

# WESTWORDS

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*Dave Bryan's up and coming Crystal White Executive with Jim, the late long-term previous owner from 1975.*

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF  
THE LEYLAND P76 OWNERS CLUB OF AUSTRALIA (WA DIVISION) Inc

## Leyland P76

LEYLAND P76 OWNERS CLUB OF AUSTRALIA (WA DIVISION) Inc.

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**General Meetings** are held on the last Monday evening of every month at 7.30 PM (unless otherwise notified). The Meetings are held at the Kenwick Community Hall

**The AGM** is held in July. For dates of club meetings and events, refer to the Coming Events section of this Newsletter.

## Committee Members 2012-2013

<b>President:</b>	James Mentiplay	0408 918 127
<b>Vice President:</b>	Dave Bryan	0400 884 841
<b>Secretary:</b>	Adam Woodward	0439 492 143
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Mick le-Cocq	0414 731 535
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### **EDITOR'S CORNER:**

As most of you know next month's issue of *WestWords* is going to be something very special. To commemorate the Club's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday we are producing a 50-page full-colour high quality magazine designed to become a "collectible" that members will treasure for many years to come. We are very fortunate to have the services of Dave Bryan to bring this mammoth issue together in such a way as to make it a worthy memento of the Club's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. The special edition will only be available in hard copy format with each copy being numbered, with No 1, and No 76 to be included in the raffle at the Club's Annual Dinner in October. Look for the order form included with the mail-out and email of this issue of *WestWords*.

This month's issue features a fine article by Phil Crowther (Dr Philthy). It should well and truly prove most interesting to the "tech heads" amongst us as it focusses on the very creative and effective modifications to our much-loved V8 engine made by some skillful and enterprising exponents associated with the P76 Sporting Club.

Finally, your editor owes an apology to The BMC-Leyland Australia Heritage Group who has advised that the excellent book, *Building Cars in Australia*, is still available from the Group to club members at \$40 plus postage. This is a huge saving compared to the price and source mentioned in the *WestWords* editorial last month. If you wish to procure a copy (or 2 or more) send an email to [rogerfoy1@bigpond.com](mailto:rogerfoy1@bigpond.com). You may need your club endorsement to get the book at the special price.



### ***The Lighter Side***

*A boy is walking along the road when a car pulls up alongside him. 'If you get in my car,' says the driver. 'I'll give you a bag of sweets.' The boy ignores him. 'Okay,' says the driver. 'Get in my car and you can have two bags of sweets and £5.' The boy ignores him. 'The driver says, 'Listen, if you'll just get in the car I'll give you all the sweets you want and £20.' The boy turns to the driver and says, 'Dad, for the last time, I'm not getting into that Skoda.'*



**LEYLAND P76 OWNERS CLUB OF AUSTRALIA (WA Division) Inc.**

**GENERAL MEETING 30 JULY 2012**

Open: 7:36pm

Apologies: George Garofallou, Gary Mentiplay, Peter swale

Correspondence in: Nil

Correspondence out: Invites to all clubs applicable for BMC Leyland Day

Minutes for June were read and seconded by Dave Neuzerling and Brett Shea

Matters arising from the minutes: Nil

Treasurer's report: As per Statement

General Business:

- The Driveline cover was discussed
- The club welcomed Jared Simpson to the club. Jarrod has purchased a Bitter Apricot Deluxe.
- Jarrod Simpson and Paul Banham applied for concessional for their P76's
- To cover costs, the special edition of the October issue of *WestWords* will be \$12.50 including delivery.
- The Triumph car club has invited us to a "variety" day
- Coming events were discussed
- The Annual dinner/monster raffle was talked about. Thanks to Harry Armstrong for a donation. Members are asked to RSVP to this event
- State P76 meeting in Donnybrook was discussed
- Matt Truman gave a talk on his P76
- Paul Banham talked about his recent purchase of 3 P76's
- **James Mentiplay** thanked the current committee for their efforts over the last year

Meeting closed: 8:37

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 30 JULY 2012**

Open: 8.45pm

Nominations and acceptances for the following positions were as follows:

**President:**– James Mentiplay, Nom. Dave Neuzerling Sec. Dennis Woodward.

**Vice President:**– Dave Bryan, Nom. Roger Pattern-Williams, Sec. Adam Woodward.

**Secretary:**– Adam Woodward, Nom. Matt Truman, Sec. Ken Domeyer.

**Treasurer:**– Mick Le Cocq, Nom. Dave Neuzerling , Sec. Sam Murray.

**Editor** – Sam Murray:- Nom, Dennis Woodward Sec. Roger Pattern-Williams .

**Vehicle Examiner:**– Andy Mentiplay,

**Vehicle Registrar:**– Gary Mentiplay.

**Publicity Officer** :- Paul Banhum. Nom James Mentiplay, Sec Ken Domeyer

**Non-Office Bearers:** Dave Neuzerling, Nom. James Mentiplay Sec. Mat Truman.

Ken Domeyer, Nom Mick le-Cocq, Sec Adam Woodward

Mat Truman, Nom Mick le-Cocq, Sec Paul Banhum.

Andrew Mentiplay, Nom James Mentiplay, Sec Adam Woodward

Meeting closed: 9.15pm

## ***COMING EVENTS***

**General Club Meeting:**

**Monday 24 September 2012**

**7.30pm**

At The Kenwick Community Centre  
cnr Kenwick Road & Brixton Street KENWICK

**Brett's Run to the Hills.** Sunday 16 September. 10.00am  
Hamburger Hill, Burswood to Yanchep National Park

**Club Annual Dinner.** Sunday 14 October – Luncheon at The  
Elizabethan Village Pub, 23 Canns Road, Bedfordale.

Members are asked to contribute prizes to a Giant Raffle to be held at the Dinner. Let Andy Mentiplay know if you have something to donate and he will arrange to have it collected. Prizes can include P76 memorabilia, books, magazines, spare parts, die-cast models, owner's handbook, and workshop manuals. You can even donate a P76 if you have one to spare!

**BMC/Leyland Day.** Sunday 28 October, Manning Park,  
Spearwood.

**Brockwell Run to Whiteman Park.** Sunday 11 November –  
[www.councilofmotoringclubs.asn.au](http://www.councilofmotoringclubs.asn.au)

**State P76 Meeting.** 17-18 November. Donnybrook. For  
Itinerary details see page 5. (Note correction to dates)

**Classic Rally 20th Anniversary Retrospective Rally** – 24-25 November -  
[www.classicrally.com.au](http://www.classicrally.com.au)

### ***The Lighter side***

*A car breaks down on the hard shoulder of a motorway. The driver opens his boot and lets out two dirty old men in raincoats. The men stand at either end of the car and start flapping their coats open and closed, exposing themselves to the passing traffic. A police car soon pulls up. 'What are those two doing?' says the policeman. 'Them?' replies the driver. 'They're my emergency flashers.'*

## **WA P76 State Meeting**

With most P76 National Meetings being held on the East Coast of Australia, it is difficult for most WA P76 owners to attend due to work or family commitments. Therefore, the clubs committee has decided to hold an annual event along the lines of the National Meetings to give members a similar experience while maximizing exposure of the P76 in regional areas of WA. The idea is to hold the event in a different location each year, and hopefully promote the P76 to a wider audience.

This year's event will be held in Donnybrook over the weekend of

**17/18 November**

If this year's event is a success we plan on increasing it from a one night/ two day event to a two night/three day event next year.

The itinerary is as follows:

### **Saturday 17th**

10am – 1pm Display in main street of Donnybrook (the club intends to invite TV stations GWN and WIN plus local newspapers to cover the display)

pm Visit local car museum (Paul Banham has been able to get us access to a large privately owned car museum in Donnybrook that is not usually open to the public, the display includes a large number of cars and motorcycles)

6pm Dinner at a restaurant/hotel (location still to be decided)

### **Sunday 18th**

Breakfast in Boyanup

10am Visit Dardanup Transport museum

1pm Lunch Location TBA

If there is enough interest amongst those attending, I have located a car museum in Mandurah called the West Coast Car Museum which looks terrific, and we can visit this on the way back to Perth. We will need to book this prior though, so will require expressions of interest if we do visit this museum.

Those attending will need to organize their own accommodation for Saturday night. The intention is to depart from Armadale in convoy at around 7am Saturday morning.

For those who intend on being a part of this event, if they could please let me know (James Mentiplay **0408918127**) so I can arrange parking spaces for the display area with the Donnybrook Tourist Bureau for the Saturday morning.



### ***Cover Picture***

*Dave Bryan is expecting delivery of this Crystal White Executive round about the time you receive this issue of WestWords. The cover picture was taken while the car was in the care of its previous long-term owner "Jim" who had the vehicle since 1975. After Jim's passing the car was bought by Alan Firth from whom Dave has just acquired it. We look forward to getting more pictures and the full story behind this original car.*

## SPORTING PNUTS AND THE V8

2012 is a very important anniversary year for a number of P76 Owners Clubs. N.S.W., S.A. and W.A. Owners Clubs all celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> birthday this year but there was another almost forgotten club that also would have celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, the Leyland P76 Sporting Car Club. This N.S.W. based club pioneered many of the performance modifications to the P76 and its V8 engine. This story from “Dr Philthy” Phil Crowther highlights those times and activities during the 1980s. Over to Phil.-

It seems quite incredible that it is now nearly 40 years since the Leyland P76 arrived on the Australian motoring scene. It is also pretty amazing that we have had Owners Clubs for the P76 operating since 1982. As a founding member of the N.S.W. P76 Owners Club and an early member of the N.S.W. P76 Sporting Car Club I have had many opportunities to witness firsthand how our P76s, which were relatively low tech family sedans from the early 70s, managed to evolve and survive as useful and practical transport during the last 30+ years. I have also witnessed how some dedicated Pnuts have managed to achieve what most critics would have scornfully declared to be an impossible undertaking, namely to take a mostly unloved and unappreciated “lemon” and either lovingly preserve it or, as is more often the case, painstakingly restore it so that it becomes an outstanding example of an Australian motoring icon.

I have been asked to write a few pages about our much loved aluminium V8 engines which were, by virtue of their light weight, a concept many years in advance of the P76s contemporary rivals. Most Pnuts will of course already be aware of how our P76 V8s are directly related to the aluminium Rover/Buick engines. Much of the history of the development of the P76 V8 has already been covered in the 2 excellent books on the P76 by Messrs Maloney and Farmer, so I won't attempt to cover that ground again. Instead let me entertain you with “Dr Philthys Condensed History of P76 V8 Engine Development” as experienced by revhead Pnuts.

Once upon a time, when the only choices that most Australian drivers had were either a Holden, Ford or Chrysler, or something European, Japanese or British, somebody in the magic Kingdom of Zetland thought that it would be a good idea to build an “All Australian” car using lots of good ideas from elsewhere adapted to make a local car which would be better than the other locally produced offerings. Unfortunately Araldite and Silastic hadn't been invented in 1973 so a lot of little production faults (and some other nasty factors) combined to give this new “wonder car” a very bad reputation. A certain type of motoring enthusiast who was able to avoid the pitfalls of blind loyalty to any particular brand of car was the sort of person who could appreciate the technical merits of any vehicle which was more advanced and/or possessed a greater degree of innovation than its rivals. Some of these discerning individuals eventually became proud owners of Leyland's greatest creation – our wonderful P76s.

With the creation of Owners Clubs, P76 owners suddenly had access to a veritable gold mine of technical information to help them to keep their cars roadworthy. Owners who had battled with repair or maintenance issues could draw on the experiences of those other owners who had battled with and conquered the same P76 repair and/or maintenance problems. Then along came a bunch of revheads who were sick and tired of having their Ps branded as lemons and who were determined to do something positive to restore the reputation of the P76 and have it recognised for its virtues rather than the stigma of poor production methods. One of these people was a Mr Steve Maher who founded the Leyland P76 Sporting Car Club in late 1982. In standard form the P76 was a fairly under stressed engine but when the boys and girls of the P76 Sporting Car Club decided to put their P76s on the weekend racing circuits around Sydney it didn't take long to identify a few weaknesses in the V8s that didn't normally show up when P76s were being driven in normal road and traffic conditions.

Hard acceleration and braking on sealed race circuits often caused a loss of engine oil pressure. The “Bodgey Bros” cure was to put extra oil into the engine to try to keep the oil pickup covered, but the only really workable fix to this problem was to weld a series of small baffle plates to the inside of the sump to limit how much the oil could slosh around.

Club member Graham Redhead’s modification to cure this problem was quite a stroke of genius. Being quite proficient with a mig welder he was able to fabricate a pair of side tanks for the sump from sections of 50mm square steel sheet. These side tanks were then welded on to each side of the sump. Holes were drilled into the side of the sump first so that oil could get in and out of these tanks. From memory I believe that Grahams “winged sump” needed about an extra 1.5 litres of engine oil to bring the oil level on the dip stick up to the full mark and as far as I can recall after this modified sump was fitted, Grahams P76 race/rally car never suffered oil starvation problems again during its racing career.

The next problem we tackled was one which nearly every Pnut in the Owners Clubs already knew about – cracking pistons. The standard P76 V8 pistons each had 2 big slots in the oil ring groove. These slots probably promoted a better flow of oil to cool the pistons but the unfortunate result was that cracks frequently developed, and in extreme cases, one half of the piston skirt would break away. Two nasty things started to happen when a piston developed a crack. The first was that lots of nasty little fragments would find their way down to the sump where they would eventually get sucked up with the oil, past the mesh strainer on the oil pickup. Then they would get carried unto the oil pump and merrily grind away at the oil pump gears and casing before getting caught (sometimes) in the oil filter. The second nasty thing that happened was that a cracked piston would start to carve nasty vertical groove in the cylinder wall because a cracked skirt would allow the piston to kick out towards the cylinder wall and so cause nasty wear on the thrust face side of the bore. Several different types of pistons were tried during the mid to late 80s as we attempted to gain more power and reliability from our engines. Some Pnuts fitted sets of oversized Rover pistons which at that time were quite expensive and others tried fancy substitutions such as Volvo pistons. Most of our racing engines were bored out to accept oversized Holden 173 pistons. Some machining work always had to be done with this conversion. As the Holden pistons were sold in sets of 6 we had to buy 2 sets and get a workshop to select the 8 pistons which were closest to each other in weight. These pistons would then need to be pin bored and honed so that they would accept the larger P76 gudgeon pins. Before the gudgeon pins could be pressed into the pistons all 8 conrods and pistons would have to be electronically balanced. Often the bigend of each conrod would have to be closed and honed to restore the bigends to perfect circles. One big advantage of using Holden pistons was that they gave a slight boost in compression ratio and our racing experience showed us that they were a stronger design than the original P76 pistons.

Often we found that our engines would start to misfire when pushed to the upper limit of their rev range. The problem here was nearly always a breakdown in the ignition. In simple terms there wasn’t enough spark at high revs. Graham, fellow member Russell Nicholson, and several others cured this problem by fitting electronic ignition systems to their engines. These systems, often borrowed from other types of vehicles, proved so efficient and effective that we were often able to fit smaller jets to our carbys without losing any power. Speaking of carbys, early in our racing adventures we realised that the Stromberg WW carby which were standard for our V8, just couldn’t provide a good mixture for engines which were being pushed a bit hard. Eventually nearly all of our race cars were fitted with Holley 350s which, when combined with electronic ignition systems, totally transformed the driving characteristics of our P76s.

Joe Torony, the founding President of the N.S.W. Owners Club, was one of the first Pnuts to make modifications to the induction system to improve the power and responsiveness of his V8 engine. Joe and his co-pilot, Paul Patten (also a past President of the N.S.W. Owners Club), developed a method of filing away obstructions to the inlet manifold to promote a better flow of the air/fuel mixture. Even though Joe and Paul's race car was a relatively low budget affair it was still an extremely quick and agile vehicle. Joe also pioneered the manufacture of 2 types of very desirable items for P76 owners. "Torony" extractors when fitted to any P76 V8 gave an immediate boost in performance and through various motor trade connections; Joe was able to have rear sway bars made which could be easily fitted to P76s to improve their handling.

In previous articles I have mentioned how during the early days the members of the P76 Sporting Car Club were often subjected to a great amount of heckling and teasing when they arrived at any of the Sydney racing circuits. However, within a few months, that situation had dramatically changed because as we sorted out and eliminated the bugs from our P76s our cars became more and more competitive and it was quite a common occurrence to see 3 or 5 or more of our P76s lining up at the end of the days racing to take part in the "Top Ten Playoffs". Most of what we learned along the way was also of relevance to P76 owners who wanted to improve the performance of their normal street use P76s. To this end most of our racing mods were put on paper giving our various club editors a much valued stream of new information to help their readers get more enjoyment from their P76s.

In the late 80s and early 90s we started to become involved in fundraising events for charities such as the Kidney Foundation and Camp Quality for kids with cancer. Graham and Russell drew on their years of experience with the Sporting Car Club and did an extensive ground up rebuild of a spare P76 shell. This car was eventually fitted with a 5 litre engine with a monster Rochester 4 barrel carburettor and an electronic ignition system that would melt standard spark plugs. It had a 5 speed Toyota Supra gearbox and a modified Jaguar diff in a custom built cradle at the rear end. The boys fitted it out with a full roll cage and rally seats and all the "bells and whistles". Gas shocks on all 4 corners took care of the bumps and the whole package was put together so well that on some stages of some of the charity rallies nothing else could come close to this beast. Mind you, Graham as a rally driver was pretty amazing too. He could flick a P76 sideways at 120kph along a dirt track that you could barely fit 2 fat pigs on side by side. I still think he had some kind of built in radar or x-ray vision. It will be interesting to see if the availability of the Range Rover 4.6 litre engines encourages more Pnuts to take up their spanners again to put more P76s back on the road. I have been told that the 4.6 litre Rover engines are bored out versions of the old 3.5 litre blocks. Maybe one day we will get our hands on a damaged 4.6 engine and pull it to pieces to see what parts we might be able to use to rebuild our old faithful 4.4 litre blocks.

In the meantime, if I was going to do a full rebuild of a P76 4.4 litre block, this is what I would get done. When everything is stripped right down the first job is the block bored out to suit the new pistons. The original steel cylinder liners can be taken out to an increase of 40/1000 of an inch. Then;

- The top faces of the block should be machined or "decked" so that the new head gaskets are sitting on fresh metal.
- The machine shop should supply and press fit to the block new camshaft bearings.
- The old Welch plugs should be removed and the block should be chemically cleaned to remove any metal tailings and scale from the water jackets on each bank of cylinders.
- All the threads should be cleaned and checked.



- The crankshaft may be machined. Usually most crankshafts can be taken down 10/1000 of an inch on both the main bearing journals and the big end journals. The oil seal surface on the boss at the rear end of the crankshaft should be finished to ensure that the rear oil seal works on clean metal.
- When new pistons are being fitted it is always a good idea to have the pistons individually balanced and the connecting rods treated as previously mentioned before the pistons are assembled to them.
- Additionally the front pulley should be dynamically balanced and, if the engine will be mated to a manual transmission, the flywheel should be machined before it is balanced and the pressure plate should also be balanced. One modification we made was to drill and tap the flywheel so that we could use 6 bolts to hold the pressure plate on to the flywheel instead of only 3.
- Heatseeker and Crow are 2 companies which can supply you with brand new billet camshafts, timing gear sets and suitable lifters. Tru Roller is one brand of timing chain and timing gear components. A roller timing chain is usually more durable than the original w-link type. New billet camshafts are usually much quieter in operation than original camshafts which have been reground or reprofiled.

One very important item which you must check out when you are planning to install a new sporty camshaft to your engine is the valve travel when the new camshaft is providing more valve lift than the original unit. The valve springs fitted to a standard P76 V8 cylinder head have a fairly fine pitch which limits how far they can be compressed before binding occurs. If you have ever stripped down a P76 cylinder head you will remember that when you used a spring compressor to compress the valve springs, the spring compressor could only squeeze the valve springs down a certain amount until the coils of the springs were pressing against each other. When that happens it is known as valve spring coil binding. When that happens the spring cannot be compressed any further and if the camshaft is a high lift sports camshaft there is a danger that if coil bind occurs it could directly cause excessive wear of the camshaft lobes and the lifters, bending of the pushrods and/or failure or breakages of the rocker arms and/or bolts/studs and pedestals not to mention the valve springs themselves. For that reason alone most camshaft manufacturers' supply a specification sheet with each camshaft so that the installer can ensure that valve spring coil binding will not occur.

- When it comes to reconditioning P76 cylinder heads it is best to leave the work to a workshop that already has a good reputation but if you are tackling it yourself;

The first procedure should be a thorough cleaning of the cylinder head followed by pressure testing and checking for cracks. If the cylinder heads appear to be sound then the usual procedure is to fit inserts to the valve guides or press new valve guides into the cylinder heads. The face of the cylinder heads must be machined and usually a full valve grind and decoke is done to each head to ensure that there are minimal obstructions to the flow of the inlet and exhaust mixtures and gases. We have previously used valve stem oil seals from petrol Holden Gemini engines. These seals were a good fit on both the top of the valve guides and the valve stems too. The small welch plugs at each end of the heads should be replaced and if there is any doubt about the condition of any of the spark plug threads then a heli-coil should be fitted. All manifold bolt threads

should be cleaned with a bottoming tap and it is also a good idea to make sure that the 4 rocker cover bolts threads are clean and unobstructed by old gasket cement etc.

- When the heads have been fully serviced the next item that requires some attention is the inlet manifold. The standard inlet manifold as fitted to most P76 V8s is a good solid unit but like all mass produced items to some degree it has been built down to a price rather than up to a higher performance standard. Obviously there were serious limitations as to how much work and attention each inlet manifold could receive on the assembly line. If you want to improve your engines responsiveness there are several modifications you can make to your inlet manifold to give your rebuilt engine a bit more power without compromising its reliability.

Compare the dimensions and size of the inlet ports on each cylinder head to the size of the matching ports on the inlet manifold. You will see that there is a sizeable step. This step is what stops the P76 V8 from breathing properly in its higher rev range because it causes an area or zone of turbulence as the fuel/air mixture passes from the inlet manifold to each port of the cylinder head. By eliminating this step you allow the mixture to flow more freely which directly makes your engine slightly more efficient. Another area which requires some similar attention is the raised boss where the carby bolts on to the inlet manifold. It is almost a total waste of time fitting a Holley 350 to any manifold which has not had the 2 inlet ports filed out. Compare the size of the bottom of the 2 barrels on a Holley 350 carby to the size of the base gasket from under a standard carby. If the inlet ports on the top of the manifold are filed out to more closely match the size of the barrels of the Holley 350 then you will achieve a greatly improved flow of mixture into your new engine.

These were the improvements pioneered by N.S.W. Owners Club founding President, Joe Torony. By improving the flow characteristics of your induction system you are improving the charge density of the air/fuel mixture. This literally means more mixture being allowed into each cylinder, giving a bit more power for each ignition event and surprisingly improvements like these do not actually cause any significant increase in fuel consumption, rather, by making the engine slightly more efficient and smoother, quite often less throttle is needed for a given power output and that usually equals better economy.

- Now, finally, a quick word about electronic ignition. Personally I have had very little hands on experience with these systems but judging from the equipment that's being to all the late model cars I'd say that the way to go is to fit coil packs to a new engine so that each spark plug is fed by its own coil. In terms of providing each spark plug with the maximum possible power this may be the way to go to make our V8s more efficient, more reliable and less polluting.

Hopefully someone out there in Pnut Land has already put pen to paper to tell you all about developments in ignition technology. Are you there Garth? What's the latest gossip in spark technology? I hope you all enjoy the 14<sup>th</sup> Leyland P76 Nationals in my absence. More of my rambling can be found from time to time in The Leyland Post in my column "Philthy Suggestions".

*Phil (Dr Philthy) Crowther*

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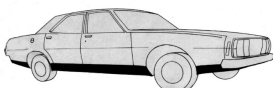
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Members on the Club emailing list also receive copies of interstate P76 club magazines when they become available.

Your co-operation in this regard would be much appreciated. Simply send your email address to the Editor: [samurai2@westnet.com.au](mailto:samurai2@westnet.com.au)

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