

Leylines 86

Canberra and Districts Leyland P76 Club Newsletter August 2010

22.03.2009

Next Meeting: Tuesday 3 August
Weston Ck Labor Club
From 7.30PM

Editor's Note



I wasn't going to produce Leylines this month as I don't have any material on hand, apart from the final part of Damo's excellent article on the world of P76 models. But it's a rainy Sunday afternoon and it's too cold to work in an unheated garage, so here's Leylines 86.

Our last meeting was held under difficult conditions, in competition with the Labor Club's Tuesday trivia night. There were rumblings from the assembled masses of P76 Club members about new nights and new venues, but nothing seems to have eventuated, so I've slotted the usual date, time and venue on the front page this month. Speaking of meetings, it must be just about time for our AGM. Perhaps next month, Mr President?

The new speedo cables that I organised through Adrian from the Queensland P76 club have arrived and I'll have them at the next meeting. While talking to Adrian he said that he was looking into having handbrake cables remade as well. I'll keep you posted on developments there. He also mentioned that the Queensland club has decided to host the next Nationals in Brisbane in 2012, and that there will be a 'gathering' for P76 enthusiasts at Inverell next Easter.

The move by Trax into low volume, pre-ordered resin models has provided a benefit for us P76 enthusiasts. Trax has just announced that its next model in this series will be a Leyland Force 7, in glorious Home on th'Orange. Order before 30 August for delivery in October. They are not cheap at \$129 but a Force 7 should complement your collection of other P76 Trax models nicely.



See you on Tuesday

Col

Looking at Leyland in 1/43

Damien Haas

PART 3

Leyland P76 Resin models

Diecast scale model cars are not the only way to accurately reproduce a 1:1 car. In the early 1970's modellers began using a new material – epoxy resins derived from the plastic industry. This included silicon, which could be used not only for casting plaster statues of mickey mouse, but were able to be used with some molten metals such as white metal. With these new casting and moulding materials, a new benefit was discovered – detail in a resin made model could be much higher than a mass-produced diecast scale model car. Importantly, it was a lot cheaper to make cars in resin, although the moulds could not be used indefinitely. A new industry began making low-run limited edition models of obscure, sporting and other cars that rivalled the major diecast producers for accuracy and quality.

When Trax held their fire sale of Leyland P76's, one person in particular was very worried. That was Steve Maher. Steve, a long time member of the Sydney Model Auto Club, as well as a member of the Leyland P76 movement felt that this was the end of P76 for Trax, and that no other manufacturer (such as Biante or Classic Carlectable) would go near anything Leyland ever again. Sadly that would include the Force 7.

Discussing the matter with other members of the club, Steve managed over the course of a year to convince an experienced model maker Rob Bender, to consider doing a run of resin 1:43 scale Force 7's. That venture was highly successful, with all 75 models produced in 2007 sold out very quickly. This success led to a second production of a Leyland design, the Deluxe P76. Depending on the success of this venture, a P76 Station Wagon may also be produced.



Leyland Force 7 Hardtop

Rob Bender Models and the NSW P76 Club collaborated to produce the Leyland Force 7 hardtop. The project came about largely through Steve Maher convincing Rob Bender

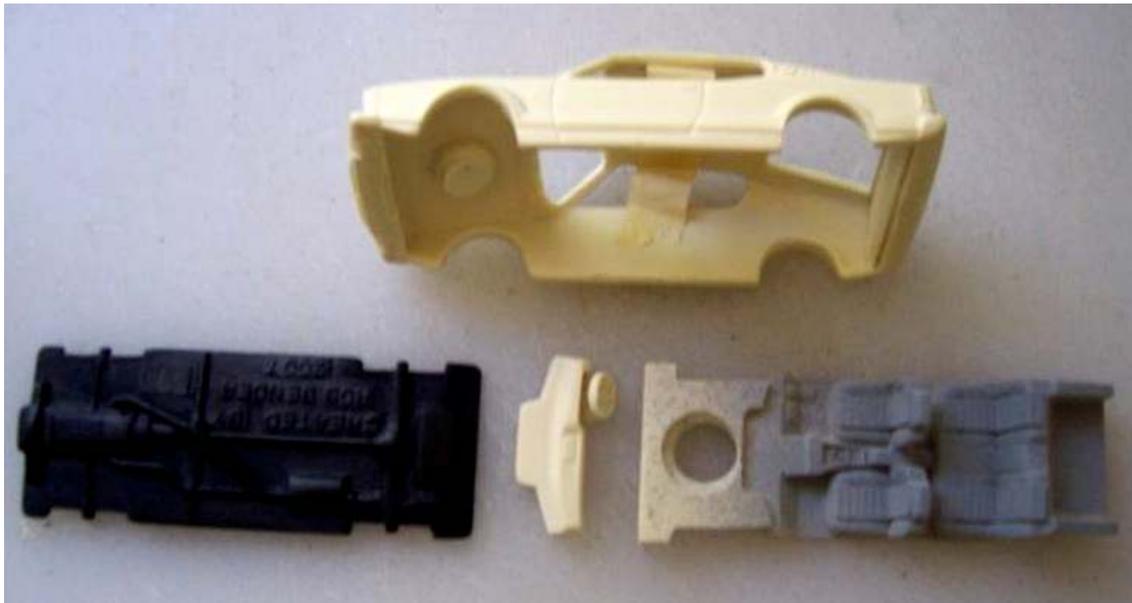
to produce the car. Interestingly Steve decided that the project would include the various owner clubs, and that the model could only be sold through the clubs. He wanted club membership to have benefits and meaning. The project was a success, with 75 models sold and one (number 76) auctioned at the 2008 nationals.

The model is very well proportioned and looks good sitting next to a Trax P76. The accuracy extends to the interior and the grille. The wheels are as detailed as the Targa Florio mags on the Trax Targa Florio. The model is in 1:43 scale and although the roof looks a bit awkward, when you refer to pictures of the 1:1 Force 7, you can see that from certain angles the Force 7 also looked a bit awkward in the styling department.



When you open the kit you see that the main parts are the body and the wheelbase, which has the interior, moulded into it. The wheels and the glass are also included as are decals. Instructions are clear and accurate. The kit goes together well although you really need to have experience building plastic models and resin models. If this is your first kit, I suggest building other kits before you start on this one.

Steve Maher advises that over 20 people have elected to have their kit built by Rob Bender. The results are always good when this occurs.



Leyland P76 Deluxe Sedan

After the success of the Force 7 project, Steve Maher turned to the Leyland P76 Deluxe Sedan and although none have reached the public yet, the photographs look promising. Designed and built by Rob Bender Models, the Deluxe sedan is based on the Force 7 kit, using the same baseplate with a modified interior. The body is new, and the wheels and glass are new. The model features a bench seat and column shift, to reflect the lower specifications of the Deluxe sedan.

This will also be a limited production run, and I urge people to procure an example of this for their collections. It will almost certainly be the only way to add a Leyland P76 Deluxe sedan to your collection.



Leyland P76 Station Wagon

Designed in tandem with the Leyland P76 Deluxe Sedan, the Leyland P76 Station Wagon resin kit is also going to be a very limited production item. Designed and built by Rob Bender Models, the Leyland P76 Station Wagon has been designed using photographs of the factory prototypes. The resin casting uses a new baseplate, body, interior and glass. As in the P76 Deluxe project, none have been made available to the public yet, however the photographs indicate that the model is true to the 1:1 version, with accurate proportions and detailing.

As with the resin Leyland Force 7 hardtop and the resin Leyland P76 Deluxe sedan, the resin Leyland P76 Station Wagon model will be a very limited production run, and I urge people to procure an example of this for their collections. It will almost certainly be the only way to add a P76 Station Wagon to your collection.



Interview with Steve Maher

Steve Maher is a long time Leyland P76 enthusiast and current President of the Leyland P76 Owners Club of NSW.

Do you collect other diecast models ?

Yes – I have been collecting diecast cars since the mid 1980's. The bulk of my collection is of Bathurst Great Race cars from 1960 to current. I also collect cars of Australians who have raced overseas, Mark Webber, Alan Jones, Jack Brabham and sons. I also collect trials cars, repco, redex, London to Sydney cars. The scale I collect is 1:43; I think that's the true collectors scale. I also collect cars I have owned such as the P76. I'm not really concerned who makes the car, as long its accurate.

I'm also a member of the Sydney Model Auto Club, and we meet once a month and have regular swap meets where we talk about cars, swap cars and look at interesting cars that members are building or have acquired. That's where I met some of the guys such as Rob Bender and Tony Hanna who have worked on the resin Force 7 and the Trax P76.

Why did you decide to have a Force 7 made?

I felt that since Trax dropped the P76 sedan, it was going to be the end for Trax and P76. I didn't think the other manufacturers would touch it either. I spoke to some club guys, especially Rob Bender as I knew he scratch built models and had done excellent work. I suggested to him that he do a Force 7.

It took about a year to convince him, and he had other models he was working on as well.



I decide also that I would offer the model through the clubs, and involve the Leyland movement. I wanted to add value to being a club member. If you wanted a Force 7, and I knew it would be popular, then you had to join a club or be a member.

Could you explain the sequence of events leading up to the model arriving?

After taking a year to convince him Rob agreed to undertake the project. There were a couple of criteria that we needed to meet before the project could go ahead. Firstly the car had to look right when placed next to a Trax P76. The Trax model is the benchmark. Secondly we had to figure out how many to build. We didn't want too few to sell and end up making a loss for the club, but we also didn't want to do too many and take away from the exclusivity. Rob wanted to build 50, I wanted 100 – so we arrived at 76.

Then Rob scratch built a model using photos alone. He didn't really base it on any single Force 7. I don't know any Force 7 owners well enough to ring them and ask them if we can come over and go over their cars. I did supply a lot of photos that I had taken, or acquired through the movement from people like James Mentiplay and others.

Having the existing Trax P76 to work from helped. The Force 7 wheelbase and track are the same, and although no panels are shared between the cars, the windscreen is, so that was a place to start. For model makers some licence needs to be taken to put the model in perspective. Visually the Force 7 looks right and in proportion and this is more important than mathematical accuracy. One of the criteria for the model was that the Force 7 had to look right when it was placed next to a Trax p76 and it does.

What was demand like? Did you sell all 76?

We built 76 and a few prototypes to use for box art and to trial the moulds, but all 75 that were for sale sold. 76 was auctioned at the last P76 Nationals in Geelong. Demand was initially slow, which led to some apprehension in P76 land. People didn't feel that it would materialize. There was some fantastic support from the clubs, especially Queensland and Western Australia. The WA club offered to take any model kits that weren't sold. In the end all kits were sold and to this day I still get people contacting the club looking to buy one.

It was important to me that the clubs get involved with the project and do the marketing. It gave them the opportunity to add value to being a club member, and they could resell the kit to their members and make a small profit for the club.

How many people elected to have them built?

Twenty people have had them built by Rob so far, and there are two underway right now. He does some extra detail work and makes it a better looking model.

What colours? Anything unusual?

Mainly the six factory colours that would have been offered initially, but the most dramatic is a Peel me Grape with White interior which was built for Adrian Spencer. It's a stunning car.



Most models have been production colours, Bold as Brass, Home on the range, a few Omega Navys including one that went to NZ possibly to a Force 7 owner. No Oh Fudge or Crystal White though (The Force 7's in Birdwood and WA). But they may have made their own models up for those cars. Nothing too flashy has been built apart from Adrian's Peel Me Grape Force 7.

I would like to do one up as a Bathurst racer. In 1975 one of the car magazines did a what if article on 'what would a Force 7 Bathurst racer look like'. The intention was to lower the car, use Bathurst Globes, Bathurst 1000 sticker, painted Blue and White, Leyland Special Tuning stickers and a big 76 on the side.

Do you think it's strange that none have appeared on Ebay ?

No, it was a unique car and I think people value them. I still get requests for them.

When did you decide to have a deluxe made?

A few years had passed since the Force 7 project and Trax began to successfully offer Targa Florios and recoloured Supers. I think it's unlikely that Trax will retool for a Deluxe although conceivably they could with a new nose and wheels, but I wasn't confident. So I spoke to Rob again about it but he was thinking of the P76 Station Wagon.

I felt that to complete the range we could build a Deluxe (single headlight, different interior) and a wagon. Both the sedan and wagon have been developed together and the wagon project is 95% complete with photographs taken etc, but wont proceed to production until all the Deluxe sedan kits have been sold.

The Deluxe came together fairly quickly. Rob used a modified baseplate from the Force 7 project. We decided to offer a base model V8 bench seat column shift version, we could have offered a 6 cylinder, but that would have meant retooling the baseplate. We used the Trax car as a reference and the resin model had to look right when placed next to the Trax and the Force 7.

What has demand been like?

The WA, Qld and NSW Clubs have sold all 11 of their allocated models, but the other clubs haven't. It is disappointing as the wagon model won't appear until all the sedans have been sold.

How many people have elected to have them built?

Five so far, including one in Plum Loco and another in Home on the range with a Casino Blue interior which is a particularly unique combination requested by Damien Haas.

What do you think of the Trax P76's?

Stunning. It's the best rendition of a P76 I've ever seen in a scale model. Despite some inaccuracies, quality is very high. Trax should be commended, they took a big risk.



Have you Code 3'd any Trax P76's ?

Yes, I turned one into an oh Fudge brown car, which was the first P76 I owned back in 1981. I also have a one off of the Deluxe kit which has bucket seats and a column shift, I plan to do a Daryl Eastlake race car at some stage, except I don't know what it looked like from behind.

What do you think of the Dinkum P76's ?

When it first came out I think it cost 50 or 60 bucks, when a Trax was around 20. That was expensive for a 1:43. The scale is also not quite right, it looks like its 1:38 rather than 1:43. Technology has also changed in the interim, look at the quality of cars in 1:43 that are coming out now such as the Trax Opals. Dinkum were ahead of their time, but that was twenty years ago. The Trax is a far better model, just look at the amount of detail on it. Having said that, I don't own one – but I wish I did. Dinkum was a good thing for the model industry, and they did some amazing and unique models, often in very limited runs, but I don't think they got the P76 quite right.

I understand you are arranging for a run of Code 3's of the P76 Rallye based on the Trax Targa Florio?

Yes, that is correct.

Why this car?

I was approached by the owner of the P76 Rallye who asked if it was possible to do it. I did some research on the car, and the viability of such a project and decided to go ahead if we could get 20 pre-sold.

Has it proved popular?

We have presold 10 but can't begin until all 20 are spoken for. The cost is in the decals and artwork. The Trax Targa has the right wheels and body so that's an obvious starting point, but they need to be completely stripped, primed, recoloured, art applied and assembled.

Who is making it?

Tony Hanna who made the original car for Trax is doing the artwork on his equipment, and Rob Bender is building the cars for us.

Have you thought about a Code 3 or resin version of the World Cup rally car or the 'Alpine' or 'Panther' car?

I have thoughts of many things! Post wagon I'd love to do an Alpine, I'd love to do a Panther, but most wanted – I'd love a replica of the World Cup car.

Trax continue to offer recolours of the P76 casting. What do you see as the future of diecast P76's?



The future? I'm sceptical that Trax will venture further afield than the P76 Super. To do an Executive they would have to do a new interior, and there is perhaps not enough difference to most people between an Executive and a Super. In 1:43 the rubber strip on the bumper would just be a decal and few would notice that detail. Trax will probably do Super recolours into the future.

Trax are doing a low-volume resin line, and there is some talk of a Force 7 appearing in that range.

Perhaps, but they're far more likely to do a Holden Brougham.

Do you think that Biante, Classic Carlectables or Trax would ever produce a 1:18 Leyland P76?

No, I doubt it, they wouldn't feel it would be a volume seller.

Perhaps a resin kit opportunity?

Perhaps! It's a much more difficult proposition. Bigger model, more detail, more parts, higher expectations. To get the quality that you want in that scale is a big ask.

Any final thoughts?

I'd like to thank Mike Stack former owner of Dinkum Classics for having a go and putting the P76 onto the market back in the day. He had a vision of producing Australian models of high quality in Australia, and he achieved that. I think Trax have also done a brilliant job at their price point. I'd like to see Biante or Classic Carlectable have a go as well but I'm not going to hold my breath. I've loved doing the resin projects, I wished we had made more Force 7's as it was very successful.

Interview with Tony Hanna

Tony Hanna is a freelance model maker/designer who has designed cars for most Australian model companies. He designed the Trax Leyland P76 sedan and built the pre-production models. He recently designed models for '56 Models' and is soon bringing out models under his own company 'Modelcraft Miniatures'.

How long have you been involved with diecast models?

I've been a freelance model builder since the 1960's. I've spent about 15 years with Trax. The first model I did for them was the 1:24 scale FJ Holden. My trade is as a hand letterer, so I suppose I am pretty good at making exact copies of things.

Recently I have been working with John Pisani (of Models 56) and if you saw the GTR-X, the FC Holden, the McCormack Charger and the Bartlett Camaro, those were mine. I've got my own company 'Modelcraft Miniatures' and I will be producing the 'Captain Nitrous' FJ Holden drag car, the Broadspeed Mini and the Holden Hurricane in the near future.



How did you become involved with the Trax Leyland P76?

Rob Hill (owner of Trax) said we would do the P76. We went over to Joe Greens house and measured his cars and took photos. I think Rob knew of Joe Green through their wives who both had an interest in art. Anyway we ended up over at Joe Greens one afternoon and used his cars as the reference for the P76.

What is the process involved in creating a diecast model?

Well you start by doing the research. Locating a car, or several taking lots of photos and making measurements. Then you rough it out by scaling the photos onto clear film. The three measurements I work from are 1:1, 1:21.5 and 1:43.

You make a rough body shape mould in 1:21.5 scale out of Styrofoam and plastibond, as close as possible to the car you are working from. You go over and over and over, sanding it down and looking at it from every angle. I use typically 80-100 photos of the car from every angle. Slowly you work the rough mould down until you are happy.

The body shape mould then, in the case of the P76, went back and forth between Robert, Joe and myself until everyone was happy. Sometimes measurements aren't perfect and a little bit of artistic licence is required.

The body shape mould is in 1:21.5 which is twice the size of the finished 1:43 model. It is a solid shape with door lines, windows etc. This mould then goes to China where it is copied in plastic in 1:21.5. This then comes back to Trax, where we can make corrections and compared with the body shape mould and photos. It then gets sent back to China when Trax are satisfied.

At the model factory in China it then gets pulled apart again and CAD Cammed using spark eroding equipment (basically measured by lasers and fed into a computer) into whatever scale you want. For the Leyland it was 1:43.

These measurements in the computer are then used to make the moulds. One platen is made for the metal components, the body, bonnet, boot and doors and one for the plastic parts – the interior and the glass. Being in the computer, you can make the car in whatever scale you like now.

With the new moulds, a tooling run is done first, and these turn out a few cars which are assembled and measured. They can airfreight these things back to Trax overnight, and of course everything is email and digital photos these days as well. Once Trax are happy with the patterns, they are case hardened. These are the moulds which will be used in production.

When you are making a car, you have to book your slot in with the Chinese factory a few months in advance. Typically a car will take from 4 to 6 weeks to make, but sometimes it can take longer. Once the moulds are complete and the plastic and metal parts are being made, they are then fettled. This involves taking sprue and casting flash off. The parts are put into big barrels and tumbled to get the rough edges off. They are then painted and assembled in various phases. The Chinese also do all the packaging.



What happens when there are problems with a car, like an incorrect detail or trim etc?

Once Trax has signed off on a model, the cars that come back are 99% the same as what was signed off on. The Chinese do everything casting, fettling, painting and packaging. I do recall the 1:24 XA Falcon GT in Purple with white interior arrived at Trax with black door trims. They were all sent back to China and replaced with white door trims.

Have you ever visited the Chinese model factories?

No I had the opportunity to visit one of the factories Hongwell, where they make the Cararama models a few years ago with Robert, but I didn't go.

Is making diecast models a passion or a job?

A passion! For stuff I like anyway! Sometimes its just a job, when I work on cars I don't really like. Then again, when I started on the Trux buses they were just a job, but now I love them.

How do you go about making sure the really fine detail is captured when you are working in small scales such as 1:43?

I go to my photos and say it's a badge; I will copy into Adobe Illustrator and blow it up 16 times. Then reduce it to the scale I need, first 1:21.5 and then 1:43. Those sorts of things are largely decals not cast parts.

When making a model, sometimes there has to be compromises between accuracy and human perspective. Were there any compromises on the P76 model?

I don't recall. I know it was a totally new model. When I did the HR and HD models, I did the HR first and got a few things wrong, mainly around the windows. When the Hr came out using the same basic pattern, somehow the Chinese had got it wrong and it was slightly warped. The P76 is fine though.

Was it a conscious design decision to make the Trax model with a separate headlight grill part so that Trax could use the P76 pattern to build a Deluxe single headlight version in the future?

Not by me, I think it was always going to be a twin headlight model.
Once the model is accepted by Trax, how much input do you have into colour selection?

Colour selection is 60% me, 40% Trax. Robert selected the first three colours. I do all the artwork for them though. I know Robert doesn't like letting the first cars go out with the best colours!

Did you work on the Targa Florios?

I did the artwork for them yes.



What about the mag wheels?

I don't do wheels; the Chinese have a wheel guy. When I work on the master body mould, I usually just have four discs where the wheels go.

How did you feel when Trax proclaimed the P76 release a dud and dumped their stock of cars at firesale prices?

What can I do! It's their stock. I think that the decision to do the Targa, and those were sold out I believe, justifies the decision by Trax to do the P76.

Do you still have any of the Trax P76's?

Yes I still have the first three cars and one of the Targas.

Damien Haas is a Management Consultant located in Canberra. He runs his own company MFP Consulting. In his spare time he plays with Ford Falcons and Leyland P76's.

He also has a blog called 'Capital Diecast Garage' where there is too much focus placed on Leyland P76's. <http://capitaldiecastgarage.blogspot.com>

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