

National Rally/AGM Cromwell 2017

BY Rob Jones



(Above: Leyland's at the lake. The fourteen cars in attendance lined up at picturesque Lake Hawea. It was a beautiful sunny calm day. We took the opportunity to take individual shots of all the cars and their crew at the far end of the domain, along with some special shots shown and explained later. Our thanks go to the friendly and cooperative residents who allowed Paul access to their balcony to get this shot. They too were out there with their own camera!.)

Statistics, Facts, Lies and Quotes, from the Cromwell National Rally and AGM 2017

In no absolute order I can share the following. There were 14 Leyland P76's attending the event, the owners of which are listed amongst others in the minutes.

There were 6 owner/members AWOL – Attending without Leyland. They were Alec Reid along with Pauline and Robert McCullum, Paul Heath along with Linda Graham and Rose Bendall, Ed Tubman, Peter and Michaela Venning, Andrew and Debbie Larsen and Gordon Gruebner.

Don and Jenifer Alexander, Paul and Barbara Faulkner and George Weigel and Sandy Downes were all registered but unable to attend due to unforeseen unfortunate circumstances.

The rainbow of colours, all abbreviated to test your knowledge!

PMAG x 3 from Sweetman, Prouting and Morris.

BA x 3 McKenzie, Walters and Buchanan

CW x 2 from Dunnage and Storer.

AEB x 2 from Timms and Jones.

N x 2 from Connor and Warren.

DR x 1 from Young

FB x 1 from Butler

(Right: The rare sight of three Peel Me a Grape cars together. These are the Morris, Sweetman and Prouting cars. There are more this colour around the South Island too, one has just joined the Club.)



Had everyone brought their P76 we would have added 2 x B as B, another FB and SO, PS and an ON car to the mix and the 3 members unable to attend would have added a further SO, BA and the big question, was it to be the AG or the CW Don, or both even? That would have put BA on top again. But three PMAG cars has to be a bit different doesn't it.

Filling in for the missing Leyland's we had 2 Jeep Grand Cherokees, a Nissan and a black Mercedes Coupe of some significant output that attracted the cops' attention at Cardrona on the President's return journey. Damn, he could have got the trophy! That's all I can recall.



(Above: The small collection of Deluxe models attending the Cromwell event, being the Bitter Apricot Buchanan, Crystal White Storer, Dry Red Young and Am Eye Blue Jones cars. We should not overlook the less common survivors these days.)

If space permits, I may include a piece from the Cromwell and Districts News published prior to our arrival. This item included my contact details, and this proved to be a big hit with me receiving numerous phone calls asking where we will be so we can come and see the cars. Many members of the public sought us out and one in particular was full of praise despite being unable to meet us. He was Stu Gray, an ex MOT Officer serving in Kaiapoi from 1974 to 1977 during which time he drove a CC P76 V8 IPC – inconspicuous patrol car – not heard that before. Below is his verbatim text to me:

“Hi Rob, further to my phone call. Isn't it a shame that when routine things are happening that we don't realise that history is being made. If only I'd thought to take a photo of our IPC at the time we had our P76 we would have had a record of (the only?)* use of a P76 as a traffic enforcement car. My memories of it are not only that it went like a streak of duck shit, but that it stopped as well. That bloody great aircraft carrier of a bonnet flapped in the breeze at 100 mph like you wouldn't believe ** in fact it was the first patrol car I drove that would do a genuine ton. Great memories of a time when things were so much simpler. When we cops could give a friendly warning and chat about cars. Now it's all about revenue *** How bloody sad! Have a great weekend. Pity that bloody Force 7 didn't make it. Best regards Stu Gray

- Put him straight about the P76 patrol cars. There were way more than one!
- I do believe having seen it several times over the years!
- Who knew?

I have two other names of P76 IPC driving MOT officers I've met in my photo dairy not to mention the bloke I met at Kai Iwi last year and at least two others locally with their names in my SCA notebook. One I work with in my new job.

Along with the phone calls there were all the people we met along the road: two Aussie women somewhere whose dad's had had P76's, a camper full of Aussie's wanting to talk about the Leyland just as we found the toilet block in our own outback! A motelier in Westport who well remembers the family outings in dad's car. The mechanic I met in Haast who wanted to look over my car as he'd owned two and had a V8 in his jet boat in the garage. He may yet get in touch about a cache of parts he has.

And amazingly, on our second morning in Invercargill there was a knock on our units' door and an elderly gent came in and said he'd seen the two nice P76's outside and wanted to have a chat. He had two at home in his shed still.

Turns out he is an ex member of 20+ years' service from the Manawatu that neither Ron nor I had ever met before. Hello Merv Crow after all these years we meet in Invercargill! And so it went.

Other people we met were as high as a kite bookseller in Hokitika, my Aunt Margaret who hosted Ed, Jared and myself for a lovely morning tea in her council flat in Hokitika. The arrival of a P76, a big Jeep and three strange men awakened her neighbours. Ken McKenzie's mate Hugh was also a character worth meeting. And a famous NZ race car driver who I will leave our mystery writer to identify.

The trip for me and my nephew Jared Simpson from Perth, a member of the WA P76 Club, with another BA D V8 was indeed very memorable for many different reasons. For me it started with distractions and delays but was always great despite these and the threatening weather that cleared thankfully, just as we sailed out of Wellington.

Some of the highlights for me, amongst a succession of highlights, was the dinner Jared and I had at Makarora with Ron, Ken and Hugh. Maybe it was the 7+hours travel since brunch that made that huge meal so good, or was it the Old Dark, or both. Amidst some beautiful scenery, mountains and lakes and birdlife (that I will try to avoid repeating my reference to from here on) we all stayed in Makarora's very comfortable chalets. A P76 pose in the morning was essential of course. Jared, me, Ken and Ron pose with our steeds in front of our chalet. Hugh was the shutter man. Comment, sad lack of Old Dark in so many of the SI pubs! Why?



I was also very happy with drinks on Friday night in Cromwell, the late bunch including Mr Warren. Good to see you out late John. Old Dark with Southern Comfort chasers generously over poured by the Fijian staff saw me happily wander off to bed late in the piece. It's the little things!

You may remember Sunday nights after the AGM weekends, there is always a few hangers on. In 2014 I think eight of us dined in Invercargill. In Cromwell we went to a local pub recommended to me by a bus driver friend in Masterton. He said to tell the Irish publican that he owed me a beer as I was a mate of Goobers. Sadly, the publican was away and I missed out but I'm sure I would have got one having brought 26 people to dinner! 26 people stayed the Sunday night in Cromwell. This is unprecedented in the club's history.

Goobar (Terry) was the publican at the Eagle Hotel in Bluff where Jared, Ron and I did enjoy a few Old Darks a few days later. Got a warm reception from the locals AFTER introducing myself as a mate of Goobers. Strange as it may seem, there was another Wairarapa bus driver staying out the back in his camper at the time we visited. Great old pub for a beer.

Cardrona brought us another Ronism of sorts: while being served at the bar the young barmaid was overheard to tell Ron “to push it in a little harder please” She was referring to his credit card but Jared and I didn’t see it that way and neither did several of the HOG owners group waiting to be served. Laughter all round but I think it went over Ron and the barmaids head. They knew not what the laughter was about! Another great pub to eat and drink in. And have my cars photo taken outside of. Note HOG – Harley Owners Group, 100’s of them.



The many Museums, vehicle collections and other attractions we visited also figure highly in my highlights reel, as does the fact that my old AEB D6 did over 2000 miles on this road trip and never missed a beat (until I got home!) I replaced a brake light bulb, used heaps of petrol, a little bit of oil and was blessed by the installation of those Halogen headlights and rebuilt bucket seats. And I found 3 unobtanium Z23 oil filters along the way. But that’s not all.

Without doubt the most memorable event was to occur at the AGM itself. When Philip Meyer stood up to address the group, standing behind me, I had no idea at all of what was about to happen. When he announced the proposal to honour me with Life Membership of the Club I was shocked and almost speechless. Quite a difficult thing to achieve in me!

I wish to thank those responsible for putting forward the idea and the assembled members who unanimously supported it. To date I have not heard of any CG members who claim knowledge of Philip’s intention but I’m sure you are out there. And thank you Philip and Clyde for the nomination. Clyde told me it may be the only time his name appears in the club minutes!

Someone said now you don’t have to pay for Penzed, which I largely write anyway!

I’m very grateful for the members’ support of my nomination and tolerance of my timekeeping when it comes to Penzed. Rest assured, as I write this, I’m thoroughly enjoying recounting such good times and as always, I enjoy writing, or putting Penzed together and hope to do so for some time yet. Thank you everyone.



(Left: The Am Eye Blue Deluxe 6 of Rob and Sonya Jones, on the occasion of the 2017 AGM crewed by Rob and his nephew Jared Simpson of the West Australian P76 Club.)

RANDOM MEMORIES

Again, in no particular order and mostly in FULL COLOUR just to break in the new Treasurer – oh by the way, Congratulations Annette King on your promotion to Natcom as Treasurer and to Paula Buchanan for remaining on Natcom as a committee member, just in case you didn't read the minutes. You can tell this is written on the fly!.

P76s on parade



Passion for P76s ... New Zealand Leyland P76 Owners Club members Gordon Grubner, of Auckland, Paul Heath, of Lower Hutt, Maria Williams, of Auckland, Clyde Walters, of Waiuku, and Philip Meyer, of Pukekohe, stand in front of a parade of P76s last Friday. The club was based in Cromwell for its annual meeting. Club members travelled to Wanaka on Saturday and to Highlands Motorsport Park on Sunday before disbanding. Leylands entered the Australian and New Zealand markets in 1973 and production ceased in 1975. They were introduced to compete with other large cars such as the Ford Falcon, Chrysler Valiant and Holden Kingswood. "You can fit a 44 gallon drum in the boot. Or 17 crates of beers, whichever you prefer", one club member said.

PHOTO MATT TSO



(left: Here we see one of Highlands Bug sculptures and the cutest little Fire Engine you'll see anywhere. This fully equipped Daihatsu Hijet was in a camping ground on the Mt Aspiring road where we should not have been – it's called following Ron, not to be recommended!)



It did however provide a convenient toilet stop while Jared and I waited for Ron to realise we weren't behind him anymore. We tooted and honked and flashed our lights all to no avail and if I tried to pass him he just sped up. Silly old bugger! Soon enough we were back on track, two blue streaks flying around the bottom of New Zealand. .

As mentioned previously we had three PMAG cars attending. At Lake Hawea we took the opportunity to photograph them in front of the balcony used by Paul for his other photos. The cars of Brian and Lyn Morris, Colin and Cathy Sweetman and Doug and Helen Prouting..

Many of us went Go Karting. Such fun. Philip "Crash" Meyer went stock car go karting and still managed to come first as you can see from the podium photo. President Larsen came 2nd and VP Timms nabbed 3rd. Crash pushed me off track into 5th place! Next time buddy. Damn it was great fun out there.



(Left: Winners of the Dale Rawlings Memorial Trophy People's Choice award this year are Ewen and Heather Dunnage with their CW Executive V8. There's that scenery and sunshine again. Congratulations.)

The others under the Highlands Bridge, Ed's Jeep and Andrew and Debbie's Mercedes Benz. Having a lot of fun indeed. Where was the other Jeep? If you look closely at the Jeep you may notice Ed is taking a photo whilst driving on the racetrack. He's actually parked there!

The Club events always throw up a big range of

Executive and Super model P76's and the humble Deluxe seems in lesser numbers so for a couple of years I've been recording those that attend. Lake Hawea again sees the Buchanan, Storer, Young and Jones Deluxe's on display in the sunshine. Missing are those of Andrew SO, Peter FB, and Jared's BA if it's fair to count him in! It's a long way to bring a car from WA!

Not a P76! In honour of all the wonderful images Paul Heath supplies to the members through Penzed and directly



we include him here in a fairly big sized pedal car at the National Transport and Toy Museum at Wanaka enjoying the outdoors displays. This shot shows a military background with a field gun, tank and jet fighter bomber on display but there were many other and quite varied offerings outside as well as inside. Why didn't I try one of those?

As many of you will recall several members continued their journey south from Cromwell, and east and north and just about everywhere. Ron, Jared and I went South together and David and Maria, Philip and Judith and Paul and Linda also headed in that general direction. On

our way out of Cromwell we stopped to admire the local apple sculpture, aptly reflecting the local fruit industry. As soon as we parked a Hilux stopped behind us and the driver wanted to talk to us about his P76 powered Triumph Stag. Being stopped and spoken to about our P76's became a theme as I'm sure you are familiar with. So, we have an apple sculpture photo, and an additional photo from the Cardrona Hotel. It seems only fair to include Ron's car here as it was his idea to go there.



We have already spoken of the fun filled experience the Highlands Park racetrack was, well here is proof of same – look at those smiling faces. Leyland contentment indeed. This photo was not available when the AGM story was first shown on the web site.



So we headed south to Invercargill and the next day met the Timms/Meyer blue leyland down the road from our motel and as we were all heading to Richardson's Transport Museum after breakfast we meet outside to find very little parking available so Philip decided we should park on the large footpath outside the entrance for a photo then lock and leave the Leyland's there until we had finished visiting the museum, some hours later. Great idea, great photo and it apparently was a huge attraction for the public, something we were oblivious of. You must visit Richardson's Transport Museum and the motorcycle branch in the city itself. Has a great café there for breakfast as well.

As has been documented in Penzed we all continued on our way too many and various points, in particular we went to Bluff to the Maritime Museum and Sterling Point, the location of



that famous signpost, one of our most photographed road signs I'm sure. Ron, an old salt from way back had to try his hand at the ships wheel and of course we parked up at the road sign for another photo!



Just a brief addition to the story of our "weekend" in Cromwell. It would be excessive to add the dozens of photos of vintage cars, trucks, aeroplanes and many other tourist spots encountered along the way, so I won't. Enjoy this little extra.



Below: Graham Storer and Dorothy with their sweet CW D at Lake Hawea.

