



**B. M. C.
LEYLAND AUSTRALIA
HERITAGE GROUP**



A no-profit association of some hundreds of former employees and interested persons whose mission is to preserve the heritage of BMC – Leyland Australia and its associated companies as a significant part of Australia’s automotive manufacturing history.

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NEWSLETTER APRIL 2013

Celebrations as P76 Turns 40!

These celebrations will be at the venue of the June 1973 P76 launch in Canberra over the last weekend in June. They will include a re-enactment over the original press road test route by about 40 P76s. There will also be car displays and a formal - ie jacket and tie - dinner. An excellent turn-out of both cars and members is expected and Heritage Group members would be welcome on this historic occasion. See details on page 2.

As this date approaches, it is interesting to re-visit that time in early 1969 when the decision was being made to abandon the complex and costly BMC FWD and Hydrolastic suspension designs and to adopt a RWD configuration. This was an enormous decision at the time, and an early Advanced Model Group report presented the proposal in detail with both product and manufacturing details and costings. This report was started before the prototype FWD, V8 prototype with Hydrolastic suspension had been completed as it was evident even then that the investment in time and expense was far beyond the capacity of the local company (BMC Australia as it was then). The diagrams below are extracts from that report.



These diagrams were prepared in early 1969 to demonstrate the implications of changing from FWD to RWD designs with conventional mechanical components. The object was to ensure that there was no mis-understanding by management. The sketch left was not a styling proposal but a generic shape only. The sketches right showed the concept changes from ADO18 front and rear suspension to those for Model B (later P76), before the detail design had been started. The proposed length was 188 inches but this grew 5 inches during the styling stage. Other dimensions were changed little.

General News

Newsletter Now Full Colour

We have received an offer from "Digitalpress" of Surry Hills to print the newsletter on better quality paper using a higher quality, full colour, printing process for under \$2.00 per copy. Previously Officeworks have been competitive in black and white at around \$1.00 per copy but colour costs have been \$0.80 per A4 page. We hope you enjoy the newsletter in colour and agree with us that this is very good value.

P76 Turns 40

The P76 launch at the Lakeside Hotel Canberra in June 1973 by Federal Minister Kep Enderby was a major media event with vast coverage in all Australian newspapers and motoring journals. A fleet of press test vehicles was available for motoring journalists and the test course covered a route to Gundaroo.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of this event, the Canberra and District Leyland P76 Owners Club is hosting a series of celebrations over the weekend of 28 to 30 June 2013 in Canberra. Members of the Heritage Group are welcome to attend. See enclosed information sheet and contact Kay De Luca by 15 May. Interest in the P76 is still strong - see pages 4 and 5.

2013 September Reunion

A reminder that this year's reunion will be held again at the Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club on Sunday 29-Sep-2013. Kay De Luca asks you to note in your diary.

"Building Cars in Australia" Book Sales

We now have only 139 books left. Books are still available at a favourable price to Group members but your time is running out. Act now and contact Roger Foy on 02 9449 1524 or rogerfoy1@bigpond.com

Heritage Group's DVDs

These are still selling well. Contact Roger Foy

Meeting of Your Committee

Your Committee met March 14. See report Page 7.

Memorabilia Project

We have now lodged our first batch - a total of 38 files - of memorabilia with City of Sydney Archives. This comprises only reports and correspondence files about the decision to "go it alone" in Australia with the Model A and Model B project. We await the CofS response to our catalogue entries before continuing. Lists of the documents we lodge with catalogue entries will be included in future newsletters.

2013 Austins Over Australia Rally

Over 200 Austins ran in this year's event over Easter, showing again the extent of continuing interest is this marque - more details on page 3

Focus on Service

Sid Breeden and Bob Johnston - both BMC Service Engineers provide some welcome material. See page 6

The Competition Scene

Rob Harrison's report returns on page 8

Your Book Team

For readers who do not know those of the Heritage Group who worked so hard from 2008 to 2012 to publish the book "Building Cars in Australia", here is a photo of all except Greg Kean who was not present.



From left: Ron Moss, Peter Davis, Ross Bell, Reg Fulford (now deceased) Chris Rogers, Roger Foy, Barry Anderson.

PMC History Project

Moving on from the Victoria Park site, your Heritage Group has set up a Project Team - headed up by Ron Moss - looking for information & photos regarding the Pressed Metal Corporation at Cosgrove Road ENFIELD covering the 1930's to 1980's period. They are looking for information about:

- The initial site and it's purchase by Larke Hoskins
- The buildings plans and construction for motor vehicle production
- The vehicle models produced together with their build dates
- The personnel and their connection with the PMC operation over this period

We would greatly appreciate receiving copies of any applicable information to assist this project.

If you can help, contact Ron - who has provided the images on the next page - on 02 9427 4001



J2 vans, MGAs and Austin A50 utilities being assembled at the Enfield factory c1960



Austin A50 Utility from Enfield c1960

Experimental Manufacturing Technicians

Many will remember Athol Stewart who was an extraordinarily gifted machinist in Experimental. It was a delight to see his calm speed and great accuracy on any of the Experimental Department's machine tools. Athol's obituary - written by nephew John Dunn - was in the January 21 edition of the Sydney Morning Herald. Many members read it and were pleased that SMH should record the life of someone who was so far from the limelight. It was only from this obituary of him that we learned of Athol's many hardships and that he machined Merlin crankshafts during WWII at Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation.

John wrote to the Group enclosing the photo below of a group of the manufacturing technicians. We have identified many of them. Can anyone identify others?

Below - Experimental Manufacturing Technicians c1973.

From left: George Fitzgerald, unknown, Dave Mawer, unknown, Vladimir Pos, Frank Foulds, unknown, Conrad Allen, Ray Chegwegen, Dennis Jamison, unknown, Laurie Keating, unknown, Athol Stewart, Jim Yates, Ray Ferguson, unknown, Ken Miller, Jack Smith, Bob Laurie, unknown, Harold Walsh.



Austins Over Australia - Bendigo - 2013

Just as the celebrations for the P76's 40th Anniversary are underway, Roger Foy reports that more than 230 vehicles drove from all over Australia to attend this year's event at Easter. Cars ranged from the A30s and A40s, 1800s and of course, the ever famous Austin 7. Another example of the continuing interest in the Austin marque - one of those manufactured at Victoria Park.



Left: Some of over 200 Austin vehicles at the Austins Over Australia event at Forbes in 2012



Victorian Club Cars at the BMC Experience Event - December 2012



NSW Owners Club Line Up at Noel Delforce's Home at Lochinvar NSW



NSW Owners Club Cars at the All British Day, The Kings School 2012



NSW Owners Club Cars at Pearl Beach NSW 2009



A Line Up of Queensland Cars



Some Victorian Cars - Mike Chadwick, Kevin Smith, Scott Reynolds

The P76 Car Club Scene

As P76 turns 40, Kay De Luca has provided us with a review of the Australian and New Zealand car clubs that are dedicated to the P76. She also provided examples of the cars they run.

There are 9 Clubs:

- Leyland P76 Owners Club NSW
- Leyland P76 Owners Club Vic
- Leyland P76 Owners Club Qld
- Leyland P76 Owners Club SA
- Leyland P76 Owners Club Aust (WA Branch)
- Leyland P76 Country Club
- Canberra & Districts Leyland P76 Owners Club
- Leyland P76 Classic Car Club
- Leyland P76 Owners Club New Zealand

It is estimated that the total membership of all these clubs is around 350 and that there are still 450 P76s registered and used regularly. There are also many cars still being restored but the numbers are unknown.

The photos on the left show examples of the clubs' activities. The photos on the opposite page show examples of individual vehicles and the standard to which many are maintained.

Clearly, there is still wide interest in the P76 with a vibrant club scene. This is confirmed by the interest in the P76 40th Anniversary Celebrations planned for the weekend of 28th to 30th June 2013 in Canberra: Some attendees from interstate are transporting their cars by ship - a not inexpensive process - such is their enthusiasm for the P76!

Kay expects a roll up of 40 P76s and at least 80 people for the event that includes a retracing of the Press Release test course to Gundaroo, a formal dinner at the Rydges Lakeside Hotel where the P76 was launched in June 1973 and a Car Display on the Sunday in the grounds in front of Old Parliament House.

President's Message

There are many anniversaries to celebrate this year. Canberra turns 100 and the mobile phone is 40. In the car world 2013 marks 100 years for many models, engines and brands. For the Heritage Group the two major milestones for 2013 would have to be 40th Anniversary of the P76 and the 100th anniversary of the first Morris rolling off the production line, the original Bullnose Morris Oxford. As it happens, we can also celebrate the return of MG to Australia.



At a function at Dalton House on Wednesday April 17th a new company MG Motor Australia Pty Ltd was launched. The MG brand is now owned by the Chinese conglomerate SAIC Motors who last year built 4.5 million cars. The MG6, a four door sedan or 5 door hatch was announced as the first models available with a smaller model, MG3, to arrive later this year. An SUV as well as a sports model is also rumoured. The new company's headquarters is on Parramatta Road in Sydney and their branding has copied that of the Chinese MG showrooms having the MG logo with 'Morris Garages' underneath. SAIC sold 200,000 MGs into China last year.

An event celebrating the 100th anniversary of Morris was held in Canberra this month. Organised by the combined Morris Registers of Australia over 150 Morris or Morris related vehicles were on display from all states of Australia.



1914 Morris Bullnose Oxford

The next major celebration is of course the P76's 40th. The event, also to be held in Canberra, is aiming to recreate the press launch. Full details are on the back of this page. It should also be another memorable milestone.

Greg Kean



2013 MG6 & 1925 MG 14/28 Super Sports



B. M. C. LEYLAND AUSTRALIA HERITAGE GROUP



As a member of BMCLAHG you are invited to register for this event

REGISTER FOR THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEYLAND P76 - 28/29/30 JUNE 2013

By registering for the event, you are entitled to:

- Participate in the 1973 Press release test drive recreation
- Attend the Formal Dinner at Rydges Lakeside Canberra
- Receive a copy of the event book (not for sale - only for registered attendees)
- View the cars in the 40th P76 Anniversary Concours Display
- Receive a Certificate of Attendance at the 40th Anniversary
- Discounted accommodation at Rydges Lakeside or Gold Creek Tourist Resort



Registration is \$120 per person.

- You must book and pay for your own accommodation.
- Registration must be completed by 15 May 2013
- Contact Kay De Luca on (02) 8812 2479 or tonkay@optusnet@hotmail.com for more details

Payment in full required at time of registration. Multiple attendees can register on the same form.

ITINERARY:

Friday 28th June - meet at lunchtime in Goulburn for drive to Canberra followed by dinner at Tradies.

Saturday 29th June - 10.00am to 2.00pm - Run to Gundaroo - Replicating the press release run from 1973, registered participants in the 40th Anniversary celebrations will recreate the original run to Gundaroo in P76 cars travelling via Gunning. If you would like a ride in a P76 just let Steve Maher or Kay De Luca know.

Return in time for the Formal Dinner - at Rydges Lakeside (location of the official launch of the P76) - 7.30pm till 12.00am - Guest Speakers Will Hagon, Barry Anderson.

Sunday 30th June - 10.00am - Leyland P76 Concours - on the lawns in front of Old Parliament House.

Just Some of the P76s Still Running



*Anti-clockwise from Left, This Page
Targa Florio - Owned by Sam Murray (WA)
Force 7 - Owned by Jo Green (NSW)
Wagon - Owned by Jo Green (NSW)
Executive, Spanish Olive - Tasmanian Owned
Deluxe - Owned by Damien Haas (ACT)
Targa Florio - Owned by John Metcalf (WA)
Executive, Crystal White - Owned by Tony De Luca (NSW) - Last Remaining Press Test Fleet Vehicle*



Focus on the Service Department

When the book "*Building Cars in Australia*" was being written, we had very little material about the Service Department which operating from 1950 until the companies closed. We remain keen to record the "Service Story" in the Newsletter and welcome material from people who were there.

We have now received letters from Bob Johnston and Sid Breeden - both ex-BMC Service Engineers.

Bob Johnston writes:

"Congratulations to you and the team who put "The Book" altogether. It brought back many memories - I am the "unknown" number 56 on page 150! Number 27 is Alan Rossbridge who worked with me after I left BMC in 1965."

After an apprenticeship at York Motors Bob joined BMC as a cadet in 1958 assigned to the Service Department. After working with Bob Simpson - Truck Service Manager he transferred to Melbourne in mid 1960 to help Arthur Rook with the move to direct distribution and the selection of BMC dealers. Most country towns had both Austin and Morris dealers and he found this selection "an interesting time".

He was involved in the preparation of the 6 cars for the First Armstrong 500 endurance race and recalls the rivalry between the 18 nominated drivers - all wanted the fastest car. Peter Manton prevailed.

After working on the Mini release in Victoria he returned to Sydney in early 1962 as Zone Service manager in NSW and later, with his truck experience, became Truck Service manager. He enjoyed time with Les Carey on field trips, dealer releases etc. He was involved in the competitions area - Evan Green could be very persuasive and Norm Prescott would shrug his shoulders and reluctantly agree! He also drove in several economy events.

He recalled that "the commercial vehicle area was one where we made many vehicle modifications to improve the vehicles" and that "the Service Department also produced service bulletins on all the imported models and carried out dealer training on these car, truck, tractor and marine engine products"

Bob finished with "I hope you can get the archiving up and running as there is I am sure there is a lot of stuff in ex- employees draws and garages that is worth keeping for future reference".

Sid Breeden has provided interesting, captioned, photos of Service personnel in the 1960s for the archive project:

- Victoria Service guys entertaining at the 1964 BMC Ball in Melbourne (the days when major Dealers and BMC held those wonderful Balls);
- Castrol entertaining the Victoria Service Department at the Chevron Hotel (autographed);
- Interstate Service Conference at Victoria Park, a copy of which is on the next page); and
- Sydney in August 1961 - from his early days at Zetland, showing the Opera House being built.

(I list these as they are examples of material that is suitable for our archives project. Ed)

Sid spent eight years with BMC Australia Service but the association was much longer. His family operated a BMC Dealership in Western Australia where he met WA Service Engineer Les Nordhoff who gave him references. With his apprenticeship behind him Sid sailed to England for further training at BMC UK. These included Cowley and Abingdon, Birmingham with SU Carburettors, Tractors and Transmissions and Lucas plus Longbridge Commercial Vehicles then finally Export Service at Holland Park.

Tom Poole had job-interviewed Sid in Cowley in 1961. Sid then joined Service at Victoria Park in the Tote building, transferring in January 1962 to Victoria's Moorabbin State Office. As Senior Service Engineer he covered metro dealers, eastern half rural Victoria, the NSW Riverina and Tasmania. In 1969 he joined Chrysler WA - later Mitsubishi, until his retirement.

Sid and several old BMC mates all agree that their BMC days engendered great loyalty towards employer and product. They talk as if it were yesterday. Those nostalgic good times will be always remembered.

Sid has provided the names of the Service people in the photo opposite. The "unknown" names anyone?

He records some memories of his BMC years - eg:

- The vital role field staff played dealing with both and Dealers and Customers re products;
- The challenge ensuring that BMC products were well promoted by multi-franchised dealers;
- The big Winter Balls in Victoria which had a wonderful bonding effect between BMC, ex Distributors Kellow-Faulkner and Lanes Motors; and later, others.



BMC Conference at Victoria Park c1965 of Service Staff from all States of Australia. From left:
Rear standing: John Payne (Trucks), unknown, Cyril Baker (Head Office), Ernie Adler (Service Mgr Adelaide Motors SA), Den Grubb (Victoria), Dante Ballarino (Queensland), Bill Phillips (NSW), Jim Metcalf (Service Engineer UK Motors Queensland), Hugh Tinsley (NSW), Rusty Curtis ("Ace" from his WW2 Airforce days), Bob Phillips (NSW).
Rear sitting: Don Smith, Brian Clifton, Richard "Dick" McGrath (Victoria), Kevin Regan (HO), Jim Hunter (Mgr Tech Pubs), Norm Prescott - General Service Mgr, unknown, Jim Hines (Asst Service Mgr), Arthur Scott (Victoria), John Andrews "Slinter" (NSW), John Searle (Tech Pubs), John Weldon (NSW).
Seated front left: Bob Johnston, Bill Luff (Warranty) **Seated front right:** Greg Fayers - (Victoria), Sid Breeden (Victoria), Bill Shipway (Service Mgr NSW)

Sid Breeden also recalls some operational moments:

- Dick McGrath, driving home to Geelong, had con-rod fail. With the all noise and with smoke in the rear view mirror he didn't even lift the bonnet - he just locked the doors and thumbed a lift!
- A memorable trip in an Elite from Orbost to Albury across the High Country on a wet muddy road - today no-one would make that trip unless in a 4WD.
- The 50,000 miles pa that Service Engineers could travel and Hugh Tinsley claiming to the 1965 conference that he was just "the highest paid car driver in Australia".
- The competition between Service Engineers to see who could squeeze the maximum speed out of a Morris 1100 - they usually drove company cars flat out in the bush.

Meeting of Your Committee

Your Committee now meets quarterly. At the meeting on March 14 2013 the following actions were agreed:

- As recent legislative changes may require us to revert to an incorporated structure, we accept the generous offer from a chartered accountant to develop an action plan on a no charge basis.
- Continue analysis of the the suggestion that we present a car to a museum.
- Research the history of Pressed Metal Enfield
- Develop a Group website
- Develop a calendar of events of interest to members for inclusion in future newsletters
- Develop a membership card
- Trial the colour newsletter for 2 issues
- Publish Peter Davis' large collection of "fact sheets" covering model numbers, ident plates, organization charts, procedures etc

More Service Department reports would be welcome.

Rob Harrison's History Corner

Looking back to the 1960's, one name was more prominent than others on the World scene, - Paddy Hopkirk. He was the Beatles of the rally scene but unlike most successful drivers of his time who specialized in rallying or racing, he was good at both.

Born in 1933 in Belfast Northern Island, Paddy first came to fame by winning the 1964 Monte Carlo Rally in the car that made him a European rally Icon, the Cooper Mini. He won the Alpine rallies in 1966 and 1967. He was very successful driving Austin Healeys and first proved that in his most successful year - 1964 - in again the Alpine Rally. But when he turned his hand to circuit racing he was also successful in the long distance races driving an MGB, in Le Mans, Sebring and the Targa Florio.

He drove for the Donald Healey Motor Company at Sebring in Austin Healey 3000's. For the 1963 event the DHMC entered 3 specially prepared Sebring 3000's - the one driven by Paddy was 54 FAC. The third car - 57 FAC - was bought by Brian Duffy in the Southern Highlands and I was fortunate enough to be driven in this extraordinary car this Christmas. I can say categorically, it is the most exciting car, together with Joe Armour's Sebring 3000 also in the Southern Highlands, in which I have had the pleasure to be driven. So, Paddy Hopkirk was given some very good machinery in which to perform.

Later in 1968 he came second in the grueling London to Sydney Rally driving an Austin 1800. His versatility again was demonstrated in Rally Cross in 1969. He came 4th in the London to Mexico Rally in a Triumph 2.5 PI in 1970. His last big success for BLMC was 2nd in the 1970 Scottish Rally in a Mini 1275cc GT.

However, for Australians he is remembered for his trips Down Under for the long distance Bathurst races where he competed in the Armstrong 500 from 1965 to 1967, his best result being 6th.

Those working for BMC remember his 1965 visit to Zetland where he was asked to demonstrate the Mini Cooper around the site. He demonstrated his amazing skills with hand brake turns and had his Mini Cooper dancing around between Experimental and the Parts buildings at speed and perfectly under control.

Never before or since has the World seen such a versatile driver as Paddy Hopkirk and perhaps the only machine he didn't adapt to was the motorcycle. Versatility here, must be granted to John Surtees

who conquered motor cycle and Formula 1 racing winning Championships in both.



Paddy Hopkirk - 2nd from right - and other works team drivers being welcomed to VP at the "main" entrance in the CKD building by (on step, from left): Lindsay Shimmin, Bill Abbott, Ian Milbank and Evan Green. 1965