



# THE PRAIRIE LADY



Rolls-Royce Owners Club - Can-Am Prairie Region

Newsletter March/April 2008

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Andy Stephenson's 1979 Silver Wraith II on a recent trip to Nakiska—his traveling friend Whistle enjoyed the trip



## EDITORS RAMBLINGS

Howdy again everyone and welcome again to another riveting edition of the Prairie Lady under my tutelage.

Let me begin by saying what a good time we had on Saturday February 16<sup>th</sup> at the pub night. The attendees were ... Terry and Marianne Murphy , Maurice Tims , Rob Manderson , John and Kathy Doyle , Jonathon Lloyd , Andy Stephenson and guest , Hoover and Joanne Reid , and myself and Donna.

Thanks to the Murphy's for organizing it.

Thank you to the contributors of this issue , Maurice Tims , Jan and Margie Kankrlik and to those who responded with information I needed. Much thanks to Maurice and Bernice Tims for helping Donna and I with this issue and of course lunch , and also to Richard Strand for printing at his office.

Please note the coming events here on the front page .... Car season is here so lets get the cars out to this.

Please keep the articles coming as we all appreciate it.

Until next time kids , enjoy.

George

## COMING EVENTS

Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup> 1:00 P.M.

Lunch at Madrina's Restarante'

23 Balsam Ave Bragg Creek

Meet at Southcenter Mall in South Calgary west of the Bay at 12:30 P.M.

Please RSVP to Marianne or Terry

May 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> at the Doyle's Ranch in Olds

2008 spring Tech session .

Best Western motor hotel 1-403-556-5900

Laurie will be calling everyone about attendance and Ralph would like an idea of problems for demo repairs.

Please let Kathy know if you are coming for her hospitality.



The Soggy Saga of the Bentley  
(the arrival of B20KM in the US)  
By: Jan and Margie Kankrik

Aside: One must remember that the Winter and Spring of 1983 were some of the worst West Coast seasons on record; with gales, drenching rains, floods and mudslides. Not your typical California dreamin'!

Part I.

The Sogga Begins

The day had started out as any other at this time of year. A cool breeze from the South, laced with a damp sea-smell, boded of rain. The storm was not yet visible on the horizon. Wisps of swiftly moving coastal fog, thrown high by pressure against the surrounding hills, were being rent into progressively smaller bits by an obviously blustery on-shore wind at the higher altitudes. An interesting day. Calm even (by Wagnerian standards). A day which gave no warning, no hint, of the Horror about to unfold. (Aside: If this all sounds a tad dramatic, you must remember that I am a being that does not cope well when simple, straightforward actions do not culminate in what one would consider to be simple, logical outcomes. But, back to the Sogga.)

Since I had received a letter, and a packing list, from Mortimer (the shipping company in London which had stripped the Bentley of all stealable parts ahead of shipping the chassis) about 2 weeks previous to this, I chanced to call the air freight forwarder in San Francisco to see if any articles had arrived. The people there knew nothing of my shipment, but said that that was normal for recently-deplaned packages, and that I should call their office near the airport in South San Francisco.

Far better response from those people. They were actually glad I had called, for it seems that a typo in our phone number had prevented them from reaching Margie and me for four days. The goods were in! I left the Mountain View lab immediately in order to recover the booty!!

As I came out to the car park, I noticed that the wind had stiffened appreciably, but undaunted I pushed on. Drove up Highway 101 toward San Carlos.

Here all Hell broke loose. Winds in gusts to 60 mph slowed traffic to a crawl. Rain and dust pelted the car from all sides, a veritable vortex; there was no direction from which dirt and water did not hit. At a 5 to 10 mph limp through this mess, I finally arrived at South San Francisco hours later.

The air-freighter's car-park was inundated, water stood even with the floorboards of the parked autos.

Slogged inside.

Their roof was leaking, water all over desks and floors.

Sat down. Waited with heightening anticipation.

Then the first bomb burst!!!

Since speaking with one of them earlier, the people in the air-freight office had been trying to clear my shipment with the airline office, only to find that one of the two boxes of parts was missing. The box had either been left behind in Britain, or had gone on to Seattle with the plane four days before. (Aside: No one ever found out the answer to that enigma, but that is getting ahead of our tale.)

Filled out the paperwork. Paid the people for both boxes of parts (the second turned up after all, 2 weeks later) scurried over to the hangar area.

At the airport the wind had hit full gale proportions. The ware-



house had locked its doors to keep them from being blown open.

Had to run around the building, in the monsoon, to find a way in.

Finally managed to make myself heard, was let inside- looking like a disheveled mop. Asked for my package—

The next bomb burst!!!

Customs would not let me have the parts since they were considered pieces of a total auto, all purchased as a unit, and I had as yet not paid duty on the total auto so there was "no way" that I could get any pieces.

Much haranguing convinced them to give me the package at the declared value of the pieces, as retail piece-parts, and since duty would be paid on the full price of the car later, how could they lose? They liked that kind of thinking – moved my box through.

Back out into the storm, limp back to the lab, spend the rest of the day drying out.

Part II.

The Long Wait

Checked with the shipping line – auto-transporter left dock December 6, due in Los Angeles (San Pedro) January 10, 1983. Fine!!

January 6<sup>th</sup> called shipper to check on progress of boat: Unknown!?

Boat possibly help up at Panama Canal, or slowed by storms. I should call back on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

January 10<sup>th</sup>: Called back. No boat (but they knew now that it was being held back at the Canal because of higher priority traffic.) Boat now due on the 17<sup>th</sup>. I should call back.

January 17<sup>th</sup>: Called back. No boat. Boat still fighting storms, due in on the 21<sup>st</sup>. I should call back.

January 21<sup>st</sup>: Called back. No boat. But boat was due in port on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and would be berthed by Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup>. I should call back.

Waited 'til January 26<sup>th</sup>: Wednesday. Called back.

Boat IN!!!!

Car off-loaded. Could pick up after noon on Thursday.

Immediately called car-rental company to reserve large, stylish auto for Thursday evening. Would drive to Los Angeles with parts; assemble motorcar on the quay; leave rental in Long

Beach; drive back in Bentley. It all sounded so simple, so straightforward.

Heavy rains hitting.

Part III.

The British Mudball

(or Britannia Rules the Mire)

Thursday afternoon: At a fever pitch, and in a flurry of last-minute activity, I rushed from our lab building, jumped into the car, roared to Sunnyvale and picked up the sweet young thing (Margie). And veritably flew down the road to San Jose airport to pick up the rental car.

The next bomb!!

A Clerk had misplaced our reservation and had rented-out the car. The other rental companies there were all booked up. (I shall omit the hour of epithets and various polysyllabic idioms, all neatly divisible by words of 4 letters, muttered under my breath.)

Finally secured a "vehicle"; at least the "thing" had a motor and 4 wheels.

More than an hour wasted!!!

Drove home.

Loaded the "thing" full of parts and suitcases.

Both of us jumped in and roared South. (Played cat and mouse all evening with the Highway Patrol trying to make up for lost time.)

Thursday night: Rain hit again!

Mudslides in the roads through the hills. Going getting slower all the time! Mood souring steadily. Drive dragged on for 10 hours. Finally found motel in Long Beach. Cussed myself to sleep.

Friday morning: Had a good breakfast to fortify ourselves for the adventure to come. Mood slightly improved. Found customs broker; completed paperwork. Given directions to berth on Terminal Island. It almost was that for me—terminal. A bat with a road map could not fly around in that place. Spent 2 hours going in circles; finally found berth. Mood now equal to previous night's; sourness. Found shipper's office, completed paperwork; went to customs inspector's office, expected MAJOR fight. Custom's official = bright, cheerful, helpful, efficient; truly a pleasure to deal with such a person. (Positively not your normal government clerk, one-of-a-kind.) Perked up a bit.

Had perked too soon!!!

Walked over to yard where cars are stored. One week of severe storms had turned the lot into a quagmire. Waded over to this dark-brown mass of mud. Paint all over windows (ship's name, dock numbers, etc.) Paper stickers glued to everything not covered by paint or mud. THAT WAS OUR BENTLEY!

HEARTBREAK!

I could find better looking things under a wet rock.

Opened the door, everything damp and sweating. The sunroof had been left unlatched; the gasket around the windscreen leaked (and naturally the car was parked as to face the weather) the cowl vent held back the water as well as a sieve; the dash was running water; the headliner damp.

Had to sit down. Sat down on car seat (feet outside).

Ignition had been left "ON". Battery was so dead that it reversed polarity on the tester. Put feet inside car. Carpet squished – totally water and mud-logged. Opened tool drawer – water gushed out. Screamed to the heavens that Argentina definitely should have won the Falkland episode. Opened glove-box – clock wet and stopped. Ashtray swelled shut; all wood on dash – wet!

Felt like crying

(Time passes.) Figured that we had better get the high-priced-mess home, as it was about to rain again. Shipper's people gave battery a hot-shot; car started; sounded like crap. Ran on only 3 cylinders.

Did cry!

Drove car to service station; charged battery, cleaned windows of paint, routing, and inspection labels. Cleaned up interior a bit. Decided to put on mascot, wheel covers, arm rests, etc. Car actually looked better. Gassed up.

Friday afternoon: Dropped off rental-car. Drove to car-wash. Two washings did not get all of the muck and grease off of vehicle. Gave up!

Got on Highway 1 to drive home – no oil pressure?!!

Nursed car through traffic; oil pressure finally started picking up.

Rain hit

Drove through Malibu – people making sandbags in the road to keep homes from washing away. Drove North – mudslides; rocks in road; traffic snarled. Drove through Ventura – houses washing away. Winds high. Rain pelting everything (outside and in). Car interior steaming up. Windscreen leaking; cowl vent leaking; water running over dashboard and down over legs and leather boots. Car smells like a dead, wet goat.

Mood Indescribable!

(You just had to be there!!)

Night falling, storm worsening.

Friday night: Finally at Santa Maria we were literally blown off the road. Margie, white-knuckled from holding on to the car seat for hours, finally threw in the towel – asked that we look for a motel and stop.

Found motel; streets and car-park flooding. Margie ran inside, secured room. Car park flooding (more). Waded in with suitcases, went upstairs to room. Felt like having nervous breakdown – decided to take hot shower instead.

Afterward, looked out of window. Flood waters now 1 1/2 feet high in lower end of car park; water approaching Bentley (figured that maybe it should just wash away). Went to eat.

Because of storm, only one cook and one waitress had reported for work. All guests stranded in hotel by weather. Hours-long-wait to be served. Ordered drinks from Lounge, sat by window, watched trees falling into the road. Police came up, pulled them out of the way. Car park flooding still. Ate dinner. Went to sleep.

Saturday morning: Woke. Went to window to look at the mobile swamp. Surprise!!! The sheer force of the rainwater had washed off much of the scum. And while still filthy, a ray of sunshine managed to make the auto just about the best looking one in the lot. Mood began to change. Feel-

ings about the car began to change. Managed to find service station with leaded gas (leaded gas not plentiful in California these days). Checked oil, cleaned windows, headed back north up Highway 101. Rain intermittent. Oil pressure higher today, auto running much better. Starting to feel much better about purchase.

Saturday afternoon: Arrive home after a comparatively pleasant ride. Unload car. Put in garage. Eat dinner early. Go to sleep.

Sunday morning: Sunny day. Spend 12 hours working on car. Cleaning inside and out. Leave car in driveway with sun-roof open. Car cleans up well. Begin to treat wood to prevent water damage.

Two weeks later: Car has dried out. It seems that there will be no permanent stain on the headliner. The wood has come back amazingly well. I have tuned the car, it now runs on all six cylinders (runs twice as well as it did on three).

Mood much better.

Shall begin rework by replacing main bearings, then time for full restoration.

Little vignettes, such as these, tend to underscore one's existence with flourishes, and keep life from being drab by injecting a touch of colour.

Jan and Margie Kankrlik

**Europe Without The Jet Lag**

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**QUEBEC COUNTRYSIDE CHARM**  
**MAY 23-29, 2008**

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Explore Montreal boutiques, restaurants, and museums.  
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Jan and Margie Kankrlik's 1950 Bentley Mk. VI B20KM

Should have done it! In 1958 I was offered this 1953 Silver Dawn Park Ward Convertible in trade for my 1958 Corvette but I was enjoying my new car—OH well!

Maurice Tims



**VENDORS MARKET**

- SCII transmission ....offers?
- Silver cloud and Bentley air filters
- 2 kralinator paper type, 4 original , 3 used ,
- 1NOS all \$150
- SC headlights
- 2pr lucas B1053-55447 1 new, 1 used
- 1 pr cibie IODE mfg France headlights
- 2 misc head lights All \$250
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- All Franklin mint
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- Contact Reg Collings