

Leyland P76, anything but average

By Abby Jones

Have you ever heard of a Leyland P76? Let me guess no, I know that some of you have probably heard of it from me, or some of you might think that it's a truck or bus and that I just added the P76 on there for no reason. But here comes a surprise the car exists; its model name is P76.

So P76 means it's a car. Lots of animal names like Tiger and Buffalo were used for bus and truck names.

P76's were built by Leyland Australia at their Zetland plant in NSW and in New Zealand at the old Austin plant in Petone on Hutt Road. This big old brick building was demolished a few years ago. They were built between 1973 and 1975. As well there were many built up cars imported into New Zealand.

Our car is the only 6-cylinder one left in New Zealand. All the rest are V8's. There were 18,200 built in total throughout New Zealand and Australia but sadly there isn't that many alive today. There are only ten Force 7V coupe models in the world and dad has driven one of them.

Being built in the 70's the cars were bright colours with funny names like Bold as Brass yellow, Plum Loco purple or Am Eye Blue like my parents' car in the photo. My dad says there is only one ugly colour, Spanish Olive green, and I must say yuck! The P76 has a huge boot, it will hold a 44-gallon drum with the boot closed!

My Dad is a founder and life member of the NZ Leyland P76 Owners Club which started in 1983. We go to shows and rallies all over New Zealand in our big blue Leyland P76. Some unkind people call it a P38 because they think it is

only half a car. You don't want to hear what my Dad says to them! He has owned a P76 since 1982, which was like a million years ago, so a very long time!

I went on my first Leyland rally to Reefton in 2007 when I was 5 months old. I've been to Napier, Hastings, Palmerston North, Wellington and Kapiti Coast in George and yes, our Leyland's name is George. I might never have been to these places and created memories with my friends and family that would last a lifetime, so I will always be forever grateful to George.

When my dad dies my sister and I will probably fight over dad's Leyland and we will most likely miss the funeral because of it. When I get the Leyland, I will go all over the South Island in it, like what my dad did last year with cousin Jared.

