



## SEPTEMBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

### RECENT EVENTS

#### DON'S DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

Don and Deidre hosted their annual "Descent into Darkness" run on Friday September 26. This was the third running of this popular event but what separated this one was a wonderful blow by blow description of Don's recent 2800km Solex ride from Port Augusta to Darwin.

Don has long held a dream to be the first to ride Saltwater to Saltwater across our mighty continent and told us all how he and Deidre planned, prepared and carried out this epic and nearly trouble free ride that kept those that attended awestruck and inspired.

The Friday night ride was a wonderful evening with almost perfect weather, a beautiful trail and a gourmet BBQ to round off this perfect night. Riding a Solex on an excellent bush trail at dusk followed by a sumptuous BBQ and a Rough Red has got to be up there as one of life's great pleasures.

Attendees included: Squadron Leader Don on his 4600, Neil, Frances and Raphael on 5000's, Peter S, James S, Charles, Andrew and Geoff all on 3800's and Brian C on his Motobecane/Mobylette 50V. As well as Deidre, Ern and Jurgen.

Apologies came from John G who is attending the Goodwood Revival Festival in the UK, Frank S also touring the UK, Don and Marg B on a Barge somewhere in the South of France and Tiby and family visiting his father in Paris.

A very sincere thanks to Deidre and Don for organizing, catering and hosting this top event, the phone calls and emails I have received from those that attended overwhelmingly gave this run a top mark.

### OCTOBER EVENT

Our next SolexOz Run will take place on Saturday October 18, this will be a new run organized by the Geelong team and will start in Torquay crossing the Bellarine Peninsula to Ocean Grove for morning Tea then back to Torquay. Further details will be sent out in the week prior.

## BIKES AND PEOPLE

One of our Canberra ACT members Cam Jamieson has a great collection of Solexes including the earliest Solex in Australia. The 1948 Solex 45cc 650 is one of only three in the country (the other two are owned by Neil Ellis). Since acquiring this iconic Solex, Cam has been working on the 45cc and only last week got it up and running. Well done Cam.



The proverbial pile of bits as found in France



Now up and running

## SOLEX FOR SALE

Not many early model Solexes come onto the market these days, the early clutchless models have always been rare in Australia and have become highly collectable.

Peter H is downsizing his collection and has decided to sell his very original 1956 Solex 660. The 660 has the larger 24" wheels and has great patina, it is very complete and running and only needs some light refurbishment.

## NEWS FROM THE BIG APPLE

Our good friend and long time member BrianSolex is one of the most knowledgeable Solexists on the Planet. His technical expertise is always in demand and his advice can frequently be found on UK and French forums. His specialty is the 4600 Solex and he has written many articles on this complex model.

Brian follows our doings here in Oz and kindly sends me a complimentary note after each newsletter is published. I have asked Brian to write an article to give us an in site into Solex happenings in the US, thanks Brian for all your support over the years.

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***Greetings from the USA! Geoff has asked me to write a short update article for the newsletter on what is happening with Solexes in this part of the world, how we use our Solexes, and comparisons with your events, so here we go!***

***VeloSolexes have been sold here since the late '40s, but were most popular in the early '70s. Solexes were not sold in every State. Most were sold in the Mid-West, especially around Detroit, Michigan. In 1975, new Federal Safety Standards were created, requiring safety equipment for all imported mopeds. So, special Solex models were made specifically to be sold over here; the model 4600 V2 (1975) and the 4600 V3 (1977-79), both having all of the necessary safety equipment including a brake light, a sealed-beam headlight, an electric horn, standard motorcycle type controls, an ignition switch, reflectors, mirror, engine guard, and an ID tag stating the serial number, weight, and that it meets the Safety Standards. The engines have more powerful magnetos to power the horn and larger lights.***

*Today, there is a small Velosolex community scattered across the country. I live on the East Coast, in New York City on Long Island, and I repair Solexes for a living. Being a Solex mechanic, I get to see and communicate with many of the Solexists over here, and have found that there are several main groups... the old-timers who rode them when they were younger and have dragged their Solex out of the shed to relive their youth or take one last ride... the newer generation who use them as daily transportation, especially here in New York City where they are quite popular...the European-Americans living over here who had them in the "old country", with some even bringing their Solexes with them...and the mechanical tinkerers who just enjoy bringing something old back to life.*

*Concerning clubs and group rides... I very much enjoy reading about club activities and group rides in other countries, and even get a little jealous, because there really are no such things here. The old-timers and tinkerers are scattered far-and-wide across the country with not much chance of getting together for a group ride... and the newer generation and the European-Americans just consider their machines to be "the way that they get around town". They may get together at a bar for some drinks, but it does not revolve around their being Solex owners. Their bikes are just "daily transportation". Additionally, there is not much "open road" here in New York City, mopeds are not allowed in the bicycle lanes, and it is actually quite dangerous riding around...not very good for a nice leisurely Solex group ride.*

*There is only one large gathering of Velosolexes every year in America, and fortunately for me it takes place here in New York City... the annual Bastille Day Citroën & Velosolex Rendezvous. We meet up on the upper west side of Manhattan Island (most of New York City is on islands) and ride through the city making several stops at French-related restaurants and boutiques before joining the "Bastille Day on 60th Street" French-American street fair where tourists and enthusiasts can check out the vehicles, take photos and whatnot. This year, we had about a dozen Solexes and two dozen Citroëns.*

*Video from this year's Bastille Day event:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seUXkFdQSVM>

Personally, I ride a Solex just about every day, all year long... whether it is one of mine, or one belonging to a customer. I have a small collection of Solexes including a 45 cc, a 6000, several Pli-Solexes, a 5000, and a bunch of S 3800s and 4600s. The weather here ranges from freezing cold in the winter to broiling hot in the summer. Each State has different regulations regarding mopeds. Here in New York State, we must register our Solexes and have a license plate on the bike, costing \$6.25 USD each year. We do not need insurance, helmets or eye protection, and no inspection (MOT) of the Solex is required.

Most of my Solex repair work involves rebuilding engines which people send to me from around the country. I also do some local repairs, and I sell a few parts. Additionally, I enjoy participating on the various Internet Solex forums around the world (in several different languages); especially answering questions about the model 4600 and Solex historical questions.

Happy Solexing!

BrianSolex

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*Photo Montage of Don's Descent into Darkness Run  
by Frances*

