

LEYLAND P76 CLASSIC CAR CLUB

INCORPORATED NSW

October 2008



P-76

Anything But Average

LEYLAND P76 CLASSIC CAR CLUB INC.

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If any members have a vehicle or spare parts for sale, an interesting story about his or her car, weather it is about a rebuild or repair, or of your trips away on holidays, please do not hesitate to contact the editor and it will be greatly received.

The opinions expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily of the Editor. Where possible articles contributed by members are verified, however the Leyland P76 Classic Car Club Inc. accepts no responsibility of the accuracy of the information.

Leyland p76 Classic Car club Inc.

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GENERAL MEETINGS

Venue: San Souci Literary institute
Address: 107 Ramsgate Road, Ramsgate
 (cnr Campbell Street)
Time: 8:00pm Wednesday Nights



MEETING DATES 2008

OCT15th, NOV 19th, DEC 17th

Editorial

This month I am pleased to be able to inform our members that Sue Green has at last made some good progress. Sue has now been in hospital for eleven weeks and it has been a difficult time for her and we all hope she will be home in the near future.

The B.M.C Heritage Day was held on the 12th October at Ryde and I am sure it would have been a great success. Next months newsletter will have a full report on the activities of the day.

The A.G.M was held last month and details are published in this months newsletter.

Congratulations to Jason Birmingham for having his Leyland P76 featured in the Drive section of The Sydney Morning Herald recently.

The Highlands motor fest at Bowral will be held on 26th October and this event is always a great show and shine day. I will not be able to attend this year, however its always a top day and I can highly recommend it.

That's about all for now so see you all at our next meeting night.

Joe Green

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Thanks to

- Jason Birmingham for his article
- Troy Green for his help with the newsletter.
- Julie for her help with the typing

Congratulations

Jason Birmingham—Re article in city press

Please note

If you are able to write an article for our newsletter the deadline for it to be printed in the next newsletter is the **1st of every month.**

Get Well Message

Ron Frith, who will be going into hospital shortly for an operation
Sue Green, who is in hospital

FUTURE EVENTS 2008

October 26th	Highlands Motorfest and County Fair at Chevalier College Bowral.
December 19th	Christmas party night at club rooms

For Sale

1974 Model P76 Executive, Colour: Bitter Apricot

Bitter Apricot -HK-5917 [without motor] runs on Gas/Petrol 6 months out of Rego
Compliance Plate Numbers P76-076-B4S4-A44-14420 X X 3/74 07684S-4A4A
Gas Compliance Plate G101008 VIN No.076B494A41414420 Serial no. U00069

Make me an offer !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Time to part with my beloved car for something smaller.

Contact Details John C Dethlefs 0266465775

9 Sovereign St, Iluka NSW 2466

This is a fantastic opportunity to purchase an original Bitter Apricot Body & extensive collection of P76 parts. Inspection welcome at above address





COVER STORY

HARVEY GRENNAN

Lemon crush

Forget the good cars. It's time to celebrate the bad and the ugly.

Mention really bad Australian cars and the name that usually springs to mind is the Leyland P76. This was not so much a bad car as a badly built car. This was Leyland Australia in its dying days with a dysfunctional management giving orders to get cars out the door whether they were finished or not. The missing bits could be added later.

Introduced in 1973, it won a car-of-the-year award but was gone from the showrooms within two years. The design of the P76 had much to commend it. The wedge-shaped body was penned by Giovanni Michelotti and the V8 version had the first all-alloy engine in an Australian-made car.

But the P76 was doomed because of trouble in the executive suite and on the shop floor. Strikes disrupted the supply of parts and incomplete cars rolled off the production line to be cobbled together later in the yard. Not only was the finish quality poor but a series of mechanical problems, such as an oil-guzzling V8, gave the car a reputation for unreliability. Even Gough Whitlam called the P76 a dud.

The worst car I have driven was a rear-engined Skoda 1000MB in 1966. I was the motoring editor of the *Herald* all those decades ago and the car was so bad it was decided not to publish the road test.

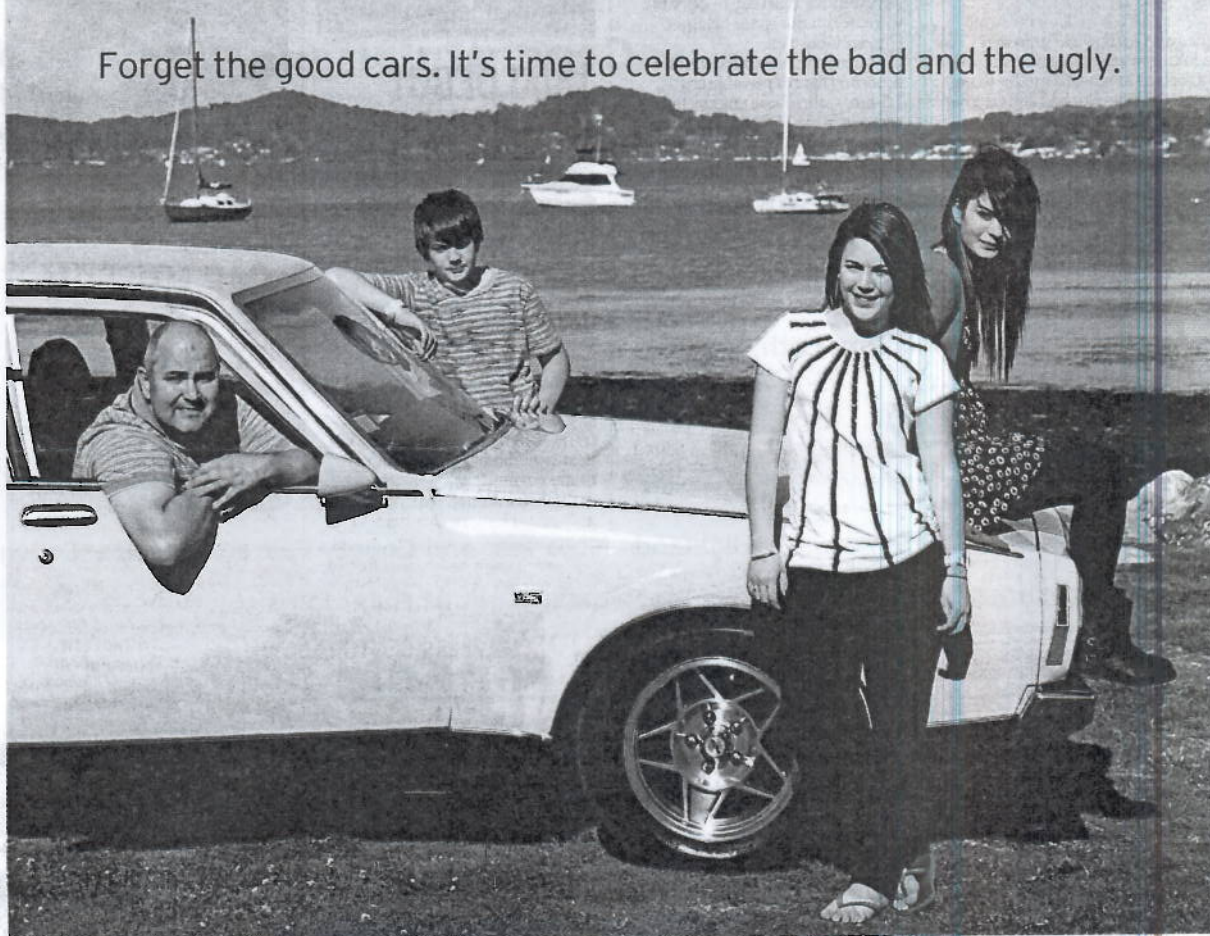
There was not a single kind thing you could say about the Skoda. It was, in a word, dangerous. The tragedy was that before the communists took over Czechoslovakia after World War II, the country was a world leader in automotive technology, creating radical breakthroughs such as the Tatra T97, which was plagiarised by Ferdinand Porsche to become the VW Beetle.

Skoda today is a very different story, with the departure of the Russians and the arrival of VW. Those clever Czechs are back in play.

Thank goodness Australia was never afflicted with those other East European exports, the East German Trabant or Tito's Yugo, although the "Trabi" is acquiring something of a retro-renaissance in Europe among masochistic Gen Y trendies.

The Russians built worse cars – the Moskvich and the Volga – but the Yugo gets a mention because it escaped across the Atlantic and has been called the worst car ever sold in the US. Yes, worse than a Ford Edsel or Chevy Corvair.

This was also the era of the early Japanese cars, the worst of which was possibly the Nissan Cedric – or was it the Cecil? Perversely, this was an innovator of sorts as it came with all the bells and whistles absent from other cars of the time. Amazingly, a radio and heater were standard but dynamically it was a horror – a veritable barge on sponge springs with pathetically small drum brakes.



Loyalty points ... (top) Jason Birmingham and his family, Kyle, Kelsie and Fairlie; a Hartnett (left) and a Lightburn Zeta. Main photo: Fiona Morris

We will not canvass the Ford Prefects and Consuls, the Morris Oxford and Majors or the Hillmans and Humbers of the 1950s. Nor will we interpret the merger of local American and British interests in 1965 into Chrysler Rootes Australia as a comment on their contribution to automotive excellence.

Other post-1960 cars that rate a mention in any discussion about cars only enthusiasts could love include just about any Triumph, the unrefined but impossible-to-kill Datsun 120Y, and any Fiat that was within 100 kilometres of the sea. Several Holdens are on the list – the Sunbird, the Camira and the short-lived

and short-of-breath four-cylinder VC Commodore.

The Camira was touted as the first "world car", sold in the US as a Pontiac, in Britain as a Vauxhall, in Germany as an Opel and in Japan as an Isuzu. Despite winning a car-of-the-year gong it was badly screwed together and the engine kept running long after you turned off the ignition. But even today the design has its defenders.

Almost all British marques built by British companies make the list – not that there are any left. The apocryphal story about Jaguars is you needed two – one to drive while the other one was at the garage. While testing a Land Rover Discovery in the early '90s, the dashboard cover fell off in my lap.

Rover sedans enjoyed a similar reputation for years.

Quality improved for the three prestige badges under the brief ownership of Ford and BMW but all three are now in the hands of Indian and Chinese proprietors.

Thankfully, the British motor industry is now largely run by the Japanese.

Enthusiasts keep P76 running

There's little doubt the Leyland P76 is the most maligned car made in Australia yet it has one of the most loyal club networks. Only 18,007 were produced in 1973 and 1974 but today, thanks to the passion of enthusiasts, more than 1000 are still registered and running.

There are four owners' groups in NSW alone. Under the club motto, Anything But Average, the NSW P76 Owners' Club, arranges regular drives such as a recent trip to a farm in Oberon. The attraction there was 40 examples sitting in a paddock. What bliss. A goldmine of parts for owners and a paradise for the members who collect vehicle identification numbers.

Gosford mechanic Jason Birmingham is a former secretary and now parts officer of the club. He owns three P76s, including one of the finest examples, a 1974 V8 with the numberplate LEY 076. He has fully restored it, changing its white duco to Hairy Lime, an original Leyland colour and part of the car's attraction today.

"There was a pink colour, too, called Plum Loco and a purple called Peel Me A Grape ... [owners] like the bright, loud colours. Leyland was boring up until the P76 and then it was all look-at-me," he says.

Birmingham, 43, fell for

P76s as a child. "I can still remember clearly the first time I saw one. I was nine and I thought 'wow'."

"I think they were a very underrated car. There were a few problems when they were new but they were a brand new car. The designers didn't have a hinge to hang the door with or a handle to close it. They had to make all parts from new."

He loves the fact that the car was designed by and for Australians. The only thing wrong with it was the timing, he says. "Unfortunately when it came out there was a credit squeeze and petrol problems and the motor industry was in turmoil. Things went from bad to worse but the P76 didn't send Leyland broke. It was the only car they made money on."

Birmingham recently sold a P76, his fourth and the first of the four he has bought, for \$10,000. He had a receipt for \$4033 for its sale new.

"I'm very passionate. My wife Debbie, thinks I'm a bit crazy, she can understand the attraction. It doesn't get negative feedback it uses."

The last thing he worries about is whether the P76 will break down. "I don't drive every day but at least once a week. It's so powerful and easy to drive just like a lot of new cars." Susan Bredow



Quality issues ... the Morris Marina.

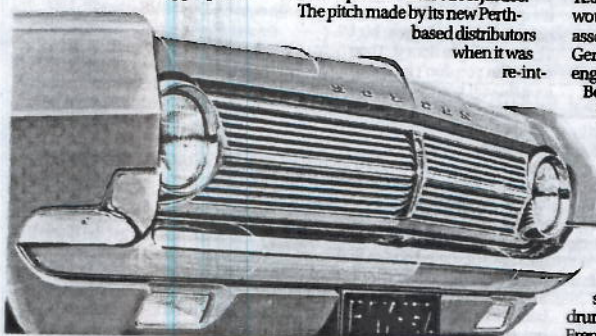
Drive Life's nominations for the worst cars sold in Australia

MORRIS/LEYLAND MARINA 1972-75

Named in 1999 by *Classic & Sports Car* magazine in Britain as the second worst car (the Allegro was the "winner"), the Marina must rank high on the Aussie list, too. Its handling was once described as "a skip on wheels". Its running gear was taken from the Morris Minor and other Leyland nasties dating back as far as 1948 and in Australia engineers managed to shoe-horn in a six-cylinder engine, which made things worse. Apart from the archaic mechanicals hiding under a modern body it suffered from the quality issues facing all Leyland cars.

LIGHTBURN ZETA 1963-66

The diminutive plastic-box-on-wheels hit the market with a splash, appropriate



for a car built in a washing machine factory. The maker, a whitegoods manufacturer by the name of Harold Lightburn, had ambitions to knock Holden off its perch with this ugly-duckling fibreglass station wagon - with no rear door - powered by a two-stroke lawnmower engine. The gearbox was set up so that the car could go as fast in reverse as it could go forward - a frightening 100km/h. Not surprisingly, only 343 Zetas made it out the showroom door.

LADA NIVA 1983-98

While the Russian-built Niva had off-road capabilities of Siberian proportions, it had an appalling reputation for quality and just about every mechanical and electrical component was prone to failure. Its ill-fitting vinyl interior was arguably the roughest of any car ever built. The word "spartan" didn't do it justice. The pitch made by its new Perth-based distributors when it was re-int-

roduced here in the mid-90s was novel. I was treated to an expensive lunch at Catalina on Rose Bay to be breathlessly informed that the problems with Nivas were all fixed because they were rebuilt on arrival on our shores. Even Jaguar with all the brickbats it has copped over the years has never tried that one.

HARTNETT/LOYD- HARTNETT 1951 and 1957

"Father of the Holden" Laurence Hartnett resigned as managing director of Holden just before it launched the first "Aussie" car in 1948. He had lost his battle with Detroit for a truly indigenous design, so he set out to build his own. This was the flimsy front-wheel-drive Hartnett with a 600cc flat-twin engine and performance to match. Due to production problems only 120 cars were built but Hartnett wouldn't give up. In 1957 he began assembly of the Lloyd-Hartnett, a German Borgward also with a 600cc engine, but this too failed when Borgward was put out of business. Hartnett then got a glimpse of the Japanese Datsun Bluebird in 1959 and imported 100 of them. The rest is history.

CHRYSLER CENTURA 1975-77

The Chrysler Centura was a shocker, even for the rust-prone, drum-braked 1970s. This was a French Simca assembled in Adelaide



Not a kind thing to say ... the Skoda 1000 MB (above) and the HD Holden.

from panels so poorly pressed that they were coaxed into place on the production line with rubber mallets. Chrysler preferred selling the front-heavy six-cylinder version because it was the cheaper, locally made "Hemi" engine but the bored-out French four was a much better-balanced, if unprofitable, car. The Centura was too little, too late to compete with the Cortina and Holden Torana and lasted less than three years in the showroom. It was replaced in 1977 by the successful, Mitsubishi-built Sigma.

HD HOLDEN 1965-66

This was the controversial, rounded "liver scoop" Holden that replaced the record-breaking and still-loved EH in 1965. It was known as the "liver scooper" because of the protruding sharp edges on the front fenders around the headlights. As sales began to dwindle, Holden hurriedly redesigned the body and launched the face-lifted HR only a year later.

The HD had other vices, being heavier than the EH but retaining its narrow track and brakes. The HD holds the inglorious title for the shortest production run of any Holden but now is becoming collectible for that very reason.

FORD TAURUS 1996-98

Ford Detroit has long believed its Antipodean outpost should adopt a US model instead of persevering with the Falcon. The third-generation Taurus was brought to Australia as a "prestige" model above the Falcon to test consumer reaction. Virtually every design feature was oval-shaped, giving the car a droopy look. The disastrous AU Falcon later took up some of the oval design cues and had to be hurriedly restyled. The oval Taurus laid an egg in the showroom and disappeared after only two years. It was a lemon not in the quality sense but in the taste buds of buyers. We know of owners groups for each model except the Ford Taurus.

Coming Next Month

Jason Birmingham's view on the article of his car in
Sydney Morning Herald Drive

Wanted to Buy

One manual steering rack and extension housing from a P76 4 speed manual gearbox.
Please phone Ray Iken (03) 5176 6086

Ray's new
O'Fudge
Super P76



Leyland P76 S.A. Spares List 2/9/08

LEYLAND P76 S.A. SPARES LIST 2/9/08

V8 Engine	
V8 throttle link ball joints	\$1
V8 throttle link bushes	0.20
V8 PCV rubber hose	\$10
V8 plug leads stainless steel Bosch	\$70
V8 spark plugs	\$1.50
V8 rotor button	\$11
V8 distributor cap	\$35
V8 distributor shaft	\$30
V8 manifold bypass hose	\$3
V8 radiator hose, top	\$15
V8 radiator hose, bottom	\$20
V8 long heater hose (VT Commodore LPG)	\$35
V8 short heater hose	\$10
V8 thermostat housing	\$36
V8 & 6 engine mount new	\$30
Z86 oil filter	\$13
V8 front seal, CR 19777	\$30
6 & V8 rear seal, PR 4978	\$20
V8 head gaskets	\$40
V8 rocker gaskets (cork)	\$12
V8 rocker gaskets (rubber)	\$11
V8 sump & timing gasket set	\$54
Fuel pump gasket	\$2
V8 fuel pump kit	\$12
V8 carb. Jet	\$5
Genuine fan belt, V8	\$5
Genuine P. Steer Belt	\$5
Power steering pulley	\$10
Air conditioner belt	\$5
V8 reco water pump changeover	\$100
V8 Water pump gaskets	\$2.50
V8 oil pressure relief valve	\$2
V8 extractor gaskets, set	\$15
V8 exhaust pipe rings (non-asbestos)	\$5
GL27V (V8) points	\$15
V8 oil pressure switches	\$8
V8 crankshaft thrust washers, Pair	\$10
Suspension/Steering	
Power steering rack c/o incl. deposit	\$750
P.S. control valve seals, pair	\$12
Rack boots, p/steer and R.H. manual	\$25
Rack boots, L.H. manual rack,	\$30
Power steer control valve spacer bush	\$5
Urethane tie bar rubbers, set of 4	\$30
Front strut inserts (Pedders) per pair	\$200
Front strut top (rebushed) changeover	\$40
Power steer pinion adjusting shims	\$1
TARGA MAG WHEELCAPS each	\$20
.....Per set of 5	\$80

4 speed gearbox	
4 speed gear lever retainer nut	\$18
4 speed g/box gasket set	\$12
4 speed g/box shifter saddles	\$5
3/4 speed g/box reversing light switch	\$10
6 Cyl	
6 cyl choke cable	\$5
6 & V8 engine mount new	\$30
6 cyl engine breathers	\$2
6 cyl fuel pump kit	\$12
Electrical	
Lucas starter motor bushes, per pair	\$10
Headlamp suit super	\$5
Headlamp dip switches	\$15
Wiper delay relays, Ford.	\$10
Wiper switches	\$30
Indicator switch assembly recon	\$40
General mechanical	
Master Cylinder kit	\$32
Front disc pads (standard) CDP 1045	\$24
Radiator recovery system cap 13psi	\$4
Long handbrake cable	\$10
Interior	
Horn rim rubber grommets	\$3.50
Boot mats	\$155
Deluxe window winder handles	\$5
T-bar selector handles	\$5
Rear parcel tray clips only brown pkt of 10	\$10
Door lock knobs	\$2
Console lid cover Imperial leather	\$10
Boot/Bonnet bump stops set 2	\$11
Exterior	
Front indicator lenses, painted, pr	\$60
Front indicator lens, painted, single RHS	\$30
R.H.F. zinc corner, no chrome	\$20
Ford number plate lenses, pair	\$15
Tinted Laminated Windscreens	\$130
Windscreen trim clips set (33)	\$6
Window scraper rubbers, repro, each	\$25
Bonnet insulation hangers, set	\$10
Badge Clips	\$1
Chrome mould clips, set 10 (pink)	\$3
Chrome mould clips, set 10 (green)	\$3
Grill Mould clips set 10	\$1
General	
A3 Posters ex Vic Club	\$10
Auto Quarterly magazines	\$40

For all spares contact Geoff Cutting on
(08) 8270 3799 or
gcutting@picknowl.com.au

**Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting of the
Leyland P76 Classic Car Club
held at the Sans Souci Literary Institute on
Wednesday 17th September 2008.**

Joe Green opened the meeting at 8:54pm. The secretary Tony De Luca read the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.

The receipt and adoption of the minutes.

Moved by Steve Maher.
Seconded by Peter O'Brien

The President Joe Green informed the meeting that the accounts for the club finances are available for inspection. In the absence of the Treasurer, Troy Green read and tabled the Auditors Report to the Meeting.

Acceptance of the Auditors Report.

Moved by Bev Lyons.
Seconded by Alan Torrance

Joe Green handed the meeting over to the Returning Officer, Alan Torrance and all committee positions were declared vacant.

The Returning Officer called for nominations to fill the Committee positions for the coming year.

As one nomination was received for each of the Office Bearers and ordinary members of the Committee they were duly elected and are:

President	Joe Green
Vice President	Peter O'Brien
Secretary	Tony De Luca
Treasurer	Troy Green
Committee Member	Ron Naylor
Committee Member	Kevin Ward
Committee Member	Paul Van Look
Committee Member	Kay De Luca
Public Officer	Joe Green

The elected President Joe Green then resumed as chairperson of the meeting. He thanked Allan for performing the duties of Returning Officer and thanked Sue Green for her outstanding effort performed as Treasurer and Editor, unfortunately having to resign due to ill health.

As there was no further business, the meeting finished at 9.12pm followed by supper.

Heated Rear Windows

We are ordering rear windows shortly so if you are interested please ring & confirm your order now on 0409 988 757 or (02) 9522-6529
Clear \$220 or Tinted \$230 plus freight

For Sale

Trax Models 1:43 scale Apsen Green Targa Florio \$40 per model

Minutes of the Leland P76 Classic Car Club

held at Sans Souci Literary Institute, Wednesday 17th September 2008.

Joe Green opened the meeting at 8:25pm. Members in attendance as per the attendance book.

Apologies: Sue Green, Valda & Don Chappell.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted. Moved-Peter O'Brien. Seconded-Steve Maher.

Business arising from the minutes: Nil

Treasurer's Report:

\$3,285.70 in Bank. Statement No. 173 dated 29/08/2008.

Income for August 2008 - Membership Fees \$70.00.

Outgoings for August 2008 - Australia Post Stamps \$30.00, Hall Rent \$27.50, Telstra White Pages Ad. \$80.00, Top Gear Trax Model Cars \$525.00, Flowers \$50.00, Stamp Pad & Photocopying \$30.00. Total \$742.50

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report. Moved - Kay De Luca. Seconded - Paul Van Look

Correspondence in:

1. Trax 5th Edition 2008 Catalogue.
2. Brochures & Invitation for Queanbeyan Swap Meet at Queanbeyan Showground 27-28/09/08 and in conjunction with the Queanbeyan Ute Show 27/09/08.
3. Letter & Invitation to Morris Minor Picnic Club outings on Tuesday 2/09/08, Tuesday 7/10/08 & Tuesday 4/11/08.
4. Invitation to the Sydney Model Car & Toy Swap Meet, Sunday 21/09/08 at Penrith Panthers Pavilion.
5. Letter & Brochures from Classic Ridz Coach Builders & Fabrication Caloundra Qld regarding their services.
6. Thank You card from the Green Family to the Leyland P76 Classic Car Club.
7. WA P76 Club Magazine Westwords September 2008.
8. Qld P76 Club Magazine August 2008.
9. Vic P76 Club Magazine July/August 2008.
10. SA P76 Club Magazine August 2008.

Correspondence Out: Nil.

Acceptance of correspondence. Moved - Kevin Ward. Seconded - Ron Naylor.

General Business:

1. Kevin Ward reported that Ticko's Tours have weekends away to Batemans Bay (7-9/11/08), Thredbo Jazz Festival (8-11/05/09) & Bathurst FoSC (Easter 2009) followed by Mudjee Wings, Wheels & Wine (18-20/04/09). Also the Rover Club has a visit planned to the Vintage Motor Garage Peats Ridge on Saturday 15/11/08.
2. Kay De Luca reported that the Orange Blossom Festival Display Day at the Bull & Bush Hotel was rained out. It is possible that a change of venue will occur next year.
3. Tony De Luca reported on the Shannons Display Day at Eastern Creek on Sunday 24 August 2008. It was the largest number of cars that have attended ever and a great day.
4. Joe Green reported on the present condition of Sue in hospital. She is still gravely ill, however is now responding to the latest medication.
5. Kay De Luca asked the members at the meeting if anyone would like to come to the BMC Leyland Heritage Luncheon on Sunday 12/10/08.

The meeting concluded at 8.50pm followed by supper.