

CREWED JOTTINGS

Issue 25

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Please visit the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia (Victoria Branch) website for more of our local Club news.
www.rrocavictoria.org.au/

JULY 2009 REPORT

Report by Peter Langman and Robert Wort.; Photos by Robert Wort and Alan Jordan.

A little while back I asked Members of our team if anyone would be interested assisting me in jotting down a few notes and to hold down the fort in case at anytime I was unable to attend a meeting. While this is unlikely and it hasn't happened yet, one must always keep it in mind that there may be a truck out there with my name on it.

So I now have an apprentice in Peter Langman and with his assistance, some added information should grace these pages with the benefit of extra eyes and ears.

Ken is remembered by many Members of the Victoria Branch as the Squadron Leader of the RAAF Museum housed at Point Cook, the birthplace of the Australian Flying Corps, the Royal Australian Air Force and the second oldest air force in the world. Well, Ken has recently retired from the RAAF but he keeps himself on 'active duty' in other fields – namely his love of motorcars.

Ken is no stranger to the Technical Self-Help Group and since his retirement, he has become a regular attendee of our little soirees of the oily kind with his 1974 Corniche, previously owned by the Late Danny La Rue, the British entertainer who sadly passed away in May of this year.

When he invited us to his 'toyshop' to play with our cars, we had no idea as to what was in store for us, for this was no ordinary private garage. Ken bought a small factory 'off the plan' in an industrial estate in the suburb of Bayswater North and it houses a collection of motoring memorabilia, a couple of Jaguars (MK II and an E Type) and two or three Vanden Plas Princess R's (Powered by the famous Rolls-Royce 4 litre, B60 series 6 cylinder engine which was primarily designed for military use until BMC slotted them into these motorcars). All of these vehicles are in various stages of restoration and I believe that the E Type is a restoration project of one of Ken's mates.

The garage has a mezzanine floor which incorporates its own lounge room and sleeping quarters in case Ken gets too weary to drive home after a long day of tinkering. He has a full complement of tools and a fully certified hoist, which is more than up to the task of lifting our heavy motorcars and of equal importance, he has a barbeque, kitchen and bathroom facilities; I can tell you – we were green with envy.

Now for Peter's Jottings:

The work agenda started with some investigative work on PJH's Silver Cloud II headlamps, it seemed that he was getting an all or nothing option in regards to his parking lamps and headlamps when he turned on the light switch; turn on the parking lamps and the headlamps also came on. A test using a circuit tester didn't seem to trace the issue with the wiring and as all the earthing points were clean, it was assumed that the problem lies in the switchbox itself – probably something ridiculously simple, but as our electrical whiz kid was attending to another matter elsewhere, PJH will get him to attend to it later.

What our 'whiz kid' was attending to was Ken's Corniche as its electric side mirror only works intermittently and Ken didn't want to risk any damage to his door trim to gain access to the cabling. Mark is a dab hand at this exercise as he fabricated some 'special tools' for the job some time back.



Steve (looking rather cold) and Peter Langman share some comments with Ken (kneeling with his back to us) in front of his Corniche, outside the 'toyshop.'



Ken's private factory was the envy of all whom attended. The mezzanine houses his motoring and aircraft memorabilia as well as being a home away from home.



'He who dies with the most toys, wins'
Don't you just love that banner?
In the foreground is one of Ken's Vanden Plas Princess R's



A friend's E Type undergoing a complete restoration.

The problem was soon identified but unfortunately it was something that couldn't be fixed on the day as the solenoid was cooked. Repairs to the solenoid is not beyond a capable sparky, so Ken will leave the door trim off and get it repaired locally. Ken is now confident that he can reassemble the door trim himself (now he knows where all the screws, nuts and bolts are) and he can service other areas within the door cavity while it's removed.

The problem seems to have arisen from the fact that the cable to the rear view mirror was seizing, due to a lack of lubrication and the overload became too much for the solenoid to overcome. The cable, while not entirely seized was incredibly hard to move. Fortunately, it's not beyond repair and so a good clean and lube should fix it.

John's Silver Cloud was the first car to use the hoist and he took the opportunity to change the oil and filter cartridge, but he also detected a minor coolant leakage which was traced to the drain tap on the side of the engine block. There is a fair amount of corrosion around the tap and the general plumbing around it has also reached its use by date. The leak itself was easily fixed; the tap wasn't fully closed but John will take the car to a radiator and coolant repair shop and replace all the corroded pipes and get the taps attended to (I believe this was done before I got this in print).

There was a myriad of small housekeeping jobs done and there were too many to list here but, as with all of our technical days, our motorcars left the venue in a little bit of better condition than they arrived in.



A view of the 4 litre Rolls-Royce B60 engine ordered from the company to power the Vanden Plas sedans.



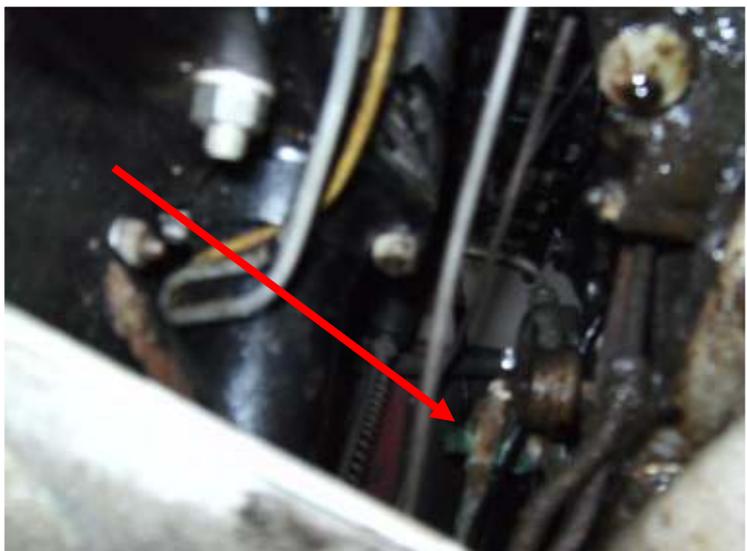
John's Silver Cloud is lifted skyward for a service



Mark keeps himself busy (as usual) tending to some electrical problems on Ken's driver's door.



PJH also does some electrical tinkering on his Silver Cloud II



Unfortunately the photo is a little blurred but the 'green monster' of corrosion is easily seen on the Silver Cloud's drain tap.



The dark patch on the pipe is an area that is getting very thin and in need of replacement. I understand that this has now been done.

WINSTON – A NEW PROJECT FOR ROB HARRIS

Readers will be familiar with the name of Robert Harris as the owner of Roadstar Automotive. Rob, as you may recall has on many occasions in the past allowed our team access to his workshop on many technical days. Well, recently an opportunity arose for an individual (Via an expression of interest) to take over the care of a 1951 Silver Wraith H.J. Mulliner Touring Limousine (Chassis No. WLE21). This particular car was the Melbourne Motor Show car, exhibited by Kellow-Falkiner Motors (The R-R agents of the day) and it was purchased by a local lingerie magnate and owned by his family for many years.

To cut a very long story short, the grandson of the original owner saw 'Winston' at a wedding and offered the owner an agreeable sum to purchase the car so it could return to the original family. The agreement was made although the car remained in the hands of the immediate past owner on a lease basis so it could continue to be used in the wedding hire business. This was over 15 years ago and the Silver Wraith continued its service on a similar basis with another wedding hire company when the previous operator retired owing to ill health.

Business was dropping off for dear old Winston as many brides today demand airconditioning and so the current operator decided it was time for the old chap to retire and informed the owner that he would need to find another carer. The owner wasn't able to house Winston satisfactorily and so tenders went out on an unusual leasing arrangement.

The successful tenderer would get full use of the car as though it was his own on the condition that the car would be maintained and repaired as necessary at the custodian's expense (within reason), the registration and insurance would still be the responsibility of the owner and no money would change hands.

There were many expressions of interest tendered but I was delighted when I learned that Robert Harris was the successful applicant. Robert is the ideal person to look after the Silver Wraith; he has a wealth of knowledge in historic vehicle restoration and he is no stranger to the Rolls-Royce marque either – he used to be in the employ of a well known repairer of the day.

When the keys were handed over, a very keen apprentice (Scott), raced out of the workshop to have a closer look at Rob's new acquisition. Scott is one of a very few lucky apprentices left who is taught the old school



'Winston's' keys are handed over to Rob Harris by the previous custodian, David.

way in becoming a motor mechanic; they are a dying breed but at least Scott will be able to carry the torch for many years to come.

Rob and Scott gave the car a thorough inspection and have seen that many years on the road has taken its toll and the long process of a sympathetic renovation has just begun. Robert promised that he would keep us all up to date in regards to the process and good to his word, here is Rob's first instalment.

Over to you Rob.

1951 SILVER WRAITH H.J. MULLINER TOURING LIMOUSINE (CHASSIS NO. WLE21)

Good Morning Robert,

I thought I would just keep you up to date on the Silver Wraith and how it's settling into its new home. I think it was about the second or third day after its arrival that the fuel pump expired, which meant removal of the offending pump, and subsequent dismantling, to find the cause of failure (Rolls Royce Terminology:- *"It failed to proceed"*). As it turned out it was probably the most common fault one can find with an SU Fuel Pump, burnt points. After a quick visit to my friends at "Morris Minor" in Moorabbin, I soon had two new sets of points installed, with bridging condensers, to help prevent premature burning of the shiny new contacts. Very soon the motor was happily running again and all was well, or so we thought.

The next day young Scott was tucking the vehicle away for the evening and thought it would be a great idea to wind up the driver side front window. As you are aware the driver's door window is a quick operation mechanism which is controlled by a lever that you push or pull rather than a crank handle. The result was that the handle had become separated from the door and Scott was left standing there with the handle, and part of mechanism still attached, in his hand.

We removed all the fittings, interior trim and inner door skin from the door to expose a very badly worn, and now broken, window regulator.

Before proceeding any further we invited Roy Evans (Engineer & Machinist) down to view the mechanism in place.

A little bit about Roy. Roy is, I believe, in his early eighties and fit as a Mallee Bull. Roy did some of his training with the Royal Navy. When he came to Australia he obtained a position at Monash University where he was responsible for setting up the machine shop and also lectured in engineering. I believe he was highly revered by his peers and students alike.



Window fallen to the bottom



Worn regulator with missing cam



Worn & broken cam retaining pin



Worn cam & pin ready for the bin



Worn CAM with broken pin

Back to the broken window: After the examination was complete young Scott removed the mechanism and it was taken down to Roy's workshop for dismantling and measuring. Once dismantled he gave me the badly worn release arm for welding, filing and hardening. In the meantime Roy very carefully measured all the guide pins and the actuator cam. He then went about the slow task of fabricating replacement parts. I might add, this was done to an absolutely amazing standard. He even duplicated the rather odd thread that accommodated the handle retaining screw, in the cam.

Once all the machine work was completed and the release arm was repaired, it was then time for assembly. Firstly there was a trial assembly just to make sure that all the tolerances were correct and that the teeth on the release arm was going clear the teeth on the body of the regulator.

Now that we were satisfied, the two arms were put together and the new guide pins pressed into place. Once this was done the regulator was then turned over and hot riveted for added security. We now installed the new CAM and pressed in its new retaining/pivot pin and also hot riveted it into position. The regulator assembly is now firmly clamped in the vice and the springs are fitted. The next big step is now testing the regulator operation prior to fitting to the vehicle, and it was just perfect, no free play anywhere. An application of rust preventive paint in the appropriate places and we're ready to install.



Hot riveted into place



Other parts cleaned & ready for assembly



Scott Assembling Regulator for Testing



Ready for first test



Job done

Cheers, Rob & Scott
To be cont'd.....

Many thanks for your contribution Rob. I would love to see more of this kind of report from the rest of our readers. I am certain that Rob will have enough work ahead of him to keep us all interested for some time yet.

The good news is that we will have another story coming soon from Brian Williams who currently resides in Texas and he works for a Netherlands based company that services the mining industries (including BHP-Billiton).

Brian originally hails from New Zealand and is actually an Australian resident. His job includes an awful lot of globetrotting, although he spends a good deal of time in the state of Texas where he is a Member of the RROC Inc.

He is the proud owner of a Bentley H.J. Mulliner-Park Ward Two-Door Coupe' (Fixed Head), which of course, is the forerunner to the Corniche. Brian blew the compressor and an exhaust manifold gasket on the way back from a recent Club Meet and has promised to report on his repairs in a later issue (looking forward to it Brian).

'Til next time folks,
Happy and safe motoring

Robert Wort
