

## Chapter 42 : “Hobby & Leisure”

In 1975, CG was asked what he was really interested in [besides his career]. The journalist obviously thought about intellectual interests. “- I have no interests, he says and grins big and his mentor [Stig Ramel] adds with a big smile, 'that is our big problem'.”<sup>1</sup> This seems to have been a consequence of his Royal Schooling. CG was thrown from one subject to another without ever being given time to develop an area of interest he could call his own. However, since school, CG has a lot of hobbies.

He is very interested in technology (cars & boats), “landowner life” (agriculture, livestock farming, hunting, fishing, gardening, riding) and sports (everyday exercise, outdoor life & spectator). Cultural interest is mostly pastime: music (jazz, pop & some classical music: Bach, Vivaldi and the 17th century; ABBA, Robin, Spice Girls, percussion group Kroumata; he has a lukewarm attitude to Bruce Springsteen and even lukewarmer to punk rock), art (handicrafts & art shows; Swedish Glass & Silver; photographs) and photography (has had his own darkroom). While CG in his official capacity often attends stage performances, he rarely does so in private, neither in cinemas, theatre, opera, concerts or in circuses, possibly for security reasons. He is most interested in ballet. He sees a lot of TV. He is demonstrably indifferent to serious fiction and poetry but appreciates Swedish history, detective novels, historical novels, science-fiction, nature and travel documentaries and National Geographic, the latter probably due to the photojournalism: “I'm restless. I find it hard to sit still. I need something to do all the time. There's no way in the world to make me sit down and read a book in the middle of the day. I never have. ... If I read I do it at night - never in the day, when I find a thousand other things to do.”<sup>2</sup>

On the court's website, it is stated that “The King is interested in art, music and food. He is a member of the Gastronomical Academy [plate No. 17 after Prince Bertil]. He has in recent years exhibited parts of his and King Gustaf VI Adolfs private collection of graphics and has initiated several music events at Stockholm Castle.” CG has also been interested in the family history, for example the exhibition The Bernadottes in politics and cultural life at Läckö Castle in 1991.

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As far as cars are concerned, CG has over the years accumulated both ordinary cars and a larger stable of rarities. As a toddler there were three pedal cars: A scrappy “family treasure” that appears to have belonged to Princess Desirée and two birthday presents from Prince Bertil: At his third anniversary a model of the English 30s racer Austin VII, white with red leather trim. At his fifth anniversary a insanely luxurious model of an Aston-Martin, real doors that could be opened, lamps, direction indicators, horn, nameplate, brakes and other features. He also received a real Volvo PV 444 from the factory, somewhat prematurely one might think. It seems to have been a competition between Mum and Prince Bertil for CG's favour.

In 1959 he received a Volvo Amazon which he had on Öland to practice with. In 1962 it was a souped up scooter Puch Florida. His first car after the June 1964 license was a light blue sports car Volvo P 1800 S as a graduation present which he sold off for 75 thousand in 1987.

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<sup>1</sup> Svensk Damtidning, 1975:10.

<sup>2</sup> Solveig Alpzén. Monarki och demokrati ger stabilitet åt landet. Svenska Dagbladet, 1986-04-28.

CG also has a military drivers license and has received special training from security how to handle his car in emergencies.

At his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1996, he received a refurbished version of a Volvo PV 60, the only Swedish car produced in the year he was born. 236 people within the Automobile History Club had joined forces for the gift. The thanks was that they and only they every two years were allowed to participate in CG's own vintage car rally the King's Rally on Öland. The distance is 50-100 kilometres and there are competition elements. People come a long way to admire the rarities. It's a royalist festival. For his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, friends Anders Philipson, Anders Lettström, Björn Kreuger and Hans Eric Brodin had managed to track down the car of type Porsche 911 Targa that CG and Silvia were photographed in 1973, 180 horsepower sky blue metallic. It had been bought and sold until it ended up in Japan, had crashed but was now completely renovated at their expense.

Additional cars are an AC-Cobra 289 sport from 1966: Weight 750 kilos and with a Ford V8 of 450 horsepower & a De Tomaso Pantera from 1971. CG has also tested a Dodge Viper. At Crown Princess Victoria's graduation, CG met up in a red Pontiac GTO Tempest Cabriolet from 1966, the ultimate hot-rod. CG's car collection consist of the coolest cars ever at different points of time. The most recent private addition (that I know of) is a BMW M3 CSL from 2003, a two-door silver gray coupé with a straight six-cylinder engine of 360 horsepower.

CG's interest in cars has mostly been noted when speeding and crashing:

- On September 24, 1974, CG ran off the Gellerås racetrack outside Karlskoga. He was to try one of Sweden's fastest racing cars, a souped up BMW 3.0 CSL, max speed about 240, belonging to racing driver Rune Tobiasson (according to another source Sten Gunnarsson). In the pit curve, he skidded out onto a grass field because of being too fast on the throttle. The car was pushed up onto the track and on Tobiasson's advice he continued another lap. “- We have never been so close to a republic, groaned one of the spectators.”<sup>3</sup> The lap times were 2.20, 2.10 & 1.55. Not so bad for a everyday motorist but the track record was 1.16.
- At the Swedish Rally February 16, 1992, CG (with Prince Carl Philip) drove off the track in a borrowed car and collided with a pine tree. The car suffered heavy metal damage. The site is posted in “Geocach.com”.
- In 2000, on his way to Kastrup airport in Denmark to pick up the children, CG drove 140 km/h on a 110 road. There were many rumours circulating about this speeding. According to one of the rumours, the convoy, two Ferraris and one Rolls Royce, were supposed to have blown past at 250 km/h. CG was driving a light blue Ferrari 456 Modificata with 442 horsepower and a top speed of 300 km/h.
- In 2004, CG reportedly drove 150 or 160 km/h on a 110 road in a yellow Porsche 911 Carrera GT3 with Silvia as a passenger. It was a race between him and Prince Carl Philip in an older Porsche 911 Carrera Coupé from 1987 (an heirloom from Prince Bertil's estate but for the day on loan to Prince Carl Philip). The escorting SÄPO car hung on. Silvia was afterwards asked if she had not been nervous but replied that CG never had exceeded the speed limit and that she in any case never was nervous when was driving the car.
- In 2005, CG in his BMW M3 CSL collided from the rear with a car that had suddenly braked for a cyclist in a roundabout. CG waited for the traffic police to interrogate the

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<sup>3</sup> Lektyr, 1974:48.

the other driver and check him for alcohol. He then continued as a passenger in the SÄPO car. (Formally, the accident was CG's fault because he was too close but as king he had immunity.)

After a death threat in 1976, a special safety car was acquired for CG. An armoured Saab with bulletproof windscreens and even the ability to put out fog curtains by the push of a button. It does not appear to have been used. Later cars, e.g. a BMW 935i from 1991 have had bulletproof glass only. CG relied on speed and the follow cars.

The King and Queen's regular representative car is a newly acquired, graphite gray Mercedes S500 2006, equipped with a lovely V8 of 5 litres and 306 hp, seven-stage automatic drawer, automatic air suspension etc. Despite a length of over five meters, the service weight is only 1875 kg. This car is therefore very fast: acceleration 0-100 in just over 6 seconds and an electronically limited top speed of 250 km/h. This is the brand new model of the Mercedes Sondersklasse, which has received overwhelming reviews in all the world's motor press. There are also those who think it is the world's best car.<sup>4</sup>

While CG was still driving his Volvo P 1800, he was asked if he did not wish for something more substantial. "No, he answered with an embarrassed smile. I wouldn't dare to buy myself a more expensive car. There would be far too much talk."<sup>5</sup> However, the talk has been largely absent. Anything but the best is measly.

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As a naval officer, CG naturally holds a skipper's degree and he has had several cruisers. In 1971 it was a Fjord Daycruiser 24 with two engines of 170 hp and top speed 40 knots that he and some friends drove over from England. In 1975 he acquired a Magnum 35 Sport Fisherman with two engines of 350 hp, an open motor boat in mahogany with kitchen and berths. The top speed was 35 knots and it was named "Green Beam". In 1977, it was a somewhat more family-friendly Fjord Weekender. In 1980, he swapped "Green Beam" for a new Storebro Royal Cruiser 40 Biscay with a top speed of 23 knots and named "Angylus". For easy access the boats used to be docked at the jetty east of Djurgården Bridge below the Nobel Park. In 1989 he bought an English Fairline sea cruiser named m/y Ancylyus à two millions for trips to and from Solliden which he drove home from the shipyard in England. In 1994, another one for 6 millions m/y Ancylyus II. The old one was made available to Prince Carl Philip. For his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1996, CG received an outboard racer, a Nimbus 19 Nova, as a gift from Sweden's royal boating clubs, GKSS, KSSS and KAK. In 2000 he acquired a J-Craft 38 named "Polaris" which ha docked in France at Prince Bertil's villa Maxime. The boat was a prototype and something of a gamble by the manufacturer. CG paid only one third of the market price, just over 2 millions. About what the engines, two of 420 hp, cost. The manufacturer hoped that CG's ownership was good advertising. The boat was a Gotland Riviera dream. A vision to build the world's best retro racer on Swedish soil with Swedish craftsmen. Top speed 50 knots. Tires, cockpit and visible details in mahogany. The quality was great but the success was not. Only 6-7 boats were built before the firm went bankrupt. In 2004 he bought a Storebro 410 Commander for four million, reportedly to be used in the

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<sup>4</sup> Jan Möller. Kungarallyspecial: H M Konungens bilar. Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club. Sweden Section. Oktober 2006:3.

<sup>5</sup> Svensk Damtidning, 1975:18.

service of bodyguards, but it probably had more to do with the deductibility. CG likes to go swimming at sea to avoid the photographers.

In 1987, CG became an honorary member of the association of MTB veterans with some 40 members and the purpose “to preserve the motor torpedo boats and their living history”. The admission ticket was that CG bought the last remaining motor torpedo boat of the T42 series, T46, in its original condition. Sixteen T42-T56 were built 1956-1959. The T46 was built in 1957 and was decommissioned in 1974. Fortunately, there was a complete stockpile of parts. The length was 23 meters and the displacement fully equipped 44 tons. It had three 18-cylinder 57-litre Isotta Franchini engines, each of them packing 1500 horsepower, and a top speed of 45 knots. The first test tour after the restoration was done on June 24, 1997. The horizon reached in 10 minutes. The boat is now part of the veteran flotilla and is managed by volunteers.

CG bought his motor torpedo boat through a representative already in March [1987]. He does not want to reveal the prize, but it is said to have been 90 thousand. The final price was probably around 110 thousand. [T46 had been decommissioned since 1975. It took six weeks for a number of “navy retirees” led by CG's old Spica boss baron Ninian Ramel to revive her.] Immediately after the Dutch state visit [Saturday May 23], CG went from Sturup to Karlskrona where the voluntary “crew” was waiting. Nine naval officers helped him take her to Öland. They moored at the bridge in Borgholm. The Queen and the children were waiting there. The King was supposed to take his new acquisition from Öland to the Stockholm archipelago on Sunday, but it blew 20 meters per seconds. In that weather, the party did not dare push their luck. The T46 had been stored on dry land with a tarpaulin for several years and her plating was only 1.5- 2 mm. The original armament was two 53-cm torpedo tubes and a 40 mm automatic cannon. The latter was removed but the defence promised to find a specimen and lend it.<sup>6</sup>

[Ramel continued the renovation in the capacity of CG's chamberlain. There was allegedly a contest between CG and Anders Philipson as to who had the coolest motor boat. If that was really the case, CG won. Something cooler than a T46 was surely beyond Philipson's means.]

As a young man, CG has owned two sailing boats that he has received as gifts: A dinghy “Flying junior” at his 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a smaller yacht “Soling” at his 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary. As an adult CG has not owned a sailboat but 1971-1975 and later he has participated a few times as a waister in the Mediterranean and the Gotland Tour competition with Philipson's boats s/y Phiesta and “Orm af Ingarö”.

In 1973/74 CG and friends often hitched a ride through the air force to his fishing cabin at Tärnasjön. Former adjutant Ulf Björkman held the controls with CG as co-pilot. They used a two-engined Cessna 404 for seven people. On other occasions Björkman gave CG flying lessons in a SK60. Björkman claimed afterwards that CG would have become a “very skilled pilot”:

I flew a lot with our young king and we always made time for some improvised flying lessons. The King proved to have a very good simultaneous ability and a distinctly good spatial perception. Two features that reveal the future elite pilot. There was also

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<sup>6</sup> Omar Magnergård. Kungen köper torpedbåt. Svenska Dagbladet, 1987-05-25.

nothing wrong with the king's ambition. In fact, we tried out some advanced flying which gradually crossed the border to hairy. Not a wrinkle, however, was to be discovered in the royal facet.

The King also demonstrated his great interest in flying by [1974] flying in the two-seat school version of Viggen. [At high altitude he was permitted to fly it himself.] The pilot Bosse Hellström could afterwards state that I was right regarding the king's slumbering aircraft aptitude.<sup>7,8</sup> CG remarked afterwards that "It was like being on Tivoli - though much more fun!"<sup>9</sup>

CG also since early years collects weapons, preferably exotic such: Knives, scimitars and firearms. In 1969, he had about 40 of them stored at the castle and at Stenhammar. Like the cars, the calibre seems to be the largest at the time available, e.g. a Smith & Wesson 357 Magnum "The gold standard of stopping power". At his birthday in 1981, Prince Albrecht of Bavaria, married to Countess Elisabeth Douglas, ordered something still more impressive: A custom-made elephant rifle by the famous American gunsmith Fred Wells in Prescott Arizona. This was more of a display object to hang on the wall than a useful weapon. Overkill was just the beginning of it. It was a Mauser design, had two interchangeable barrels of calibre large and large, used custom-made ammunition that would have dismembered a moose into its constituent parts and was delivered in an exquisite box of crocodile leather. Fred Wells own opinion on the customer base was: "It's surprising the number of African hunters we have here in Prescott, but then everybody wants to own a big-bore rifle whether they ever use it or not. They can fondle it and dream they're going to Africa. When wildlife shows come on they can shoot the TV. You'd be surprised how many TV sets are shot out around here." But it was a beautiful weapon and it was deadly.

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CG rents the estate Stenhammar. This has the following background: As the Marshal of the Court von Kraemer and his wife left no children, they decided to donate their estate Stenhammar to the State with the condition that it would be leased by a member of the royal house for SEK 1000 annually. Not so much then and even less now. von Kraemer had put a lot of effort into improving the goods. He reclaimed land, built roads, trenched and had oak groves planted around the castle or rather mansion. The first royal tenant was Prince Wilhelm in 1903. On his death in 1965, CG took over the lease but the inspection had to wait until after graduation.

The estate included a run down 17th-century castle, 2,000 acres of not very high-yielding farmland and 3,000 acres of forest managed by the Domain Board. The livestock had been auctioned earlier in the year. The castle itself had 33 rooms and halls but no furniture. CG had already been advised to close down the greenhouses and the kitchen garden. Prince Wilhelm's old chestnut tree from the 18<sup>th</sup> century was in poor condition: "Just in time for the state tenant's first inspection, the leaves struck out on Stenhammar's gnarled 18<sup>th</sup> century chestnuts. The trees are not very beautiful, parts of them are propped up but worshipped by Stenhammar's former master. It is told that Prince Wilhelm used to stand on the balcony and follow every change in his chestnuts."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ulf Björkman. Ett liv i det blå. Flygrevyns förlag AB, 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Svenska Dagbladet, 1974-06-11.

<sup>9</sup> Kvällsposten, 1974-06-11.

<sup>10</sup> Omar Magnergård. Statsarrendatorn. Svenska Dagbladet, 1966-05-17.



On May 17, 1966, there was an official welcome ceremony in front of the castle Stenhammar. CG was driven there by Sibylla who skipped the ceremony and went down to the lake to bask in the sun. CG was received by the employees, the local housekeeping society and the student body of the agricultural school. The student union wished CG welcome to the Swedish Farmers' Council, reported that they would be happy to help out at this point in the beginning and handed over some elementary textbooks in agriculture. The husbandry society promised CG help to investigate whether or not it would be feasible with cattle-free farming.

Initially, the estate was engaged in cereal production, grassland and milk production, but in 2005 it switched to organic meat production, grazing-based calf meat, in collaboration with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU):

After a study visit at the SLU farm Krusenberg, which then had eighty Simmentalkor (i.e. meat animals) to be sold, it was decided to establish a contract with SLU. The contract was for the animals to be used and bred while research on them could continue. In addition to the Simmental cows, there are currently a number of Red Angus and crossbreeds between them.<sup>11</sup>

The castle was renovated in 2010-2013 for a total of 39 million from various pockets, also CG's. It was the waste pipes, a boiler centre for chippings etc. The operation is dimensioned for 400 meat animals. Some years the estate leaves a surplus used to cover the deficit in the management of the park facility at Solliden to keep it open to the public. CG would have liked to have trained as an agronomist if this with monarchy had not interfered.<sup>12</sup> Travel time from Stockholm is a bit long, 1 ½ hours by car, so CG only rarely visits the place. To keep the tourists away there is a fence.

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CG is very well built and had could have become a good athlete. It would have required him to take this seriously however. Now it was a bit of everything to keep in shape and because it amused him: jogging, horse riding, back packing, cross-country skiing, sailing, water skiing, sport diving, swimming. During high school, CG was very amused by fencing and shooting. He was best in downhill skiing. He's done Vasaloppet three times: 1977, 1987 & 1997. It went so so: The first time cramp in the lower back and 5708 place. The last time he hurt his back during training which was running up and down the stairs in Drottningholm Castle with a backpack loaded with 45 kilos of brick etc. This has not affected him. He likes to subject himself to hardships but is indifferent to whether he wins. In the winter of 1999-2000 he sought medical help for back pain. Perhaps a consequence of the training.

CG has a poor ball sense and therefore does not play football himself. (Nor golf, tennis or anything else.) However, he is the patron and first honorary member of AIK. In 2007 he jokingly stated in an interview with Kalmarposten that he was born into AIK but actually cheered for Djurgården. A newspaper then confronted the leadership of AIK and wondered whether this meant that the king would be deprived of his honorary membership. It took almost two years for CG to kill that story. The circle, especially Noppe Lewenhaupt and Anders Philipson, had a lot of fun with it.

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<sup>11</sup> Julia Fransson. Med LRF på Stenhammars gods. Ultuna Studentkårs medlemstidning, 2008:3, s 27.

<sup>12</sup> Mattias Abrahamsson. I huvudet på scout Carl XVI Gustaf. Scoutmagasinet, 2009:1.

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CG's almost total indifference to and ignorance of the Swedish cultural elite, shared by Crown Princess Victoria, has of course made them little loved. When CG was to attend the Swedish Writers' Union's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the Blue Hall in 1993, a lot of protests were lodged. Prior to Crown Princess Victoria's wedding in 2010, a project by Mårten Castenfors, head of Liljevalchs konsthall, was announced that some 30 Swedish poets would write an anthology of love poems for the wedding couple. The Poems would be shouted through loudspeakers along the caravan route. However, court poetry nowadays is out of favour. (Attempts in the genre as Bo Setterlind's "A song for Crown Prince Carl Gustaf on his 9-year anniversary on 30 April 1955"<sup>13</sup> have met with ridicule. Long after, Setterlind said that he had not even thought of CG when he wrote it. Originally, the poem was called "The Royal Guard" and CG not even mentioned by name.<sup>14</sup>, Setterlind participated as the only "court poet" in the gala performance at the Opera the day before CG's wedding and recited a tribute to Silvia - *Siljefog, Silverskies, Silver Silvia, Silver Silvia Silverclouds*.) Castenfors project ended up as an appendix of anti-royalist poems in Re:publics wedding special.<sup>15</sup> There was no true bite in the poems however. For example, Göran Greider contributed "No, I have never been able to hate the royal house even though I have tried. / What stands in the way is the love of the people." & Thomas Tidholm with "this little spoiled security-rated family/the costly habits, the custom-made clothes/the admirably dutiful charity/the high status socializing with admired descendants and relatives".

CG often attends or attended private previews of films, organized by his friends. It appears to be mostly American films. For example, he appreciates Kevin Costner, Robert De Niro, Paul Newman and Meryl Streep. The most noticed is that he also appreciates actor and akido expert Steven Seagal, whom he actually met in 1995 over lunch at Eriks restaurant in the old town. In his youth, Seagal was a very impressive martial artist, almost 195 cm, 82 kilos and with perfect muscle control. Martial arts on film is a form of ballet. Or vice versa: Ballet is the closest that high cultural comes to sport. In 1990, CG appointed ballet dancer Anneli Alhanko (1953-) as court dancer, the first in Swedish history it appears.

Among the writers who have been glimpsed on his nightstand are Arthur Koestler, Herbert Marcuse, Mario Puzzo, Herman Lindqvist and Tom Clancy. CG would probably agree with his mentor Marcus Wallenberg though. When asked if he read much fiction he is said to have answered: I do not understand people reading fiction when there is nothing more beautiful than reading a balance sheet.

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<sup>13</sup> Bo Setterlind. Vaktparaden. Husmodern, 1955:17.

<sup>14</sup> Marianne Jansson. Om Bo Setterlind. Allers veckotidning, 1966:27.

<sup>15</sup> Bröllopspecial. [Bilaga.] Re:public, 2010:16.