

# My life with Peugeot

from Tony Howman



A long while ago I obtained employment for a couple of years, 1955 to 1957, with a car dealer in the Wimmera, north west Victoria. It was a multiple dealership, which included Dodge, Rootes Group, Studebaker, Armstrong Siddeley, Hudson and a few other bits and pieces and Peugeot.

As a rep. for the dealership I was issued with a low mileage 1951 black 203 (sunroof, remote boot control, reclining front seats and all the other things the other cars did not have) to do my job.

After driving "UA104" for a week or so my enthusiasm for Peugeots became boundless. I got to the tug tug stage where my boss called me in one day and said "slow down a bit on the Peugeot sales and sell the people a Hillman or a Humber Hawk".

The 203 slotted in somewhere between the price range of a Hillman or Hawk. It was purely from his viewpoint a commercial decision as there was 30 quid less commission in a Peugeot than in a Hillman. That difference would have represented a fortnight of my wages. Not only that, if a bloke bought a Hillman, after the 3,000 miles warranty was up in 8 or 9 months, we would have it in for a valve grind, 12 months later a clutch, after that a front end rebuild and a ring set. The boss could anticipate a lot of his money. When I sold a 203 and we wouldn't see it again for 100,000 miles, until it was brought in to trade on another Peugeot (apart from routine oil change, plugs and points). So you can see they weren't the best proposition for a dealer!

The 403 then arrived and it was harder still to curb my enthusiasm.



Tony's 203. It now has the reg number AJH203

A 203 panel van had been converted to an ambulance and the ambos said they made better times to Melbourne and back in the 203 than the converted Ford Mainlines. The Mainlines would outrun the 203 on the straight but the Peugeot made up more on the bends and rough stuff of that era.

The couple of years working there were extremely happy ones and although I had to slow down a little on the Peugeot sales I have fond memories of that time and the man who ran the place, he had to slow me down for his own interests, naturally. He was a magic bloke.

After leaving there I owned several Pommy and American cars until I could afford to buy a Peugeot of my own.

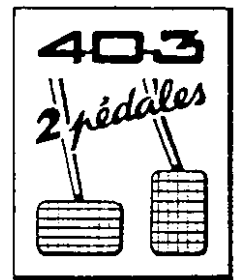
I bought a very late low mileage 203C from Canada Cycle & Motor Co – a magic car. I was dissatisfied with the colour and 12 months later I had it painted a beautiful iridescent green. I "Greeked" it a bit by putting white pompoms around the back window etc, as we all did in those days.

Some time later I had a relatively low speed head on, insurance fixed it but it didn't seem quite the same. I traded it in on a low mileage 403, then a '66 404,

then a '70 model 404 which I still have and which is still in remarkably good condition. In a (vain) attempt to recapture my youth I decided to get back into a 203 as well, so I bought two and built a fairly good 203C out of them. Anyone who knows it will attest that it is not a bad car (now 403 powered).

Well, I thought I had better fill the gap again with a 403, maybe a wagon or something, but none were about then. I found a Jaeger Coupler (2 pedal) equipped sedan for something different. The body had had it. Then another Jaeger 403 turned up so bought it as well.

When a good-bodied 403 sedan was found I bought it and fitted the Jaeger equipment to make a unique semi auto 403. It works well, 21,000 miles without a hiccup.



I am currently restoring a 404 U10 (Ute) out of 2 rough Utes and a rough sedan. It will take about 6 months.



On the left is Tony's "Jaeger Coupler" 403 photographed at a Worm Weekend.