

MONTHLY ISSUE

JUNE 2011

LEYLAND P76 CLASSIC CAR CLUB



LEYLAND FORCE 1 COUPE

FUTURE EVENTS 2011

PART 1

MEETING DATES - MEMBERS ARTICLES - EDITORIALS AND MORE

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 2011

- June 15th
- July 20th
- August 17th
- September 21st
- October 19th
- November 16th
- December 21st

PLEASE NOTE

If you are able to write up an article for our newsletter, it will be much appreciated. If you wish to sell a car please send in your add. There is no cost, it is free. It must be received by the 1st of the month to be in the next newsletter, however to ensure that your write up or add is included in the newsletter, please observe the following:

Email it to force7v@hotmail.com

Post it to: c/o 9 Apsley Place Taren Point NSW 2229

follow up with a **phone call** to 9522 6529 to ensure it has been received.



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Editorial



Well another club year is coming to an end and membership fees are due again thanks to those who have already paid. We would be obliged if all members could pay promptly.

Some good news on a positive note. At the recent CMC Heritage Day at Bella Vista Tony De Luca was interviewed by Fletch, the TV presenter of Channel 44, for the show Classic Resto's. It was a very informative and interesting interview about the Leyland P76 and Tony has his Immaculate White Executive on the show. Congratulations Tony. The show was screened on June 1st 2011.

At our last general meeting the proposed National Charter was discussed by the members and all agreed it was a great idea and our club would like to become associated with it when the details have been finalised.

The South Coast Holden Owners Show & Shine is the weekend of Sunday 26th June and should be a great event. All money raised goes to charity.

That's it for now. Hope to see a good attendance at our next general meeting

Joe Green

PLEASE NOTE

Membership Fees are due on 30/6/2011. We would be obliged if members pay promptly. Fees are \$35 – Single Membership and, \$40 – Family. (Please note there has been no increase of fees for many years)



Eastern Creek

Eastern Creek tickets are available now so please pick up your tickets at the next general meeting or phone Joe Green on 9522 6529

Thanks To

Gary & James Mentiplay & the Western Australia P76 Owners Club for the interesting Leyland Force7v coupe Story

The Leyland P76 Home Page for Pictures of the Force7's www.leylandp76.com
Thanks Adrian

LEYLAND FORCE / COUPE (PART 1)

Origins

The Advance Model Group was set up by BMC Australia in Dec 1967, to plan future models for the company to manufacture in Australia in the 1970s. They came up with a two model proposal: Model A being a range of small/medium cars, and Model B would be the large/medium car project.

Model A was put onto the back-burner due to the impending release of the Marina; the P82 project that would have replaced the Marina came back into focus in 1974. Model B eventually became the P76 project, with three bodies planned: a four door sedan, a two door coupe and a four door station wagon. There was never a proposal for the P76 to include either Utility or Panel Van versions, as the market percentages of those types of vehicles would not warrant the extra tooling expense.

BMC Australia (which became Leyland Australia) believed that the P76 range should appeal to customers who are used to American styling, but must have a character of its own. From a company report dated April 1969, the preferred release timings for the P76 range were:

2 door Coupe: Jan 1973
4 door Sedan: June 1973
4 door Station Wagon: Jan 1974

This report also stated: "We would like to introduce the 2 door first, however extensive marketing analysis is required to determine the final model introduction priorities."

Eight months later in December 1969 the model introduction sequence had been finalised with a company report from that month revealing that the 4 door sedan was to be released first, having priority in styling and body engineering – the coupe and station wagon were to follow at 6 monthly intervals. This report also stated: "Outer-skin styling of the coupe derivative should be different from the 4 door sedan version, utilising similar inner panels wherever possible. The 2 door is aimed at young people under 30 years of age."

Karmann, Michelotti and British Leyland's Longbridge styling studio had all been asked to provide styling submissions by the end of 1969. BMC / Leyland Australia's own in-house stylist, Romand Rodbergh also submitted styling concepts on the sedan and coupe, although he had not been formally asked.

All of the styling sketches from the various styling studios were displayed at Zetland (in Sydney) for a high level visit by Lord Stokes from British Leyland in January 1970. Rodbergh's concepts for both the sedan and coupe attracted the most interest from the bosses. Rodbergh had been influenced by the wedge-shaped styling of the NSU Ro80 – he believed that the wedge styling was the future direction of car styling. For the coupe, he wanted a style that was unique and not something that looked like it was just a derivative of the sedan.

Michelotti was contracted for the styling on both sedan and coupe, with the aim of developing the Rodbergh theme. Rodbergh was sent to Turin in March 1970, to work in collaboration with Michelotti. During discussions at Michelotti, it was agreed that the coupe version could be lengthened at the front and shortened at the rear.

LEYLAND FORCE 7 COUPE (Part 1)cont

LEYLAND FORCE 7 COUPE (Part 1)cont

Not long after his return to Sydney, Rodbergh left Leyland Australia and went to work in Canada, where he later learned that his original design concepts had been the basis of the styling accepted for production of the sedan and coupe.

His replacement at Leyland, Mark Cassarchis, worked on the interior styling, the front end and grille treatment, and also on the rear of the sedan.

Pressed Steel Fisher (BL subsidiary in UK) was to be given the task of body engineering and tooling for the P76 sedan, coupe and station wagon.

S2

The codename S2 was given to the coupe, which would be a large two door pillarless hatchback, based on the P76 platform. It would also feature a large rear lift-up hatch, with fold down rear seats from the station wagon version. This gave an enormous flat area in the rear interior of the car. The interior roominess matched the P76 sedan, and was much greater than any of its Australian rivals: the Holden Monaro, the Falcon 2 door Hardtop, and the Valiant Charger. The interior seated five people in comfort.

The front floorpan and bulkhead were from the P76 sedan, whilst the rear floorpan was similar to the station wagon. It had the same wheelbase as the sedan and wagon. All outer panels were different to the sedan, giving the coupe a distinctive appearance (as per Rodbergh's original concepts). The engine, drive-train, and all mechanicals were the same as the sedan. The dash and interior styling also borrowed heavily from the sedan, with the exception of the steering wheel, which was unique to the coupe.

The large Leyland coupe was Australia's first hatchback, and combined with the fold-down rear seats, gave station wagon flexibility. The straight roofline gave much better headroom to back seat passengers. Rear seat passenger room is identical to the 4 door sedan. The spare wheel was positioned in a well in the rear floor, the same arrangement that would be used on the P76 station wagon.

The E series 6 cylinder engine (used in P76 and Marina) was ready for durability testing at the same time as the first S2 prototype became available to the experimental department. As a consequence, the first prototype was fitted with the 6 cylinder engine, and both engine and coupe body underwent severe durability testing in Charleville, QLD. The coupe had disguise panels front and rear. Following the testing, the car was returned to the Zetland factory for "Mark Down", being stripped and measured for any deformities. During the strip down, the engineers noticed that the stiffener panels at the lower B post / floorpan area had not been included by Pressed Steel when the prototype was built. This of course affected the structural rigidity of the coupe's body.

Another Force 7 was slightly damaged in a collision with another vehicle in Crookwell (NSW) in early 1973. This vehicle was on a "familiarisation trip" (not a full road test) with other Leyland vehicles in the Snowy Mountains area, when the accident occurred during heavy rain. The nose cone received superficial damage only in this low-speed collision.

Force 7

S2 became the coupe's code name to distinguish it from the 4 door P76 sedan. Early favoured names for production versions included Marauder and Interceptor. Sales Director John Kay came up with the name Force 7, after listening to a radio broadcast whilst driving through one of Sydney's violent storms. The name proved instantly popular. The Marketing department were never really happy that the P76 sedan had carried its code number into production, and were determined that the coupe would not be marketed as the S2.

LEYLAND FORCE 7 COUPE (Part 1)cont

LEYLAND FORCE 7 COUPE (Part 1)cont

A Leyland Australia specification chart from January 1974 listed ten different versions of the Force 7 coupe, in the following model specifications:

Force 7: (Base Model):

- a. three six cylinder models: column auto, column manual, and 4 speed floor manual.
- b. Three V8 models: column auto, column manual, and 4 speed floor manual.

Force 7V:

- a. V8 t-bar floor automatic;
- b. V8 4 speed floor manual.

Tour De Force:

- a. V8 t-bar automatic;
- b. V8 4 speed manual.

The base model Force 7 would be equivalent to the base model Deluxe P76 4 door sedan. The Force 7V would be similar to the trim level of the Super P76 4 door sedan, and the luxury Tour De Force would be similar to the top-of-the-line P76 Executive sedan. Leyland Australia CEO Peter North dismissed rumours of a high performance version when he stated: "There will be no equivalent model to the Monaro GTS or Falcon GT and GTHO. We are not about to enter a power race with anybody."

Inertia reel front seatbelts were standard on all upper models. All models were to have four headlight grille treatment. Textile trim was only available on the Tour De Force. An interesting dealer option was listed as a removable "Louvred sunshade" for the large rear window.

Woodgrain on glovebox and facia would only be available on the Force 7V and Tour De Force versions (glovebox and facia were painted on basic Force 7 models). Glovebox facia badge and the front fender badge would be "Leyland" on all models. Chrome Force 7, Force 7 V and Tour De Force badges would be on the rear panel (below hatch) adjacent to the right hand tail-light. This panel was painted black on all models except Tour De Force, which would have a special "appliqué" panel. A number of Force 7 badges survive today, and are a collector's item.

Chrome bumper bars would be standard on all models, with a rubber protector on the front bumper only (all of the ten surviving coupes are fitted with black painted bumpers). Interestingly, the photos and drawings of the car in the Force 7V Owners Manual show a car with black painted bumpers.

A rear quarter decal was available only on "Force 7V" models. An interesting option available only on Force 7V models was "decorative striping, incorporating 'Leyland' on the bonnet and upper body sides" (none of the surviving coupes have this striping). Interior Trim would have been black, brown and blue (same as sedan), however the antique parchment (off white) colour of the sedan was replaced by a new full white interior trim for the Force 7.

Standard road wheels for all models were 6 inch steel rims, with a special CAC alloy wheel available as an option. These same CAC alloy rims were later fitted to the limited-edition P76 Targa Florio sedans.

Upmarket emphasis and reduced model range

The original plan for 10 different versions of the Force 7 was dropped shortly after January 1974, as Leyland decided to introduce the coupe in only three versions of the upper-level V8 models – Level 3 and Level 4. Leyland wished to place the coupe up-

LEYLAND FORCE 7 COUPE (Part 1)cont

market from their local rivals, and therefore the Force 7 would now only be available as a Force 7 V (floor manual and floor automatic) and Tour de Force (floor automatic) – all three versions being fitted with the CAC alloy wheels.

A first "Pilot" run of coupes (nine cars) went down the assembly lines in December 1973, and revealed major problems at some stations on the line, with the cars receiving damage on some of the narrow assembly track stations – the coupe is slightly wider than the sedan, and this created problems with the coupe doors open at some work stations on the line. The P76 sedan had also caused problems with its size on the assembly tracks at Zetland.

Production and Release Delayed

Public release of the Force 7 was originally going to be in November 1973, but this was put back to February 1974, and then rescheduled again to June 1974 (the date mentioned in the Force 7 Owner's Handbook).

The major reason for the delay in going to full production was the ABS moulded plastic nose cone. This moulding caused endless problems and delays. Originally a steel nose cone was going to be fitted, however Leyland were assured by the plastics manufacturer that a large moulding would present no problem, and would stand up to all tests. However, the early nose cones were not only a very poor fit, durability road testing in outback NSW and QLD revealed that the plastic had problems keeping its shape in extreme heat. Continual experiments improved the process, and by July 1974 the nose cone problems had been largely solved, however by that stage it was far too late.

A Force 7 prototype and a P76 station wagon prototype, were both crash tested at Ford's facility in Victoria in the second quarter of 1974. Both coupe and wagon passed all crash test criteria.

Leyland's road proving crew took a Force 7 prototype (Car 541), a P76 station wagon prototype, plus a Marina 6 cylinder sedan to the Charleville area of QLD in Feb/Mar 1974. The station wagon underwent severe durability testing whilst the coupe and Marina underwent other durability trials.

The coupe returned after testing with fatigue cracks around the rear of the C Pillar area, near the aperture for the large rear hatchback window, to the dismay of company management. Despite management's concerns, the Leyland body engineers were very confident that those problems could have been solved without undue expense in the short term. This resulted in further delays to the full production schedule of the coupe, which was never implemented before the coupe project was put onto the back-burner in July 1974.

David Abell, from British Leyland had by then been appointed as the new CEO, and his (then secret) terms of reference was to shut up the Australian manufacturing operations as quickly as possible. Leyland Australia would then become an importer of commercials and luxury cars from Britain.

The Experimental Division was progressively run down between July and September 1974, with engineers being re-deployed to other parts of the factory.

Gary Mentiplay

(To be continued in next month's issue)



VI-3

Original concept by Michelloti Italy.



Some Historic Photo's

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FUTURE EVENTS 2011

- June 12th Motoring Expo at Motorlife Museum , Kembla Grange
- June 26th South Coast Holden Owners Club Charity Show & Shine at Kembla Grange Racecourse
- August Shannons Show & Shine Eastern Creek
- August British Display Day Kings School Parramatta
- September 11th Orange Blossom Festival, Baukham Hills.
- September 18th Burwood Spring Festival Show & Shine
- September 25th 2011 Annual Reunion BMC Leyland at Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club
- October 23rd Chevalier College Motorfest Show

Come along to the Australian Motorlife Museum and help us celebrate the

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Sunday
12th June 2011
9.30am - 2.30pm

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visit www.motorlifemuseum.com.au
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NRMA Members \$7.50
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Club (if applicable): _____

Entrance fee is \$10 per vehicle (some space limits will apply on the day)

PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN TO THE AUSTRALIAN MOTORLIFE MUSEUM
INTEGRAL ENERGY RECREATION PARK, DARKES ROAD, KEMBLA GRANGE 2530



**Minutes of the Leyland P76 Classic Car Club held at the Sans Souci Literary
Institute on Wednesday 18th May 2011**

Joe Green opened the meeting at 8:19 pm. Members in attendance as per the attendance book.

Apologies - Ron Frith, Peter O'Brien & Kevin Cross

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted.

Moved – Sue Green Seconded – Kevin Ward

Business arising from the minutes;

Nil

Treasurers Report:

Income

M/ship Fees \$55.00

Nat Mag Sale \$20.00

Total \$75.00

Outgoings

Hall Rent \$33.00

Aust Post \$30.00

Officeworks \$25.50

Eastern Creek Fees \$96.00

CMC Fees \$20.00

Total \$204.50

Bank Statement No 204 Dated 31/03/2011 and Bank Statement No 205 Dated 29/04/2011 with a Balance of \$3014.14

Moved – Tony de Luca Seconded – Bev Lyons

Correspondence In:

Penzed P76 – May 11

Westwords – May 11

SA P76 Club Newsletter – Mar & Apl 2011

Correspondence Out: Nil

Acceptance of correspondence.

Moved – Tony de Luca Seconded – Sue Green

General Business:

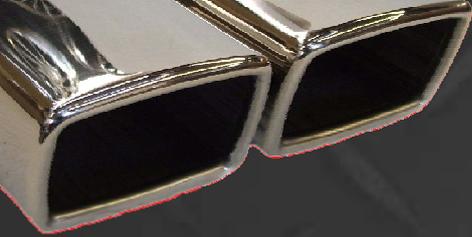
Valda Chappel rang and wished everyone all the best.

Ron Frith rang, he is still been unwell but is slowly getting better.

Discussion about the National Charter – the response from the membership was positive and it was decided that we would like to be involved.

Tony gave a talk on the CMC Heritage Day at Bella Vista. It went very well and spoke about meeting Fletch from TRS? And said he will be doing a story on Tony's car later in the year.

The meeting concluded at 8:53 pm followed by supper.



TAILPIECE



**INTERESTING
STUFF**



LEYLAND P76

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO AUSTRALIA'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL CAR

By HAL MOLONEY
Foreword by BARRY LAKE



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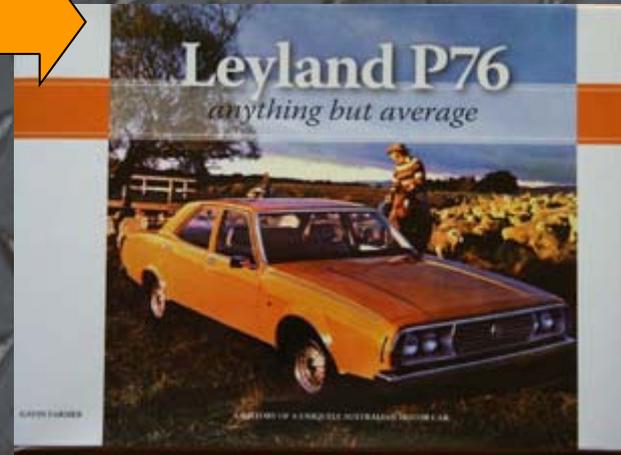


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If any members are able to write up an article for the newsletter about their car or their holiday trip please do not hesitate to send it in; it will be gratefully accepted.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE THE MAGAZINE EMAILED TO YOU IN FULL COLOUR INSTEAD OF SNAIL MAIL PLEASE EMAIL ME AT : force7v@hotmail.com



JUNE 12TH

MOTORING EXPO AT MOTOR LIFE MUSUEM

KEMBLA GRANGE