



B.C. Star Newsletter

April 2010



Club WEB Site

mercedesclub.ca
For
Information about
upcoming club events
and/or changes and
directions for events
visit the Section web
site.

Recent Executive Changes

Charles Godwin
has returned to
the role of BC Club

President following Richard Sullivan's request to stand down. We thank Richard for his term at the helm of the club. His E420 has developed some rather expensive maintenance habits this past year, so Richard is inclined to want to lick his wounds quietly for the moment. Who would have guessed that a heater hose could cost a four figure sum to replace? Ouch!! Unfortunately, that was just one of many items that felt the need to be refreshed. Take it easy buddy.

David Godwin has been producing these newsletters for longer than most of us can remember, in fact longer than any other individual in any of the other club roles. His only break from the newsletter was when he was stationed out of province. David we are most grateful for your tenacity, enthusiasm and dedication to the Three-Pointed-Star and for keeping our membership posted on what did or was about to happen. You deserve a good rest.

Your new intrepid scribe is Louis Fourie, someone who is using MS Publisher for the first time, so take it easy on this neophyte please. I am sure before long I will have a far greater appreciation for the contribution David has made. Anyway here we go in a rather wobbly



Vancouver's skyline from Waterfront Park reflected off what used to be David Godwin's 1914 Mercedes 22/50. This gem has since returned to the family that originally owned the car. The restoration was done by RX Autoworks and was a trophy winner at Pebble Beach Concours. Read more about a visit to RX on page 7.



Upcoming Events

May 22, 2010	All British Field Meet
No Benzes allowed here except outside in the VanDusen Botanical Gardens parking lot off 37th Street and Oak Street, Vancouver. You will not find a larger collection of British Cars anywhere close, or far, for that matter. People travel from the Prairies and South of the Border for this event. The event takes place from 10.00AM to 4.30PM	
June 20, 2010	Father's Day Italian and French Car Meet
You can see everything from Modena's exotics to small Fiats and quirky Citroen 2 CV's at this event on Waterfront Park off West Esplanade Street in North Vancouver. The Italian & French meet is just south of the Oldsmobiles that are also displayed and closer to the street. Timing is usually from 11.00AM to 3.00PM	
June 27, 2010	German Car Festival
The BMW, Porsche and Mercedes-Benz Clubs gather together at Waterfront Park, North Vancouver to display a wide variety of German cars. The event runs from 11.00AM to 3.00PM and a \$10 donation admits your car.	
July 21, 2010	Pioneers in Safety
The Mercedes-Benz Club hosts this event inviting Volvo and Saab to join us at Waterfront Park, North Vancouver	

As you can see from the above events, some do not involve Mercedes-Benz, but on the assumption that you admire other interesting automobiles, we will list some of the more appealing collector car gatherings for your consideration

President's Message

Hello Members,

I would like to thank Richard for his efforts in trying to motivate members and in holding together the section. This has not been an easy task as the membership continues to decline and event participation has become almost non-existent.

So what does 2010 bring us? First up we are trying a new approach to rewarding members for attending our monthly social meetings and/or events. If you would like to host an event then you will be recognized accordingly. We may sound desperate in rewarding people for showing up and the truth is we are. The club is very close to being no more if we don't get out and participate. We have a few events planned for this year and hope to see more people out.

Mercedes enthusiasts, is how I would describe the active members that attend the monthly social meeting. Most of us either have or drive daily a 'modern classic' these would be the W124, W126, W129 or W201 body style cars. These cars are in abundance and are reliable and affordable to own. They don't have the (insert the latest acronym) feature but they do have the classic Mercedes styling which we all love. What I'm getting at is you don't need to have either a new Mercedes or a classic Mercedes to participate in events; we accept all and will gladly listen to the owner talk about their car.

I look forward to seeing more of the membership out this year.

Charles Godwin



New Directions for the BC Section

From what you will read below we are actively and even aggressively trying to increase member participation in events and enthusiasm in club activities in general. Even if you live far away, you are encouraged to share your motoring stories in this newsletter. We want and will act on your ideas and suggestion.

Electronic Newsletter.....

We need to move with the times and not rely on snail mail. Accordingly the newsletter will be displayed on our web site and those members for whom we have an e-mail address will receive a notification as each new edition is launched with a link to the site. In the event that we do not have an e-mail address for you, a mailed copy will be sent, but we will ask that you provide us with an e-mail address as soon as possible.

Event Reminders.....

Having your e-mail addresses will allow us to provide reminders of upcoming events and last minute changes or additions to these events.

Rewards for Participation.....

Later in this newsletter you will read about how you can earn points for participating in events, with the top scorers receiving some significant prizes.

Youthful Enthusiasm.....

Those of us who became terminally ill with automotive mania at an early age must remember how we valued the recognition of a likeminded adult who helped broaden our knowledge and added to our enthusiasm. We are keen to take these fascinated youngsters under our wings, so if you know any young enthusiasts, bring them along.

Test Drive our Events.....

We encourage non-members to join our events, meet fellow enthusiasts and take us for a test drive to see what we have to offer. In most cases the camaraderie is infectious, but you can also learn interesting aspects of your car that you may not have known.

Tell Us How YOU Became a Benz Enthusiast.....

Here is where far off members can participate on equal footing. Share with us what has made you a Mercedes enthusiast, your earliest recollections and how you finally achieved the dream of owning one of these German masterpieces. Your scribe will kick this process off with his introduction to Mercedes-Benz, but it will be serialized in several issues while I wait for someone else to join in and contribute their background.

Letters to the Editor.....

As you will read elsewhere, your editor plans to be intentionally provocative about your favorite car, partly to motivate letters to the editor chastising such views and defending the pride of Germany.

The More You Put Into Something, The More You Get Out Of It.....

This saying is never more true than in a club environment such as ours. So get involved and join in. Suggest what events interest you and even better, organize an event. Some of the old hands will be more than willing to help and guide you along.

Remember our Regular Monthly meetings the First Tuesday of the Month at the Coal Harbour White Spot on Georgia Street. These are not formal meetings, simply social gatherings with a little planning of what events lie ahead.



How to Win Prizes by Participating

Like many car clubs we always are looking to increase attendance at meeting as well as encourage members to help organize events. There is an old saying: the more you put into something, the greater the rewards. The problem is we have to get you out there first.

So here is a plan to award points to members in the hope that their attendance and participation is encouraged at club events. This plan will be a work-in-progress, so we are not going to hard code the rules for the allocation of the points. Our goal will be to tweak whatever seems to work. What you should note is that the top few prizes will be worthwhile and in the three-figure range. We plan at least four prizes, but this may increase. The point is that we do not want someone "dropping out of the hunt" if they have missed a few events.

The preliminary plans are to award points on the following basis:

- One Point for attending the monthly first Tuesday meeting at White Spot on Georgia Street. These are not solely organizational meetings. We are simply a group of car enthusiasts who gather to enjoy each others company and as the saying goes "swap lies".
- Two Points for attending an event on the weekend. A multi-day event will attract at least two points per day.
- Organizers of events will get three or more points based on the complexity of the event and where joint efforts are involved, more than one organizer can receive points.
- The organizers will be encouraged to award discretionary points for unusual cars, older cars, cleaner cars or whatever aspect makes that person's attendance more rewarding to the event. Any person contributing more than one car would be rewarded accordingly.
- If people from outside the Lower Mainland attend, a significant long distance point award is appropriate. Also articles contributed to the newsletter can earn a far-off member points, so do not feel left out if you are one of the out-of-towners.

Remember as well that we will attempt to award various prizes at our major events. We have in the past given out automobilia such as old brochures, books and other odds and ends to tickle your automotive fancy.

Hopefully from the above you can sense we want your participation and are willing to be generous with the points and prizes. Any suggestions regarding the above are most welcome.

If the Club does NOT have
your current e-mail
address please e-mail
Louis Fourie at
L4IE@telus.net

This way you can be kept
up to date on the latest
Club developments.

Club Presidents,
Past and Current:
Richard Sullivan
(left) and Charles
Godwin at the RX
Autoworks visit.





Why I am a Mercedes-Benz Enthusiast by Louis Fourie

The more members participate in the activities of the club, the greater the enjoyment derived. To encourage involvement, I have suggested that members contribute articles as to why they are Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts. So I will start the ball rolling. But I am going to push further and deliberately be antagonistic and critical of your favorite make with the intention of provoking indignant responses. You don't like what I write, take up the pen or tickle that keyboard.

My grandmother used to subscribe to The Illustrated London News prior to World War II, providing this young car enthusiast with numerous pre-war car advertisements and more than likely the first sight of Hitler riding in a Mercedes-Benz. While the Benz was an impressive chariot, it did not impress me. I had acquired a taste for lithe razor edged styling typical of British coach builders with those graceful flowing fenders curving over tall wire wheels. The MG Midget (TA or TB) represented the ultimate proportioning with tall wheels, gentle arching front fenders, long hood (sorry, bonnet to the Brits) and stubby cockpit, all emphasizing function and appealing to the young at heart. In comparison, the Mercedes was big, fat and heavy and at odds with the grace of a Bentley for instance.

The first actual Mercedes, as distinct from pictures, that I recall was the Ponton 219 belonging to a Dr. Vincent Wright, who lived across a small park from our home. He also had two appealing daughters, but that is another story. However, these girls were allowed to drive their mother's DKW along a private road that surrounded their house, making me most envious. The one feature of the 219 that did not appeal to me was the lopsided instrument cluster. My infantile mind expected to see Dr. Wright periodically tilting his head to get a better view of his rate of progress.

Eventually the exhaust of the 219 must have rusted out because it was replaced by a more vocal free-flowing pipe. As such I was always alerted to activity at the Wright household from the sound of the 219. Unfortunately for Dr. Wright, another far more appealing growl emulated from a fellow neighbor, each time Jessica Perritt drove past our back door in her Austin-Healey. It is no coincidence that this taunting sound eventually prompted me to include a Healey in my garage. While many of my generation recall their youth through Elvis or the Beatles, my ears delight to the tunes from bygone exhausts.

When it came time to replace the 219, Dr. Wright bought a Wolseley 6/110 with an exhaust slightly toned down from the Healey, based on sharing a less lively version of the same engine. Did this signify that Dr. Wright was not impressed with his Benz experience or had the Healey sound also began to captivate him as well? After a Triumph 2000, he did migrate back to a Mercedes, this time a 108 series.

The first drive that I had in a Mercedes-Benz was thanks to my friend Steven Nason, who's parents had a fintail 220S. I am happy to report that the upright instrumentation cured any thoughts of Benz drivers having to cock their heads sideways to check their speed. Unfortunately, I was left puzzled by the busy nature of the engine. This was in marked contrast to the smooth V8 of my Father's 1961 Chevrolet, which also seemed to have a far more comfortable ride and softer seating than the Nason's Benz. In view of the fact that neither Mrs. Nason nor my Father might have indulged my thirst for thrills by carving up the twisties, I was unable to experience the Chevy wallowing around while the Benz gained control of a sharp corner.

Even though my inquiring automotive mind was well aware that the 300SL Gullwing was the supercar of its era, I was still trying to identify the aura that went with a Mercedes. Sure the 300SL was a bold and beautiful beast, but somehow there were elements of its styling that did not bowl me over. Such was not the case the first time I set eyes on a 230SL.



It was in 1963 or 1964 at a boarding school rugby game that this 230SL slowly drove by. I had not noticed it approaching until the last moment, so did not have much time to appreciate the frontal view. As it drew level, I envied the occupant of the novel transverse rear seat and approved of the exhaust note. Oblivious to any following traffic, I moved into the middle of the road to fully appreciate the departing view. The pagoda roof line and tall glass area helped accentuate the tapered tight tail. It looked sure footed with the wide track, an improvement over its predecessor the 300SL. I was finally smitten and captivated by a Mercedes but quickly brought back to reality by a horn blasting to get me off the road.. I did not see the SL again as the affluent family usually visited the school in their fintail 300SE, which fascinated me how the air suspension treated the speed bumps with immunity as there was no apparent need to slow down.

Many years passed before I finally had a chance to actually drive a Mercedes-Benz. Judge Joubert cleaned and tinkered with his 250S series 108 within view of my apartment and it was not long before we shared our interests in things automotive. Besides, he also had a daughter that I occasionally dated. By now I was working for General Motors, so had sampled a wide range of cars. Still I was immediately aware at the busy nature of the 250S engine that I had noted a decade before. I was also most unimpressed with the automatic transmission because of the abrupt way it swapped cogs and lack of part-throttle down shifts. However I did appreciate the rattle free sturdy body.

A manual transmission 250S was far more enjoyable to drive. It belonged to the wife of an avid old car enthusiast, Liefie Bosch. Liefie had a warehouse full of collectable cars, mostly Model T Fords. These old cars were much sought after for weddings, with the limitations usually being a lack of skilled chauffeurs. Suffice to say, I spent many hours driving his fleet and sometimes almost as long trying to coach life into the T's via a crank handle while the wedding party watched with concern. As usual, a delightful daughter named Linda, complete with an equally as pretty 1928 Chevrolet coupe, was an appealing companion. There was never a need to hurry the old Chevy along while we dawdled through the countryside.

Two other cars I had the opportunity to drive had a great impact. One was a BMW 3.0 CSL, with the L standing for light. Within five-minutes behind the wheel, the owner had me drifting the tail out. Apparently I was not aggressive enough, so was relegated to the passenger seat. I was then shown its cornering prowess as side rail of the bucket seat pressed through the padding from the intensity of the lateral forces. The other was an automatic BMW 528 which impressed me with its agility and amazing smoothness as it delivered an almost seamless flow of power. So while the rival from Munich had won me over, there was no doubt that, like the source of the Mercedes name, Benz owners had delightful daughters.

Next newsletter: How a BMW enthusiast buys a Benz.



Alfa Romeo C6 1750 at RX Autoworks—front and tail, as well as the tail of a Lagonda LG45.



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Visit to RX Autoworks on April 11, 2010

A last minute invitation was extended to our club to join the Triumph Club on a visit to RX Autoworks—an amazing restoration enterprise that has earned many trophies at Pebble Beach. Unplanned events such as this prove the need to have rapid e-mail contacts for our membership, so that more people can benefit from such opportunities.

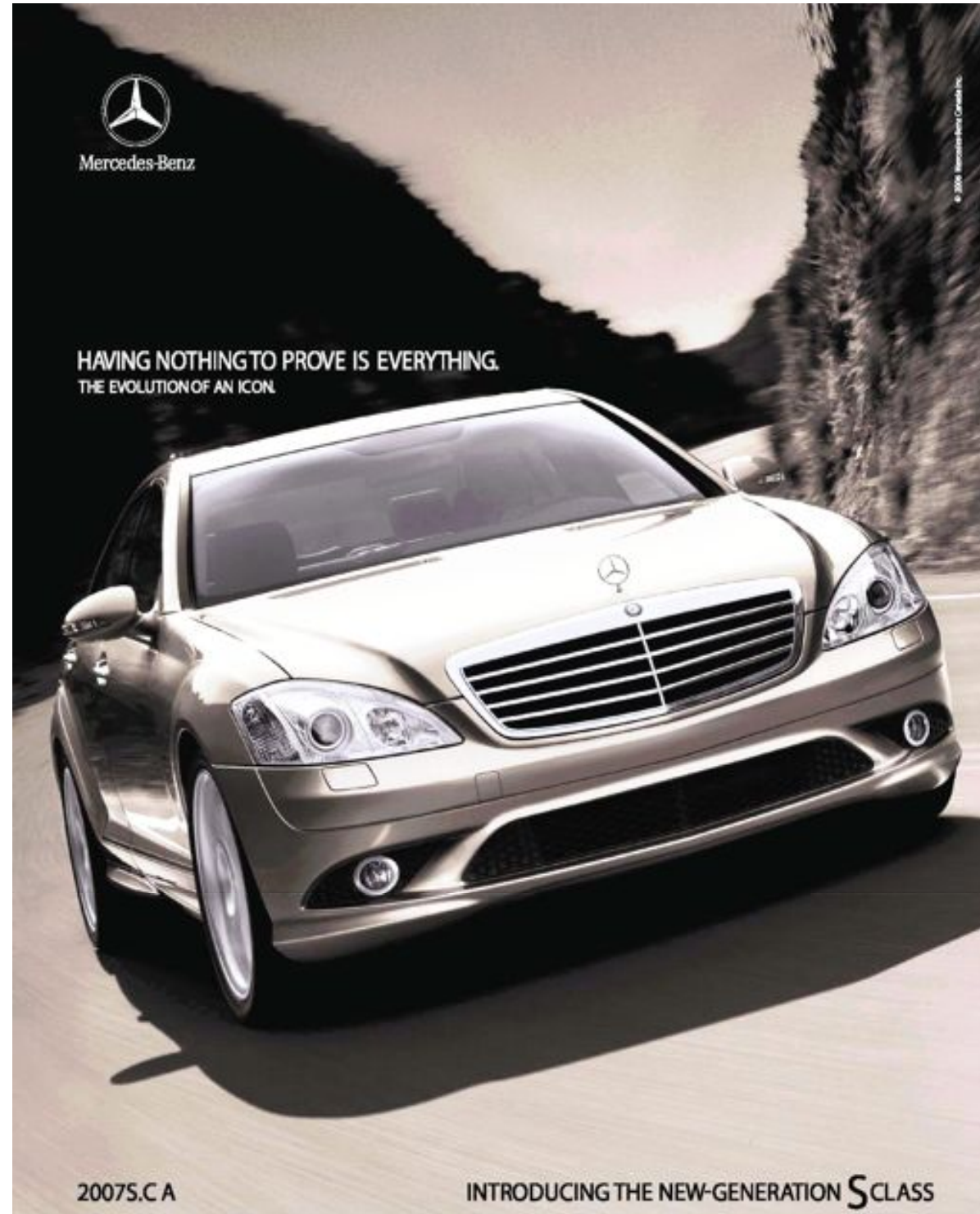
RX currently have a Figoni bodied 1933 Alfa Romeo 6C 1750, several Lagondas, both V12 and LG45 Rapide, a 1958 Jaguar XK150 that is about to have its body re-mounted on its chassis, plus a small 1960 Messerschmitt KR200. This last bubble car looks great as it is but its fastidious owner demands the best, so it will shortly be totally stripped down.

Besides seeing some of the cars in "the raw" it is highly educational to listen to RX's philosophy that allows them to recreate such masterpieces.

The 1914 Mercedes that David Godwin used to have is a worthy graduate of RX. David's modesty prevented many photographs of this oldtimer, so here is a photograph to correct this omission. See also page one.



David Godwin's 1914 Mercedes 22/50 at Pebble Beach in 2001



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