

WESTWORDS

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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 Tuesday 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 2010-2011

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Treasurer:	Mick le-Cocq	0414 731 535
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Cover picture: Club Line-up at BMC Day, Manning Park, Spearwood, 31 October 2010

EDITOR'S CORNER:

This month's main feature article tells the story of a P76 enthusiast in New Zealand, who has built a replica Targa in a land where the special edition P76 was never offered for sale during the dying months of Leyland Australia. No doubt this is only one of many tales of passionate endeavour involving our favourite car. Some of these stories can be found on a fascinating website at <http://www.webtrade.com.au/p76/>. As the "silly season" approaches, the level of club activity will subside while families enjoy the onset of Christmas, New Year and the long summer school holidays. Hopefully, the next issue of *WestWords* will have a listing of general motoring events in WA for 2011, as well as those events of particular interest to our members. Meanwhile we take time out to congratulate John Metcalf, our oldest club member, on recently reaching his 90th birthday, and appeal to all to make that our goal by driving safely and courteously during the busy holiday period. I take this opportunity to wish all our members, associates, friends and families a most Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Coming Events

General Club Meeting, Tuesday 25 January 2011 at 7.30pm, Kenwick Community Centre, cnr Kenwick Road & Brixton Street, Kenwick.

Northam Flying 50, Sunday 3 April, 2011. See details in letter of invitation from The Vintage Sports Car Club of WA (Inc) on page 4.

All Australian Car Day VIII, Sunday 10 April 2011, Waroona. See details in box below.

Easter 2012 (April 22-25) P76 Nationals - more details to follow

“All Australian Car Day VIII”

Sunday 10th April 2011
10am to 4pm
Waroona Town Oval

Huge Classic Display
Featuring: Chrysler Charger 40th Anniversary

Quality Market, Kids Fun & Games
Outdoor Variety Show, Wine & Gourmet Expo.

FREE ENTRY

Ph/Fx: (08) 9586 1010; Email: ter.syl@bigpond.com

www.eventassist.org.au

DECEMBER MEETING AND BARBECUE

Five club members and three family members attended the Club Barbecue and meeting at Manning Park, Spearwood, on Sunday 19 December. While those attending enjoyed the chance to chat and share, it was not possible to conduct a formal club Meeting due to the absence of three committee members.

Andy Mentiplay conducted an informal “committee” meeting. The only items discussed were coming events and the next club meeting which was confirmed for Tuesday 25 January. (See details page 2.)

By any standard the meet was less than well attended. Informal discussion took place on how to encourage members to offer more support to Club events. The editor invites members to submit suggestions as to how to revive interest and generate passion for Club activities in 2011. Remember--- it’s your Club, and to paraphrase an old war cry: **“Your Club Needs YOU!”** Send your suggestions to samurai2@westnet.com.au or text them to 0415768485.

The Vintage Sports Car Club of WA (Inc.)

A.B.N. 49 845 981 838

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The Vintage Sports Car Club of WA Inc (VSCC) has as you may be aware held the Flying 50 event in Northam over the past number of years with great success and 2011 will be no exception with the event being held on Sunday April 3rd 2011.

The event over the years has grown to the stage where the Shire of Northam is very keen to help make it grow to the extent that they have increasingly been adding attractions in the centre of town and in the Park behind the pit area.

The VSCC and the Shire of Northam invite your Club to be part of the event in the form of Car Club displays.

The format is straightforward in as much as each club participating would have an area allocated to set up an appropriate display arrangement including placing the cars in an attractive manner, setting up a tent to sell regalia and handing out information on your club with the hope of attracting new members.

It gives your club a venue to display your cars, have a great social day out and enjoy some great vintage car events and to use the event as an official Club outing giving those cars on concessional licence the opportunity to use their cars.

The cost of entry will be \$10.00 per car which includes a collector's event program.

If your club is interested in being involved in one of WA's premier car events please contact me for more information. Space at Northam is limited so first in best dressed.

My contact details are 'phone 0412 078 444 and email tony.bagshaw@chemicalsystems.com.au.

As time is always of the essence in arranging any type of Car Club event we would like ASAP your expression of interest so that an area can be allocated to you.

Kind regards

Tony Bagshaw

VSCC Northam Flying 50 Committee Member

17 December 2010

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

MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 2010 MEETING

Regrettably, minutes for the November Club meeting were not available at the time of going to press. As our commercial printing shop was closing down from 24 December until 10 January, *WestWords* had to be submitted for printing prior to the Christmas break.

Hopefully, we can include the minutes in the February issue.

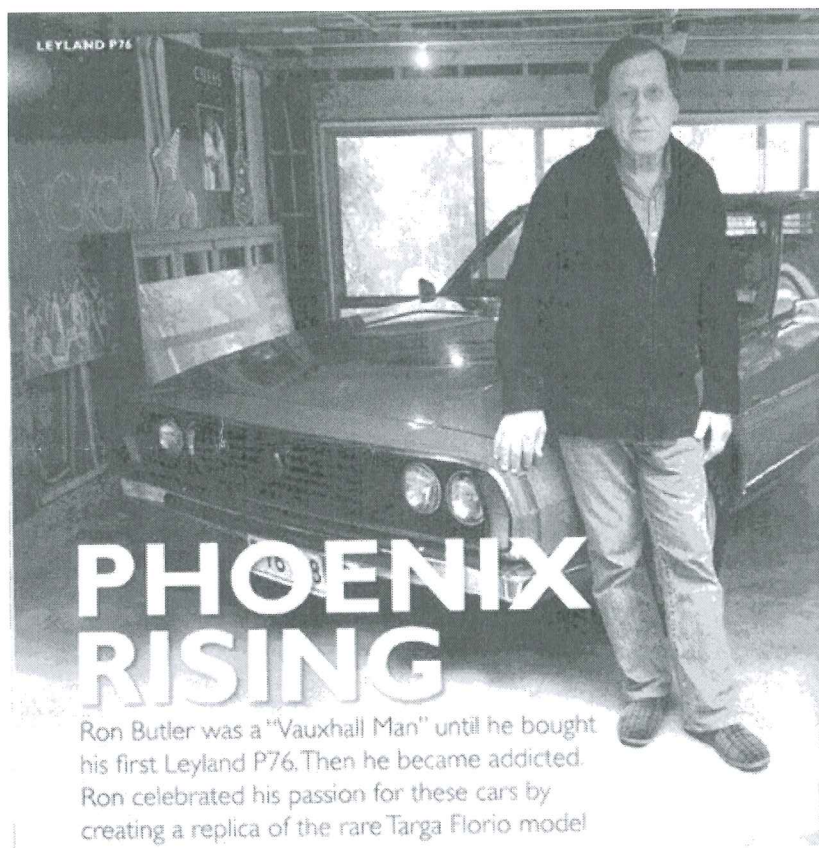
**The Club Officers and Members
Wish to extend their heartiest
CONGRATULATIONS
AND VERY BEST WISHES
To our highly-esteemed member
JOHN METCALF
On attaining his 90th Birthday
On 30 October 2010
And take pleasure in wishing him
Continuing good health and happiness
for many years to come.**

Contributions to *WestWords*

Contributions are always welcome to enhance the interest and appeal of the club magazine. These can include letters to the editor, technical hints and queries, historical anecdotes, motoring adventures, restoration tales, unique or special-interest P76s with stories of how they came to be. Members with future or ongoing projects are encouraged to keep *WestWords* posted regarding progress.

Where possible, contributions should be in electronic form, via email to samurai2@westnet.com.au, on flash drive or even on old-fashioned floppy disc. This reduces the need to scan hard copies, reduces the byte-size of the magazine and makes for easier emailing.

NOTE: A number of member email addresses need to be updated on the Club email register. A number of email messages are being returned to the Editor as undeliverable. If you are missing out on your emailed copy of *WestWords* please send your correct email address to samurai2@westnet.com.au.



Courtesy of Allan Dick, Editor of *Classic Driver*

Ron Butler bought his first Leyland P76 in 1977 after he took a short cut through a Wellington car yard on his way to lunch and he saw one sitting in the showroom. He went for a test drive and loved it. Loved it so much that he still owns one and is a founding member of the New Zealand Leyland P76 Owners' club.

"I was a Vauxhall man, but by 1972 Vauxhalls were long gone and I fancied a Holden Monaro. But all of the cars I liked were too expensive for me. If they were in my price range they were too baggy.

"But I saw this 1974 Leyland P76 in the showroom at Wakefield Motors and thought it was interesting. It was an automatic Super painted in "Oh Fudge" and after a test drive I decided I wanted it.

"At the time I was driving a XA Falcon and I didn't really like it. Wakefield Motors took it as a trade."

He kept that car for 20 years before selling it to a fellow club member and today he drives what, to all intents and purposes, is the second most highly-rated P76 after the Force Seven – a Targa Florio. But Ron's the first to admit that it's a replica that he created himself.

"I don't think there are any genuine Targa Florios in new Zealand."

Ron's first car was a rare one – it was 1960 and he bought an Austin 10 convertible. That was followed by a 'three window' PA Vauxhall and that by an HB Brabham Viva. His last Vauxhall was a 1972 Victor FD – one of the coke bottle shaped cars. Then came the XA Falcon with which he was "not impressed".

"I did 200,000 or 250,000 kms in my first P76. it gave gearbox trouble – in fact it had two automatic transmissions – it gave no real engine trouble.

"Because they are all aluminium engines, there was some movement between the surfaces and the inlet manifold gasket bunched up and started leaking air

"I fixed that by making small center punch marks around the edges of both surfaces, that gave the gasket something to grip on and it never happened again.

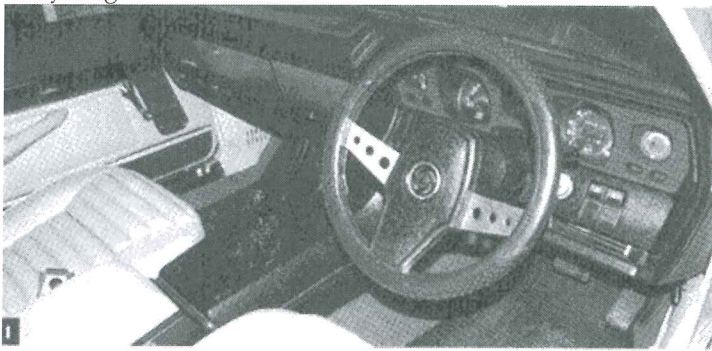
"I had an 8 metre trailer yacht at the time and I used the P76 for towing that all over the place. It handled it very well.

"but I wanted another, so I found a basic De Luxe in Havelock North. It was painted "am, I blue". The de Luxe was the basic model with a three speed manual gearbox, column shift. It was a June 1976 model and like my first car it was new Zealand assembled, out at the Motor Corporation plant at Petone.

"I wanted a Targa Florio – obviously I would have liked a Force Seven Coupe, but that wasn't realistic. However creating a replica Targa Florio was.

I chose a standard Deluxe as the basis because they were already manual transmission car with the pedal box already there."

Ron did all the work himself, sourcing all of the parts and installing them as well, from the Borg Warner four speed manual gearbox to the Targa Florio decals, the seats – everything.



1) Interior is up to Targa Florio standard. (2) Decals were created and added to the car.
3) Alloy wheels were designed for the Force Seven Coupe



When he changed the gearbox, Ron lightened the flywheel and fitted a six-bolt Chevrolet pressure plate for security.

He also fitted a limited slip diff, fitted a larger core radiator, new coil springs and suspension bushes and power steering.

Ron has compiled a list of all the parts he added to the car in his conversion – apart from obvious items such as the targa Florio decals, the Force seven steering wheel and the alloy wheels which were also designed for the Force seven, all the other parts come from wither a P76 Super, or a P76 executive.

This includes all of the interior and exterior trim, dash with rev-counter, etc.

This car has come a long way from its relatively humble De Luxe beginnings.

Along the way there was a minor rust issue.

“Rust appeared in the front sills, but it was a simple matter to cut that out and replace the metal

Ron’s car not only looks the part – but sounds it as well. It starts with a crackle and quickly settles down into a fiery rumble. Exhaust constriction was always a performance issue with the P76 and when they were raced in events like the B&H 500 long distance races drivers were always pleased when the exhaust “fell off”, liberating considerable more power.

We’re surprised how comfortable this car is. It’s fitted with seats from an Executive and they are super soft with plenty of support.

But, room in the rear isn’t all that great and you have the AU Falcon problem of clouting your head on the roofline if you’re not careful.

But there is that h-u-g-e boot as compensation – big enough to put a 44-gallon drum in – if you have need to.

So big, in fact, that you can overload it.

“I did a bit of scuba diving,” says Ron. “We were going away for a weekend and the boot was big enough to take the wet suits and all of the other gear for six people – including the weights. There was so much in there that we almost had the front wheels off the ground and had to bring the diving weights inside and put them on the front floor!”

Today the P76 is his car for special occasions – an AU Falcon XR Turbo is his daily transport. It’s absolutely mint and spotless in red, but he doesn’t consider it “better” car than the P76.

Ron’s a dedicated P76 enthusiast – a junkie you may say. In his “second” workshop there are P76 photos and posters on the walls – and up in the rook is a brand new metal pressing – a side off a P76 sedan. But there’s another new pressing up there as well. It’s for a Force Seven. And on the workshop bench is a Force Seven owner’s manual. And in a box is a brand new Force Seven tail light.

Maybe Ron’s going to build himself a Force Seven from parts?

This article first appeared in the Oct-Nov 2009 issue of *Classic Driver* and is printed by kind permission of the author.

Moments in History

P76 in Encyclopaedia Britannica

A new high-performance model based on the HQ series was announced by GM-Holden in Australia early in the year. Called the Monaro GTS, it was offered with a choice of three V-8 engines ranging up to 5.7 litres in displacement. Ford scored a success with a six-cylinder version of the Cortina, using the Falcon engine, and brought out a new, large, and powerful LTD model (overall length, 204 in.). British Leyland developed the P.76, a special passenger car to compete in Australia with the Holden, the Ford Falcon, and the Chrysler Valiant. It had a choice of either a 2.6-litre six-cylinder or a 4.4-litre V-8 engine, both being somewhat enlarged versions of comparable power units made by BL in the United Kingdom.
(MAURICE PLATT)

The extract at left is taken from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year for 1974*, p.369, and summarises the main events of the 1973 Australian motoring year.

It is interesting that the P76 write-up took up nearly 50% of *Britannica’s* offering on the Australian motoring scene in that year.—Ed.

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Car runs on water power

From MICHAEL KEMP

LONDON, Sun: It is here . . . the car that runs on water at the rate of 35km per litre and could make petrol out of date.

Scientists in England say it is impossible and for more than a month I too, have been highly sceptical of the secret trials on Guernsey Island.

But I drove the water car, a Leyland Mini, and saw that it works. I drove it on the roads of Guernsey in normal traffic.

The engine was lively and powerful. It accelerated normally and travelled about 8km with nothing but water in the tank—till a pump burnt out.

Mini No 19454—a Guernsey registration—runs on hydrogen gas made from water by electrolysis.

TESTS WATCHED

Two days of tests and driving with water as the base fuel have been watched by an engine expert, Mr David Hooper, who lives and works on Guernsey.

The device to obtain hydrogen from water is estimated to cost about \$100 in mass production.

It was invented by a 74-year-old New Zealander, Mr Archibald Blue.

He was brought to Guernsey about three months ago by a group of three retired, wealthy British businessmen, who are living on Guernsey to avoid Britain's taxes.

Together they and Mr Blue have been developing his invention to the point where they can prove that a car will run on hydrogen produced from water as it travels along.

An electric current from the car battery is passed through water to break it into its basic gases of hydrogen and oxygen.

It is well known that hydrogen can replace petrol to power a car but it is regarded as an expensive gas to produce and costly to carry in a heavy, pressurised cylinder.

Mr Blue says: "This is conventional rubbish."

He has added a pump that forces the mixture of hydrogen, oxygen and air into the carburettor in place of the normal petrol-air mixture.

Mighty Mini

This 33-year-old clipping from the *West Australian* records an intriguing trial of a water-powered engine in a Leyland Mini.

The tests were conducted on the island of Guernsey, and from the account it would appear they were quite successful.

As with many of these unconventional developments utilizing the cheapest possible fuel sources, this one apparently "died on the vine".

One can only imagine how much it may have cost multi-national oil companies to ensure this invention was nipped in the bud before it became a threat to the industry's vast profit margins.—Ed.

ACW

The P76 Story

Over the years there have been many versions of the unique history of the development and demise of the P76. It can be quite an interesting exercise noting the inconsistencies between the various renderings of the tale.

Another noteworthy version can be found on the Austin Rover Online website at the following address: <http://austin-rover.co.uk/index.htm?p76storyf.htm>

This gives a UK perspective of the saga with some insights into the workings of the relationship between the parent company and its antipodean offspring that dared to do its own thing by bringing into the world the first (and to some people the only) All-Aussie designed and mass-produced automobile loaded with features that were ahead of its time. So much so, it would seem that, while it could be said that the P76 was made ready for Australia, it may also have been the case that Australia wasn't quite ready for the P76.

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