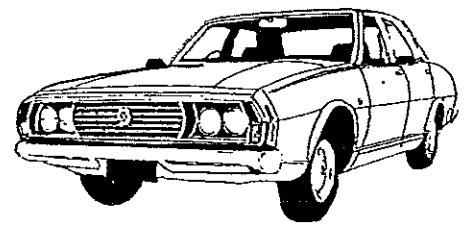




**THE QUEENSLAND
P76 OWNERS CLUB
INCORPORATED**



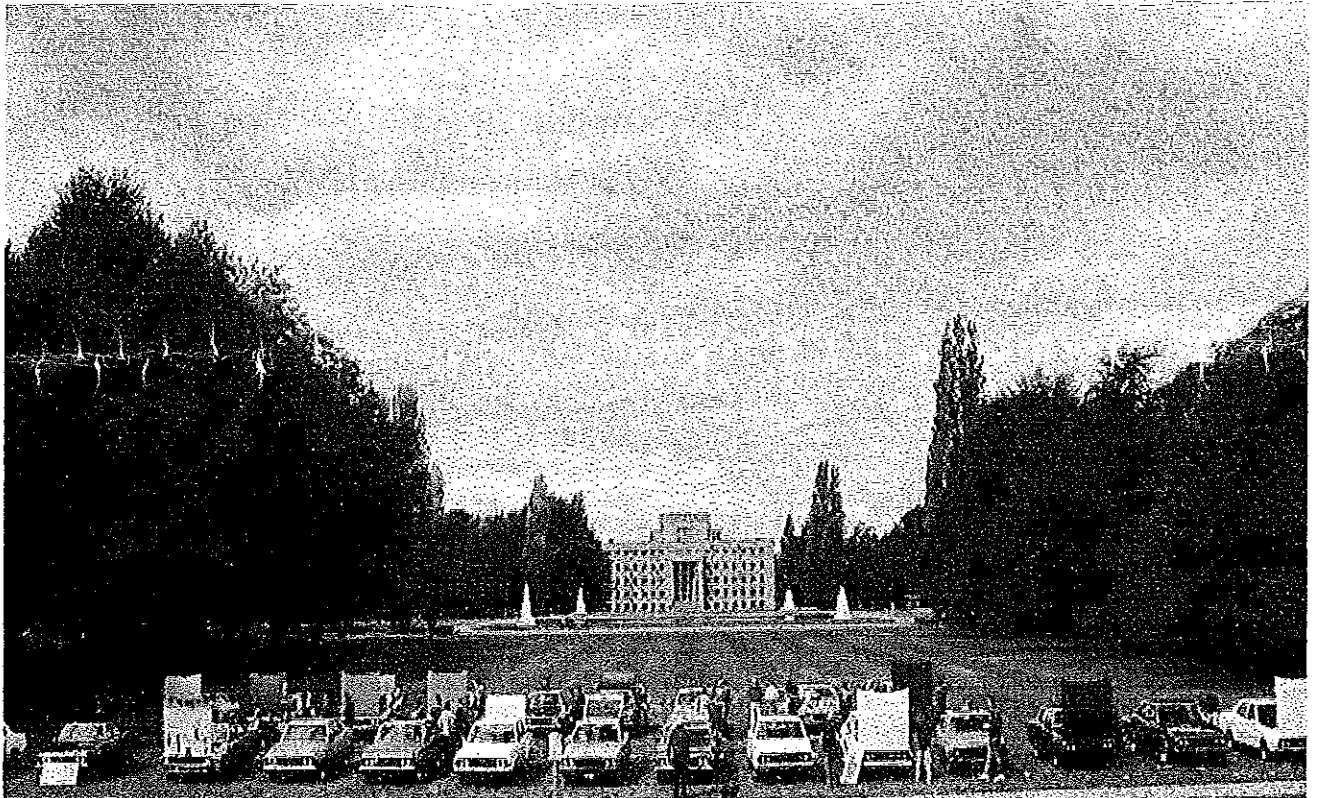
Leyland P76 .Anything But Average

may 2003

VOL 6 ISSUE 63

THE QUEENSLAND BULLETIN

CANBERRA EASTER 2003



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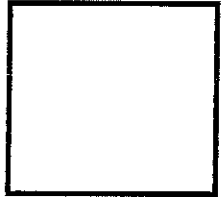
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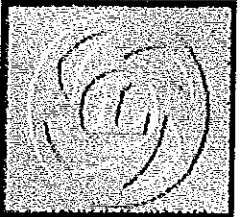
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THE QLD P76 OWNERS CLUB
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GENERAL INFORMATION

<http://www.leylandp76.com>

The Queensland P76 Owners Club Inc holds its monthly meetings on the second Friday of each month at 7.30 PM
VENUE: Norman Park Uniting Church.
Cur Bennetts Rd and
McIlwraith Ave
NORMAN PARK.

Various activities are organized by Club Members and are generally held on the last Sunday of the month. All venue details are confirmed at the General Meeting and are recorded in the Minutes on the next page.

2003 MEETING DATES

June 13
July 11
AUG 8

CLUB MEMBER OF THE YEAR POINTS ALLOCATED Attend Meeting - 1 point - Raffle Donation - 1 point - Organize Event - 1 point - Win Event - 1 point

Other "P76 Owners " clubs are welcome to reproduce the original material in this newsletter, and mention of The Queensland P76 Owners Club Inc and the Author of that material would be appreciated as the source.

GENERAL MEETING MAY 2003

The meeting was opened at 8 10 pm
Apologies john Spencer,dixie,davecollins

Treasurers Report \$ 238.43

Incoming Magazine.

Vic ,leylines,westwords,s.e.qld.touring guide,goodmans report

Incoming Mail.

1. Stanthorpe area sent a leaflet about Stanthorpe as a club trip destinations

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

1. Any ideas for the xmas party contact Adrian or Garth
2. Club shirts are available contact Garth or warren cost\$25.00

SPARE PARTS.

1. Graham told us the story of the spare parts bought at Canberra
2. The rear number plate light lenses are going to be ready in 2 weeks

GENERAL BUSINESS.

1. The public liability insurance monster has reared its ugly head again several options being investigated cost have required increase in memberships to get cover. Expected cost around \$1,400
2. We need ideas for memorabilia for national meet next Easter on gold coast
Also we need expression of interest if you plan to attend
3. The A.G. M. is on the 8th of august and we need a new committee as all our present committee wont be standing again so help your club and receive free membership
4. Adrian would likt to know from anyone interestred in advertising any cars or parts 4 sale on web page

4 SALE

Adrian car is still 4 sale asking \$1500 PN 0414383503

OUTINGS

MAY 25 trip to kondalilla falls montville U.B.D reference map 54 j 19 meet at B.P morayfeild between 9.30 and 10.00

JUNE queens birthday weekend get together at coffs on again details in mag

Coffs Harbour Weekend

Well as everyone knows, the Queen's Birthday weekend is coming up soon (7th,8th and 9th of June) and like other years we will be going down to Coffs Harbour again this year to meet up with some New South Wales members for our annual State Of Origin Games. This year we will be all staying in virtually the same place. Due to over booking we will be staying across the road from last years accommodation. The place is still run by the same people. You will need to book as it is filling up fast.

The details are

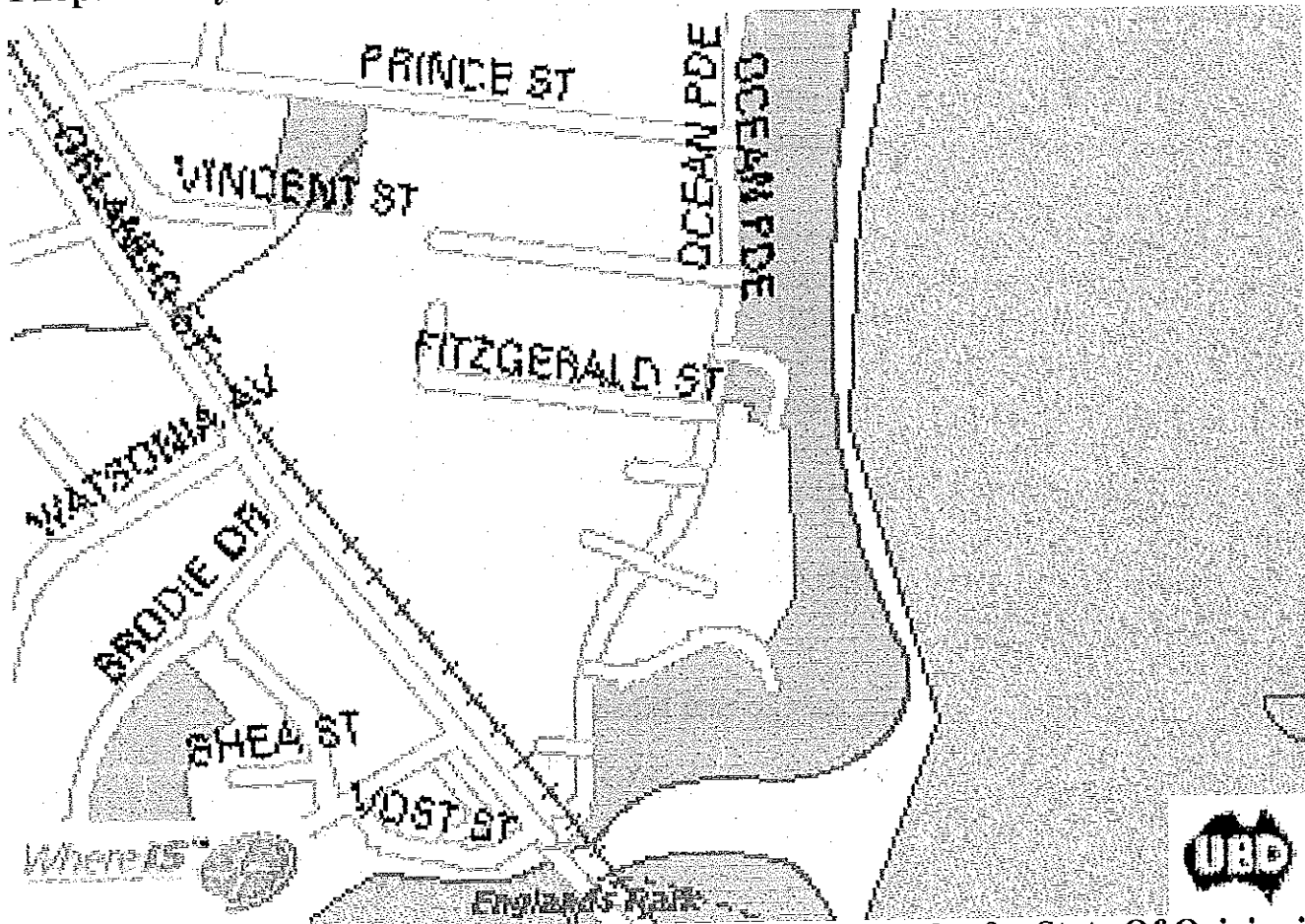
Park Beach Cabins

14 Fitzgerald St

Coffs Harbour 2450

02 6652 1095

I hope to see you all there this year. Activities include Ten Pin Bowling, Go Karting



and Putt Putt Golf. Also after a few discussion about the rules for State Of Origin, it has been explained that you must play for the state that you first joined a P76 Club in.

Garth...

Leyland P76 'Anything But Average'
Look at the Facts and Not the Bullshit

The P76 should not be seen as the best car ever built in Australia, but at the same time it should not be dismissed as an embarrassment or a blunder. By doing so we ignore the contribution the P76 made to Australian vehicle manufacturing and the standards that we have all come to expect in cars today. The fact is, as a car, the P76 did not fail (WHEELS 1974 Dec p18). It was considered superior in its dynamic qualities, qualities sadly lacking in Ford and GMH cars. Almost without exception, the motoring press applauded the P76 and many said it was better than Ford, Chrysler and GMH and held its own in performance (WHEELS 1974 Dec p96). The P76 forced a number of changes on the 'Big Three', GMH, Ford and Chrysler at the time, mainly in the following areas:

- 1) Ventilated power assisted front disk brakes as standard across the range, whereas the others still had drums except on expensive models (WHEELS 1974 Dec p96).
- 2) Reduction in the weight of a vehicle which result in fuel, tyre, suspension and brake savings.
- 3) Crash testing and the use of plastics and breakaway components in the impact areas between interior fittings and driver/passengers. HQ Holden, XA Falcon and Valiant all had significant metal in their dashboards and fascia.
- 4) Road holding, handling and general performance were at least as good as the others and many believed better (WHEELS 1974 Dec p98). Remember Radial Tuned Suspension by GMH, and the Ford and Valiant equivalents, all attempts to catch up. To quote a car magazine of the time, "the P76 remained neutral during hard cornering. The products of the Big 3 would washout with terminal understeer which in the case of the Valiant would sometimes suddenly switch to violent and dangerous oversteer. What made the P76 more remarkable was that it was often cornering some 20 mph faster".
- 5) Impact protection is designed into the body shell, i.e. front end designed to allow the motor to go under the car in a front impact instead of through the firewall, side door intrusion bars in all doors, and a fuel tank between the rear wheels rather than under the boot floor. A collapsing forward hinged bonnet, and built in seat headrests etc. etc.
- 6) The first time that plastic had been chrome finished. Basic equipment such as a radio, become standard equipment after the P76 made them a standard (WHEELS 1974 Dec p96). Prior to this you had to buy it as an extra.

The most important contribution is that given the opportunity, Australians can design, engineer and manufacture their own car without the "help" of either the US or Britain. You may not be aware that Holden's and Fords in Australia since they appeared in this country have not been totally conceived or designed by Australians, but are adapted from models in the U.S. or Europe. Holden started out importing GM cars and assembling them, now they manufacture but not totally design them. The Holden Commodore in England is known as the Vauxhall Royal, and we get the latest version six to twelve months after it has been released in the U.K. Mr A. McWilliams a service manager, holding an A Grade Automotive Engineers Certificate with 25 Years in the motor trade, stated in WHEELS Magazine (Jan 1975 p.86), the P76 is a very good vehicle, offering excellent road holding, with very reliable engineering and performance, and was the only real Australian-developed car from the ground up.

With regard to common assertions about the P76, let the facts speak for themselves and not another misinformed motoring writer. These are:

1. Orders in the first week were astronomical – more than 2000 and within a month there was a 16-week waiting list. Orders continued to outstrip supply by 3 months till March 1974, some 8 months after the launch (WHEELS 1974 Dec p20). People swamped Leyland dealerships, and in the first two weeks the P76 sales rate was higher than any other new car launched in Australia with some models with a five month waiting list (WHEELS 1974 Dec p97). In the first week after release, more than 2000 orders were taken. Toyota only recently surpassed this record in the late 1990's. This clearly illustrates the P76 was hardly an unpopular design and a car in demand contrary to many assertions by so called motoring commentators.
2. Assertions were made such as things started falling off, that the windscreen tended to pop out of its moorings whereby water seeped in, carpets smoulder, and doors that wouldn't close. I have never heard any club members ever mention this as a problem over the years and certainly haven't experienced such problems. The same windscreen attachment technique is still used today. However, it is well known that opposition carmakers whispered to the media every P76 horror story they heard or could invent. GMH was responsible for spreading false and misleading information about the P76. P76 club members have kept copies of these memos to GMH sales staff.

3. The P76 sank Leyland because of the 1973-74 oil shock that made big cars less attractive to the buying public. What commentators fail to say is that Leyland made mostly small cars that were selling well. In November 1973 suppliers hit Leyland with strike action. In order to keep its own workforce employed during Christmas that year Leyland kept manufacturing, leaving in excess of 2,000 unfinished cars stockpiled and largely unpaid for. At the end of the strike other manufactures particularly Ford and GMH sensing Leyland's weakened state, made several deals with component manufactures to restrict supply. Borg Warner supplied differentials and gearboxes to both Ford and Chrysler before Leyland. However, British Leyland was in big trouble (in England) and was looking at reducing its exposure worldwide, hence they sent out the British whiz kid David Abel. Abel made no secret of the fact that he felt that colonials (Australians, New Zealanders and South Africans) had no business building cars let alone designing them. Despite assurances that no more than 2,500 jobs would go, Abel sacked over 6,000 by Christmas 1974. The P76 failed due to British Leyland rationalising its world operations by shutting plants in not only in Australia, but South Africa and New Zealand and not for any other reason.
4. Comments on the P76 on the notion they are as heavy as the Queen Mary and handle like a barge. A racing driver once said to me, after being involved in racing them for quite a while in stock trim, my V8 4 speed P76 was only .32 sec of the pace of a VT Commodore at the Morwell Hill climb. That is 38.46 versus 38.14, and with the same driver. Not to shabby for a 30-year-old barge. Sir Jack Brabham also used modified P76 V8's for racing in his later years. One P76 was entered by Evan Green in the 1974 World Cup Rally and made the fastest time around the Sicily leg including the Targa Florio course. The Targa Florio model was released to celebrate this.

Let's not forget the P76 V8 Executive was named by 'WHEELS Magazine' as the '1973 WHEELS Car of the Year'. This award is the most prestigious and important award made to the Australian motor industry, and is given to the manufacturer which contributes the most significant product advance to the industry whereby chief points of evaluation are based on engineering excellence including innovation in design, road behaviour and performance, and with further considerations on standard of quality (WHEELS Jan 1974). As a P38 (half a car as often joked) it was the best as judged by independent assessment. More than 40 motoring writers drove the P76 and heaped strong praise and pronounced it the best. WHEELS concluded "the totally new Leyland sedan emerged as a dynamic and remarkably fine motor car" and "is a very worthy winner of the WHEELS Car Of The Year award" (WHEELS Jan 1974 p12).

WHEELS writers said pitted against the Holden Kingswood, Falcon 500 and Valiant, it had the best brakes, gearbox, driver position, seat design and general accommodation, the best boot and the best equipped (WHEELS 1973 Sept). In addition, superior fuel economy, and local content close to 100% and was the most thoroughly Australian car, in concept and content, ever offered to the Australian public (WHEELS Jan 1974). Peter Wherrett the most well known motoring commentator in Australia, test drove the P76 in 1998, and pronounced it to be still very competitive in driving, handling and comfort as many recently released models. Not bad for a 30 year old car. Ford and Holden still couldn't win WHEELS Car of the Year in 1974, the VW Passat did. It's bad when you can't beat a VW.

How about all the stuff ups Ford and Holden, and now Mitsubishi, who bought out Chrysler in Australia, have made since the P76 was released. We seem to hear little about these genuine stuff ups when talking about the P76. They are many and have been documented but people especially uninformed motoring writers tend to forget this when they let their bias get in the way of objective thinking. Ford and Holden have over the years, some major recalls of which the P76 did not. Of recent note, Holden had a recall of their VS & VT Commodore, and Ford with its AU suspension problems and as Gordon Lomas stated in The Courier Mail (20/7/02) the AU is Fords biggest blunder, more so than the Ford Edsel of the 1960s. According to the RACQ (Quest 1997 July) the EA-Ed 1988-93 Falcons suffered from gearbox problems, over heating, and poor build quality. Remember the Holden Camira and Piazza in the 1980s, failures on a gross scale (Sunday Mail 1999 p6). Lets not forget Mitsubishi with gearbox problems of which is just the tip of the iceberg. The New Zealand Classic WHEELS Magazine (Number 11, July/August 1995) concluded, 'It can be still stated that the P76 was a good degree better than its peers'. This still seems to be the case.

In summary, the New Zealand Classic WHEELS Magazine (No. 11 July/Aug 1995) stated, "the P76 has been referred to as the Australian Edsel by more than one unkind and perhaps misinformed journalist. In fact the P76 was a very good car indeed, had it been produced by any other manufacturer than Leyland we might have had the P99 in our showrooms today, and boy would it be different from the jelly mould cars you see everyday". Is the P76 really as bad as it is made out to be? According to MOTOR Magazine (April 1981 p68) "No – definitely not. Although it is far from being the best car in the country it is certainly not as bad as most people think. And certainly not as bad as its ridiculously-low used-car value would suggest". Yes, much bullshit is said about the P76, usually by people who have no idea about cars, but think they do. So look at the facts and see the real picture, but most importantly, every time people criticise the P76 they are really criticising Australians and their ability to produce world class engineering. I don't know about you, but I think it's time we gave ourselves a pat on the back and tell the media to be fair in their reporting about all cars of past and present. We need to insist that motoring writers report within context and only researched facts. Australians deserve better than bullshit.