

THE PRAIRIE LADY

Rolls-Royce Owners Club - Can-Am Prairie Region

Newsletter Nov/Dec 2008

Officers and Directors

Chair

Rob Manderson

Calgary, Alberta.

403.

rob_manderson@

Treasurer and Membership

Maurice Tims

Calgary, Alberta.

403.

timsmd@

Secretary

Darcy Collings

Calgary, Alberta.

403.

dcollings@

Archives

Howard Lengert

Calmar, Alberta.

780.

lengert@

Social Events

Terry and Marianne Murphy

Calgary, Alberta.

403.

terryjmurphy@

Newsletter Editor

George Pope

Strathmore, Alberta

403.

pogo@

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Darcy And Dawn Collings 1999 Bentley Arnage

Editors Ramblings

Welcome once again to another edition of the Prairie Lady. Winter is just around the corner now and many of us are putting the cars to bed for another year. I finished the last cooling system flush last weekend, but all the cars are still getting out weekly for a run. I hope to get a few more minor things done on them before the snow flies so there will be less to do come spring.

We just had the annual general meeting for the club on October 26th in Red Deer with 4 PMC's in attendance. There was no change in officers with the exception of chairman. Kathy Doyle stepped down after 3 years in office and Rob Manderson was appointed, somewhat reluctantly, in absentia. Thanks go to Kathy for all her hard work and commitment to the position of chair.

Feel free to submit any articles to me for this newsletter.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Potluck Dinner

Sunday December 14th

4:00 p.m.

at

Terry and Marianne Murphys'

(Marianne and Terry will cook the turkey)

Please RSVP for menu organization and attendance by Dec. 10th



Can-Am Prairie Region members Rolls-Royce & Bentley experiences

Maurice Tims and the 1954 Silver Dawn LSRH8

This is No.2 of the series re my experiences with Rolls-Royce and the Club. The first one was on the Phantom III. Here is some brief background information and how I became involved with automobiles. I served a five year engineering apprenticeship with the Royal Ordnance Factories in the UK from 1943 to 1948 which gave me a good mechanical background. I spent most of my spare time working on cars as a hobby. The family car was a 1930 Singer 8. My first car (1948) was a 1933 BSA 10 HP, followed by a Wolsley 14 in 1950. I remember seeing a 1949 Alvis in 1949 and wondering if I could ever afford one (£4,000!) - 1956 I found one in a field in Ontario at the back of a service station and bought it for \$175 - spent 2 years restoring it and it was used by the family until 1972. My pride and joy in 1956 was a new Corvette which had no room for our son David and had to be replaced. The good news was that the replacement was a 1954 Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn.

The 1949 Alvis TA14 was

built like an tank - in fact Alvis built armoured cars for the military and for Brinks in the USA.

It was thoroughly reliable and we used it daily from 1958 to 1972.



My fun car was the 1956 Corvette. I should have kept it but we needed a car with more room to accommodate our family and so

I sold it in 1962 to buy the 1954 Silver Dawn.

I had been introduced to the Silver Dawn series while in Sarnia, Ontario where a friend was ready to make a swap with my Corvette. It was a 1953 SD convertible. I should have done it but it was an unknown quantity and I was being transferred by Imperial Oil to Calgary.



Six months after I bought the PMC I visited the UK and George Reeves arranged for me to visit the factory at Crewe. I was picked up in a new RR at the station and taken to the factory, they served coffee and scones in a plush room with the thickest carpet that I have ever trodden on! Then a tour of the factory and lunch in a nice restaurant complete with a ride in a Silver Dawn. After lunch more factory tour and then a ride in a new Bentley to the station. It was very impressive.

After twelve months of ownership I couldn't resist the temptation to pull the head and take a look. I was concerned to find one of the piston rings breaking through the top of the piston. So I pulled the engine out and dismantled it. The problem was caused by a chrome liner which only extended for the first 2" of the bore. Prior to this Rolls-Royce had successfully flash chromed the top section of the bore to reduce cylinder wear.

The partial chrome liner caused the cylinder to wear below the liner and the expansion and contraction of the rings resulted in breakage. I bought some 5 thou' oversized pistons and honed the bores. Replaced all the bearings. At the time I was doing this Harold Carlyle (while driving his Phantom II) chanced to meet Tony Guerrero in Banff and brought him back to my garage.



Engine ready to go back in to the chassis. My helper was long time RR friend Harold Carlyle.

Tony was the RROC VP Technical and immediately gave me the job of Tech. Rep. for the Silver Dawn and Bentley Mk.VI series.

At that time Kendal Motors (Valentine

Volvo's old site) were the Rolls-Royce dealers and were closing shop. I was able to get a large collection of data from them in the form of manuals. So armed with all the information I had a busy time in the following 10 years answering many enquiries from RROC members.

In 1965 Harold Carlyle and our family went down to Carmel, California for the annual

RROC Meet. We were equipped with two way radios borrowed from Gulf's Geophysical department which had a five mile range and proved very useful at times keeping in touch. We had a great time

but the summer temperature at times was 117°F so I resolved that I would not return until I fitted air conditioning to the car. I bought a Thermo-King unit and after three weeks of making special mounting gear and modifications had a comfortable warm weather auto. This a/c worked flawlessly for 40 years and I only just recently replaced the compressor and dryer.

Thereafter we attended every National Meet in the '60's travelling to Seattle, Dearborn, Michigan and many other destinations.

In 1968 I was transferred to Edmonton - it needed a car transporter to take all the cars and made Imperial Oil rethink their "Major Hobbies" transfers!

In 1969 I attended a National meet in Toronto and met Bill Nicholson who had just returned to Canada from Australia en-route to Edmonton with a 1953 Bentley Continental. He was very knowledgeable on the Mk VI series. Jokingly I said we should start a business and get the RR dealership for Edmonton. The next week Nicholson called to say he had a garage leased and what had I done about getting the Rolls-Royce dealership? I contacted George Reeves and made a deal. After we sold three Silver Shadows we moved into a larger place with a show room. Roger Ford joined us from Rolls-Royce Montreal. In '71 we had a LWB Silver Shadow and a Corniche convertible in the



A neighbour in Calgary owned the 54 SD and I asked him if he would let me know if he was thinking of selling it. He came round a few days

later with the keys and said "I will be out of town for three weeks if you would like to try it!" It was January and 40 below, the battery was dead, it had been kept in an unheated garage, no block heater, 30 oil and the electric choke did not work. I fixed the problems and it worked like a charm so I bought it. It was in daily use for the next 18 years until BMW (I was the Edmonton dealer) twisted my arm to drive one of their automobiles.

Shortly after I purchased the Silver Dawn I was contacted by a George Reeves of Rolls-Royce who was in town and wanted to check the car. He examined the car, made a few adjustments and he bought me lunch! Thereafter George Reeves visited at least twice a year and we got to know him quite well. Just imagine this happening these days!



show room just prior to Rolls-Royce Inc. going into receivership—they ran into trouble with their aero engine production. In the US the new cars sold well because it

was thought the manufacturing would cease, but in Canada nobody would buy. When the outlook was looking grim BMW came by and asked if we would take their line of cars! Then Citroen asked if we would be a dealer. Again we accepted and also



FIRST LOCATION OF PARTHENON MOTORS LTD. EDMONTON 1970 TO 1975

took over the whole Citroen Vancouver operation. The Citroen line included the SM - a Maserati powered special Citroen body with turning quartz headlights - \$13,000!- it had a top speed of 145 mph which I can attest to! .I often visited the Vancouver operation on the week ends and would drive back with a new SM - you could drive all the way effortlessly at 100 mph! Take a look at this website: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5K_CyD0qw1A

Our Citroen operation was doing well until 1973 when Citroen decided they were not going to meet the new US Safety regulations relating to 5 mph collision damage costs. Ironically Citroen had won the International Safety award for 17 years in succession. Also banned in the US were quartz headlights and turning headlights connected to the steering. The SM headlights were fantastic for night driving especially on unlit country roads. We tried several other makes at Vancouver such as Peugeot but it did not catch on and sold the operation in 1976.

Eventually Rolls-Royce sold their Automotive Division and production continued on the Shadow and Phantom Series.

In 1974 Rolls-Royce cancelled all the dealers across Canada with the exception of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. We sold a total of 13 cars in Edmonton over the four year period. By this time BMW sales were improving and it was a relief not to be dependant on Rolls-Royce.

Back to the '54 Silver Dawn in 1973 the engine was upgraded by fitting a Silver Cloud short block with the full length liner and 3-3/4 bore instead of 3-5/8. It required new front engine mounts but everything else fell into place. A Bentley Continental rear end was added to improve highway cruising. I also put in electronic ignition to reduce the wear on the distributor points.

I drove Dawn every day and in fact continued to drive it up until 1979 when BMW thought it would be more appropriate for me to drive one of their cars.

In 1976 we purchased Silverwood Dairy's garage on 108th Street & Jasper Avenue.

The property was on one acre and contained a large well built garage.



PARTHENON MOTORS LTD on 108 street—'76 to '82

As an exclusive BMW dealership things went very well and after years of scraping by we started to make a profit.

In 1980 Norman Miller of Rolls-Royce, Montreal visited us in Edmonton to encourage us to take on the Rolls-Royce dealership again but we declined.

1981 was a fabulous year for BMW sales and service. We also serviced many Rolls-Royce cars in the area.

Then came 1982 and the Liberal Government (Trudeau and McEachren/Lalond and the National Energy Policy 'NEP'). All business in Edmonton dropped to 10% within a month. Our new car sales went from 30 a month to 3. We also had a large computer company with 40 major businesses on line running on our Main Frame and within 6 months 38 of them had gone out of business. I ended up giving the dealership to BMW Distributors to keep it afloat. Shortly after that I returned to Calgary because business in Edmonton was dead.

In 1984 I decided that the 54 Dawn needed a face lift. The first owner had painted it black. so it was repainted to its original



color - silver. Actually it is BMW's two component paint which stands up better in the cold weather and the color is "Polaris". I also replaced the driver's seat leather with a hide that Ned Estridge (RROC) had given me back in the 60's.

The steering links and king pins were replaced by Ralph Curzon on one of his Calgary visits in 2005. New tires were fitted in 2006 (Volvo Cross Country Wagon 57036 205/80R16 Michelin 4x4 Synchrone 104T XL Nitrogen filled from Harper Tire, Calgary—recommended by Rob Manderson).

The car is used often for special occasions (RROC gatherings, weddings, dinners etc) except in the winter months, One of the best things about ownership is all the people you meet over the years and staying in touch with all the region owner's.

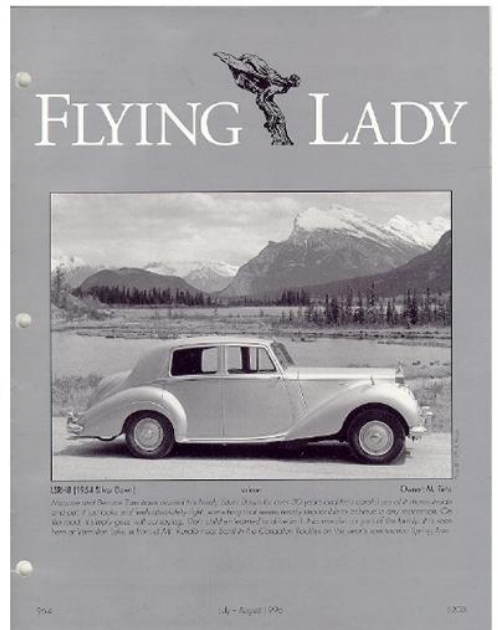
This photograph was taken on the 1996 (May 19 - 25) RROC Canadian Rockies Spring Tour. It was a great event and the



weather was brilliant. The drive from Lake Louise to Jasper was spectacular with snow covered mountains. Thirty-nine cars attended ranging from a 1929 Silver Ghost to a 1989 Bentley Mulsanne. The tour started with a reception and dinner at the Palliser Hotel in Calgary. Then on the next six days we travelled to Banff, Columbia Ice Fields, Jasper, then back to lake Louise, Banff and home to Calgary. It was enjoyed by all and especially the out of town members. Ken and Mermie Karger from Pennsylvania were there (Our former Flying Lady editor



and photographer). Ken took the photo of the 54 Dawn for the cover of the July 1996 Flying Lady magazine.



Event Report

Madrina's Restaurant' in Bragg Creek in September

This was a great event with lots of local cars out. We met in Calgary and drove out to Bragg Creek for lunch. Later, most of the group went on to Cochrane for ice cream. The attendees of the group including their cars were: Maurice and Bernice Tims with their 54 Dawn, Rob Manderson with his 89 Turbo R, Terry and Marianne Murphy with their 84 Silver Spur, Reg and Lorraine Collings, Chris McAviny, David and Marie Baer with their 54 R type coach built Hooper [that I really, really want], Dave Turner with his 89 Spur, myself and Donna and our 78 Silver Wraith II, and new members Mr. and Mrs. George Freeman with their Silver Spur.



Event Report

Red Deer Annual General Meeting

The turn out for this event could have been better. We had a good lunch and then proceeded with the meeting. Darcy has already forwarded me the minutes and they will be produced along with the treasurers report in the next Prairie Lady. The attendees of the meeting along with their cars were: Terry and Marianne Murphy with their 84 Silver Spur, Darcy Collings with his 99 Arnage, Andy Stephenson with his 79 Silver Wraith II, myself and Donna with our 78 Silver Wraith II, John and Kathy Doyle, Maurice Tims, Ted Carswell with his 57 Silver Cloud I, Laurie Niewchas, and Reg and Lorraine Collings. Rob Manderson made an honest attempt to attend but encountered an extremely rare "failure to proceed".



For Sale

1953 Rolls Royce Silver Wraith

30,000 original miles, Muellener body, gorgeous burled walnut inlay throughout car, electric partition separating front from back, forest green (recently repainted in its entirety Borris Corva Autobody Vancouver), right hand drive, immaculate condition.

Dr Reese Halter 310.

Serviced by Ron Peters since late 1968 (formerly Carter Rolls Vancouver, now operates Strathmore Motors Vancouver 604.254.8191)

PS- Also Ron Peters installed in the glove box a cd player, speakers were carefully placed in front and back so as not to denigrate antique car status.

