

# National Rally/AGM Dunedin 2023

The 2023 Dunedin National Rally and AGM, part of the story anyway.



[Waihemo Pub]

The issue after our National Rally and AGM is often overloaded with commentary from the event, however, members bursting into print have been limited to Ron Butler at this stage, offering a brief report on his return journey, and Debbie's Minutes from the AGM of course.

As many will recall the trip to Dunedin for several of us was fraught, given the dysfunctional ferry system running in New Zealand at the time. All power to Ed, David, and Maria, who dined with Sonya and me in Petone before heading back to Hamilton the next day in Ed's P76, swapping to his Jeep and heading to Auckland to enable a flight to Dunedin that in fact got them there before Ron and me.

And why pray tell, were Sonya and Rob in Wellington anyway, only to join the above three, well me anyway, to sail away on the early morning tide. Due to the vagaries of our health system, we were delayed in leaving by visitors who otherwise should have been in Wellington Hospital. This worked to our/my advantage as we were still at home when David phoned at about 4.15 p.m. to say their sailing had JUST been cancelled after reassurances to the contrary. This allowed me to call Ron and luckily arrange to travel with him on the last available seat on another ferry, literally the last one, while he sorted our accommodation along the way. Sonya and I had already booked a hotel for the night so she could visit said friend now not in hospital and I could catch the ferry. It was early in the morning when I left the Waterloo to see Ron parked outside the Blue Bridge office so off I trotted in time for him to drive around to the loading lines, giving me an extra walk!

Good sailing, good breakfast on the ferry in the company of two giant brothers from the NZ Army and several Citroen owners on their way to Rangiora for their National Rally. Did you notice Citroen's along the way in your travels, we certainly did and for me the nicest was an ID19 Decapitale, that being a red ID 19 convertible just like the model one I have!

I didn't get an expensive ticket along the way, the guy in the Subaru who made a principle pass did. A principle pass is where a newer car just has to pass an old car and then sit in front of it, the third car in the group just stayed at the back as we made good progress along the highway, until those coloured lights did a handbrake turn behind us, overtook us and pulled up the Subaru, thankfully. This was somewhere before Kaikoura. We were on the lookout for Bernie's Diner, home to coffee, cake and memorabilia and a car collection and haunt of local photographer Colin Medd, a prolific poster of classic cars on Facebook. Colin cycled up for a chat and told of previous Leylands that had graced his area. I haven't seen the P76s on Facebook as yet and in fact, haven't seen anything from Colin for some time now. Hope he's ok.

We motored to Christchurch without trouble, meeting Ken McKenzie, Ian Burroughs, and Don Learmonth at our motel, in the company of a couple of schoolgirl sports teams, however, all was not perfect. Besides me having a

mattress on the floor between Ron and Ken (was very comfy actually) all the others complained of niggles with their cars. Wheel alignment, overheating and something about a tranny. Don and Ian went off in the morning to sort the overheating problem, ultimately gaining Don the Piston Broke Trophy and a lot of peace of mind having his 80% blocked radiator properly sorted. We went off with Ken to try and get a wheel alignment, and then it rained, and then I realised Ron's drivers' side wiper was buggered, broken and pretty useless! I was driving at the time.

So, we sought help at the Shirley (it's a place) Auto Super Shoppe. They were really helpful, determining that no one nearby had the wheel alignment specs for a P76 (really, not on anyone's computer records!) and the young bloke there couldn't find them on the Net either, however, we were able to replace Ron's wiper blade and they did refer us to a great café for brunch where of course our cars attracted more attention. So on we went.

Heading through Ashburton to Hinds we spotted Paul doing his truck photography thing in the main street and assumed correctly that Linda was at the shops. Arriving at Hinds for a look around and a rummage, we were remembered from our last visit, attracted more attention, had a good chat and I bought a NOS P76 petrol cap just in case. Ken had caught up to us by now too. Having spotted Paul, Ron wondered if we might come across any other P76s heading to Dunedin. The only likely contender I was aware of was the Youngs and lo and behold as we headed south of Waimate I spotted a dark P76 a bit behind us so we pulled into a three-bay car park in Palmerston outside the ice cream shop and then we were three P's.



Wasn't far to go now and soon enough, through the torrential rain we approached Dunedin, thankfully it wasn't raining upon our eventual arrival at the hotel, Ron needs to brush up on his navigational skills! Wondered why Alistair took a different route behind us. Turning into the hotel and seeing a rainbow of colours was a great sight, there seemed to be many a Leyland in the car parks. Later on, I will have to try to describe said rainbow. So that's the journey so far.

At this point, I must sincerely thank Ron for enabling me to travel with him and in fact giving me the wheel for most of the run. His car is a pleasure to drive exhibiting both performance and comfort. I had to fly home from Dunedin but my long drive to Dunedin and around the area for the weekend was greatly appreciated. Thanks mate.

Picture showing the colour range and Statistics follow.

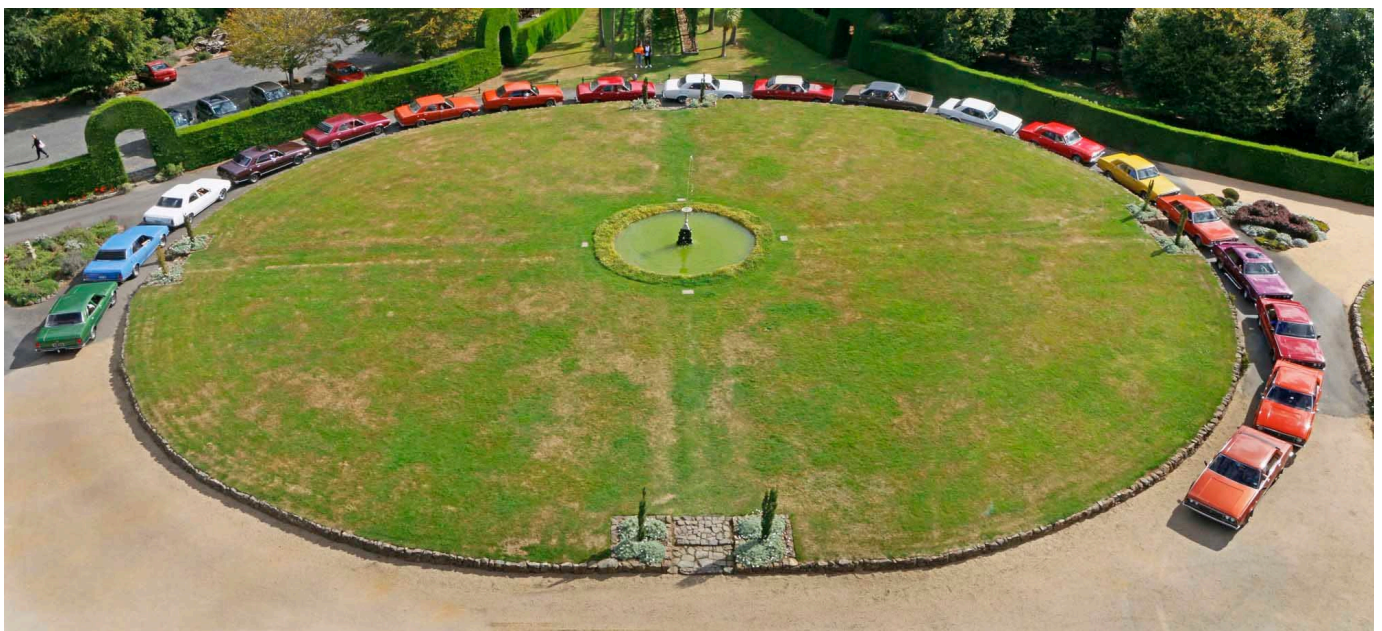




Illustrating the colour range, we see nineteen P76s out the front of Larnach Castle. As you can see reds predominate. Unusually for me I didn't take note of all the stat's I normally do so I will do my best from recollection. There were nine factory colours, French Blue, Aspen Green, Crystal White, Peel Me a Grape, Bitter Apricot, Nutmeg, Pimento, Bold as Brass and Dry Red, Bitter Apricot being the most numerous. Others were Persian Sand and a dark Peel Me a Grape variant. Missing (AWOL) were ours and David's Am Eye Blue, Ed's Omega Navy, Debbie and Andrew's Bold as Brass, given their Spanish Olive car wasn't on the road, and Sandy who doesn't have a P76. Hope I haven't missed anyone.

We effectively had three of our newest four or five members in attendance, all in cars that were new to us. Noel Moore, Ross Bubbins and Stephen Barton all made an impact and Stephen won People's Choice on his first outing. As well we had Garry and Val Milne on their first-ever club appearance in their mildly custom BA D V8. Garry is going to do an article on the Morgan he built, an absolute credit to his craftsmanship. Even the Morgan Club like it.

It was great to meet so many new faces at the meeting and to see so many new cars. I even got to have a wee drive of Don A's AG E V8, taking them back from Larnach Castle to Dunedin.





You may feel the Australian 50th Anniversary Nationals, attended by ten Kiwis are being ignored here and you are correct as I'm trying for as much past and current local content in here as I can so I will continue with our weekend in Dunedin. The itinerary has us taking a gorgeous scenic drive to the Albatross Colony, it was beautiful. The shop saw much action as did the café, especially after the hill hike to the viewing platform. People were enthralled that they got there, I mean by the soaring birds and fluffy chicks, but that came after the tour of the disappearing gun. Yes, the colony is based around a very unique WW11 gun emplacement which had the guys in particular amazed at the ingenuity of it, not to mention the rifles on display along the corridors. Google it for the specifics otherwise, we'd be here all night.



The viewing platform had several chicks nearby so we could get a good look at them and their parents soaring above and below us and contained a wealth of information boards about the colony. The sea view from up there was pretty spectacular too. I didn't take photos!

The drive to Larnach castle was equally scenic and in places a little challenging, I had to ensure we were in first gear for a couple of bends! The castle was imposing, busy and well-staffed by kilted waiters and informative guides. The dining hall was adorned with many a prize stags head with multi-point antler sets, very impressive but not for inclusion here. And many Leylanders eating well. The tour was fascinating, Mr Larnach led an interesting life shall we say but was an integral part of Dunedin society, along with many other well-known business names even of today.

While impressive and expansive we knew not what was still come. As always, the gathering of the cars (not the clans) was something to behold. I implored Ed to use his dulcet tones to get it organised, seeing as he didn't have a car to line up. Putting them into that circle around the driveway garden was an exercise to beat probably all that we had experienced before. Below is a photo of the cars entering the circle taken from the driver's window of Ron's car by me with the Larnach Castle in the background. Remember there were many others there and by the time we had finished some of them were agitated about the time taken, something about missing the bus back to their cruise ship. I should say the Mr Whippy lady did a roaring trade and was most impressed by the P76 show. Many a lovely ice cream was purchased and 100s of photos were taken by lord knows who.

**Now back to Dunedin** and my further random recollections, Food and accommodation were up to our usual high standard. I found the Victoria Hotel staff to be friendly, helpful and they seemed happy to have our big group on board and I certainly liked my accommodation. The Manor restaurant served us often and well, beautiful breakfasts and dinners and maybe even a lunch? Parking was tight but mishap free and the AGM venue was spacious allowing for a good number of members to attend. Read the Minutes to see what happened, what was suggested and who won what. Sadly, Mr President was quite ill on the day, so the VP stepped up admirably. Well done, David. And so to the big dinner which was enjoyed by all I'm sure.



Sunday dawned cool as it seems to do for a car boot sale but at least it wasn't dark! I got the impression many things changed hands and I even took some clothing orders. Given the hurried shambolic nature of my departure, I wasn't carrying anything for sale. Manor breakfast was delicious.

We proceeded to the Chinese Gardens, well most of us, at least one car went somewhere else en route! A restful place where our understanding was assisted by audio units we could carry around. Never did find all the numbered points of interest but found Abby a very pertinent keyring in the gift shop. She loves it. A stroll along the road to the Otago Settlers Museum saw us find the automotive section under reconstruction yet again. I have history with this place, Megan, our eldest daughter went to Otago Uni and while she was there the museum was being rebuilt so I never got to see it and its renowned fire engine collection. Come 2019 and we are on a cruise around New Zealand and stopped at Port Chalmers, so I took the opportunity to take another scenic bus ride to view the museum, and it was great, but no fire engines. Where do you hide a fire engine collection? At least I'd seen the automotive section. After marvelling at the various exhibits, many of which aged some of us a bit we met in the café for lunch. That's where I spotted a beautiful clock that I knew Sonya would love so I bought it. Got it home, determined where to set it up and tried to get it going. No bloody go! And it still won't go but looks great so now we have a big round decoration.

Stroll back to the cars, return to the hotel, and have a couple of hours of free time. What did I do? Our next stop was to Olveston House, now this was truly wonderful, like being in an episode of Antiques Roadshow. Again, a great shop, discussion with the sales team about souvenir opportunities, a very special car in the garage, a 1921 Fiat Tipo 510, just beautiful but behind glass or heavy plastic to keep fingers off it. It is quite amazing how many of these big vintage Fiats there are hiding around New Zealand with several in the South Island. However, that is not all, we had a brilliant guide, especially knowledgeable about the artworks hanging almost everywhere. Some priceless, others worth 100s of thousands and some maybe \$20! Larnach Castle was always on my list of places to visit, my parents went there on their honeymoon and I have Dad's old photos to hand, but Olveston House was something else. Google it, visit it, you won't be disappointed. Again, I didn't take photos other than one rather unusual one you will see shortly. Do you know what it is? I had to use this.

In dire need of a lavatory, I was directed to one with a beautiful stained-glass window, an old pan with a polished wooden seat and this delightful handle on the chain used to flush said lavatory.



It has been many a long year since I have had to use one of these.

I know I could have photographed the suit of armour, or the exquisite furniture, or the dining table setting, or any number of sculptures, paintings or other gorgeous antiques but I didn't!



There was a greenhouse with plants bursting into life, beautiful trees and gardens, stairwells, and all sorts of other delights, but this took my fancy.

With more free time until dinner at the local Speight's Alehouse, where else do you go in Dunedin, we anticipated more great food and beverages having travelled by van to the pub.

The service and servers were flat out but did a great job as did the chefs. Not a quiet



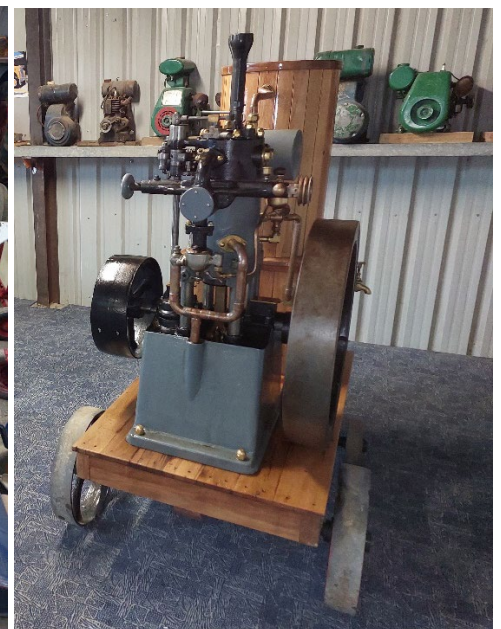
dinner, this place was pumping, we were upstairs, so it was warmer and probably noisier, made no less so by our own contribution. I did manage a couple of people shots over dinner, the one to the left shows you a couple of lesser-known faces and a couple you should all know. Sorry if the photos are a bit unclear. So, we have Richard Mallon, Ewen Dunnage and Paula Buchanan seated with Jan Moore behind. Jan and Paula were part of the team of three known as the Ladies who organised our great weekend away.

And as chance would have it a group from Central Group seated to my right was Ron Butler, Andrew and Debbie Larsen and Paul Heath. All imbibing healthily. It was a great night



While Monday saw some people departing it also saw many heading out to Palmerston past Baldwin Street, no Ron I'm not driving a 4-speed car up there to the Stop sign at the top! We led a group of cars out the back way towards Palmerston, mainly because I had a vague idea where we were headed and knew Baldwin Street. What we didn't realise is that we had become the head of the snake and as we progressed, we kept wondering where the others ahead of us were and when they might stop for us to catch them

up. To this day we don't know where the cars that were in front of us in Dunedin got to. One light changed ahead of us and suddenly we were in the lead. We stopped in Palmerston and decided to ring Lyn who asked where the hell we were, as everyone else was still back in Waikouaiti. Who knew? I did wonder if we should have stopped there. Anyhow, soon enough another convoy of Leyland's powered through Palmerston, and we hurriedly followed along behind on our way to the Palmerston Vintage Machinery Club collection. This was a cool collection of machinery of many brands and types, stationary engines, tractors, bulldozers, and other machinery well set out in big sheds. A couple of sample shots follow. The hosts, several in number from the local club were enthralled by the cars and knowledgeable of their collection, answering many a question from members.



From the Machinery Club, we adjourned to lunch at the lovely old country pub, Waihemo Lodge where once again we were well fed and watered with vibrant conversation amongst the dwindling group. They looked after us well. All that remained was for us to travel back to Dunedin and settle in for a rest and dinner. I think that's what happened! Oh yes, Ron and I found a good Chinese to eat at. Some of us stopped in at 1 Court Street to check out the new Morris abode, dam flash it is with spectacular views and some interesting cars in the garage that Brian doesn't seem to have mentioned before! The Ladies' cars are shown in the photo along with Ron's meaning me, Roy, Ron, Malcolm, and Brian had afternoon tea at the Morris residence. Along with the Ladies of course and one son who arrived later on. Sorry, names are hard for me! Also, see Ron Butler outside "My Butlers Pantry" showing a huge collection of cups and other vintage wares.





Not open on the day. Also see a rather unusual front seat configuration as seen in Alistair and Frances Young's car.

### On the road with Ron.

Stopping at various places driving back from Dunedin I met a few people who were interested in the P76. One place was a cafe in Cheviot. A couple sitting near left the cafe for the husband to return a few minutes later coming over and complimenting me on a fine P76. Turns out he was a friend of Jan & Malcolm from the West Coast he obviously knew them well as he said Jan has Frank's car now.



After he left the owner of the cafe came over and introduced himself commenting on the car. Turns out he lived in Paraparaumu. He and his wife sold their house here to buy the cafe in Cheviot. He mentioned that two P76s went past together a few days before.

That Wednesday evening, I stayed in Kaikoura with only one pub open for lunch and that was closed from 2 to 4pm. the other two were closed all day and night on Wednesday and Thursday only opening Friday till Tuesday. A new building housing a flash Asian restaurant on the outside was abandoned and stripped out. The town felt the same.

The advantage of being old and decrepit is that when I rocked up to the interisland office in my car the lovely lady asked me if I would like to park next to the lift, gave me a bright pink sign to hang on my mirror and told me to park in row 13. I was the first car in that lane. A truck and trailer went in first then we were both up to the bow opening door on the ship and close to the lift. The truck driver James worked at the Austin factory assembling the P76. He was a spot welder there. On board, I met up with a member Bruce Farley. We had a good chat about P76s. Driving home from the ferry on the new Transmission Gully Road took me under half an hour.



*[Left: Cake celebrates NZ Clubs 40 years and P76s 50th anniversary and tasted good too.]*