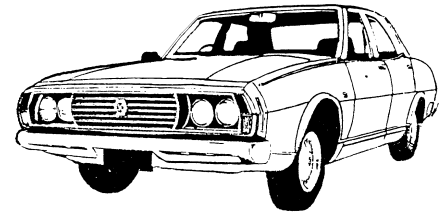




Leyland P76 Owners Club
Incorporated Queensland



Leyland P76 Anything But Average

February 2012

THE QUEENSLAND BULLETIN



**A SOCIAL EVENING AT
MAROOCHYDORE**



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INCORPORATED QUEENSLAND
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General Information

AIMS OF THE P76 CLUB

1. To restore and actively use all model of P76 produced.
2. To provide knowledge, advice and parts on the P76 and its variants.
3. To conduct various activities for the members and their cars.
4. To include any vehicle assembled in the Zetland factory.

Membership of the club will be open to anyone who is interested in pursuing the aims of the club

The Leyland P76 Owners Club Incorporated Queensland has its monthly Meetings on **2nd Friday** of each month:

Venue: Mt Petrie Primary School
Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road
MACKENZIE, QLD (Entry is via Vivaldi Street)
Time: 8.00pm

Various activities are organised by Club Members and are generally held on the last Sunday of the month. All venue information is confirmed at the General Meeting and is recorded in the Minutes.

CLUB MEMBER OF THE YEAR POINTS ALLOCATED

Attend Meeting = 1 point: Raffle donation = 1 point: Organise Event = 1 point: Win Event = 1 point

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From the Editors Desk

Welcome to the first magazine of 2012. Planning ahead it looks like another good year for the club with an array of outings, a number of swap meets to attend and of course the National Meeting at Easter.

We started the year off with a lunch meeting at Daryl and Barbi's new house north of Brisbane. I wouldn't mind if all the meetings were here as it is a beautiful house, the chef cooked up a great lunch and it was really relaxing. The lunch meeting was held by the National Committee who had invited the Club committee to discuss where they are at with preparations and welcome any input the club had in regards to the forthcoming event. I can report that the committee has this event well in hand and are doing a great job. They are now asking for volunteers to help them over the Easter weekend. Come on up to Maroochydore for a morning, an afternoon, a day or more and join in the club spirit, meet new members and our friends from clubs around Australia and New Zealand and also offer a hand to help make this a successful event.

It was a pity that the Australia Day event at Ormiston State School was postponed as I am sure a lot of events at schools and public parks were also in the same situation due to the continuing rain. With the recent heavy rains and swollen rivers, once again there are a number of towns and rural areas that have flooded in Queensland and New South Wales. We trust all our members and families are okay and wish them well.

The last weekend of January was an overnighter to Maroochydore to see how things are up that way for our Nationals at Easter. We had a lot of Fords and a couple of other cars and one Leyland on Saturday and two on Sunday. No one would have known who we were as a group. However, as the weather was very wet and threatening to flood, most people decided to take their more modern vehicles. We had our evening meal at the tavern and this was good value. Alan managed to get two scoops of ice cream on his dessert by sweet talking the receptionist. Obviously Rogo didn't have the same sweet talking ability so he only got one. We missed Pat being up there with us – no one to keep Rogo under control – but as she had got out of hospital the day before she was only too willing to stay at home and enjoy the peace and quiet with Rogo away.

We had a meeting for the Nationals at the BBQ area after dinner and I commend Daryl on his minute taking abilities. A lot of laughs, talking nonsense, a proposal of a nude male calendar with their cars and many other things and he managed to make sense of it all somehow. At one point we were concerned as he was chairing the meeting but had fallen off his seat backwards and was lying on the ground. Talk about an interesting meeting. Many photos were taken and yes, a few drinks were obvious.

On the Sunday morning we packed up and headed off to breakfast in a convoy of Fords (I wonder if those in our group were NOT driving a ford felt out of place). We had breakfast while it continued to rain but we were dry and all in good spirits. We parted our ways after breakfast with a few going onto visit a local member while the rest of us tackled the rain and the highway back down south again. There were about 12 people that stayed over night and another two who were local and joined in the weekend. We had such a good time that another weekend away may be in the plans for later in the year.

Our run this month is on Sunday 26 February and is lunch at the Royal Hotel Kalbar followed by coffee and dessert of traditional Belgian waffles or Dutch Croquettes at the local arts café. Meeting times are in the magazine.

Can anyone please supply me with dates for the following as I have looked these up on the internet and they have not put their dates in for 2012: Pimpama Open Day – July, Lakeside Fathers Day Spectacular – September, All British Day – September

If you could email these to me and any other dates I do not have on the Swap Meets and Events Calendar I will add them.

We have had suggestions from those at the meeting of some places they would like to go on our monthly runs. These include: Fish and Chips at Bribie Island, Mt Cootha, Mt Tambourne / Eagle Heights Bush Walk, Maleny, Kennilworth Cheese Factory, Friday night Petrie Country Markets, Boonah.

Looking forward to dessert on the Kalbar run so how about joining us.

Happy motoring and safe driving

MEN DO REMEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

A woman awakes during the night to find that her husband was not in their bed. She puts on her dressing gown and goes downstairs to look for him. She finds him sitting at the kitchen table with a hot cup of coffee in front of him. He appears to be in deep thought, just staring at the wall. She watches as he wipes a tear from his eye and takes a sip of his coffee.

'What's the matter, dear?' she whispers as she steps into the room, 'Why are you down here at this time of night?' The husband looks up from his coffee, 'I am just remembering when we first met 20 years ago and started dating. You were only 16. Do you remember back then?' he says solemnly.

The wife is touched to tears thinking that her husband is so caring, so sensitive. 'Yes, I do' she replies.

The husband pauses. The words were not coming easily... 'Do you remember when your father caught us in the back seat of my car?'

'Yes, I remember!' said the wife, lowering herself into a chair beside him.

The husband continues. 'Do you remember when he shoved the shotgun in my face and said, 'Either you marry my daughter, or I will send you to jail for 20 years?'

'I remember that too' she replies softly.

He wipes another tear from his cheek and says... 'I would have been released today.'



General Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Leyland P76 Owners Club Incorporated Queensland General Meeting held on Friday 10 February 2012

The meeting was opened by the President at 8.00pm

Attendance: Carle Gregory, Graham and Pat Rogerson, Richard and Ann Mallon, Keith and Pedita Nicolson, Richard Rydel, Daryl and Barbi Packham, John and Beth Wakeman, Neville Humphries, Adrian Spencer, Garth Morris, Warren Ashworth, Mark Bailey, Graham Joseph, Ricki Donahue, Alan Schutz

Apologies: None

Treasurers Report:

The treasurer reported the bank balance as per the current statement. Moved by Ann Mallon and seconded by Richard Rydel that the treasurer's report be accepted. Carried

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the December meeting were accepted as a true and correct record. Moved by Keith Nicolson and seconded by Graham Rogerson. Carried

Business Arising:

Internet Banking is now up and running
12 February is the Australia Day Rally

Incoming Mail:

Club Magazines received: - The Leyland Post – Jan/Feb 2012, Westwords – Jan and February 2012, Leyland P76 South Australia – December 2011, Penzed - November 2011, Anything But Average – Dec 2011, BMC Heritage Newsletter

New Membership: - Mark Bailey

Postal Mail:

Toowoomba conferences
Trailer Registration renewal
Shannons Auction News – Sydney
Flyer for MacLeans Bridge @ Lakeside 19 and 20 May

Email:

Steve Maher – acceptance and thank you for offer to address Nationals
Steve Maher – article for the BMC Heritage Newsletter

Outgoing Mail:

Email to Steve Maher re attendance at Nationals to address delegates

Spare Parts Report:

\$1,000 in sales over the Christmas break
Targa stripes will not be available soon via our clubs source

National Committee Report:

Daryl Packham reported on progress to date. Volunteers are needed for Nationals. Day trippers need to advise who they are and what events they will be coming to – contact Daryl to advise.

General Business

Targa for sale – ex Leyland Manager's car
Graham Joseph had a person visit his business and advised he worked at Leyland and was there till the end
Alan Schutz talked about a fuel tank sealant

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

February Outing

Sunday 26 February 2012 – Lunch at the Royal Hotel Kalbar (cnr George & Edward Streets Kalbar QLD 4309) followed by coffee and dessert of traditional Belgian waffles or Dutch Croquettes at the local arts café.

10.00am - Brisbane members meet at the Shell Service Station, Gailes for morning tea

10.00am - Gold Coast members meet at Macdonalds Beaudesert for morning tea

KALBAR – a bit of history

Kalbar is a small town in the Scenic Rim, South East Queensland 70 km south west of central Brisbane. It is located near the Cunningham Highway and directly north of Mount French in the Fassifern Valley. The town is part of the Scenic Rim Region local government area. At the 2006 census, Kalbar had a population of 713. Settlement began at the location in 1876 and by 1890 a small town had developed. The town was once known as Fassifern Scrub and then Engelsburg after the first settler of the town. The name changed to Kalbar because of anti-German sentiment in 1916. The Mount Edwards railway line reached the town in the same year. During the 1899 referendum to decide if Australia should become a federation, Kalbar registered the highest No vote of any town in Queensland. In 1920, the Kalbar School of Arts hall and half the businesses in town were destroyed by fire.

The principal farm crop at first was maize, followed by dairying. A dairy factory was opened in about 1900, and as dairying increased fodder crops replaced maize. Kalbar was an active farming township, unusually self-reliant in that it did not have a railway connection until 1916. The Kalbar and District Agricultural and Pastoral Association was formed in 1926. The railway closed in 1960 and the dairy industry showed early signs of decline. Former dairy properties were turned over to irrigated agriculture and potatoes became an important crop. A bulk grain storage facility at Kalbar is used for oil seeds.

Kalbar is dominated by the historic and beautiful Wiss Emporium and Wiss Cottage, which stand at its gateway. Both buildings, and the nearby Wiss House which is being run as a B&B, were built by the entrepreneurial Wiss Brothers, who did very well out of trading a variety of goods to the locals. Legend has it that the Wiss Brothers and the town's other general store, Bickerton's, enjoyed fierce competition. Farmers would arrive to town with a load of produce to be sold by 'Dutch auction'. Bickerton's buyer would stand on one side of the wagon and the Wiss Bros buyer on the other side. Each buyer would write his price down and the farmer would shake his head until a deal was done.

This town presents many options for visitors, traditional Belgian waffles or Dutch Croquettes at the local art café, a cold beer and a great meal at the historic Kalbar pub, or why not browse the unique range of gifts, clothes and jewellery at the Wiss Emporium.



2012 Club Events Calendar

February 2012

26 Sunday

Lunch at Royal Hotel Kalbar
Cnr Gerorge & Edward Streets, Kalbar QLD 4309

March 2012

9 Friday

8.00pm at Mt Petrie School – monthly meeting

25 Sunday

Monthly Run to be advised

April 2012

6 – 9 Easter

13 Friday

2012 National Leyland P76 Meet

8.00pm at Mt Petrie School – monthly meeting

29 Sunday

Monthly Run to be advised

May 2012

11 Friday

8.00pm at Mt Petrie School – monthly meeting

27 Sunday

Monthly Run to be advised

June 2012

8 Friday

8.00pm at Mt Petrie School – monthly meeting

24 Sunday

Monthly Run to be advised

July 2012

13 Friday

8.00pm at Mt Petrie School – monthly meeting

29 Sunday

Monthly Run to be advised

August 2012

10 Friday

8.00pm at Mt Petrie School – monthly meeting

26 Sunday

Richard & Ann Mallon's home on the Gold Coast

September 2012

14 Friday

8.00pm at Mt Petrie School – monthly meeting

30 Sunday

Run to Maleny

October 2012

12 Friday

8.00pm at Mt Petrie School – monthly meeting

28 Sunday

Monthly Run to be advised

November 2012

9 Friday

8.00pm at Mt Petrie School – monthly meeting

25 Sunday

Christmas lunch – venue to be advised

December 2012

14 Friday

8.00pm at Mt Petrie School – monthly meeting

2012 Queensland Swap Meets and Events

March 2012

- Mar 3 Back to the 50s Classic Night at Yatala Drive-In Theatre, 100 Jacobs Well Road, Stapylton, QLD 4207. Adults \$18.00 Children \$10.00. Phone 07 3287 2930
- Mar 4 HMCC Frazer Coast Area Swap Meet Action Park Race Track, Maryborough, Nick 07 4121 2685 or Jack 07 4123 1028 or email: jackp@activ8.net.au
- Mar 11 Beenleigh Swap Meet at Beenleigh Showground, James Street, Beenleigh. Phone 07 3200 5381
- Mar 18 Northern District Rodders Brisbane Swap Meet/Show at Redcliffe Showgrounds, Recreation Street, Redcliffe. Richard 0403 823 70 or Peter 0423 031 630
- Mar 25 Ormiston Swap Meet at Ormiston State School, Wellington Rd. Ormiston. Phone Richard 07 3207 3733 or 0417 612 533 or president@baysideclub.org.au

April 2012

- Apr 15 Shannons Queensland Autospectacular 2012 at Willowbank Raceway, car and bike show and swap meet, phone 0403 960 584 or www.queenslandautospectacular.com.au
- Apr 22 14th Annual Gold Coast Super Swap Meet & Show n' Shine opposite the Carrara Sports Complex, Nerang Broadbeach Rd, Carrara, Gold Coast. Terry 0413 875 737 or email: aussieacer@hotmail.com

May 2012

- May 8 Gold Coast Auto Swap Meet at Oxenford Pony Club, 19 Oberon Way, Oxenford. Phone 0418 768 860 or kevin@goldcoastswapmeet.com.au or www.goldcoastswapmeet.com.au TBC
- May 13 Classic Speedway Association of Qld 7th Annual Car/Bike Show & Swap at Greenbank Sport & Recreation Grounds, 720/768 Middle Road, Greenbank. Frank 0407 035 412 or email tony@classicspeedway.com or www.classicspeedway.com
- May 19 37th Annual MacLean's Bridge at Lakeside Sports and Classic Car Festival, at Lakeside Park (Lakeside Raceway), Kurwonghah. Phone Neville 0419 213 009
- May 27 Capalaba Swap at Capalaba State College, School Road, Capalaba, Brisbane
Phone 07 3348 7900

June 2012

- June 17 Redbank Plains Swap Meet at Strollers Cricket Club, Redbank Plains Road, Redbank Plains. Phone Dennis 0413 893 793 or denzcrab.fish@yahoo.com
- June 23 Caboolture Show'n Shine & Swap Meet at Caboolture Showgrounds, Caboolture. Phone Graeme 07 5498 9579 or Rod 07 5495 3294

July 2012

- Jul 8 Original Gold Coast Swap at Mudgeeraba Showgrounds, cnr Mudgeeraba & Worongary Roads, Mudgeeraba. Ray 0424 983 270 or Pam 0400 278 807 or email: gcswap@gcaac.com.au or www.gcaac.com.au
- July 28 Nambour Swap Meet at Nambour Showgrounds, Nambour. Phone 07 54768388 (6.30-8.30 pm) or Mail: SCACC Box 362 Nambour QLD 4560

August 2012

- Aug 12 Rocklea Swap Meet at Rocklea Showgrounds, Rocklea. Phone Kevin 0412 183 804 or kwar1421@bigpond.net.au

September 2012

- Sep 8 Gympie Swap Meet at Gympie Showgrounds, Exhibition Road, Southside Gympie
Phone Noel: 07 5482 2303 or 0408 708 321 or gympiehistoricauspid@spiderweb.com.au
- Sep 16 Beaudesert Swap Meet at Beaudesert Showgrounds, Beaudesert. Phone 0414 066 121 or beaudesertswap@yahoo.com.au

October 2012

- Oct 1 Toowoomba Swap Meet at Souths Football Oval, Baker St, Toowoomba. Phone Jim Dwan 0407 353 959
- Oct 13 Bundaberg Swap Meet at Agro-Trends Grounds, Childers Road, Bundaberg. Phone Trish 0402 066 728 or <http://www.bundyswapmeet.org.au/>
- Oct 21 Morris Minor Day at Ormiston State School
- Oct 21 Mary Valley Swap Meet at Mary Valley Showgrounds, Edward St, Imbul. Phone Viv 07 5484 5335 or Val 07 5484 5298
- Oct 23 Fassifern Car Club Swap Meet at Boonah Showgrounds, Macquarie Street Boonah. Phone Vince 0409 075 919 or vince@vkh50.com.au or Anthony 0429 899 930
- Oct 30 Goodna RSL Show'n Shine (but NO Swap Meet at Evan Marginson Park, Woogaroo St Goodna Phone 07 3288 3916

November 2012

- Nov 5 Hervey Bay HS P&C Swap Meet at Hervey Bay High School Ovals, entry via Old Maryborough Road, Pialba. Phone Kylie 07 4194 3759 (7am-3pm) or Rob 0408 455 447 or pcurr6@eq.edu.au
- Nov 12 Kenilworth Swap Meet at Bellbird Creek Tea House, 3409 Maleny-Kenilworth Road, 4km south of Kenilworth. Phone Pete 07 5446 0211 or pete@bellbirdcreek.com or www.bellbirdcreek.com
- Nov 25 Beaudesert Little Athletics Swap Meet (Formerly Tamborine Swap Meet) at Beaudesert Showgrounds, Beaudesert. Phone 0409 488 912 or 0419 981 940

Please note: the above dates are all to be confirmed. There will be changes as confirmations come in so keep an eye on them.



President's Report

Welcome to 2012. I hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year. It seems a long time ago since we had our last General Meeting in December. We had a good number of people for our first meeting of the year - about 20 members which is very encouraging to see. Unfortunately, as the school is doing major renovations we met in the staff room which was rather cramped. This may have to be addressed if we continue to get a good turnout of members. I would like to extend a welcome to new member Mark Bailey.

Planning for the National Meeting is well under way and our organising committee is doing a great job. They are now looking for volunteers to give some of their time to assist with this event. Please contact one of our committee to register your interest and they will pass on your details to our Nationals Committee. If we all pitch in it will make it a lot easier for everyone to enjoy themselves. We are also booked in to visit Bowden's Car Museum. This is a must if you are a car enthusiast. Steve Maher has agreed to speak to members attending the Easter Nationals in regards to the goals and objectives of the proposed Council of Leyland P76 Club. If you are a Queensland member reading this and you haven't registered to attend the Nationals, you need to do so now as it is only a few weeks away.

Well done to our Nationals committee - you are all doing a great job and we look forward to Easter.

A few of our members went up to the Sunshine Coast to test the waters so to speak. Well, I don't know about the water but the amber fluid at the local hotel was fine as was the food. It was a great weekend although the weather was not kind to us with continual rain. I think Maryanne should attend more meetings with her ideas and humour getting everyone laughing and involved in discussion.

Our outing for this month is a run to Kalbar. See the notice in the magazine about where and when to meet. The Yatala Drive In (Back to the 50s) is on Saturday 3 March. This is always a great day out. Bring along a picnic, deck chairs and drinks and watch a couple of movies under the stars.

Richard

I am not forgetful

Three ladies were discussing the travails of getting older. One said, "Sometimes I catch myself with a jar of mayonnaise in my hand, while standing in front of the refrigerator, and I can't remember whether I need to put it away, or start making a sandwich."

The second lady chimed in with, "Yes, sometimes I find myself on the landing of the stairs and can't remember whether I was on my way up or on my way down."

The third one responded, "Well, ladies, I'm glad I don't have that problem. Knock on wood," as she rapped her knuckles on the table, and then said, "That must be the door, I'll get it!"

Editor: Thank you to the New Zealand Club for the following article:

Back To the Future - by John Bryson

It is a strange and hostile world when the pundits say that your car is a "lemon" and you know full well that it was the outstanding Aussie family car of its day. They have never lived with one, enjoyed its ability and been impressed with its overall capability.

So, what's this about "of its day"?

To me the Leyland P76's day is "Now", and for all days to come. Naturally all P76 owners and fans will agree but sometimes you have to go out into the world and try to convince the sceptics by doing something different.

That is just what rally legend Gerry Crown and Matt Bryson are about to do - they are running an almost replica of the Evan Green/John Bryson UDT World Cup car in the 2012 "Trans America Rally", a 33 day event across USA and Canada..

This is being run by the Endurance Rally Association of long distance event fame in Asia, Africa, India and recreations of the epic 1907 Peking to Paris. This was the first long distance international rally and was won by Prince Borghese, in an Itala.

The route is shown in detail on the ERA web site and runs from New York to the Grand Canyon and up to Vancouver and on to Anchorage, Alaska with enough special stages to suit most drivers. It should suit the Leyland P76 and it is going to be interesting to see how the Aussie V8 stacks up against a swarm of Porsche 911s and the like.

It is all my fault, because, for many years, I have been telling Gerry that the P76 was the best two wheel drive long distance rally car I had ever been in.

Gerry and I have been lucky over the years to scoop up a string of international event trophies in an extremely well prepared EH Holden. In 1997 we were second Classic Outright in the Peking to Paris Motor Challenge.

We decided to try for a win in 2007 but struck a snag when the Chinese reckoned we were both too old to have a Chinese driving licence. Someone had to drop out and as Gerry was paying the bills that was me. We had to get a younger driver for China.

Enter Matthew, older son of John and Sonja Bryson. Gerry had known him for twenty five years. Best of all, he knew that Matthew was mechanically competent, having built a most competitive LB Lancer for historic events to replicate the one his father had been so successful in with Andrew Cowan for the Mitsubishi works team.

Suffice to say they built a 1940 Buick because Gerry had decided to go a little later than was desirable and the organiser (Philip Young) wanted a pre-'40s car. The new team proved more than competent and set the pace until the differential housing separated where one of the trailing arms joins. Not a good situation.

Matt worked like a Trojan and strapped the two pieces together with ratchet straps, odd pieces of metal and chain so they could get from Mongolia into Russia. This meant they dropped from the leader board, losing a lot of time while Matt welded the housing in Biyrsk. The repair worked and the Gerry/Matt combination ended up in the high 20s.

Then, one Sunday afternoon, we were talking (as you do) and proving that we get a lot faster as we get older than we actually were when Gerry says, "What about Trans Am?"

Matthew sits up straighter, Sonja looks interested, and John says, "What car, the Holden?"

I am immediately thinking of all that would be needed to prepare the old girl for another run as she is exactly as she finished when they won the 2010 Peking to Paris outright.

"We'll take one of your P76s," says Gerry, casually.

Shocked silence explodes. Everyone in the Bryson family is suddenly aware of just what this means. The date is 20th November 2011; the event starts in New York on 8 May 2012. The car will have to leave Australia in February to safely arrive in time.

One of our P76s! Evan Green gave me our Leyland P76 as a reward for running a business called "Competition Equipment" into the ground preparing our World Cup challenge and then recovering a leased van from Tunis when a "service" team member stuffed things up. This was sitting in a shed and it was a tossup whether there was more metal or more rust holding the body together.

Matthew had obtained a "new" body from Norm Julian and was going to resurrect the rally car when time was available. Time is something that motoring enthusiasts do not seem to have as projects just *seem* to keep happening. At least the shell was painted and is rust free. Our P76 had become a basket case because of two reasons.

One was that it had been deck cargo on P&O Mulberrra from Bombay to Perth. The other was that I had filled all the hollow sections of the body with expanding foam. This is fantastic for strength but I did not know that foam attracts moisture and encourages rust.

We also had another V8 as a spare and had been given a body from Steve Maher so you could say we were almost in a position to build a car.

In actual fact you could probably go and run a stock standard P76 in good order and do well. BUT, if you want to try to win then there is a lot more work to be done.

No one can guarantee a win, ever, but my thoughts are that an event is sport and the idea of competition is to try and win. You don't have to win but you need to try your best.

This means that to build a car to win you need to be particular about every aspect of how the car is prepared - very particular.

One serious consideration is the rules of the event. In this case Philip Young knew that our car was a special built for an event in 1974 with no rules. The fact that our car was essentially stock standard was simply a decision we made because we knew the team who had tested and developed the car in New South Wales had been rally oriented and told us we should have an unbeatable car - if we did not "muck" it up with modifications.

Which was what we built, albeit a P76 which was much lighter than when it left Zetland? Weight is critical and the lighter a car is for rallying the better it goes.

We were leading by hours until one of the "special" shock absorber units built by Armstrong broke the thread at the top of the strut. This was because the "engineer" had not relieved, or radiused, where the thread and shaft joined. When we fitted standard struts, these lasted to Munich and are still in the car and seem to work. We had to roll the car from one shed to another the other day and they still seemed OK.

With Gerry's decision to accept the Trans America challenge we had to go into top gear. Initially we started to prepare Steve's old body until I got a "bright" idea. I wondered if Philip Meyer in New Zealand would sell the replica he had made of our car. Philip had stayed with us and worked out what had to be done and the word was that he had a very competitive car. Matt flew over the NZ and was impressed with the machine.

Buying this made sense as Matthew was off to Thailand to meet with the guy he was booked to drive with in Peking to Paris 2013 and discuss how to build their car. But, worst of all, Christmas was almost on us with everyone likely to be on holiday.

Philip Meyer came to our rescue and all was well until we found out that we needed permission to bring a car into Australia. We were told this could take from eight to eighty days! This was NOT what we wanted to hear.

What do you do when you strike a problem? Work around it of course! To do that we arranged for Graham Wilkins to build an engine, chased up a five speed gearbox and disc brakes for the rear end to have all

the mechanicals to drop in Philip's car when it arrived. We would keep the replaced items to re-build the real World Cup car.

Benefits we gained from Philip's car were that it had roll cage, sump guard, Terratrip and rally seats plus all the little things needed in place so we save weeks of work and would only have to check everything after replacing the mechanicals.

Matt and I visited the NSW P76 Club and were made really welcome. We were given good technical information. Matt bought two doors for Steve Maher's old body shell, some Force 7 lower control arms and odd bits such as an engine, power steering rack and so on.

Rather than twiddle our thumbs and wait for Canberra we needed to get our suspension under way. The only real choice was a guy called Murray Coote at Landsborough, north of Brisbane. He wanted a car and spare struts to build us something which would not fail in the Sahara as our old items had. Murray is a rally champion and really knows how to make an efficient and long lasting suspension.

In 1997 I think I replaced tired shocks three times, once at night near Everest at 12,000 ft. I can tell you that the ground was mighty cold and I only did it because we had to

We were helped out by the Queensland P76 club who saved us much time and travel. Firstly Adrian Spencer put me on to Reg Jones who agreed to take one of his P76's across to Murray for a week. Then he introduced me to Graham Rogerson (who runs the Queensland club supply of P76 parts). He just happened to have a pair of struts ready for Russ Cumming to pick up. These were given to us by the club to help our effort and gestures like this remind us that there are an awful lot of nice people in this world.

Russ Cumming happens to be my brother in law and was quite a rally driver in his own right. Almost as good as his sister to whom I am married. His other claims to infamy are that he created a diabolical group of people known as "the Killer Mullet rally team" and was an outstanding rally photographer known as "Flash".

With Russ living in Maroochydore he was able to help us by collecting the struts and delivering to Murray so we could get on with preparation in Sydney. We would like to have gone up to Queensland but it was a case of wet one day and drowning the next!

When you are competing every little item becomes important. How you put the car together is vital. Do you Loctite every nut or do you use locking wires? How are all the electrical wires protected from chafing and moisture - we lost first place in P-P 1997 because I had not siliconed a grommet into place and the cooling fan wire shorted out. This took twenty minutes from us...and back to second place.

Competitors in these long distance rallies are a mix of serious and adventurer. The serious ones can be hard to beat and usually have the best and latest European technology to help them - all within the rules, of course.

The idea is to make the car as reliable as possible because you don't want to spend time working on the vehicle when you could be resting - or partying. Now, you don't think we only go on these events for the competition do you? Yes, there is the travel; there are very good hotels and lots of top quality tucker, and a lot of parties.

As well driving hard on strange roads is very interesting to us

I don't think Matthew had an easy win in Peking to Paris because Gerry talks of how they spent time every night doing preventative maintenance and checking every nut. These rallies run mainly in daylight and have accommodation organised each night. On many nights the stop is a camp site so the only mechanics available are the crew!

Overall the building of the Leyland P76 Trans America car would be Matthew's baby. After all he would be the one fixing problems and he was about to learn all about a car he had only seen parked in a shed for the whole of his life. I guess it is a lot different from having your father say what a good car it is to having to prove it for yourself. It is now December 11th and we have a bit of a task ahead of us so I will keep you posted as the action happens.

Like all the voters of Australia, all we are doing is waiting on Canberra.

Or, maybe, we are like a duck - cool, calm and collected on top but paddling like hell under water! There is a calendar in front of my desk and it does not seem very long before a Leyland P76 has to be on its way to the United States of America. .

John Bryson

If you are not familiar with the background to this escapade which goes back to the 70's the Bill Bolt Memorial copy of "A boot full of right arms" will provide you with an entertaining historical account of the World Cup Rally as told by Evan Green, driver and author.

As I've aged, I've become kinder to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend.. I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the computer until 4 AM or sleep until noon? I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 60 & 70's & 80's and if I, at the same time, wish to cry over a lost love .. I will.

I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body and will dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the jet set. They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car? But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turning silver and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore.. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be. And I shall eat dessert every single day (if I feel like it).