

Anything But Average



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Official Publication of the P76 Owners Club of Victoria Inc.

ANYTHING BUT AVERAGE

IS THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LEYLAND P76 OWNERS CLUB OF VICTORIA (IAN-AO019822)

This publication is not for sale to the general public and is only available through membership.

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Cover – Off the Beaten Track – Club Rally Yarra Valley & Ranges
Alternative Title – Im not taking my car on dirt roads!!!!!!

Editorial

Fellow Pnuts

Last issue I started a campaign to expose the virtues of not just owning a P76, but owning a rare 6 Cylinder (Endangered Species) P76

(Fineprint - Spanish Olive P76 Excluded)

Since this campaign began it has been my aim to assure the special breed of P76 owner that it's OK to have a small folic symbol and fear not the scorn of the V8 Bullies, because it is you people that own something special, the coolest owners of P76 Vehicles.

"So what if a certain Vice President makes fun of your sexuality, its time to leap from the closet and declare your love for the purrr and not the burble or if you like it both ways the Purrr and the Burble".

I must say this campaign is attracting local and national club members confessions and an international response from across the ditch where L6 P76 are very rare. We will be featuring the owners who have come out this month and show you their vehicles.

Speaking of vehicles my restoration project The Plum Loco Super is well under way after a kick start helping hand with the fusion engineering requirements. This has nothing to do with atomic Physics but a whole lot to do with turning rust into good steel by the removal and replacement method. Thanks to Andy Frith for showing me the way and doing most of the work

I have produced for my pink P a Symbol which I intend to proudly display on the front fender; I cant wait to line up beside a Ford GT Super Roo at a car show and gauge some perspective.



I know it's a pig but it's a very masculine pig!!!!!!

We also have for you and answer to a question owners have pondered but never asked in fear of being a Dip Stick, and a story on the un canny similarities between a P76 the ill fated Rover P8 and the Rover SD1. Everyone loves a good conspiracy theory.

Hope you enjoy reading this months offering, but seriously guys I cant keep making up stuff I need your contributions. This is your magazine. I am continually promised articles and don't receive. At the risk of sounding like a broken record and a nag there are

plenty of stories about restoration projects that other members would love to hear about.

There are three member Targa's nearing completion, one in Kiata one on Cranbourne and one in Jeeralang Junction (Where???). There is a member Bitter Apricot in NSW that has an interesting family story attached; there is a member Yellow Terra at Pakenham that surely must be finished by now, an "Ive got it Going Again" vehicle at Caulfield North, a Spanish Spew in Churchill and a Black Limo in Tassie along with an Oh Pooh L6 in Bentleigh that are just beginning their journey to the SA Nationals.

That's at least one story for the next 9-10 issues. Get your fingers out guys we would all love to hear about your projects and don't forget the pictures.

Regards Martyn & Silvia

The SAT NAV

*I have a little Satnav, It sits there in my car
A Satnav is a driver's friend, it tells you where you are.
It gives me full instructions, especially how to drive
"It's sixty K an hour", it says, "You're doing sixty five".
It tells me when to stop and start, and when to use the brake
And tells me that it's never ever, safe to overtake.
It tells me when a light is red, and when it goes to green
It seems to know instinctively, just when to intervene.
It lists the vehicles just in front, and all those to the rear
And taking this into account, it specifies my gear.
I'm sure no other driver, has so helpful a device
For when we leave and lock the car, it still gives its advice.
It fills me up with counselling, each journey's pretty fraught
So why don't I exchange it, and get a quieter sort?
Ah well, you see, it cleans the house, makes sure I'm properly fed
It washes all my shirts and things, and keeps me warm in bed!
I have a little Satnav, I've had it all my life
It's better than the normal ones, my Satnav is my wife.
Despite all these advantages, and my tendency to scoff,
I only wish that now and then, I could turn the bugger off.*

Bulletin Board



LEYLAND P76 OWNERS CLUB (SA) INC

Easter National Meeting 3-6 April 2015

The SA Club wishes to announce that the 2015 Easter National Meeting will be held in South Australia at McLaren Vale 40 kms south of Adelaide. McLaren Vale is situated at the Gateway to the Fleurieu Peninsula well known for its beaches and food it is also a world renowned Wine Region.

All accommodation has been reserved at McLaren Vale Motel & Apartments, Registration and accommodation will be available from Thursday 2 April. Bookings are to be made direct to the motel and state that you are attending the P76 National Meeting.

Please notify the Events Coordinator [Dianne Bray](mailto:npbray@hotmail.com) of your intention to attend Email npbray@hotmail.com or mail 24 Elijah Street Morphett Vale SA 5162

40 YEARS OF THE P76 TARGA FLORIO

The "Targa Florio" model was created in Mid 1974 to commemorate the stage win of a nearly standard P76 in the 1974 world cup rally driven by legendary Australian rally driver Evan Green. The speed and ability his V8 4 speed manual surprised the worlds best in the "Targa Florio" stage in Sicily (Italy) .

Following on from the 40th Anniversary P76 Launch gathering held in Canberra last year, The P76 Owners Club of NSW and Hunter Valley Club are organising a celebratory gathering to mark the 40th Anniversary of the release of the Targa Florio on the 7/8/9 JUNE 2014

**The Venue will be at the
Motto Farm Country Comfort Motel (same venue as 2010 Nationals)
2285 Pacific Highway, Heatherbrae NSW 2324**

If you wish to attend Registration forms are sent as an attachment accompanying this issue of this Magazine.

If you have any questions please contact
Tony Deluca Ph 0288122479.



PNUTS CHARITY DRIVE

The Shit Box Rally is approaching and the boys are making their final preparations for their departure to Perth on the 24th; the start point of the rally.

Rick tells me there is an 11th hour dash to finish the preparation of the car and hopefully he will have time to bring it down for a photo opportunity prior to heading off. .

It's not too late to make your donation to the Cancer Council on the website, Rick tells me that up until the last month donations from P76 Club members amounted to only 6% of the total but now with a spurt in this month P76 member and club donations amount to 20% of the total. I will leave it to the prerogative of the boys to disclose the actual total donations raised on behalf of the Cancer Council until after it is all done and dusted



Letters to the Editor

Martyn,

I enjoyed your magazine item on the L6 model range, of which only two variants exist in NZ. The Deluxe 3 speed manual and column auto. All those Super 6's and 4 speeds are dream territory for us! I can assure you that I am the only known owner of a road registered P76 Deluxe 6 in NZ. It is an Am Eye Blue 3 speed manual and has been somewhat modified in the interior and dash areas and has an electric fuel pump.

We have had our car since 2001 so are experienced owners. I fitted reclining cloth covered buckets and rear seat, carpet and centre console some years ago. Previously the car was fitted with a Super dash with different gauges such as vacuum, oil pressure and amp along with the standard Deluxe speedo/temp/fuel gauges.

The original engine is still fitted and going well. It has an electric fuel pump and a redeveloped bypass system that I know nothing about. It also benefited from having hardened valve seats fitted in the late 90's as we changed our petrol to the unleaded @\$%! we still endure – but it's not as bad as it was back then.



There is one other Deluxe 6 highly likely to return to the road (should have over 2 years ago) and that is my old Bold as Brass 3 speed column auto that I bought off my Dad, one of about 17 owners the car had! It has been 99% restored, only requiring the new headlining to be fitted and very little else to see it back again and I hope it will not be long before it resurfaces.

There are a few very sad wrecks in storage in the South Island, and a couple parked on farms but it is extremely unlikely any of these will ever be back. One is probably the only Envy Green coloured car in NZ. But there is always hope, locally a Deluxe V8 just returned to the road just last week after a 7 year sleep! I hope my nagging helped its return!

For the record, I think the Shit Box rally is a great idea and people who get hung up on the name should get over it and some type of club support shouldn't be condemned by members at large. The club is part of the community and

needs to pull together along with many other organisations and if the club makes a small donation so be it. Obviously you can't give all your money away but people will overlook the benefits to the club (let alone the charity) of having a P76 compete.

How can they get hung up on a name when you all use "Start you Bastard"

How many parts/members/whole cars will be discovered along the way just because a P76 is there? I go to a show here every year and every year I get parts given to me or sold at very good rates because people recognise that I have an odd car and when they find parts they keep them until February and hand them over; A whole brand new distributor in its box one year. This year it was gasket sets, wheel bearings, oil and air filters etc – a good year indeed.

We are currently preparing to go the South Island to attend the Annual AGM and Concourse. While our 6 isn't going south with us, we are going by ferry, train and plane. There will be some Deluxe's down there and I've just realised that three of us North Islander's are going down without our Deluxe's. This could have proved to be the biggest Deluxe gathering here in NZ for a long time. I reckon the Deluxe is way under represented now. Get a line up of Leyland's and see how many single head light models are in it!

We are leaving an Am Eye Blue, French Blue and a Spanish Olive car behind and should have at least two Bitter Apricot, a Crystal White, Spanish Olive, Dry Red and maybe another Deluxe as well in attendance. Very unusual here.

Rob Jones Publicity Officer NZLP76OCInc

Follow up Email 1 April

I thought this might get your attention. It is your club that entertains an aversion to this rather unpleasant colour isn't it?

The shocking news is that a Spanish Olive Executive was awarded the members choice trophy at our recent National Rally and AGM.

We had 14 cars there with five owner driver's attending without Leyland's (AWOL) Had everyone been with car we would have had 4 Spanish Olive cars covering all 3 main models! Of the 19 potential cars there would have been 8 Deluxe's, unheard of in NZ since our 1988 meeting which was the largest ever seen here.

Twenty-eight P76's passed through the car park that day! Eccentric statistics!

Rob Jones Publicity Officer NZLP76OCInc

Editors Comment ; *In order to clarify things and so as not to cause any offence to Spanish Olive owner members of the Victorian Club, The aversion to Spanish Olive as a colour is the view of the Editor and not the Victorian Club because I am the only one with the guts to publicly say so. Its about time all you closet Spanish Oliver haters came out of the closet and declared yourselves to the world; You know you want to!!!!*



**Mommy I think
I'm Gunna Hurl
Again**

**This is \$%#@
Child Abuse**

Coming Events/Social Pages

MARCH CLUB RUN by Ken Western

We had 6 cars take part in this most enjoyable day. We started as planned at 8.30 and had a leisurely drive up to Gembrook. The Gembrook market was in full swing (despite a bit of rain) and the ladies had quite a bit of fun I think looking through the wares. Breakfast was pretty good too – egg and bacon toasted sandwiches.



We visited the car museum – quite small but full of some very interesting cars. The owner was on site and gave us a comprehensive guide to the museum and the history behind each of the cars on exhibit. Worth another visit at some time I think. Then onto the road on the way to Marysville.

A beautiful part of the country and a winding country road through the forest that just proved what a great touring car the P76 was. A dirt road stopped us at the top of the mountain – certain members were not keen to take their cars onto dirt roads. So we took an alternate route missing Marysville but taking us down the hill to Healesville. Great forest country, but we ended up on another dirt road. This time no option but to press on.

John Beattie and Mike Hare won't speak to me again I don't think. After quite a trip we finally ended up at the Pub in Yarra Glen – had lunch, listened to the band and chatted amongst ourselves. I Arrived home about 5.30; Great day and the P76 went like a dream.



Above Left Not the Duco!!!!



Above Right "Gorillas in the Mist"

EXCURSION TO PENRITE



Penrite are putting on a one day tour and "seminar" about oils, coolants etc on a weekend in August for a number of car clubs, and the P76 Owners Club of Victoria is invited. The club has responded by accepting the invitation. We will advise members of dates etc. as details come to hand.

BEECHWORTH DRIVE BACK IN TIME 2014

SATURDAY MAY 3RD 2014

Weekend starts with a BBQ lunch at 1:00pm at the old railway goods shed, Railway Avenue

This is followed by a point of interest car run.

(Cost \$10 per car, BBQ Included)

**Then join us for the
CRUIS'N BACK IN TIME
Street Cruise
commencing at 4.30pm**

Any vehicle over 25 years old is welcome to participate in the cruise.

Note that normal road rules apply, and any infringement of these rules will see vehicles removed from the cruise.

Bring the family, chairs and sit and watch the Back In Time Cruise.

The cruise will start at Railway Avenue (Old Railway Shed "A")

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RACV

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SUNDAY 18TH MAY 2014

Gold coin admittance - Proceeds to local charity
Free shuttle bus to Yering Station Sunday market
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- More details over the page -

For more information www.aomc.asn.au



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2014**

POST VINTAGE CAR CLUB
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10AM - 2.30PM **18TH MAY**

You are invited to
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come along and be part of it in 2014
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SUNDAY MAY 25th 2014

Winton Motor Raceway - Via Benalla Presented by the Austin Seven Club
IN CONJUNCTION WITH HISTORIC WINTON
www.historicwinton.org enquiries: 03 5428 2689
Photo: Neil Hammond | Austin Seven Club Inc. AM032908



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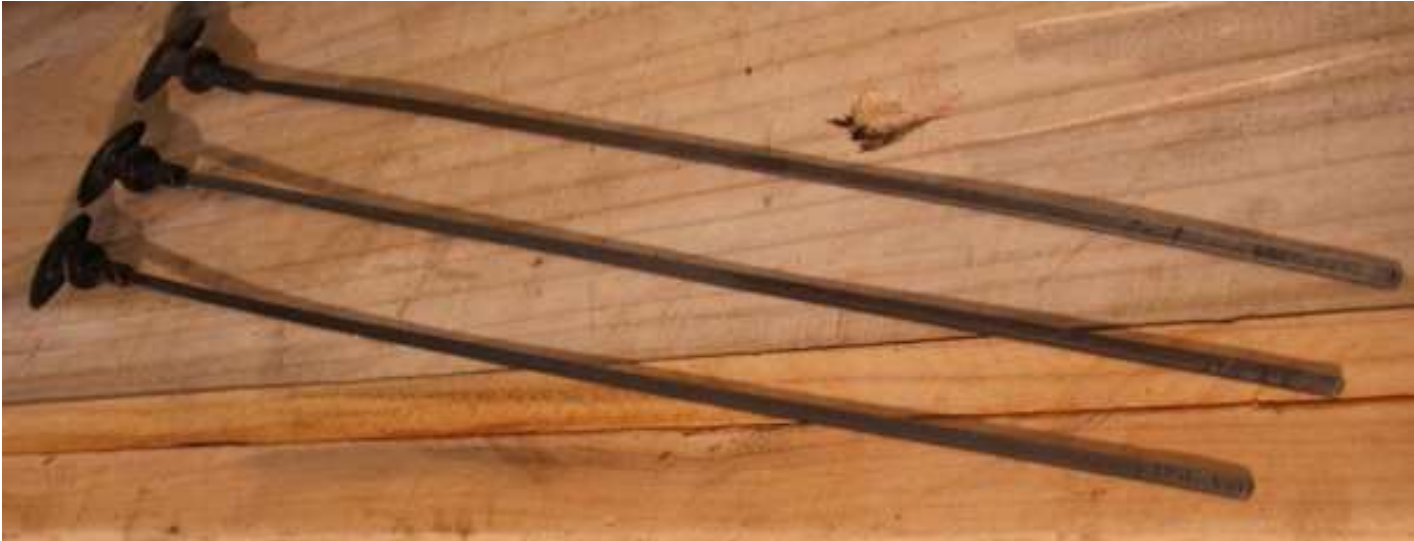
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TECH TIP – DIPSTICK GRADS

If you have more than the one V8 P76 you may have noticed the variation on Dipsticks, yes you heard me dipsticks! I have three V8 Engines and noticed that there were three different Dipsticks. While the lengths of the dipsticks are all roughly the same the issue was the position of the Max and Min Oil level marks.



The variance was quite large which could represent a half litre of oil either way. How do I know the engine is not overfull or if I have been running the engine on minimum oil level?

In my mind this seems to be quite important. I discovered that there is a service bulletin that covers this which most long term owners may be already aware of but for you first time owners how would you know if you are running your car with the correct oil level?

Position of Max oil Level Marks

The following dipstick graduations dimension and capacity figures are correct measured from the underside of the plastic top (The face that butts against the dipstick tube when inserted) to the Max Mark is

V8 - 475mm (18.7 in)

L6 - 325mm (12.8 in)

Oil Capacities

	V8	L6
Drain and Refill .	3 Litres (5.25 Pints)	3.4 Litres (6 Pints)
Oil Filter	0.74 Litres (1.3 Pints)	0.67 Litres (1.36 Pints)
Remaining in Reservoir	0.57 Litres (1.0 Pints)	0.57 Litres (1.0 Pints)
Remaining in Galleries	0.57 Litres (1.0 Pints)	

Hope this helps to Keep your P76 Healthy.

Martyn Hayes

La página de Presidentes



We have had an interesting couple of months since the last magazine, with quite a bit happening. We had the Club run up into the Dandenong Ranges and the Yarra Valley; the revised Club Constitution is at the first draft stage for review by the Committee and Rick (who was largely the creator of the current Constitution.) We were also asked by the ABC to help with a documentary in which the P76 featured. More on this in my Article under Member Articles.

I would also like to remind members that Ryan Ford is still looking for members to donate money to the Cancer Council, so that he can qualify his P76 in the Shit box Rally. As previously advised, the Club will donate an equal amount to any member donation, to the Cancer Council to a maximum of \$200. The last magazine outlined how to do this, so lets get behind Ryan and donate to a worthy cause – any donations are also tax deductible.

Club Constitution

The first draft is complete and is being reviewed by the Committee and Rick Perceval. I hope to have the final complete by the end of April/ middle of May, at which point the Committee will send out a copy of the draft with a summary of the changes for the membership to review and comment as needed.

As soon as these comments (after review by the committee), the final document will be sent out to members in anticipation of a vote on the new document at the AGM in July. Once approved at the AGM, the Constitution is then sent to the department of consumer affairs for final approval and registration.

Club Parts

In the last magazine Parts and Tech published a draft policy for Parts Management and Distribution asking for comment. There have been no responses submitted from the membership so we have assumed that everyone is happy what they have read. The next committee meeting is scheduled for the 5th May so if anyone has

any concerns this is your final opportunity to suggest any amendments before the committee finalises this policy.

Any member is welcome to submit comments and/or attend the committee meeting to become involved in the discussion. The Parts and Tech officer and his Elves have been busy completing a stock take and so an updated version of the Club Parts list will be published on our website shortly.

You don't have to wait for the list to be issued before submitting an order to the Parts and Tech Officer. As per the Draft Policy, if the part you are seeking is not in stock your order will be placed on a wait list and the next person on the list will receive the next available as they come into our stock.

Selected items will continue to be advertised in the Parts for Sale section of this magazine. Generally these parts are those that are limited or of particular interest and club purchased batch remanufactured parts that need to be moved in order for the club to maintain a reasonable working capital so as not to have all our assets tied up in shelf stock. There are also those items that are just plain difficult to store and need to be moved quickly such as engines gearboxes and Diffs.

Where parts are accessory non standard but suitable for P76 we will advertise these in the mag but may also place them in On Line Shopper sites such as Ebay or Gumtree. A good example to this would be a set of Mag Wheels.

Safe and Happy Driving

Ken

Member Articles

"The remit given by the ABC" by Ken Western

(Alias send in the Telly Goons)

The ABC contacted me a few weeks ago requesting that the club provide 4 or 5 P76's to take part in a photo shoot in support of a new documentary called "The Australian Moment" which is a 2 or 3 part documentary examining the Australian economy in the early seventies, comparing it with the economy today. To Outline what the doco is all about.....

Just how did Australia avoid the devastating effects of the GFC in 2008? Was it strategy, thoughtful preparation, good advice, geography,... or just dumb luck? Combining his fine gift for analysing economic trends and his enviable access to Prime Ministers, George Megalogenis will answer this question.



George will speak to every Prime Minister since the Whitlam dismissal, as well as political advisors, social commentators, treasury staff, and the people of Australia, to help unpack this question. He will travel around Australia, and the world, to establish how this lucky country sailed through the Global Financial Crisis while other developed countries barely kept their heads above water. The Australian Moment (working title) is presented by George Megalogenis, author of the 2012 Walkley-winning book of the same name. He is a journalist, author and political commentator and will take us on this journey to unpack the question: Just how did Australia dodge the bullet?

Of course as part of the story we are looking at the development (and demise..??.) of the Australian car industry. This will involve visiting Ford/Holden etc. But we would very much like to include the story of the Leyland P76. This could take many forms, and in terms of filming - might take the shape of the presenter, George Megalogenis, visiting a car rally, or car-demonstration, driving a P76 (?), talking to an enthusiastic owner, mechanic, or lover of the vehicle.



**The Telly Goons from Left to Right
Eccles, Major Dennis Blodnock, Bluebottle, Henry Crun and William Cobblers**

As well as talking to someone about the history, why it was made, whether it really was anything but average. And it's legacy, historically, economically and socially. We are looking to have a bit of fun with this and illustrate this proud moment in Australian history... That keeps on going.

The ABC requested cars that were in good shape, virtually unmodified and would be available for a whole day. The ABC camera team spent the whole day shooting photos of the cars in some detail, and George spent quite a while interviewing the group asking about our feelings about the car, why it failed and why we still owned our cars.



**Above Telly Goons being interviewed by George for the Documentary
(George is the man behind the man with the hat)**

George was very positive about the P76 and after having driven mine thought it was great car. The day was a lot of fun, although there was a lot of waiting around. I will keep an eye out for when it is due to air and let everyone know.

Tassie L6 Deluxe 4 Speed with Twist of Underbelly. - Andy Frith

I went to a farm south of Hobart to have a look at a L6 P76 Deluxe that I had been told about by Nick Kounelis. I hear that at the farm there are many P76 wasting away in the fields, at the property occupied by "Bro" the Drug Lord. I was keen on the car sight unseen but came prepared to take it home with me. I borrowed a trailer which weight more than the car and headed down from Launceston with a fist full of dollars I though needed to secure the deal.

Accompanied by Nick we arrived at the farm to notice a line of P76 in the paddock and more over the bank at the bottom of a small valley next to a house. The car I came to see was a Bitter Apricot. L6 4 Speed Manual Deluxe and there she was looking quite OK. The "Bro" lived in a caravan next to the house.

Nick as a skilled hostage negotiator asked me to stay back and let him do the talking. The van looked quiet with not a soul responding to repeated attempts to rouse an inhabitant. After an hour, a brisk whisk of the curtains was noticed and a sign of life was established. Eventually a figure emerged in the flesh staggering about the place but somehow I think the consciousness was else where.



The ensuing communication took a turn for the worst with the Bro deciding to keep the car and not sell. With quick thinking on my part I produced the four hundred smackers that I had brought with me, fanned it out so it actually looked like a lot of Money and waved it gently across the Bro's seemingly distant gaze. His eyes became more focused as the banknotes slid across his field of view with ample opportunity for him to smell the rancid aroma of used money.

My hope was that this form of communication would close the deal. Surprisingly he accepted so the next step was to get the car on the trailer and get out of there. Nick had previously told me it was going so I was determined to start it and drive it onto the trailer.



In order to get into the car, firstly we had to empty the interior of its contents even to find the steering wheel ignition. This was a daunting task as the contents were a lot of paper laced with vials and syringes which took nearly an hour to remove. After repeated attempts to start the car I got the distinct feeling it was not going to fire so I decided to sort that out once I get home. We loaded the car and I started the slow journey back to Launceston.

I am proud to be a L6 P76 Owner and look forward to getting it ship shape and back on the road but right now my priority is to get my ex Tasmanian Governors Factory Black Executive back in shape to take me to the SA Nationals Next Easter. I have commenced the restoration Project

with all stops out to make it so. I hereby do solemnly pledge to ensure that the Editor of this fine literary periodical is kept informed of my progress for future issues of ABA.

Note very cold West Australian with Frozen Thumb.

Note Chrome Strips on tops of Guards and centre of Bonnet

Note Original Tas Gov Number Plate



My Plum Loco V8 Super Project Project By Martyn Hayes

I too am preparing a car for the Nationals in South Australia Next Easter. I have a Oh Fudge-ish V8 T Bar Auto Super which was actually the first P76 I bought around 7 years ago. The car was owned by a farmer in Shepparton and due to a broken piston (I suspect quite early in its life) it was parked up against a fence and discarded. The elements made toast of the parchment interior and faded the rich Oh Pooh duco to something resembling skid marks in a newborns nappy. Luckily for me they built better cars in 1973 and the rust was minimal with just Battery tray, small hole in the firewall under the heater hose and the two bottom rear corners of the the rear wheel arches.

I plan to restore the car retaining a V8 T Bar Auto drive train but repainting in Plum Loco. I have a black interior



consisting of reclining front seats with NOS Seat Squabs, repaired back seat, super door tops and deluxe door trims with a nice new black carpet. Im not too particular about originality so a nice chrome boot rack and bonnet mounted emblem will finish it off nicely. I have an engine that I bought from a fellow that had it stored for years. It apparently came out of a car that was written off early in its life. Im looking forward to the finished car but alas I have a lot of work to do before then.

Above - The car poised neatly in the rotisserie (these things are great no more welding on your back)

Left Andy puts some finishing touches to a wheel arch repair



I invested in a rotisserie and stripped the car to a shell. First things first was to get all the rust repairs done. While I have the equipment I confess to being a hopeless case when it comes to Welding especially thin metal. Andy Frith came over from Tassie and Spent Easter with us to help give me a step up start and to teach me a thing or two. We achieved all of the rust repairs in that time so I am ready to get stuck into the body prep for painting. I will keep you informed of my progress with the car but as a backup I have decided to get the tired engine in my Bitter Apricot replaced incase it is this car I will have to drive to the Nationals.

Oh, so similar under the skin?



**Above Left : Rover P8
Above Right : Leyland P76
Left : Rover SD1**

THE conspiracy theory is a great thing, don't you think? Usually conjured up by fertile imaginations, conspiracy theories are used to explain away conventional wisdoms, and in doing so, challenge what we hold close to our hearts as solid facts.

Take for instance the Leyland-Australia P76 – here's a car, seemingly conjured out of nowhere, tailored specifically for the Australian market that owed nothing to any other model in BL's elephantine model catalogue. And when one thinks that BLMC was moving towards more rational cost management at the time, under the leadership of George Turnbull and John Barber, it seems odd that the company would launch a brand new car with no carry over parts.

Except that this is not quite true. For one, the P76 did pick up the development of the well-respected E6-Series engine, which at the time lived under the bonnet of the Wolseley Six and Austin Kimberley. Okay, it was a version not yet seen in the BL product range (unlike the 2.2-litre E6-Series engine), and displaced 2623cc, but it was still a parts bin special as its relationship to the 2.2-litre E6 was the same as the 1750cc E4-Series was related to the 1485cc version.

The other P76 engine was a magnificent 4.4-litre version of the Rover V8. Initially earmarked for the Rover P8 project, this engine was a logical upscaling of the original, and most befitting of a new and bold leader of the Rover range. Sadly, the P8 was killed at the eleventh hour of its development cycle, when it became clear that it had no real advantages over the long wheelbase versions of the Jaguar XJ6, and would serve no other purpose than to be an internal competitor to the Browns Lane product.

Well, that was Sir William Lyons' view anyway – and as he was a BL board member at the time of the P8's culling, his view was a very important one.

As can be read in the Rover P8 [development story](#), its gestation progressed right through to the pre-production stage – even as far as having its body pressings made up by Pressed Steel in anticipation of a full production run.

This would have been a very expensive process, and one that would have been very painful for the company not to see through to its conclusion. But die it did, and in Spring 1971, the entered the realms of a BMC>Rover fascinating might-have-been.

But would all of that development simply gone to waste? That is the main question.

Obviously the P8’s engine and automatic gearbox found their way into the P76, but did anything else? After all, the two car’s proportions, stance and size are almost extremely similar. I put this question to one insider who was very much a part of the Longbridge scene at the time, and therefore not directly involved with the P76 programme. His informed response was interesting: “Can’t be categorical, but a lot of that stuff about P76 being based on P8 tooling/SD1 floorpan is in the same category as R40 being based on 5-Series... ie garbage.”

He went on to say that the P8’s problem was one of being allowed to continue in development for three years after the Jaguar XJ6 became a family member: “The crime was to allow development and expenditure to continue for three years 1968-71 before canning it. XJ6 was on the market in 1968, so there could have been no misunderstanding about overlap. Or was Lyons a really sharp cookie, who waited until the last minute, knowing that it would do more serious damage to Rover that way, thus further protecting his precious Jaguar?”



It’s a hatchback, and an unusually large one at that. Was the Force 7V’s body engineering shared with the SD1? The opinion from Australia is that it was.

This is all conjecture of course. To a degree, anyway. The Rover P8 lived as long as it did because Rover could justify its existence while the XJ was only available in cramped standard wheelbase form. And with that in mind, it is hard to believe that none of the the P8 programme found its way into the P76 – this car was so close to production, it hurt, and only the least prudent company would not have sat on what it had, and save it for a later day.

Much of the development of the P76 took place in the UK (over in Abingdon, mainly), and although a different area of BLMC would be responsible for chassis tuning and the like (Roy Brocklehurst of MG fame set-up the chassis in his last major assignment for the company). What is needed is to see the P8’s Pressed Steel engineering drawings, so they can be compared with those of the P76...

The three cars compared					
	Front track	Rear track	Wheelbase	Suspension	Engine
Rover P8	N/A	N/A	108.5in	Front: double wishbones, coil springs. Rear: De Dion, coil springs, with self-levelling	V8, 4.4-litres
Leyland P76	59.4in	59.6in	111in	Front: McPherson struts, coil springs. Rear: rigid axle, coil springs, radius arms	V8, 4.4-litres. 6-cyl, 2.6-litres.
Rover SD1	59in	59in	111in	Front: McPherson strut/coil springs. Rear: Rigid axle, coil springs, radius arms	V8, 3.5-litres, 6-cyl, 2.3- and 2.6-litres.

So, although the link between P8 and P76 is tenuous, it is most certainly a possibility – probably in the same way that SD2 and TR7 are genetically linked through their designers, and engineers, and by dint of their being developed in the same timeframe. As Graham Robson relates: “There is much more obvious ‘engineering building block’ symmetry between P76 (1973) and SD1 (1976), than between P76 and P8 – and that 2.5in. difference in wheelbase is significant.”

The link between SD1 and P76 is also circumstantial but interesting nonetheless. For one, their floorpan designs are said to be so similar, they are almost interchangeable. During the SD1’s development phase, a P76 was used as a ‘mule’ – and would that have been the case had they not been so similar? There is also another link between the two: the SD1 used the P76’s straight-six engine (albeit, only in South Africa), and that is enough to make one wonder how much these two projects fed off each other as they went through the BL machine together during the early ‘70s...

Phil West, a Leyland Australia enthusiast from Brisbane said: “Well, further to that, when I was working for a Leyland Australia dealership during the era, I once heard from ‘sources who would know’ that the P76 Force 7V hatchback did help form the basis for the hatchback design of the Rover SD1. This was more or less accepted as being fact, and it would not surprise me if this is true. The two vehicles did share some basic design similarities; McPherson front end, five-link rear coil suspension, and power rack & pinion steering.

“As for development, Leyland Australia converted the then-current Holden bodies to P76 specification. The P76 running gear, power units were grafted into the Holden bodies – all of this, while the body design was still being carried out in Italy, and then later at Pressed Steel. The only transmission that would have been shared between the SD1 and P76, was the Borg Warner BW35 autobox. The manual transmission and rear axles were manufactured in Australia by Borg Warner, and were actually shared with the other Australian big car manufacturers; Holden, Ford and Chrysler.

“With the P76 V8, from memory the only identical parts with the Rover V8 were the timing chain, inlet and exhaust valves and valve guides.”

Graham Robson shares this view that there is common DNA between the three cars, and like us, is very keen to get to the bottom of the story. He said: “The styling of the two cars – P8 and P76 – is remarkably similar. My guess is that Michelotti had a hand in both cars (Rover, after all, had been swallowed up by Leyland in 1966/67, when Michelotti was still the golden boy at Leyland-Triumph).”

And in terms of engineering, the P76 and P8 are a distance apart, Graham still feels that there could have been structural commonality: “Quite a lot of the monocoque structure of the P76, I reckon, could have been ‘rescued’ from tooling already completed for the P8 – or modified from the same tooling.” There is no doubt about the P76/SD1 relationship, though – and the specification table show just how spookily similar the two’s ‘hard-points’ actually are.

Obviously, there are a lot of blanks to fill here, and perhaps there really is smoke without fire, but there are a number of motoring historians out there, that feel it is time to confirm or deny these rumours for good. So, if you worked on any of these projects, or know someone who did, please get in touch with AROnline, because this is a story we really want to get straight before we lose the opportunity forever...

Keith Adams Editor and creator AROnline at [AROnline](#)

Editor at AROnline and @hjclassics. Likes cars, taking pictures, travelling and knee-high boots...

CLASSIFIEDS

Parts Trader

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Windscreens -The Victorian Club has new Laminated Windscreens in stock priced at \$185 Ea. **Please contact Brian Carte (Parts and Tech).**

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Pedders Front Strut Inserts- The club has managed to purchase 5 additional sets of front Strut inserts from Pedders. These are the last available from the batch produced instigated by the P76 National Council. These inserts are available to Vic Members only at \$350/pair If you would like a set **Please contact Brian Carte Parts and Tech**

P76 V8 Engine Main Bearing Sets . With the closure of ACL the Club has made a last ditch purchase of engine bearing sets for the P76 V8 Engine.



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For Sale Leyland V8 Engine 44004078



Engine complete except for water pump and starter. Condition unknown but turns over OK (\$400)

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Both Gearbox are condition unknown and threofre suitable for reco. One gearbox comes with Bell Housing (\$250) the other without (\$150). **Contact Brian Carte (Parts and Tech)**

P76 Electronic Distributor (Scorcher) \$150 Contact Brian Carte (Parts and Tech)

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2600 L6 Engine Short Motor Engine No. 26061024. Engine is a *Factory Replacement Short Motor* but I am unable to provide details of KM since reco. It has been inhibited and stored for around 10-20 years.



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