapped the carby. In desperation, I rang Geoff to see if he had any ideas. He suggested a blocked fuel cap and was spot on! After fixing that, it ran really well except a lack of power, which the bedding in process has cured. Some internet browsing indicated that my bike was made in September or October 1960 and seems befitting that it was restored around its 50th birthday. Many thanks for the help given by Neil, Geoff, Frank and Peter.

Photos below show the progress from its arrival home through to a beautifully finished 1700.



