

C.A.R.S. PT in PRINCE GEORGE 1956-1976

Written by Hilary Crowley CARS Physio 1971-1973

Julia Serup (Reid) 1956-1958

Julia graduated from Edinburgh School of Physiotherapy in 1952. She emigrated to Canada in 1954. She went to work for CARS in Vancouver for 6 weeks then went with them to Cranbrook and the Kootenays. She worked there as a travelling physiotherapist for 18 months and remembers that the CARS car was a GMC Belair. The roads were all dirt so travelling was very dusty. She travelled to Fernie, Kimberly, Invermere and Creston. She took over this position from Rachel Daggert who later moved to Prince George in 1963. CARS wanted Julia to open a new area and treatment office in Prince Rupert in 1955 but Julia didn't feel up to this.

Julia left the Kootenays and arrived in Prince George Summer of 1956. She took over from Jean Harder as CARS therapist and worked here for CARS until 1958 then Pamela from New Zealand took over. Julia worked out of the old Prince George Hospital on 10th Avenue when she first came then moved into the new hospital on its present site. Margaret Chell was a physiotherapist at the hospital at this time. Jean Ashwell (now Moore) was another physiotherapist in Prince George who opened her own private practice in the fifties.

As CARS physio in Prince George, Julia travelled to Quesnel, Vanderhoof and Burns Lake. The rheumatologist was Dr. Boyce and he came up every 3 months to hold clinics. There was no OT. Julia's main memory is trying to stay out of the ditch in the winter! She remembers the uniform was a blue dress in summer with the CARS crest and a blue skirt suit in winter with white shirt and white socks and white rubber boots. She had 4 flat tyres in one day but there was always someone who appeared and fixed the problem for her. She never had to change a tyre herself.

Julia stayed with CARS in Prince George for 2 years then she married and had 2 children so took some time off then returned to work at the hospital part-time. There she worked with Monica Williams and briefly with Rachel Daggert.

Julia remembers that there was no CPA component in Prince George at this time. She's not sure if CPA existed then. Julia is the longest standing physiotherapist in Prince George. Unfortunately Monica Williams and Anne Martin, 2 other long-standing local physiotherapists have passed away. Monica was head physiotherapist at the hospital and Anne Martin was CEO at the Child development Centre. Eira Jones (now O'Lausen) was chief physiotherapist at the Hospital in 1970 but she now resides at the Simon Fraser Hospital in Prince George and has limited memory and communication.

Patricia Whitehead

CARS PT in Prince George 1966 for one year then married RCMP and moved to Montreal

Val Donovan (Black) 1968-1970

I worked for CARS for 4 years in the lower mainland - I worked in Richmond (out of a small room they gave us in the fire hall, until they built the hospital and I moved into the physio dept.) and I did home visiting in the afternoon. I swear whoever planned my schedule for the afternoons couldn't have sent me to further afield places if they tried. In one afternoon, I'd go from UBC, to Chinatown, on to Nanaimo street and then the West End. Wonder if they ever looked at a map?

In Sept 1964 I was scheduled to go to Quesnel - driving a car up from Vancouver. Two days before I was due to leave they discovered they had already put Ann Gillespie in Quesnel, so they sent me to Price George on the train. I was met by a very nice lady who volunteered for CARS, who teased me I was 7 inches too short and 50 lbs too light to be the physio she'd come to the train station to meet. I replaced a physio called Patricia Whitehead, apparently she was a real character, so wish I'd had a chance to know her better. She'd lived in a cabin, somewhere in the boonies and painted the whole of the inside black. Her wild parties were memorable apparently. She went to Quesnel to marry a Quebecois RCMP.

Loved the job. I worked in PG on Mondays, Vanderhoof on Tuesdays, Burns Lake on Wednesday, Thursday Fraser Lake and Vanderhoof and PG again on Friday.

Lots of adventures on these trips, as I'm sure the physios that came before and after me experienced too, but I'm not sure how much of that you want to hear?

After a year I had bad news from home that my mother had her first stroke. We only had 2 weeks holidays in those days, so I applied for an extra weeks holiday to go home and was refused. I put in my notice immediately and accepted a job at the hospital, Pat Phillips from CARS phoned me the day they got my resignation and she was furious. They hadn't consulted her at all. She offered me my job back or one anywhere I wanted in BC, but I didn't feel I could withdraw my acceptance of the job at PGRH. It was nice to welcome Sheila Datoff as my replacement - they couldn't have chosen a better person!

Sheila Datoff (Silcock) 1970-1971

Arrived Canada May 1966 from UK. Arrived Prince Albert, her travel paid for as long as she stayed a year. Loved it. Returned UK for few months but returned to Canada April 1968 to CARS in Vancouver. Stayed there 2 years then came up to Prince George with CARS in Spring 1970 until April 1971 when married,

Val Donovan (Black) was CARS physio before Sheila and Hilary Crowley (Forrester) was Cars physio after Sheila, starting in June 1971.

Sheila later did locums at Phoenix and Victoria Physio clinics in Prince George and at the Hospital. She then worked in Community Care from 1981-1999. Eira Jones then joined her there and later Marion Konopski then Karen Peterson.

Dr. Truelove was the visiting rheumatologist. Sheila travelled to Quesnel, Wells, Burns Lake, Vanderhoof and McLeod Lake.

Hilary Crowley (Forrester) 1971-1972

Worked 2 days in Prince George, 2 days in Vanderhoof and 1 day in Burns Lake each week. Motel accommodation provided on the road.

5 PTs were at PGRH then. Chief therapist was Eira Olausen, now in residential care in Prince George. Followed by Val Donovan then Sheila Fleming. Many physiotherapists came to Prince George though CARS: Sheila Datoff (nee Silcock), Val Donovan (nee Black), Sue Bond (nee Shaw), and many others who have since left town.

I was sent to Prince George from CARS in Vancouver on a 6 week locum. I asked CARS to promise not to forget me and that I could return to Vancouver after 6 weeks. I'd only been there 2 weeks when I asked if I could stay. I found the community and lifestyle suited me well. The caseload in Prince George was OPs and Home Visits, mostly arthritis but occasional house-bound neurological clients. Outreach was OPs, IPs and HVs. There was no other PT service in any of these other communities, except Prince George, so I had a variety of clients.

This position was very enjoyable but I didn't want to experience a 2nd winter of driving on these roads. One particularly snowy night I drove off the road between Vanderhoof and Burns Lake. A travel advisory had been given but the CARS car had no radio so I was unaware. Once on the road, it was impossible to turn around or stop as visibility was nil. One tow truck broke down trying to pull me out so I had to wait for another truck to come out from Burns Lake. That same winter I found all the tyres were square on the car, from the extreme cold, when I was ready to leave work in Burns Lake and drive back. This was a new experience.

In **Vanderhoof**, I helped design the new physio department. I stayed in nurses' residence during the week and returned to PG on weekends. This was a sole charge position and involved work at St Johns Hospital Vanderhoof and 2 days at Fort St James each week. During this time I met my husband so left Vanderhoof and moved to Summit Lake.

Sue Bond (Shaw) 1974-1976

Sue started with CARS in April 1974. She spent 3 weeks in Vancouver then was sent to Prince George. She travelled to Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake, Burns Lake and Fort St James. Until May 1975 then she just worked out of Prince George Hospital, still with CARS, for 1 year. She and Lynda Menard (McPherson) were allotted space in the corridor of the psyche ward during this time. Linda Thiessen came after Sue and after this, CARS therapists no longer travelled.

Sue mostly remembers the Home Visits. She also mentioned that all the CARS physios had at least one car accident during their time and most of them quit before having to do a 2nd year of winter driving. It is interesting to note that all these physios came from England or a few came from NZ and Australia. All the therapists were sent to Prince George from Vancouver and otherwise might not have chosen to live in Prince George but most loved it and decided to stay.