

The P76 National Meeting

Easter 2018 - Wodonga Victoria

BY Rob Jones

As has been the norm for several years there is a contingent of Kiwi members who attend the P76 Nationals in Australia. For 2018 we were represented by Edward Tubman, Mike King, Carmen Pallesen, David Timms and Maria, Eric Connor and me and to be totally correct, our ex-pat members Ann and Richard Mallon. Remember them from Dunedin?

It was decided that I should go along with the full support of my lovely wife, so Edward and I (well Ed really) developed a plan of tourist attack for him and me to undertake after the rally weekend. First, I had to find my way to Hamilton. Outside the gate is the start of a journey so I drove Megan's MX5 rapidly over the Rimutaka's – great fun – to her place whereupon she delivered me to Paul and Linda's for an overnight stay. Thanks guys.

Paul dropped me off in Wellington to catch the morning train to Auckland. Do this trip, it is magic. Met at Hamilton by Ed and his granddaughter Haley, my bag was immediately loaded into the Jeep by Haley. Must think I'm old and frail! Off to Ed's and some socialising before a drive to Auckland for some model retail therapy the next day. Note the word model. Overnight in Auckland, early plane to Melbourne, flash bus to town, chat to Kiwi bus driver, check-in, beer and wham, our first model shop just down the road. Happiness is!

Later we meet Mike and Carmen and further refreshed ourselves for the evening. We then proceeded to tour Melbourne with Mike and Carmen and later with a mate of Ed's visiting model and train shops, car museums and collections. Recommend the Fox Collection and Charlie's Auto Museum. Worlds apart but both fantastic. More wining and dining was to take place before we went our separate ways only to meet up in Wodonga later on. I'm trying to keep this brief so details of our fun-filled days in Melbourne shall remain unwritten. Do ride a tram and experience the foods on offer. FYI our hotel was delightful.

Arriving in Wodonga in our Mitsubishi Outlander (certainly NOT a P76) we were soon cheerfully accosted by Aussies before we had even reached the office. They were in the pool and everywhere else. Again, we finally got checked in and started to meet and greet, a long happy process but we had yet to register or find any other Kiwis. They did appear.



So many people, so many cool cars of so many hues, lots of new people to me, who was that it has been 5 years since I was here! Old friends like Nigel and Diane, Ann and Richard and others who have not been seen in an even longer time. Infamous names of Leyland lore, kids galore and still the cars kept coming in. A busy day Leyland for sure. I should mention the cool show bags presented to us with our shirts, caps, number plates – look out at the next show – and all sorts of other goodies to make us feel welcome and well equipped. All very well done. But then a new experience for me, well two actually. I got the sober driver job of taking us to dinner at the local Ettamogah Pub and the privilege of driving in the biggest Leyland convoy I'm ever likely to be part of. I'd never been to an Ettamogah Pub before, even my parents had!

The three amigos, or three past presidents imbibing at Ettamogah, a great night out followed by much more at home. We had to evict!

And the Kiwi team at the prize-giving dinner, MC John Ernst, Victorian Club President presents Eric, David, Maria, Carmen, Mike, Rob and Ed to the dinner guests, ladies and gentlemen, the Kiwi team all the way from New Zealand. And Ann and Richard Mallon were Kiwi members at the time too, just based in Queensland, so in effect, there were nine of us present.



On Saturday we had an observation run to a town called Tallangatta, we gave it a go. It was challenging especially when we were confronted by three P76's going in the opposite direction a few k's in and later learning that the first question was null and void as we and all been despatched through a different gate! A long run but very scenic and enjoyable with a good public reaction to all the P76s passing by and Tallangatta was a pretty little town with a very busy coffee shop. It also allowed some photos to be taken. I spent some time explaining to some Chinese tourists what the cars were and taking their photos with one of them. Below you will see The Nemesis in black and the car is known as Tangerine due to that being its colour. Both these cars were judged in the modified section of the Concours, Nemesis coming out on top. Hard to judge, Tangerine has some quirky bits like a hammer floor gear change, a silver lace effect paint finish on the roof and an LS1 engine as I recall whereas Nemesis appears more understated, albeit with a bonnet bulge, 12 slot wheels, tinted glass, rear spoiler and louvre, Targa like stripes and a simple Southern Cross motif on the lower guard. Sweet.



We have no idea where we came in the trial but missed a few and got a surprising number correct as well. The winners by a country mile, or maybe 400 miles were Steve Maher and Drew Ritchie in an AG TF. Rumour has it they ran the course for 4 hours until they got it all correct as no time limit had been put on the event. Surely not guys!



We wandered around Tallangatta, an old railway town while chatting, admiring, taking in the huge selection of cars and catching up with more people both old and new. The remainder of the afternoon was free to use as we wished and the advisory note to visit a local Vintage Steam rally seemed just perfect (I've lost the flyer!) This great event netted me models and Ed petrol paraphernalia and afforded us some wonderful sights, stationary

engines, traction engines, a small loco, vintage vehicles, the smells, steam and sounds all adding to a great afternoon. The train and one distinct car are shown below – I couldn't miss this shot.

Having satisfied our need for steam it was time to return for the big dinner and the Rocker Cover racing. I'd not experienced this phenomenon before! Dedication beyond description best explains the participant's attitudes to the event. It took a long time to determine a winner. An example of two of the Rocker Racers below, shown are these V8 versions but there were 6-cylinder racers as well. Many and varied were the developments!



Thankfully it all started after the lovely dinner had been consumed. We split the group and mingled in mixed interstate company, at our table there were several names I knew but not the faces so that was good, we fixed that. Thanks for the intros, Ed.

We also include our ex Dunedinites, Anne and Richard Mallon, Richard wearing his best Highlanders rugby jersey. Our old friends Nigel and Diane Bray from Adelaide. Nigel is the SA President



but that doesn't stop him from having a whale of a time, or Di for that matter and the table of three. You will recognise Maria (see right) and the pint with the beard and long hair, our Vice President, however, the lady on the left is new to this business, this being only her second event. Meet Amanda Cossens, proud owner/driver of a very nice HOTO S V8 who now has the faith in her car and the confidence in the Leyland movement to go anywhere the club suggests. Great to meet you Amanda and sorry I didn't take up your offer of a drive.



While I haven't yet located all the famous faces mentioned, one VIP couple at the Nationals of course were Tony and Kay De Luca are seen here at the early part of the dinner. Drinks more to the point.



Anne & Richard Mallon, long term NZ Club members based in Queensland at this time.



The colourful coupling of Nigel and Diane Bray, powerhouses of the South Australian P76 Club

After the dinner and racing, I believe there was an auction of valuable Leyland things but by then some of us had headed for home, well our unit. Some of us were thrilled to see kangaroos grazing about 30 feet from our doorway - better there than out on the highway like I had 10 minutes earlier. They were still there, or back in the morning with Carmen stalking them with her camera, but it is still novel to see these creatures up so close.

The morning saw a level of activity not often seen in NZ, preparations for the Concours were in full swing. For us it was breakfast, but we knew we were in for a treat later in the morning.

Held in Junction Square in central Wodonga, an area of town that didn't exist when we were there in 2013, the square quickly filled with what I believe were forty-five P76s, again a few drove by before coming in. I missed a Kimberley and there was an 1800 there as well and plenty of interesting vehicles passing by for a look, and so many members of the public. Thick on the ground. And of course, there was Leyland stuff to buy, I landed a P76 station wagon kitset!

Of all the cars present there was one really shiny one – mirror finish in black, and that was GOV 1, the ex-Government car restored by our new member and Victorian Club Editor Andy Frith. Andy won Best Executive for his undoubted efforts as you should be able to see below.

Andy's GOV 1 Best Executive.

To be fair there were many very shiny cars there and a great number of them in CC and HOTO and boy those HOTO cars stand out. I took detailed photos to apply to my car upon my return one day, just little touches that

give your car an edge. Many of the cars had colour coded mag wheel centres like Amanda's HOTO centres, there was one with 76 set in them, Ed tells me it's an American oil company, but relevant all the same and others to admire. Targa mags in black, chrome, polished, and even two-tone. Very interesting little add ons.

Below we see three more cars from the display day. I can't show you them all!



Every home should have one, a CC Super 6, winner of Best Experimental Gorgeous it was



There has to be a HOTO V8 4 speed manual. This one is chassis #1001, the first off the line. Little differences like a left-hand fuse box etc



This amazing car is entered in the Shit Box Rally, a major charity but very competitive event not long finished. Great crew.

From here we were on our own, well the next day after a while. Many and varied and wonderful were the places we visited. But first, a chance for us to turn back time sort of presented itself when we realised that we had been here before in 2013 when the place was like a bomb site. I would say many a million have gone into the CBD Wodonga and in particular the area we were in for the display day. So before enjoying lunch and drinks, we asked Carmen to take another photo just as Philip had done back in 2013 with us at the old, now totally redeveloped railway station. So here (Right) Rob, Ed and Mike are vaguely similar to the way we were 5 years earlier. Such chances don't come along often!



(Right) Edward and I visited a Beer Museum, the Bendigo Tram Museum and we took an enjoyable ride. Found the antique shop visited before and spent more.

Two very good historic villages were explored, these of course hold all manner of farm equipment and vintage vehicles, riverboats and souvenirs for tourists to lavish upon themselves.



We rode the 1924 Dodge seen below being enjoyed by a German woman after we'd had our turn, this in the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum as I recall



Edward is mates with dozens of petrol pumps, remember we all have the sickness!

In no particular order, we bought models in antique shops seen in passing, car museums and other places. We rode trams in Bendigo and Melbourne, visited the Ballarat Tram Museum and their National Holden Museum, marvelled at the Lake Boga Catalina Museum, found as we passed a sign on the roadside. A historic airbase from WW2 c/w Catalina and part of a Dutch Dornier flying boat and a "new" RR Merlin engine barely used.

We spent a wonderful day at Sovereign Hill Gold Mining historic village and mine and the Gold Museum. The village was virtually alive and trading as it would have back then. Public transport was a 4-draught horse-drawn carriage, a beautiful sight. All staff were in period costume or uniform. We didn't enter the mine. Other great finds as we drove our 2500kms around Victoria and NSW zig-zagging across the Murray included the Wheatland's Agricultural Machinery Museum. Tractors to the fore, well about 400 plus my first Blitz trucks and a Morris Marina Coupe. Quaint little pubs, one we forced ourselves to leave, beautiful country towns, architecture that grabbed us both, the amazing artworks to be seen on the Victoria Silo Art Trail, painted wheat silos, these are big works and we saw several. You just marvel at the open space and like in NZ, some of the driving antics!

Outside of the rally, we didn't see a P76 anywhere, but we may have happened onto a good parts source that wasn't even fully opened then. We stop, look, and ask questions and find things and people and information. I have to share the photo (right) with you as it took me back to my childhood Matchbox Toy 1/75 # 47 which I still have of course. A gem outside a café with a small car collection, mainly American. We enjoyed our Pickers Tour immensely.



This tractor was at the steam rally we visited but maybe the same one we saw at the Wheatfields Museum, how many orange Vickers tractors are there!



1930 Harley Davidson V Twin, one of a great variety of exhibits at the Steam Rally



A Bendigo tram leaving the depot and museum on its way to the goldmine. A beautiful tram car with an extremely helpful conductor/guide on board. Trams from all over the world are sent to Bendigo for restoration and overhaul



An unusual colour, especially to our eyes, NV Green looks pretty good on this Deluxe outside the Ettamogah Pub.



An interesting paint addition to this Am Eye Blue car.



Not all the cars present were pristine. This Aspen Green Targa Florio had been hurriedly made operation after about a 20-year layoff if I recall correctly. It had certainly been resting for a long time.



Somewhere along the way, we spotted this beauty across the road from some old Bedford's and International's. The old trucks attracted us into a newly established business in an old building where a couple were sorting containers of NOS parts for all sorts of things. We didn't have a few days to spare sadly.



The Sovereign Hill Gold Museum and mining town was a spectacular place, easily able to spend many hours there. This shows the working mine head.



The Sovereign Hill township is a time warp, this showing the latest in ladies' and girl's attire, and it's all for sale.



The Wheatfields Museum was extensive and offered so much, sadly I have not been able to recover all my photos from this trip after a computer meltdown and so many very interesting subjects may be lost, but you never know. One that didn't get away was this 1928 Dodge Fire appliance, the body and equipment all being built by TE Gardner in Warracknabeal. As stated elsewhere, I'm sure the orange Vickers tractor came from this collection.



While we were at the beer museum there were a lot of other local interest displays like this very customised old Vanguard, not like one you've ever seen before. The extroverted owner gave a fascinating address on the museum and its contents which included a section on New Zealand beers and brewery accessories such as branded hairbrush sets and the like. He also described a very derelict looking field gun of German origin as having been brought home after the war and put on display in the town, like you might see in many a local town here. The story goes a new council was elected, one of the green pacifist persuasion and they removed the war memorial relic and dumped it in a swamp. Hardly patriotic! It was rescued before it dissolved completely and now again sits proudly in remembrance of the area's war dead within the beer museum. Kind of fitting really.



The Lake Boga Flying Boat Museum was another great find. We passed the sign late in the afternoon so decided to return at opening time the next day. The two old guys on duty were very helpful with information and stories. The lake is a natural circle that led to its use as a flying boat service area during WW2. The whole base being built from scratch in just a few months, such was the urgent need for the facility. The flying boats could land at any time irrespective of wind conditions, like landing in a giant frying pan with no obstructions in any direction. Many flew down from northern Australia for repairs after Japanese raids in Broome and Darwin. Numerous flying boats were destroyed in these raids. This photo shows a Chev truck and the nose of a Dornier flying boat, German in manufacture but in fact, flown down from Indonesia by the Dutch Royal Air Force. Most probably remained in Australia.



I've recorded this as Charlie's Auto Museum but I'm sure it has another name. A brilliant collection of all sorts as illustrated by the pedal cars and large scale model boats and so much more, but this will suffice.



Not to be outdone the men were catered for in the township with a well-stocked menswear store complete with a great range of hats.



. Another stunner from the Wheatfields Agricultural and Mechanical Museum was this Ford V8 beast with the heavy-duty trailer. The data sheet tells us that this machine was used to determine the horsepower output of tractors and other equipment. That's what it said it did.



One huge traction engine, arguably the biggest I've ever seen. This just scratches the surface of what we discovered in our travels.



A GIANT Jelbart Roller, the data sheet reads "Here be Monsters"



A Jelbart Light Oil tractor keeps company with a 1926 Wallis 20/30



Swan Hill Pioneer Museum offered so much more besides the ride in the old Dodge, the driver of which assured us we could easily motor to Melbourne at speed in her. Amongst the many spectacular sights was this Marshall Colonial tractor from 1909, a sizable machine we thought!



The yellow Chamberlain 55KA and orange Champion 9G are locally built units, well in Australia anyway. In our travels we encountered some massive machinery built by the Chamberlain Company. Note the louvre windows on the Chamberlain.



This incredible display is owned and built by Mr Robin McCulloch who was over 90 at the time of installation according to the attendant on the day.