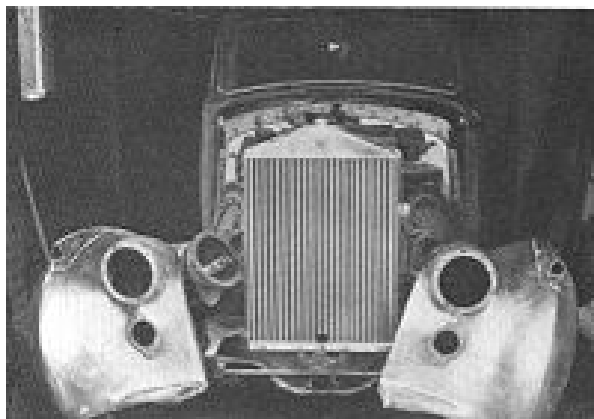


Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia Library

New Dawn for a Dawn

by Phil Morrow, 1985

Chassis No.SDB94 was purchased by Judith Bisley (as she was known then) from Ron Murray in 1979. Judith had been steered to the car by Bruce Ross who had known of the thorough chassis restoration done just a short time before by Bill Coburn from Canberra. "Dawn" as she is now known was very complete and in excellent mechanical order, but already the metallic blue paintwork had begun to craze very badly. Three years went by during which time Judith married Peter Merlin, house had to be set up and the crazing paint on Dawn had to be ignored.



During 1984 Nick Preston and I started to point out in very loud terms to Peter that his new wife's "shopping trolley" was very much in need of a new paint job - and urgently before rust set into the crazing cavities. After much agitation over numerous lunches and dinners supplied by Judith it was agreed that Nick and I, helped by Peter, would strip the car back to bare metal in preparation for paint.



Judith and Peter stripped the interior out then over to my garage where the paint stripping began in November 1984. What we were not to know in advance was that the car had been undercoated with a thick layer of body filler all over!

Assisted by Harvey and Gail Dearing, Judith stripped all the chrome work, whilst Peter and I started removing body panels. Nick worked solidly for the two weekends with the grinder to remove the body filler layered everywhere for no apparent reason.

Fortunately, it was holiday time for the neighbours, so the dust and the noise in the yard was not causing any problem. Onto the fence we hung the smaller items and used paint stripper on them - what a messy job. We had a sea of filler dust, paint dust and stripper, all combined with necessary water which ensured cleanliness of the parts. I'm sure we could have put Laurel and Hardy out of business should a movie camera have been watching!



The next week once again assisted by the trusty Dearings all the nuts, bolts and fittings were carefully placed in plastic bags, labelled, and then put away in boxes awaiting the refit.

The chrome pieces were gathered and taken to the chrome platers by Nick.

Finally, Dawn was in a very much dismantled state ready for minor body repairs and painting. Onto a trailer and towed by the trusty Valiant, Dawn was taken to a friend for the job to be done.

It became plainly obvious that a new boot lid would be necessary. "How much will that be?" said Judith now becoming concerned at our apparent lack of concern for the mounting cost of the job. "Don't worry about it, Judith. Make more cakes to sell, and insist Peter do more overtime and money won't be a problem" we assured her!



Numerous cakes were made and sold, many hours overtime were worked and finally Dawn was ready to come home to be buffed, polished and put together.

As Nick started to buff the car to get depth in the paint that he wanted - drama struck. The paint had not been put on thick enough and he was buffing through to the undercoat in patches.

After many whiskies and worry Nick decided that more paint would have to be put on some sections of the car, so a further eight litres was purchased for the job.

"More cakes and more overtime" we assured Judith would overcome the dollar problem. Meanwhile while this was going on Judith was supplying lunches and dinners in voluminous amounts for the workers (and loving it I'm sure).

The day came to repaint some sections. Nick's friend the painter was commissioned to begin on Sunday at 7.30am, and he should only be here two hours.

On application it was soon noted that the new paint wasn't even close to the colour already on the car. A hasty discussion was made, and we decided that the new colour was far nicer

than the colour on the car, so then it was more, more, more. The car had to be prepared and rubbed back immediately for a complete respray.

Work hard was what we did! Nick and I were rubbing back and the painting was done there and then By 3pm that afternoon the car had been completely resprayed again in a gorgeous shade of dark blue.

"That's the colour I originally wanted," said Judith "I wasn't really happy with the first colour at all , but didn't like to say so as so much effort had been put into it."

More weeks went by, Christmas passed, and Nick and I returned early from holidays to complete the job on Dawn.



Aided again by the trusty Dearings and Judith supplying yet again more food, Peter, Nick and I completed the assembly of the car.

New interior pieces were completed by Harvey for installation and finally in late January and some four months hard work Dawn was ready to reappear the beautiful lady that she was when delivered to Sir Gordon Rolph in Tasmania in July 1951 - the first Silver Dawn on the island.

Here I am a Silver Dawn
My paint all cracked and worn
To Uncle Phil's and Nick's I went
All dejected and forlorn

Much scraping and unbolting
Lots of prodding and poking
Down to bare essentials
How embarrassing and blushing

Put upon a trailer for a little trip
To a place that was very well equipped
Hammer flew, paint was sprayed
They rushed about, my nerves were frayed

Back at Beecroft, everything was laid
No expense and lots of attention paid
To leather seats and cloth head lining
All my chrome and jewellery shining

Now "the six" started moving in
Screwdrivers, hammers & laughter make a din
Photographs of stages really are a must.
In almost erotic poses, golly what a fuss!

So here I am no longer in dejection
I've just seen my velvet blue reflection
Grazed knuckles, bruises for the weary worn
Smiles were wide, I'm a "new" Silver Dawn.

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