

Harold & Lorna: The Premiere

By Heather A. Rennalls

Friday September 14, 2012, Harry Wilson premiered his new docudrama entitled “Harold & Lorna World Water Speed Champions” at the Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts (ITOPA) in Ingersoll. It was full circle of the long legacy about the almost forgotten story of his parents, Harold and Lorna Wilson. Most people may know about *Miss Supertest III* and her connection to the Thompson family from London Ontario the owners of the petroleum company stations of the same name. Some may even know of the driver of the *Miss Supertest* boats, the chicken farmer from Embro, Ontario Bob (Robert) Hayward. However, few people may know of the Ingersoll family who first built, raced and made a name for Canada on the international circuit by winning hydroplane boat races with *Little Miss Canada* and *Miss Canada* series of speed boats. The Wilsons also became the first Canadians to compete for the prestigious British International Harmsworth Trophy. After fifteen years of racing, the Wilson family, owner Ernest Wilson, the driver Ernest’s son Harold Wilson, and the riding mechanic, Harold’s fiancé and later his wife Lorna Reid, retired and sold *Miss Canada IV* to the Thompson family who renamed her *Miss Supertest I*.

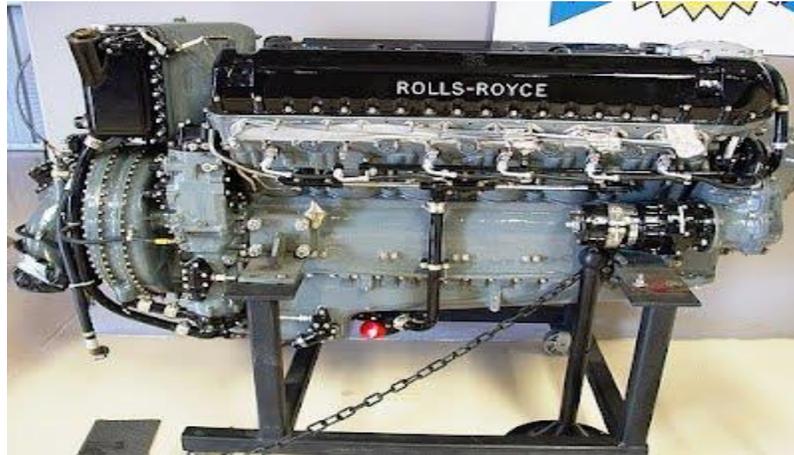


British International Harmsworth Trophy 1903 - 2010

With the fanfare as with Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), the red carpet was laid out in front of the ITOPA with guests dressed in their formal ware and greeted to wine and cheese. Harry Wilson, along with his financier, Executive Producer and Restoration Team Co-ordinator Jamie Smith presented a brief introduction to their project. In October 2010, the former car salesman, Jamie Smith and former drama teacher, Harry Wilson, approached the Ingersoll Museum to try to retrieve *Miss Canada IV* where she was housed since 1992. Permission was granted. On June 15, 2011 the town of Ingersoll hosted a farewell ceremony for their beloved boat. On July 9, 2011, after twenty years residing in the Ingersoll’s Cheese & Agricultural Museum, *Miss Canada IV* had a homecoming in Gravenhurst, Ontario where she was first built in the 1940s.

A well-known independent boat maker in Muskoka Tom Adams will be bringing the dream of restoring *Miss Canada IV* to life to her pristine condition for her to once again fly over Muskoka waters. Just like her predecessor, *Miss Canada IV* will be equipped with a Rolls Royce Griffon (named after a bird of prey) 58, “V” type 12 cylinders engine from England. However, unlike in her predecessor this 3000 horsepower engine with the top speed of 200 MPH weighing 2,050 pounds will be a permanent fixture

on *Miss Canada IV*. The Griffon engine for *Miss Canada III* was on loan in 1949 and was returned to Rolls Royce in 1950.



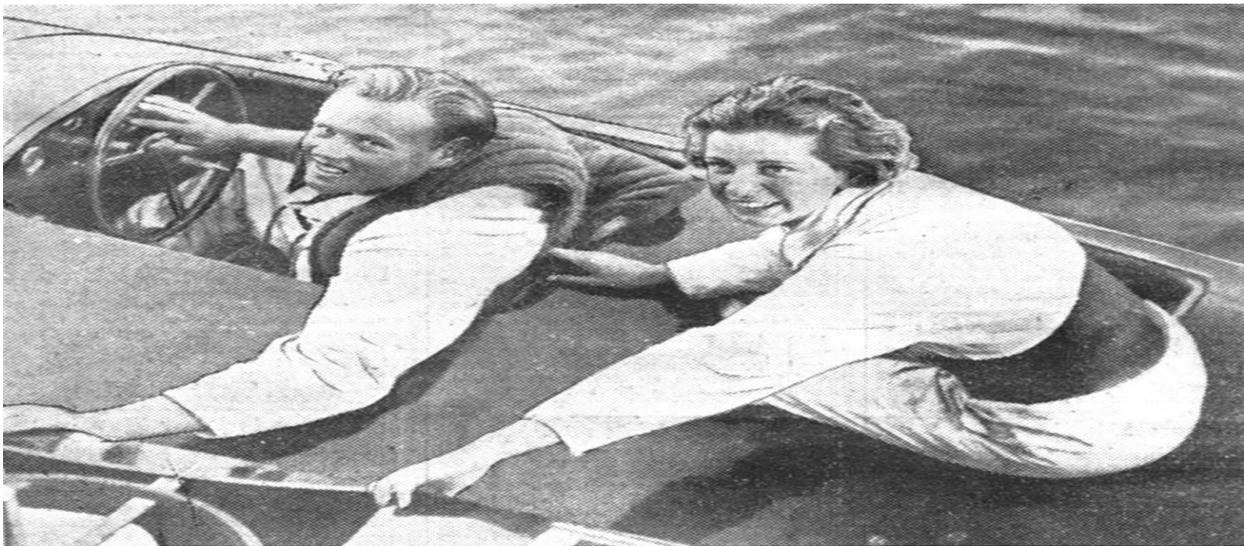
Engine	Rolls Royce Griffon 58, "V" Type 12 Cylinders
Cylinder Displacement	2,339 Cubic Inches
Exhaust System	2 x 6-Inch Diameter Exhaust Pipes
Horsepower	3000
Fuel	150 Octane with special water-methanol injection at top speed
Top Speed	+ 200 MPH
Weight of Engine	2,050 LBS

Harry further explained how "Muskoka gave us hope but Ingersoll gave us a vision." Both Jamie and Harry stressed how these two Ontario towns, Ingersoll and Gravenhurst, were instrumental in getting this project off the ground and hopefully into the water. The hope in Muskoka not only refers to the numerous friends and supporters from cottage country, it also includes the beginning of the dream. Last August, I had the pleasure in meeting both Jamie and Harry in Picton, Ontario during the 50 Anniversary Celebrations for *Miss Supertest III* ironically enough at Peter Lockyer, the former CBC Radio and Television Broadcaster's, premiere of his then documentary entitled *Making Waves: The Story of Canada's Miss Supertest Team*. Harry mentioned his dream of also filming a documentary of his parents Harold and Lorna.

Harry explained how the curator from the Muskoka Boat & Heritage Centre Mary Storey contacted him to research his mother's contribution to boat racing for an exhibit highlighting women in boating at the museum. Harry was astounded when North Bay director Bill Plumstead contacted him to do a film about his parents and asked about memorabilia. Harry reported that little information existed about his parent's contributions to boating, never mind hardly or no reference of his mother being a boat mechanic. Part of the latter would be Lorna, a female being in a dominated male profession in the 1930s. Harry wanted to "rewrite history" and change all that. Produced by the company that he formed, Muskoka Film Works Inc., the docudrama "Harold & Lorna World Water Speed Champions" premiered to a packed house.

This made for television documentary depicts the love story of Harold Wilson and Lorna Reid and how they met at the University of Toronto. Harold tried to scare Lorna by his full-throttle power turns on *Little Miss Canada II* but failed. Instead, Lorna offered to be Harold's riding mechanic. At that time, Harold was already racing and winning regattas. Over the next fifteen years, this husband and wife team balanced their love for each other, their family responsibilities and their love for building and racing hydro-plane boats. Harold and Lorna Wilson built three boats, won three World Championships (1934, 1935, and 1939), two North American speed records and broke the world's speed record. Furthermore, *Miss Canada III* became the first Canadian boat to win a major American trophy and the Wilsons became the first Canadians to compete for the prestigious British International Harmsworth Trophy in 1949 with *Miss Canada IV*.

Following the premiere of "Harold & Lorna," Harry reported that the DVD with four bonus features including the restoration of *Miss Canada IV* will be available just in time for Christmas shopping. On July 8, 2012, the movie trailer for Harold and Lorna was realised on the web and Facebook. The movie made its screening debut at the Doc North Film Festival at Capitol Centre Theatre in North Bay, Ontario on August 19, 2012. On August 22 and 23, 2012, the Premier of "Harold & Lorna" was shown at the Gravenhurst Opera House. September 14, 2012 marked the Black Tie Gala Event in Ingersoll for "Harold Lorna, World Water Speed Champions."



Harold & Lorna Wilson

In the words of the Producer Bill Plumstead, from the movie "Harold & Lorna, World Water Speed Champions:" the movie "is a profoundly Canadian story of two sweethearts who met at a the university of Toronto learned to navigate and pilot small boats, medium sized boats into larger racing boats, won champions at the Canadian National Exhibition to then take the name of Canada onto the world stage." Both Jamie Smith and Harry Wilson can finally bask in their glory for a successfully completing their documentary "Harold & Lorna, World Water Speed Champions," a remarkable story depicting Canada's almost forgotten heroes in speed boat racing. A story this is finally being told. Check out the movie trailer here: <http://youtu.be/Nx6zpAsdCWw>.

