

Leylines 83

Canberra and Districts Leyland F76 Club Newsletter May 2010

Next Meeting: Tuesday 4 May
Weston Creek Labor Club
From 7.30PM

Photo: © Col Gardner



Presidential Pearls



After some nagging from the urchins, I took my Peel Me a Grape Exec for a drive last weekend. Apparently for the first time in six months, according to the log book.

I'd forgotten how much fun it was to drive or how much attention it attracted.

So the boys and I drove all about town, went to the Zierholtz brewery for lunch, took it home for a wash then put it back in its home away from home in Fyshwick for another fewdays?



Earlier in the week, using the power of Facebook chat I conversed with Norm Julian, and he suggested a club outing in his general direction, perhaps in conjunction with the country club. Something we can all consider at the next meeting.

Foreign Transportation.

As some of you know I recently returned from a month working in Germany, some of the transport they use over there is different to here.

As well as having trains that run on time, it would seem you can drive your quad bike to work, actually quite suited to driving in the snow....which had melted by the time I got around to taking this photo.

Earlier it was too bloody cold and I just wanted to get back inside.



Under Repair.

Work is progressing slowly on my Country Cream Deluxe.

As I had no success selling it in its unregistered state so I have decided to tidy it up and register it then sell it.

As you may remember from previous Leylines it is essentially a very neat and tidy car with just a little rust near the petrol filler and a fair bit in the passenger's front door.

Curiously it has no rust in the more common locations such as the lower front guards or under the battery tray.



Also it had a large dent in the driver's front $\frac{1}{4}$. I was able to beat out the dent and smooth it off with a wafer thin amount of filler and the final result is quite impressive if I say so myself.

The rust around the fuel filler is repaired, so the only remaining thing is the rusty front door, I have been procrastinating getting started on the door as it's a big area to patch but it seemed the only way forward. That was until last weekend when I had to go under the house to shim one of the stumps under the kids bedrooms which had previously sagged under the hundred weight of a wardrobe full of Pete's textbooks and car magazines and now the doors don't close properly. So SWMBO said it needed fixing.

Anyway whilst dragging my hydraulic jack under the house I happened to pass a long forgotten dusty stash of P76 bits put way under the house when we first moved in, last millennium.

Motor gnome has mentioned in the past, how when restoring his Deluxe Pink Taxi the parts he needed just seemed to fall into his lap. The one part he needed was the very same part a friend had one too many of. For example when he came to town to get some rust repair body panels from me, we went to my P76 graveyard out past Cooma, (Birthplace of Olympic gold medal winner Torah Bright and myself). The car I preferred to wreck first was very rusty and extensively damaged, but the bits that had no rust or damage were the parts that The Gnome required, so we were both happy.

And of course following P76 restoration folklore the one and only panel under the house was.....a passenger's side, front Country Cream door, completely rust free. Originally from Dick Rennick's Exec that met an untimely demise at the hands of Pete. I will need to weld up the small holes from the stainless trim as it's from an Exec but I am way in front. And don't need to paint the inner side of the door as it already matches. How cool is that?



W@nkers everywhere.

As a final note I thought the more immature amongst you would relate to the antics of some of my workmates, who using an immense acuity and some sticky white paper and scissors to totally transform my rego plate using a single letter. Astounding.



Editor's Note



It's either feast or famine with the content of Leylines. For the past few months there has been little available to make up the newsletter. This month, thanks to Damo, Alex and Bryce there is more than enough. So much, in fact, that I have material to hold over until the June issue.

Like Alex, a trip under the house had unexpected results for me, too. I seem to spend a large amount of time sitting in front of the computer for one reason or another. My chair for the past few years has been one of those basic office chairs, with a flat wooden base that has a piece of thin plastic foam over it and then a cover over it all. A bit of bent metal with another pad on it provides the backrest, and the entire shebang is mounted on five wheels with a pneumatic lift (which is on the way out). While it suffices as a bum perch for an hour or so, an all-day stint is less than comfortable.

About a year or so back, while browsing on a French car discussion group, I came across an idea for an improved seat. A Peugeot owner, faced with the same problems as I have, worked out a means of attaching a Peugeot car seat to the base of a similar seat to mine. I filed it in the 'interesting ideas' tray and thought no more of it. Until a month or so back, when a trip under the house revealed a long-forgotten seat from a 1975 Renault 12 (arguably one of the best small car of the 1970s) that my son owned to destruction some years ago. The vinyl covering on the original driver's seat was coming apart, so he replaced the seat with one in better condition from a later model. The original seat went under the house and out of mind, until I spied it again on my expedition. Renault and Peugeot utilised the same design of seat back in the 1970s, so the office seat idea ran through my mind. I pulled the Renault seat out. It was still in much the same condition as it had gone under there about 20 years ago. Fortunately, rodents had spared it as a housing project, and with a good dust off, it looked quite reasonable, apart from the tattered vinyl. I made up mountings to fix it to the office chair frame from scrap wood. (As the end result was unknown, I didn't want to spend any cash on the project.) To tidy it up I installed an old sheepskin cover over the tattered vinyl seat.

And how did it turn out? Just wonderful! In the 1960s and '70s, Renault made some of the most comfortable seats in any cars, regardless of price. They were, in effect, anatomically designed lounge chairs installed in cars. The seat cushion of my new office chair is soft and supportive, and the backrest is fully adjustable, shaped and reaches above shoulder blade level. On a couple of occasions I've spent all day sitting at the computer in complete comfort. No more numb bum and back pain.



It should be possible to do the same thing with a P76 seat. Maybe even easier, because the Renault seat has a tubular steel frame, while the P76 frame seems to be right-angled steel with a flat base. Anyone want to try it out and report back?

Col

Leyland P76 Nationals 2010

Damien Haas

'How long does it take to drive to Newcastle from Canberra?' I asked my Novocastrian friend. 'About four and a half hours she replied. With that info in my mind I rose early on Good Friday morning and headed off for Newcastle around 9.30AM.



The trip through Sydney was pretty busy, but having purchased a GPS a few weeks earlier, I figured that I could just nip through the sophisticated Sydney highway toll robbery system at a peaceful relaxed pace, and arrive in plenty of time for the boat trip around Newcastle's Harbour that the organising committee had arranged.



At some point I turned off the highway for petrol, and received a call from Motor Gnome – who was driving past with his Junior Elf and spotted my car. I followed them on the highway, but Jason is an inveterate lane changer, fancying himself the Stirling Moss of Woy Woy. I prefer to sit in one lane and

stay there. At one point I pulled alongside the Hairy Lime P76, but a young man made some extremely rude gestures and started licking the windows, so I backed off lest I see some 'pressed ham action'.

At 3 PM I arrived in Motto Farm – the actual location of the Nationals, about 30 km out of Newcastle, and realised that the Sydney traffic combined with Easter traffic had blown that four and a half hour trip estimate out by two hours... and I had missed my boat trip and the bus trip in a Leyland double decker bus, and the Fish and Chips...

With no one from the organising committee on hand when I arrived, I checked in at the reception area, grabbed my room keys, parked the car and wandered around Motto farm catching up with people I hadn't seen for a while.



Just outside the check-in desk at Motto Farm I saw this amazing stretched P76 limousine. It's owned by Andrew Lee from SA.



I also saw this nice Bitter Apricot vinyl roofed car, with Series II hub caps.



A nice Spanish Olive car, with Targa mags.



Naturally, at every Nationals someone has a disastrous 'failure to proceed' and fortunately there are also a few people who know how to fix it. In this photo we see Jason 'Motor Gnome' Birmingham, Garth Morris, Neville Humphries, Steve Maher and on the ground, David Walker. If these guys can't fix a P76 – it's really rooted.

This was the nicest boot I saw all weekend, mainly because it was nice and clean. Even the spare had been polished!





People were parking their cars in this area and washing them. Leonard Spencer was shammying up a storm.

A trip to the local ten pin bowling lanes was organised for the Friday night, and before this I went to dinner at the local Hungry Jacks with a few of the usual suspects. Instead of turning right at the roundabout, I went straight ahead and ended up not finding an exit for another ten kilometres. By the time I arrived at Hungry Jacks, the others were ready to go! The locals were mightily impressed by our cars, especially Jason's pink taxi. At the bowling alley I declined to place my feet into bacteria-laden reservoirs of disease and pestilence, and sat and chatted to Gary Mentiplay and Phil Crowther for an hour or so.



On the Saturday morning the boot sale was held. There were quite a few parts on sale, but there had been parts trading going on since I arrived on Friday arvo, as some people weren't happy about having to pay \$10 to sell parts at the boot sale. The

organisers had decided to cancel this, but I don't think some people had heard that. In any case, it aid to ask people for a particular part rather than rely on seeing it in someone's boot.



I managed to pick up a Targa Mag, some Casino Blue material and some other parts from various people, some at the boot sale but most beforehand. My quest to build a Bitter Apricot Super with a Casino Blue Exec interior continues.

Hal Moloney arrived in his P76 rally car. Very nice. I liked the alloy roll cage. Recent CAMS regulation changes mean Hal might not be able to rally his car in its present form, which is sad. Hal was selling new editions of his book on the 1995 Repco rally, with a lot of colour photos added in. Nev Humphries managed to pick up a Force 7 instrument cluster from Hal at a very reasonable price.





Phil Crowther livened up the boot sale by generously putting on a water pump reconditioning workshop. His health seems to be much better. He also had examples of the two different size flex plates, which when placed back to back made it very obvious just how easy it would be to put the wrong one in your car.



After the boot sale, people went and polished their cars and dust busted their boots and engine bays before the Concours that was to be held that afternoon. I wandered over to the main room and bought some national magazines, some badges, caps, etc. I was disappointed there weren't any window stickers but I thought that the paraphernalia available was very good. The magazine featured Motor Gnome's Hairy Lime Super and a NSW shaped logo. I also discovered at that point that very few of the many photos I had supplied for my article on 1:43 scale P76s had been used, and that the magazine was all in black and white. I can understand the production and editing decision, but it was disappointing as the photos really would have made the article a lot better for those who read it.

In the main room at Motto Farm was a display of P76 photo albums, paraphernalia and posters. Of interest were these two items from the Zetland factory – a conrod balancer and a control panel from the experimental dyno room. Who wouldn't want these in their garage?





Around 11.30-ish people mounted their steeds and formed up to drive in convoy from Motto Farm to the Newcastle foreshore. In theory this was a great idea, in practice it was frustrating. The cars in front sat on about 40km most of the way and traffic lights meant that a 2 km line of P76s didn't travel in one group.





We arrived at the foreshore and were directed to our designated areas. Sections were divided into Deluxe, Super, Exec, Targa etc. This made it easy to wander around and look at the cars, and of course observe the Concours judges go about their business.



Joe Green's Force 7



Good to see young fellas interested in P76s.

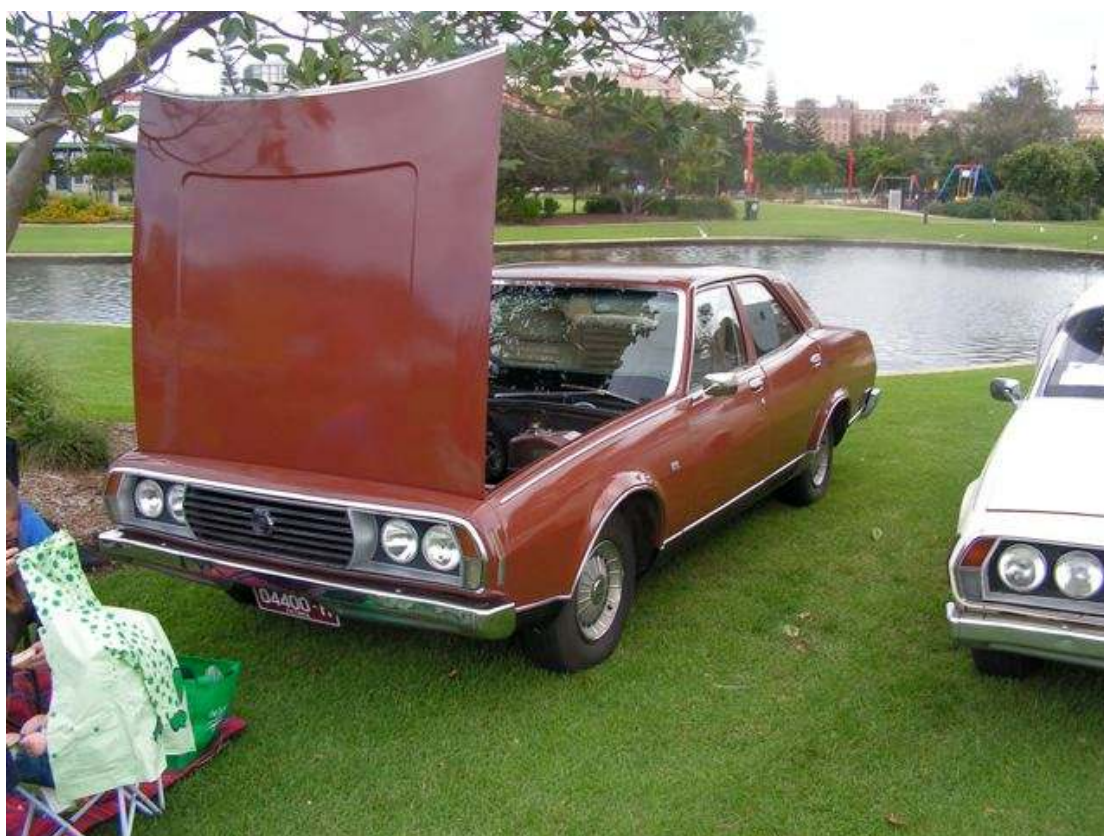














After the Concours, I did a bit of a tour around Newcastle and stopped at what I am assured is Newcastle's contribution to Australian cuisine – Henny Penny crumbed chicken.



That evening we went to the Muree Golf Club for a Trivia Competition and dinner. The evening was MC'd by Steve Maher, who did a fantastic job, introducing the guest speakers. My table 'the Dry Reds' did pretty well in the Trivia comp, especially with the ultra-competitive James Mentiplay on the table. Following this, we enjoyed an excellent dinner while being regaled with tales of Zetland by past employees of Leyland. They were absolutely fascinating anecdotes and really added a bit of perspective on why we spend so much energy driving, preserving and promoting the P76 long after Leyland Australia has gone. Unfortunately it was a little difficult to hear the speakers as the Golf Club also had a band on in another room which was quite loud.



Easter Sunday – and alas, the Easter Bunny didn't drop by my room. He did stop at Guy Morris's (Garth's son) room however. I asked him how the Easter Bunny knew where he was and apparently his Mum had phoned the Easter Bunny and told him that he would be in Newcastle on Sunday. Good old Mum. The traditional 'observation run' was held on Sunday morning, and I headed off in Neville Humphries Omega Navy Targa Florio – which is in simply amazing condition. One of the Kiwis was driving, and I sat in the back seat, just enjoying the countryside.



At one point we came across a Dry Red P76 parked across the road – one of the younger members had missed a clue, and while doing a three point turn stalled the car. He climbed out to poke under the bonnet (flooded I think) and just as we prepared to get out of our cars and help him, it fired back into life and they went back to the missed point. Seconds later a local came flying around the corner – it had serious potential for tragedy.

After completing most of the clues on the observation run we arrived at the 'secret destination' for lunch. It was in a nice park by the river in a small tourist town called Morpeth. As I hadn't paid for lunch, I went up to the local pie shop (with additional pie orders from Motor Gnome who HAD paid for sandwiches...) and grabbed a pie and a Fanta.



P76s were still arriving as I walked back, as well as a horse drawn cart with tourists on board.



After lunch, we then headed off to an amazing private museum of garaganalia and Austin A30s. I was really impressed.





Brian Hooper reckons this will just buff out...

On the way back some people decided to go Go-Kart racing. I declined, and had a nice cappuccino out in the sunshine between drizzle. Some of the P76 folk were amazingly competitive – and Kelsie Birmingham seems to be another Leanne Tander. Warwick Williams was also pretty hardcore. At one point the go kart staff stopped a race and read the P76 people the riot act about crashing into each other. Adrian Spencer had been bashed around enough at that stage and he pitted and walked off for a coffee, his bones gradually clicking back into order as he straightened himself up. It's pretty clear why you need neck braces and helmets – it has potential for serious jarring and crashing.



Sunday night was the Auction and Presentation dinner, at Motto Farm. I think that this was probably not a good venue for the dinner, and it was clear that the event was beyond the capability of the restaurant staff. It took half an hour for people to get into the room for dinner for some reason, and the room had a very low roof and two long tables, with no places designated – so it was a free for all. The event was MC'd by Joe Green and Tony DeLuca, and it was very hard to hear them from the other end of the room. This meant that you couldn't actually hear them when they started talking – even with a microphone – and people kept chatting to their dinner companions, resulting in other people getting upset that they couldn't hear and shouting out 'QUIET' etc. Problems also arose during the Auction when bids weren't picked up by Joe Green from people at the far end of the room. Finally, I'm not a food snob - but 'two fruits' from a tin and ice cream for the desert, was really a bit poor for 2010 diners.



Excellent cake – it tasted pretty good too!

Those whinges aside, the Auction was a lot of fun, although I did miss out on a few items. I was resolutely determined to win the 76th version of the 1:43 scale kit of the

P76 Station Wagon. Finally at \$155 it was mine. Since I hadn't been successful at earlier auction items, I had plenty of reserve cash left over.



Pretty packed – as you can see. Very noisy and crowded.



Alan Firth (looking at camera) owns the P76 in the UK that went to the Vanden Plas factory. He came to Australia via NZ, and is looking for parts to restore his P76 Super to factory condition. He is ex-Rover developmental, and owns MANY cars. A true gearhead and lovely chap. Travelling to Oz to look for car parts is P76 dedication! He said he might even ship another Super back to England.

Finally the results of the Concours were announced and awards handed out to the winners.

Concours Winners of the 2010 Leyland P76 Nationals

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----|----------------|---------|
| <i>Best Executive</i> | John Beattie | VIC | Bitter Apricot | PNK 987 |
| <i>Runner Up</i> | Tony DeLuca | NSW | Crystal White | 30445-H |
| <i>Best Super</i> | Kevin Smith | VIC | Country Cream | IUK 453 |
| <i>Runner up</i> | Denise Mort | NSW | Country Cream | 38744-H |
| <i>Best Deluxe</i> | Peter O'Brien | NSW | Country Cream | 26839-H |
| <i>Runner Up</i> | Jeff Cutting | SA | Crystal White | 760 J |
| <i>Best Targa</i> | Neville Humphries | QLD | Omega Navy | MI P76 |
| <i>Runner up</i> | Jason Birmingham | NSW | Nutmeg | 39429-H |
| <i>Best Modified</i> | Jason Birmingham | NSW | Hairy Lime | LEY 076 |
| <i>Runner Up</i> | Jason Birmingham | NSW | Plum Loco Taxi | P76 |
| <i>Judges Choice</i> | John Beattie | VIC | Bitter Apricot | PNK 987 |
| | Wayne Filmer | SA | NV Green | LEY P76 |
| | Denise Mort | NSW | Country Cream | 38744-H |

Best Car from Each State

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------|----------------|
| WA | Riley & Lynne Bradley | Bold as Brass |
| SA | Andrew Lee | Blue Limo |
| VIC | John Beattie | Bitter Apricot |
| QLD | Neville Humphries | Omega Navy |
| NSW | Jason Birmingham | Hairy Lime |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----|----------------|---------|
| <i>Grand Champion</i> | Jason Birmingham | NSW | Hairy Lime | LEY 076 |
| <i>Encouragement Award</i> | Scott Reynolds | VIC | Bitter Apricot | WOH 588 |
| <i>People's Choice Award</i> | Jason Birmingham | NSW | Plum Loco Taxi | P76 |

I was sitting with Jason and he was genuinely moved by the amount of awards that he took away. Then again, he turned up with three outstanding cars and had worked on several others that turned up on the weekend.





Monday came all too quickly and people began leaving very early as some had great distances to cover. I know that the Spencers had to leave early as Leonard, on his 'P' plate, can only drive at 80 km/h – back to Queensland! I had breakfast, wandered around saying goodbye and then drove back to Canberra through the Easter traffic, arriving in the afternoon. On the way back, I overtook several other P76s and it's always a great feeling when you see another.

The Nationals were very well organised and run by Steve Maher, Joe Green, Tony DeLuca and their spouses, and all the various club members of the two Sydney clubs. I felt that some of the criticisms raised at the delegates meeting were a little unfair, and felt that overall they had done an excellent job. It was notable that no club volunteered to host the 2012 Nationals – although a 2013 40th Anniversary 'Run' for Canberra was discussed (which I think is a great idea). I had a great time and was sad to go home.

All events like these only succeed through the good will and willing participation by those who organise and those who attend. I think that the broad family of P76 aficionados benefit greatly from these National gatherings and I hope that a decision is made on who holds the 2012 Nationals soon. Motor Gnome needs more trophies.

More photos can be seen at my blog <http://onfourwheels.blogspot.com> and at the National web site <http://www.leylandp76.com/clubs/nationals/2010/nationals.html>



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