

Leylines 63

Canberra and Districts Leyland P76 Club Newsletter February 2008

*Next Meeting:
Tuesday 12 February
Weston Creek Labor Club
From 7.30pm*

Photo: Alex

Editor's Note



My apologies for the late delivery of this month's Leylines. I've been out of town for a few days, so this month's edition has been put together very quickly on Tuesday morning. We don't seem to have a contribution from our esteemed President this month, but fortunately Damo and Bryce have provided enough material to fill out a few pages.

I've hardly driven my car in the past two months, and couldn't make it to Jugiong with Alex, Damo and Geoff. However, Damo has come to the party with a story about the outing, and another misadventure, to put us all in the picture.

See you tonight.

Col

More misadventures - Jugiong and back

Damien Haas

One of the endearing aspects of our small club is the clockwork precision-like attention to logistical detail that is exhibited whenever a club outing is planned. Who can forget the famous confused car park fiasco of 2005, or the January 2003 BBQ outing planned for the day that half of Canberra was destroyed by bushfires? The BBQ was cancelled.

So I always expect small wrinkles when these trips are planned.

The agreement was that we would meet at 10 AM and travel in convoy from the little car park on the side of the Barton highway near the border in Hall. Upon my arrival at 9.50 AM in the car park, I saw no one. It wasn't 10 however, so I turned off the engine as the car was running a little hot, and read the paper.

At 9.58 my mobile phone rang – it was El Presidente. "Where are you?" he asked. I replied that I was in the car park, as agreed, and it was 10 and no one else was here. He had arrived half an hour earlier, but seeing no one assumed we weren't coming and driven off. He was now in Murrumbateman (probably drinking a soy latte).

As I chided him on his lack of faith, the president of Vice arrived in his white six cylinder, with his son Christian on board. As he pulled alongside and wound down his window I noticed he had his driving gloves on and was ready for a serious day's car nerd activity. I apprised him of the situation and we agreed to head off.

El Presidente was advised to cool his heels in Murrumbateman and that we would be cruising through in a few minutes. Off we went, my Bitter Apricot V8 Super 4 speed in front, with Geoff and his son following in the Crystal White Super 6.

Fifteen minutes later as we cruised through Murrumbateman I noticed a Peel Me Grape Leyland P76 parked on the side of the road. I was doing 50 km/h and flashed my lights but, El Presidente probably didn't see me and waited until all the cars travelling behind Geoff and I passed through before putting the lid on his soy latte and joining the convoy.

My car was still running warm and the temperature needle had now moved to the right of the gauge. As we were on a highway and it would be steady cruising, I decided that it was OK and that only if the needle nudged into the red would I pull over.

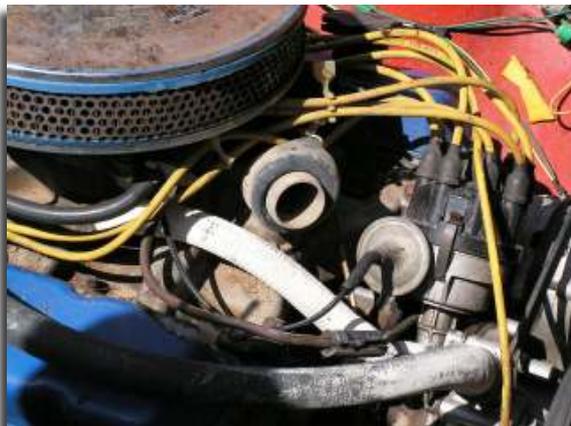
Thirty minutes later, our group had turned off the Barton highway onto the Hume highway near Yass and was travelling at a steady 100 km/h to Jugiong.

I noticed that my temperature gauge had just gone into the red. "Hmm, I had better pull over", I thought to myself as the upper radiator hose went BANG and I gently coasted to the emergency lane.

This is the second major trip this car has completed since 1989. The last one, in November 2007, was to Yass to collect a TH700R4 transmission. I had just had the car registered and it was still on a 1989 tank of fuel, half topped up with hi-octane ULP. My mechanic advised that it needed to burn through a few tanks of fuel before a tune would do it any good. He considered it safe to drive, however, and he had done an excellent job at trying to remedy the 1st gear clutch shudder. The car ran flawlessly (although warm) to Yass and back (about 120km all up). However when I was reversing up my driveway my lower radiator hose exploded.



While repairing that, I noticed lots of crud and corrosion in the coolant and knowing that cooling systems are the Achilles' heel of the alloy V8 engine, I had sourced a new water pump just before Xmas 07 in anticipation of replacing other components of the cooling system in the very near future. The previous owner must have experienced the same issues, as he had fitted a thermo fan to the car ahead of the radiator. However I cannot locate the switch to turn it on (there are about 10 extra switches and also gauges which do nothing in the car). The enormous aircraft landing lights behind the grille probably don't help either.



So now both major hoses had gone.

I popped the bonnet and looked at the damage. Minutes earlier I had excellent condition under bonnet heat insulation. The radiator hose had shredded the two triangular panels on the driver's side. The hose had exploded with such force that it had peeled itself back over the thermostat housing. Bits of insulation and hose were everywhere. I'm lucky no electrical wires or leads

had been damaged. Coolant was everywhere, including the windscreen and outside panels. I will have to polish the engine bay again.

By now, the other two cars had stopped and much mirth ensued. Fortunately, I had a spare upper hose in the boot and about three litres of coolant. Geoff had 5 or 6 litres of water in his car, and a flat bladed screwdriver. The repairs commenced.

As we milled around the open bonnet of the car, a few other cars stopped. It was Gwen Livingstone's daughters and a son-in-law. They offered assistance, but we were OK and had a chat instead. Gwen had been planning on bringing her Ford Capri to the Jugiong run, but it wouldn't start and she was instead driving Michael's Aspen Green Targa Florio to the event. This would be the Targa's first outing since Michael passed away. I was keen to see both Gwen, and Michael's Targa.

After a few minutes the hose was replaced and fluids poured in. We were about an inch short of high tide in the radiator. I was pretty concerned at this stage, and planned to pull into the next available servo to replace the water and coolant that were now in the radiator. Apart from a 500ml bottle of Fanta in my car, there was nothing else to put in the radiator if it was required. We all went back to our cars and headed off again. It was about 50km to Jugiong.

Out on the highway, with the half-water, half-coolant, mixture sloshing around in the radiator I kept a paranoid eye on the temperature gauge. In addition to the radiator blowing, a nasty miss was occurring. This didn't occur under load, only when the foot was lifted and between 90 and 100km/h. Apart from that, the 50km to Jugiong was covered without incident. I did receive reports of puffs of smoke occurring occasionally from the right hand exhaust pipe on my car.

Arriving at Jugiong after a 50km trouble free run, I lined my car up in the same area the P76s were parked in last year. I could see some of the Country Club cars, and also Michael Livingstone's Targa Florio. I took my window cleaner spray bottle out of the boot and cleaned up some of the mess on the paint and windscreen caused by my explosion on the highway. I had actually washed the car the day before, and toyed with the idea of waxing and polishing it. I had even applied tyre black to the tyres. I don't think my black car has ever had tyre black near it. It's not that sort of car.



I stood around and chatted to various people, mainly the Country P76 members and also some of the Antiques from the Cootamundra Antique Vehicle Club. Someone had driven a beautiful Armstrong Siddeley to the event. I would have liked to peer under its bonnet but I couldn't locate its owner. After lunch, the Cootamundra Club business started and Gwen and Michael's daughters thanked everyone for attending. The event is also the Cootamundra Antique's birthday event, and a cake was cut and slices passed around. I have heard that the two events may be split with the memorial run to be held in November and the Cootamundra Birthday Jugiong run staying in February.

This would make sense and I think the Michael Livingstone Memorial run would have



potential to grow as an event. I am not sure if the Model A club or the FJ club have regional representation, but they were also passions of Michael's and would be natural inclusions for the event along with the strong turnout of Leyland P76s seen at the last two memorial runs.

I suggested to the Country Club guys that, regardless of future more formal events, we should plan a joint event for mid-year and they seemed keen. Following the Easter nationals I will contact them and arrange something.

After a few hours of car-related chatting and peering at other people's prides and joys, the Canberra gang decided to head back towards the ACT. Considering the events of the trip up I decided to travel back with Geoff and his son Christian. My first stop was at the Jugiong servo where I checked all my fluid levels and topped up the oil. The coolant seemed OK, and the small servo there didn't even sell replacement coolant. Jugiong once had three servos prior the bypass in 1996. I'm glad they still have this one.



Christian jumped in the car and we set off. Within metres of driving off, and still in the servo, the steering mechanism locked up. The famous steering lock problem, which Leyland issued a service bulletin on back in 1974, had not been implemented on this car. I was shocked. After some juggling of the wheel it unlocked. I was now doubly paranoid. Christian suggested not driving it at all. If the steering hadn't returned just as he said that, perhaps I would have left the car there and had it towed back to Canberra and repaired. I do have a copy of the service bulletin and read it as soon as I got home.

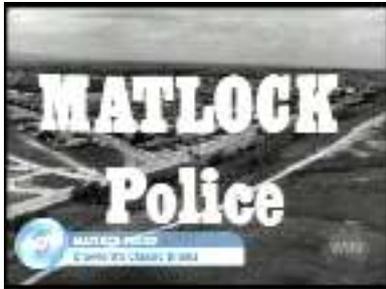
The drive back was uneventful. Christian diagnosed the strange miss as probably being carbie related, or the car could just need a general tune. We stopped at the Yass service centre and checked all the fluid levels again. The car was running cool and apart from the miss, well. While poking around under the hood Christian found a two inch long brass screw sitting in the manifold. It looked like a carbie screw. I pulled the air cleaner off and sure enough the choke linkage arm was missing its screw. Once replaced and with everything screwed back down and tightened I headed off again and the 60km back to Belconnen went very smoothly.

The run was excellent and it was nice to catch up with the NSW Country P76 Club members, the Livingstone family, and the few ACT club members who made the trip. I like looking at the eclectic cars of the Cootamundra Antiques Club also. The Jugiong Park is an excellent facility for a club run.



1973, THE P76 WAS RELEASED and MATLOCK POLICE was on TV

Bryce French



1973, the P76 was released and Matlock Police was on TV. Now with re-runs of Matlock Police shown in the wee small hours, we have some reminders of the different world the P76 was born into.

Below are screen grabs of a 1973 episode of Matlock Police 'A Special Place'. Some of the norms of the time were the payment of wages in cash. In this show it allowed the naughty people to stage an armed robbery while the cash was being counted into little envelopes to be distributed to the workers. The counting process involved people punching numbers into adding machines which spewed out long wide ribbons of paper.



First view of the villains' car.

No computers, no mobile phones, and all the fixed phones had coiled leads to the handset. The Police drove Valiants with whiney sirens mounted in the middle of the bonnet and a single blue rotating light in the middle of the roof. Well at least they did in this show. Probably because the credits at the end acknowledged the Valiants were supplied by Chrysler Australia Pty Ltd, the Land Rover from Regent Motors Melbourne, and the Honda motor cycle from Bennett Honda Brisbane.



Second look. Hmm!!

But the strongest impression of change is the absolute poverty of the television industry at that time. Part of the impression comes from the acknowledgements mentioned above; they didn't pay for much. And black and white. I remember that, at the time, motor cars were valuable items that didn't get banged into things all that often; I suppose Chrysler expected the Valiants back with a little wear and tear but around the same length, width and height.



Villains' car at start of chase.

Thus when someone turned up in an old banger on TV we all said 'Allo Allo there's a car chase and crash coming up'. So it was in this case when the 1953 Zephyr turned up with the villains in it, it was about 20 years old when this show was made.



Villains' car during chase



Villains' car during chase, hmm again



Just before the final plunge



Start of the final plunge



Now I'm not one of those super observant people who can give the police detailed descriptions. In fact, I live in fear of observing a crime and then telling the police it was an ordinary person of normal height and build and average features. But there was something about this Zephyr that intrigued me as the show developed. Have a look at the pictures and see if you notice anything.

It seems to me this was a wonderful old Zephyr, it metamorphosed into a Consul, back to a Zephyr, then to a Consul for the final crash. And maybe a Zephyr again for the long shots of the final plunge.

The credits (blame ?) for continuity are given to Kay Leech. We really shouldn't have let women into the work place. But I jest, I don't think anyone could have let this slip by without noticing. I'm guessing the Zephyr was crashed or broke during the chase sequence, the budget or time didn't run to getting another one, so the Consul was used for the remainder of the filming, and the damaged Zephyr was tipped over the edge for the final long shots.

And that is the frugal world into which the P76 was released. We do lose track of how effluent we've become in the intervening years.

(Editor's note. There must be something about Zephyrs, Consuls, and the film industry. In the 1959 remake of *The 39 Steps*, starring Kenneth More, a Zephyr transmogrifies into a Consul and back to a Zephyr in the course of one afternoon's pursuit of the aforesaid Mr More.)

During the final plunge – now I think this is a Zephyr



The end of the road, now this still looks like a Zephyr to me



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