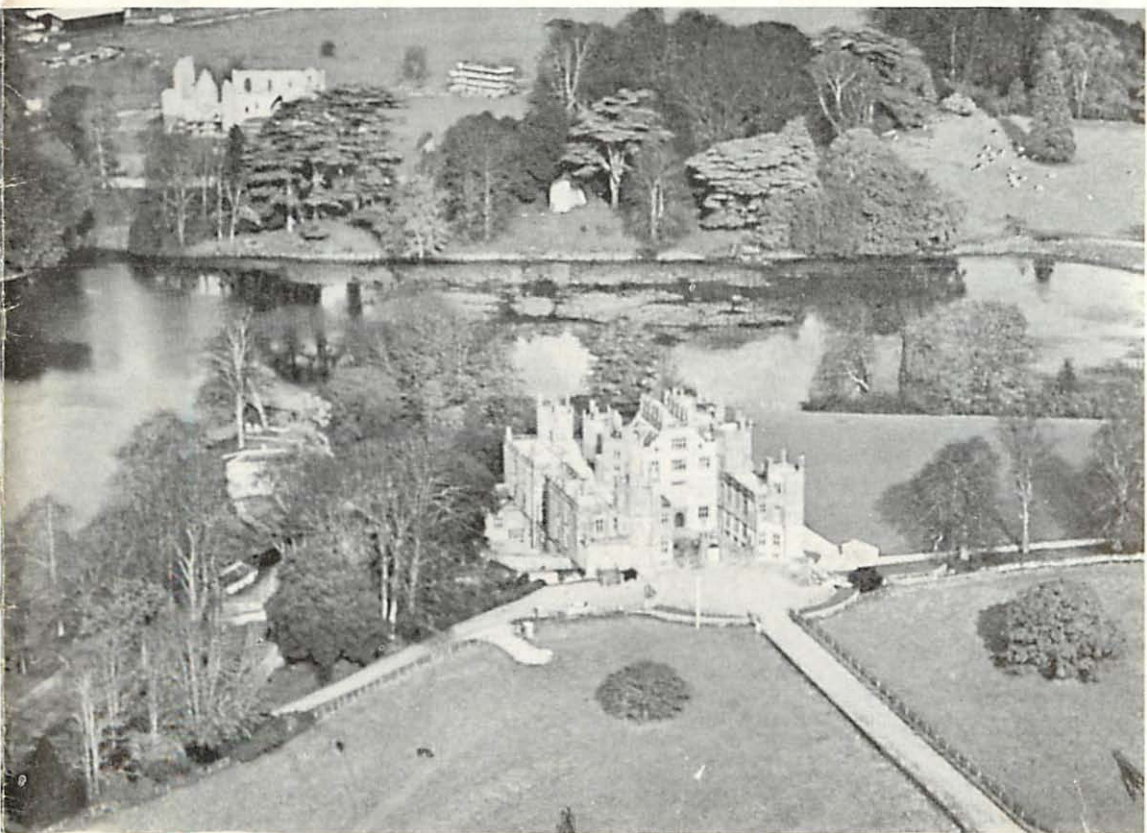




# owner club bulletin

No. 312

APRIL 1980



# alvis owner

## Officials:

- President:** K. R. Day, 1 Roydon Lodge, Woburn Hill, Addlestone, Surrey. (Weybridge 52526).  
**Vice President:** E. Shenton, "Gandria", Caverswall Common, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.  
**Council:** E. P. Oakman (Chairman), K. R. Day, E. Shenton, N. Whitton, Eric Stapleton, LT.-Cdr. B. H. Clinkard, M. J. Cummins, D. G. Rouse, A. F. Rivers Fletcher.  
**Chairman:** E. P. Oakman, White Oak Court, 28 Slave Hill, Hadenham, Aylesbury, Bucks. (0844 290259).  
**General Secretary:** M. J. Cummins, The Hill House, Rushock, Nr. Droitwich, Worcestershire. (Chaddesley Corbett 309).  
**Treasurer:** N. Whitton, 102, Henwood Green Road, Pembury, Kent. (089282 2088).  
**Bulletin Editor:** Eric Stapleton, Willow Cottage, Little Dunmow, Essex.  
**Competition Secretary:** D. G. Rouse, St. Mary's Coach House, Gt. Maplestead, Halstead, Essex. (Hedingham 60521).  
**Membership Secretary:** E. W. Wimple, 82 Dorling Drive, Ewell, Surrey. (01-393 4680).  
**History and Publicity:** K. R. Day (Club President).  
**Honorary Solicitor:** Chris Bird (East Anglian Secretary).  
**Section Secretaries**  
**Scottish:** John Thompson, Peel Lodge, Waterside Road, Busby, nr. Glasgow (041-644 4115).  
**Northern:** Terry Poppelwell, 8, Greenway, Whitley Bay, Northumberland. (0632 528854).  
**Midland:** R. G. F. Hyde, 147, Longdon Road, Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands. B93 9HY. (Knowle) 05645 77792).  
**South-Eastern:** Tom Oakman, 14, Burnt Oak, Wokingham, Berks. RG11 4UQ.  
**South-Western:** Derek Bradbury, Broadlawn, Lower Rowe, Holt, Wimborne, Dorset. (Wimborne 0202) 882838) and Ted Sayer, Lydford Hall Cottage, East Lydford, Somerton, Somerset (Wheathill 375).  
**East Anglian:** Chris Bird, The Old Crown, Westhorpe, Stowmarket, Suffolk. (Bacton 781490).  
**American:** J. H. Grotz, 308, Dogwood Lane, Wallingford, Pa. 19086, U.S.A. (Tel: 215, 566-1994).  
**Danish:** Peter Bering, Jupitervej 16, 2720 Vanlose, Copenhagen, Denmark. (010 45 1716537).  
**Technical Adviser, 12/50s:** S. Fletcher, Oak Tree Cottage, Hasketon, nr. Woodbridge, Suffolk. (Woodbridge 2574, map ref. 247581).  
**Technical Adviser & Spares** Lt.-Cdr. B. H. Clinkard, Pump Farm, Assington by Colchester, Essex.  
**Register, 1932-39 cars:** (Bures 227 378).  
**Technical Adviser & Spares** A. J. Buck, Kimberley Bungalow, Swan Street, Sible Hedingham, Essex.  
**Post-War cars:** (Hedingham 6013).

## Cover:

Welcome to Sherborne Castle!  
(see 'Direct Transmission')



Associated with the Royal Automobile Club

**Patrons:**

S. C. H. DAVIS and C. G. H. F. DUNHAM

## Past Presidents

A. G. Coles, R. P. Birks, A. Lees, A. James, Lt.-Col. E. B. Dewey, J. E. Brownbridge.

## Information

<i>Pre-War Car Registrar:</i>	C. Hutchinson, 183 Whalle Road, Shuttleworth, Ramsbottom, Lancs.
<i>Post-War Car Registrar:</i>	D. J. Culshaw, 27 Whiteside Avenue, Hall Lane, Hindley, nr. Wigan, Lancs.
<i>Delegates to the COMCC:</i>	Competition Secretary and A. S. R. Clinkard, 6 Regency Close, Uckfield, Sussex.
<i>Club Insurance Brokers:</i>	Hoveringham Howard Ltd., 6/7 Botolph Alley, London, EC3 8JH. (Tel: 01-626 0745).
<i>Bankers:</i>	Barclays Bank Ltd., Cherryhinton, Cambridge.
<i>Club Film Custodian:</i>	K. Blake, 8 Cables Avenue, Borehamwood, Herts. (Tel: 01-952 5471).
<i>R.A.C. Associated Membership:</i>	Mr. A. Sanders, "The Barn", 74 Leatherhead Road, Ashted, Surrey. (Tel: Ashted 75818).
<i>Badges, etc.:</i>	D. H. Bailey, 26, Gables Avenue, Borehamwood, Herts.
<i>Bulletin, back numbers:</i>	General Secretary (see opposite).

Car Badges £4.50; Brooch or buttonhole Badges 60p; Cloth Badges 40p; Woven Ties (multiple motif) £2.80 (state whether navy blue or racing green); Printed Ties (single motif blue only) £1.75; Coachwork Transfers 25p (for external or internal fixing – please state which); Key Rings 60p; Cuff Links £2.25; Tie Tacks 75p; Bulletin Back Numbers 50p – all prices inclusive of postage.

### Instruction Manuals and Photograph Albums

(These may be borrowed by U.K. MEMBERS ONLY against a deposit, by cheque payable to the AOC, which will be returned when the manual/album is returned. Please send separate cheque or P.O. to cover postage payable to the custodian).

*Manuals (Deposit £3, postage 15p):* N. Whitton, 102 Henwood Green Road, Pembury, Kent.

*Albums (Deposit £5, postage £1.50p):* A. R. Buck, Westfield, Leek Road, Stockton Brook, Stoke-on-Trent.

### IMPORTANT NOTICES

All material submitted must be double-spaced typewritten and should be in the Editor's hands 6 weeks before the month of intended publication.

Any enquiries about delivery of the Bulletin should be addressed to the General Secretary.

All changes of address should be notified at once to the Membership Secretary. Please quote your MEMBERSHIP NUMBER in all correspondence.

Cordex Binders, each to accommodate a year's Bulletins, are now available from the Editor at £1.50, to include p.&p. in the UK. Cheques should be made payable to the Alvis Owner Club.

### JULY BULLETIN

All material for the next Bulletin must be double-spaced typewritten and be in the Editor's hands by **20th May**.

# Editorial

The more hawk-eyed amongst you will have observed the Editor's recent change of address on the inside front cover, whilst the more knowledgeable will have rightly assumed that the removal was dictated, at least in part, by restricted garage accommodation, no longer able to keep pace with the owner's acquisitive tendencies. Although the distance from Great to Little Dunmow is little more than three miles, the disruption of moving house would scarcely have been worse had the journey been 300 miles. Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible.

Your Editor, generally a most easy-going, tolerant and genial fellow (a frank self-assessment) can only blame the trauma of this upheaval for an unaccustomed trace of rancour which has crept into recent correspondence with readers who insist on his supplying them with back numbers of the Bulletin. The General Secretary has this responsibility and deals also with enquiries regarding non-delivery, regrettably more frequent of late. The Membership Secretary, on the other

hand, should be appraised of any changes of address, a factor often connected with non-delivery. Members are once again asked to comply with these procedures which are outlined on p.3, to avoid wasting officials' time and the Club's money.

Finally, on a less contentious note, your attention is drawn to another more positive way of enhancing Club funds. The special insurance scheme devised by the Club brokers, Hoveringham Howard Ltd. (see p.3 again for details!) offers members very competitive terms on their Alvis cars and a worthwhile discount on any other vehicles they may wish to insure with the firm. Furthermore, every policy concluded automatically benefits Club funds by £1, so it is hoped that as many members as possible will respond to the offer. Increased business will also help to maintain premiums at their present level. Support the Club and help yourselves.

ERIC STAPLETON

## The Chairman's Column

International Alvis Day,  
Knebworth House,  
Sunday, 18th May, 1980

Join us at the White Horse Inn, Hertfordbury, just off the A1-A414, on Saturday evening, 17th May, for drinks and dinner. Tom has booked all the accommodation at the special price of £12/£13 Bed and Breakfast. We take dinner together at 9 pm choosing from the hotel menu ranging from £5 upwards. A good night is assured and we travel together to Knebworth on Sunday.

Please book direct, quote the AOC for special terms and mention Mr. Hughes the Deputy Manager.

Sunday at Knebworth - free entry for all Alvis cars. Our theme this year is the 12/50 range and I appeal to all owners of 12/50s to make a special effort to attend. We would particularly welcome all our friends from the 12/50 Register.

Concours in the morning, driving tests after lunch plus a special cavalcade being organised by Den Bailey. Entry forms from Tom Oakman, 14 Burnt Oak, Wokingham, Berks.

We require additional marshals - volunteers contact Tom please.

Knebworth Caterers will supply snack meals plus tea and coffee throughout the day.

If overseas visitors attending would please con-

tact Tom in advance, it would enable you to be met and made welcome.

If you have not visited Knebworth previously the House and grounds are well worth seeing but, best of all, you will see the largest display of Alvis cars here at Knebworth on this very special day. See you there with your Alvis sparkling in the May sunshine - yes!

Write to Tom today and obtain your entry forms. Write or telephone the White Horse Inn to book your room, telephone me if the hotel becomes full and I will try to arrange alternative accommodation at short notice.

### Club Insurance

Hoveringham Howard inform me the rates for 1980 will remain as for 1979.

We do however, require more members to join the scheme as at present only 10% are participating. So, if your insurance is coming up for renewal may I suggest you contact John Gilson at Hoveringham Howard, 6/7 Botolph Alley, London, E.C.3. He is looking after us now and you will be surprised at his quote - £50/£60 all depending on the car, no No Claims bonus and your car is covered up to £3,000 agreed value. Over this figure only a small surcharge. See our August issue for full details. The Club receives £1 rebate per policy too!

ERIC OAKMAN





*All aboard for the Knebworth adventure playground!*

# President's Notes

## Front Wheel Drive Quarterly

Anthony Cox, 63, Portsmouth Road, Surbiton, Surrey is one of the country's leading experts on these cars and is often to be seen in competitive events. Interest in these advanced cars extends outside the immediate ranks of owners and if you wish to subscribe to this quarterly you should contact Tony direct.

One of the interesting facts which emerges from the first quarterly is that, while it was generally said that about 25 cars out of 120 manufactured still existed Tony has been able to account for no less than 38 – a high survival rate for any car especially for a model which was so advanced and only purchased by the discerning sporting motorist in 1928-1930.

## Congratulations

These are due to Eric Benfield who last year won the Club's trophy presented by the VSCC for the Alvis owner putting up the best performance in their events. Very few vintage team cars still exist which have been rebuilt to the standards of originality attained by Eric and which are then raced with success on a regular basis. Not a few have disappeared into private and public museums and the sight of Eric and his wife and their magnificent 1924 200 Mile Race car at race meetings is a fine reminder of what Alvis achieved when most British manufacturers kept well away from racing.

K. R. DAY

# Said in Sport

Comp. Sec. has at last managed to work out the overall results of the Alvis Days held during 1979 – aided by those who filled in their entry forms fully and despite the few who did not!

Firstly the Inter-Section Shield was won this year by Northern Section, closely followed by Midland Section. Final placings were:

Northern Section	24 points
Midland Section	21 points
South Eastern Section	7 points
South Western Section	5 points

For those who do not know, the Inter-Section Shield is awarded by taking the best ten individual performances of Section members and awarding ten points to the Section of the best performer, nine points to the Section of the next best performer . . . and so on. Individual performances are assessed by the number of first, second and third place awards gained by an individual in con-

cours and driving tests and the number of "best overall" awards won, with bonus points depending on mileage travelled to the event.

This accounts for Scottish Section not figuring in the final placings since no Scottish member finished in the top ten. In general it is necessary to compete at at least one other Section's Day, although Bill Gore for example managed to scrape in, albeit with a first in concours and driving test at Knebworth and with a useful mileage bonus. E. W. Chilcott of Scottish Section missed being in the top ten by only one point.

The top ten for 1979, with the points gained are as follows:

		Points
1st J. M. Hey	Speed 20	47
2nd G. Exton	TA 14	35
3rd C. Holt	TA 14	29
4th A. R. Buck	Speed 25	28
5th J. E. Strugnell	12/50	26
6th A. Blacow and J. J. Hills	Speed 20	23
	TD 21	23
8th N. A. Vann	TA 14	22
9th S. Harris	TD 21	19
10th Julie Blacow and W. Gore	Speed 20	18
	12/70	18

John Hey wins the award for best overall individual performance in the year and Julie Blacow (again!) takes the George Wiltshire Award for best overall performance by a lady (to be held for one year).

All awards will be presented at International Alvis Day at Knebworth.

For 1980 events the following members cars are deemed to be Master Class cars for Concours purposes. This means that the member with the car listed has won one first or two second class awards at Alvis Days during the past three seasons. If you are on and think that you should not be, or *vice versa*, please let Comp. Sec. know. Special considerations apply if a Master Class car changes ownership, so if a change of ownership does occur, it would be helpful to let Comp. Sec. know for his records.

## Master Class Cars for 1980 Concours

D. H. Bailey	TA 21
W. Bateman	Speed 25
J. Betterton	Speed 25
A. R. Buck	Speed 25
A. R. Buck	TA 14
A. C. Bunton	TD 21
R. Byford	TC 21
G. Exton	TA 14
I. R. Francis	Speed 25
P. L. Glover	12/50

W. Gore	12/70
Katherine Grant-Wilson	3-litre
K. Hardaker	Silver Eagle
J. M. Hey-	Speed 25
J. H. Hinton	12/50
J. Holder	TE 21
R. Jolley	Speed 20/4.3
M. Lock	TD 21
M. Lock	Firebird
Bob Moore	TC 21
J. Moore	TC 21
P. Osmond	12/50
P. Osmond	Speed 25
C. Sayer	TD 21
N. J. H. Simpson	TE 21
J. E. Strugnell	12/50
M. Smith	TD 21
P. Talbot	4.3

As we enter 1980 we embark on an anniversary year for Alvis so what about a special effort to get out and about with the Red Triangle? The marque has not gone without notice in recent times and with a bit of effort we could make this a bumper year. The Six Hour Relay is some way off, but what about the VSCC Pomeroy Trophy Meeting at Silverstone on 1st March? Whether you compete or support you will not be on your own. From what I've heard there should be a good Alvis entry for this year. Comp. Sec. will actually be entering his own Alvis - no, not Healey Alvis or anything created over a pint of beer but his refurbished Speed 20 saloon - and it would be a good start to the year for an Alvis to be in the money here.

*Ad nauseam* I have predicted that an Alvis should be able to win the Pomeroy. Well I understand that one did in the mid-fifties in the hands of a Mr. Richards. Does anyone have any further information on this?

At race meetings there is an increasing tendency for competing Alvis men to group together in the paddock. This has a number of advantages and presents an impressive picture. At Vintage Silverstone the biggest group is on the left hand side of the paddock just past the footbridge. Look for Clink's "Equipe Maritime" transporter, but leave a bit of room for him!

DAVID ROUSE

## South-West Inn Tour

### The Final Day

After a somewhat hectic and late night at the Foxhunters, Saturday dawned bright and sunny and we wished we had time to walk along the beach and watch the breakers relentlessly poun-

ding the smooth, golden sands. It was not to be - but we all enjoyed a first-class breakfast, packed our cases and loaded up the cars for the run down to Cheltenham.

I was given the opportunity of driving the Bullock's TE with p.a.s. and found this different but once accustomed quickly stopped over-correcting and upon returning to my own TE found the steering very heavy, but it's something you get used to.

There was some talk the night before of linking up with the main group from the Foxhunters, but we found the traffic heavy and apart from sighting the tail end of an 'Alvis en route to Barnstaple we were soon on our own in what appeared to be a traffic jam all the way to Taunton. We stopped at a local pub for lunch with David Clarke but once on the M5 David shot off not to be seen again until Cheltenham was reached.

We found the motorway journey easy, the TE running at a steady 70 mph and Cheltenham reached shortly after 3 pm. It would appear that most of the party had gone off into the town but the Morris' TE dhc plus caravan had successfully completed the run around and was all present, along with Jim's Alvis Healey out for the first time for two years or so and looking as good as ever.

The Golden Valley is a very good hotel, the rooms up to a high standard. One or two things needed sorting out prior to the function but everyone was helpful and everything had been taken care of so, in company with Jim and Trudi, we motored into Cheltenham and found the place almost full of Alvis. We squeezed in between the Rainer's TA 14 in company with a Speed 25 and another three-litre and enjoyed a pleasant walk around this delightful old town, even though the centre was jam-packed with people.

Back at the hotel things were getting busy and Alvis cars were appearing, depositing luggage, parking alongside friends from the same Works covering 1924 to 1966. It was good to see a number of friends again who were with us at Sherborne plus a number who kindly joined the party for that particular evening. Dr. Millington and his delightful family were in residence, the children disappointed to learn that because of illness the Holder family were unable at the very last minute to join us. Ken Day took fourteen hours to cross the Channel in his boat (yacht!) and missed the function. John and Nadine Fox gave it a miss as John had to be in Manchester on Monday morning early, whilst Mike Cummins having been without his wife all week decided to rush home just down the road, thought they might return but didn't. Thus we were one table short. Nevertheless, the company was as usual very good, we

drank in the hotel bar until our private bar opened up and subsequently sat down to a good meal followed by dancing until 1 am. Perhaps we were all just a little tired – it had after all been a hectic week with late nights, early mornings and plenty to do, we had all covered a lot of ground both in the car and on foot – but things certainly did not reach the heights of the Chateau Impney or at Hereford, but then our numbers were fewer. We enjoyed the dancing, the band was good and the bar provided a fairly good service until the shutters were pulled down shortly after twelve. Not in fact what we expected and it was quickly opened again but without a friendly manager to keep it going until we went to bed it finally closed shortly before 1 am. No-one stayed up late, although several were strolling around the floodlit gardens and talking beside the parked cars until the early hours.

Sunday was warm and sunny. Kit and Den were conducting a conversation from their ground floor window overlooking the car park, the dogs were taken for a run and then it was breakfast. Most of us arrived at the same time and caused havoc to the system – semi-self-service eggs and bacon. I doubt if they expected over sixty people to suddenly demand full English breakfast all at around 9 am.

Goodbyes were exchanged, further examination of the two beautiful 12/50s – the Rainers were to spend a further week or so in England before returning to Sweden, John Ward who completed the entire trip in his early Triumph Herald left for Slough, Chris Holt's TA 14 dhc plus boat went back to the north along with the Blacow's Speed 25 and the Morris's TE and caravan, whilst Derek Bradbury and Robin Moore were returning to Dorset and Devon. The Bullocks departed for Nottingham and the remainder of us generally headed south – and so it was all over. Yes, it was different and I hope you all enjoyed your holiday. Staying in local inns can be fun and can also be very crowded. Most, if not all, of the hotels were of reasonable standard, we did not experience any petrol problems and, as far as I am aware, all returned home safely.

Thank you for helping to make up the party, it was fun and well worth the effort. I appreciate the help I received throughout the Tour from Brenda who seldom knew just where I was except when driving the car. Thanks to David Clarke for keeping us company and to all of you who some time or another said nice things and bought me a drink! Cheers!

ERIC OAKMAN



*Christmas Dinner at the Fantail Restaurant*



# Reflections in Retirement

from A. F. Rivers Fletcher

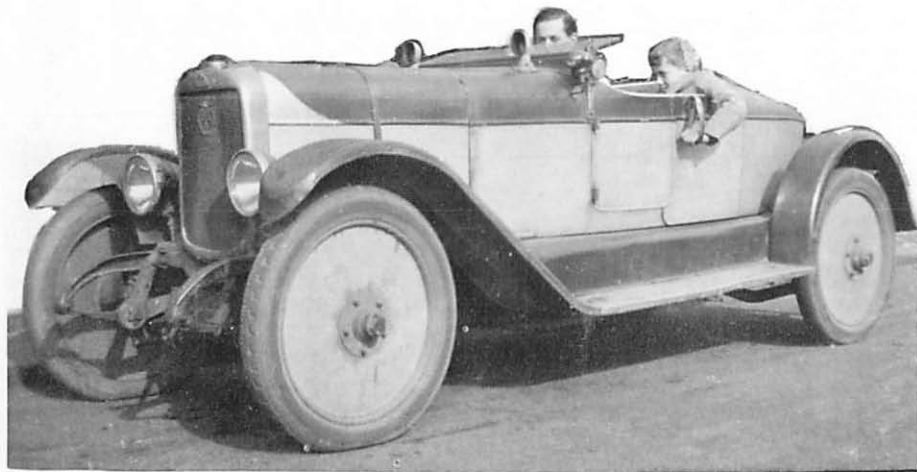
## Part I: Motoring Memories

In the case of the latest contributor to this series the title might justifiably be regarded as somewhat of a misnomer. A youthful 67, he remains an active figure on the national motoring scene where he combines successfully his sporting proclivities with his business interests. Further involvement next season is already being planned in cars as diverse as MG and Bugatti, apart altogether from his well known Speed 25 with Speed 20 body in 2-seater form. In view of his long association with the Alvis marque an attempt will be made to do justice to the subject of the article in two instalments, one dealing with the pre-war and the other with the post-war period.

Rivers' earliest recollections of Alvis cars date from 1923 when as a schoolboy enthusiast he spent his pocket-money on motoring magazines and read them avidly. The Duck's-back of the period is recalled as an extremely attractive motor

car. Living in Hertfordshire at that time he was able to catch the occasional glimpse of this model in its natural habitat at speed on the Great North Road. His excitement can be imagined when his boyhood hero, Major Harvey, won the 200-mile Race at Brooklands in an Alvis car. The son of a friend of the family owned a 10/30 side-valve Duck's-back about that time which provided Rivers with his first taste of sports car motoring. In those relatively spacious days a less jaundiced view was taken of essays by the younger generation into the gentle art of driving on public roads, though he was stopped more than once by the local police sergeant for 'routine checks'.

After leaving school he joined Bentley Motors and began a lifelong career in the world of motoring which was soon to embrace the unforgettable experience of acting as riding mechanic to Malcolm Campbell at Brooklands.



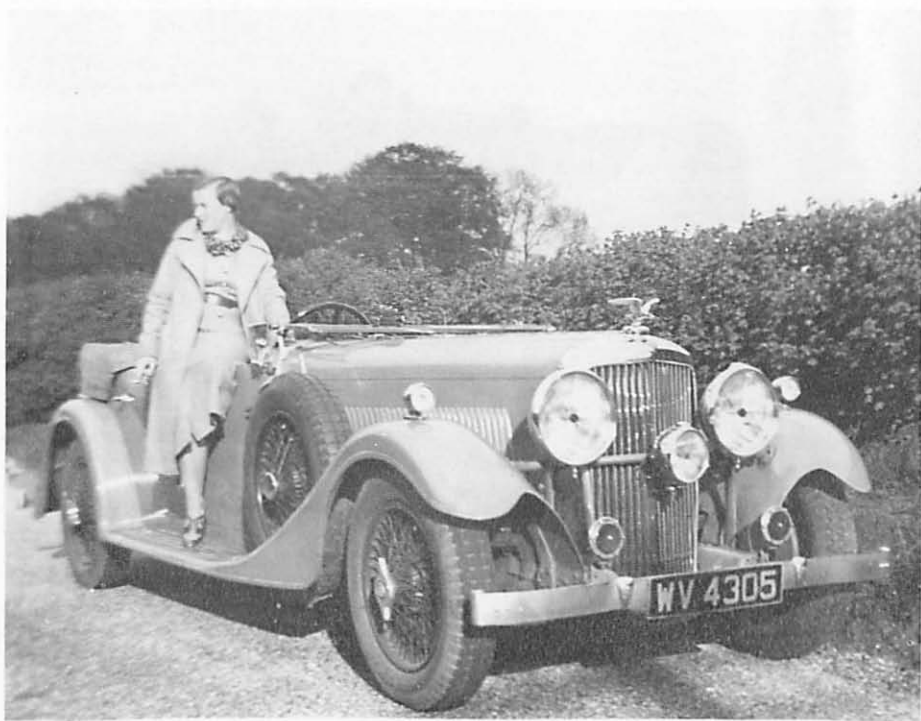
Other notable personalities of the day whom he saw in action included Woolf Barnato and 'Tim' Birkin of Bentley fame, and also our Patron, 'Sammy' Davis, whom above all he found both helpful and encouraging, though he considered the lines and general appearance of the FWD Alvis singularly unattractive.

The subsequent liquidation of Bentley Motors saw him temporarily unemployed, so that he looked initially for a livelihood in the direction of the firm of MG. However, after a while he joined a company which was resuscitated from the former Bentley Sales Department and which also acted as agents for Alvis under Charles Follett who lived, incidentally, not far away in Hertfordshire. He was thus enabled to re-kindle his earlier enthusiasm for the 'Master of the King's Highway', as contemporary publicity described the car, and particularly admired the Speed 20 model which was being introduced in the early 1930s.

After the demise of the Bentley concern it was perhaps natural that their driver Birkin should also turn towards Alvis for a suitable mount in which to continue his racing career. Accordingly the Hon. Brian Lewis (later Lord Essenden) ordered a Speed 20 from the Follett concern which

Birkin was entered to drive at Le Mans. Unfortunately its preparation was not completed in time for the race, so that Birkin teamed up instead with Earl Howe to compete in an Alfa Romeo. The car was subsequently taken over by Dr. Benjafield and Sir Ronald Gunter and was entered for the International Tourist Trophy race in 1933. It is sad to record that on the same weekend Birkin had an arm burnt while racing a Maserati on the Continent and died within a week, probably from septicaemia.

To return to the TT race, Benjafield blew up the Speed 20 fairly early on – although stripped and lightened for racing, it was still very much a sports car. The engine was rebuilt and the car sold, though it turned up later in the showroom where Rivers used it for a time as a demonstrator. The wheel finally turned full circle when Charles Follett sold it to Sir Ronald Gunter! Rivers admired the car immensely and vowed that he would own it or a replica one day. His personal transport about that time is described as an 'Old Banger', supplemented by the occasional use of a company car. One of the finest of these was an early Crested Eagle fitted with a pre-selector gearbox.



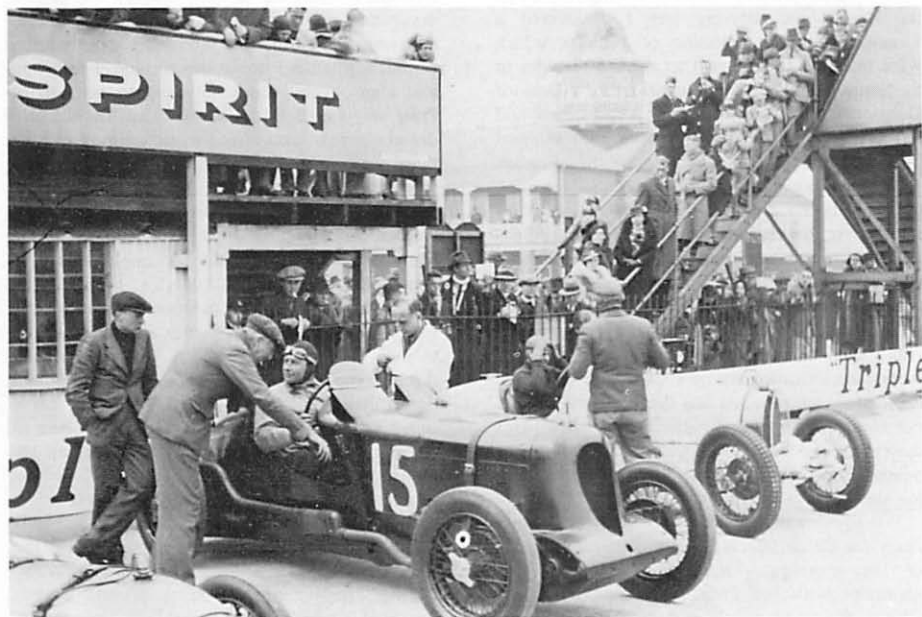
Amongst other positions held at that time was that of motoring consultant to Gainsborough Films in Elstree, sited conveniently near to his home. He was paid apparently for giving advice which was seldom if ever taken, on matters such as the authenticity of cars and motoring situations depicted on celluloid. In this post he was occasionally expected also to drive some of the vehicles featured, heavily helmeted and bafflingly begoggled, rather in the manner of the stunt-man of today.

In 1932 Gaumont British decided to make a musical entitled "Car of Dreams", the star of which was to be a Rolls Royce drophead coupe: also featured was John Mills as a song and dance man. The footage was to include a sequence filmed at Brooklands against a background of the theme song "Goodbye Trouble", Rivers' responsibility being to obtain suitable cars complete with 'singing' drivers. To this end he invited members of the Brooklands Automobile Racing Club to take part in the motoring jamboree, with free teas and expenses thrown in for good measure. Lured by such blandishments no fewer than 250 drivers and their cars turned up at the Track on an idyllic summer day. With cameras everywhere, both near the circuit and on the cars themselves, the plan was for the participants to drive round seven abreast, at a steady speed of 60 mph, and with no overtaking. Scarcely surprisingly, the proposed procession developed rapidly into a plausible imitation of a Grand Prix, with many of the cars

being driven flat out round the famous banking, rather to the discomfiture of the families in their back seats. After three unsuccessful attempts the project was finally abandoned.

Later on Rivers joined Raymond Mays and Peter Berthon on the ERA development programme and also recalls travelling in Speed 20, Speed 25 and 4.3 Alvis models with Charles Follett. One of his friends, Reggie Allback, owned a 4.3 Charlesworth saloon which they took to Donington for a drive round the track. Follett had a service station in Hammersmith which was run by his son Pat, and the two young men became great friends. He used to go to Brooklands to watch Follett senior race his Speed 20 and frequently won money by betting on him at the track. As indicated previously in this series, the car was meticulously prepared by Dick Oates. It was invariably driven flat out, but the improvements regularly effected by this excellent mechanic used to confound "Ebbey" the timekeeper who was responsible for allocating the handicaps. This car was regularly driven from home to the Track and back again afterwards, rather than taken in vans like some of its contemporaries: the current outcry against trailering to events is not without precedent. It also appeared at Shelsley Walsh where it proved heavy but inherently stable and well balanced, its standard gear ratios quite suitable for hill-climbing.

Rivers also knew and respected the 12/50-12/60 single-seater which was raced at



Brooklands, shown here next to a T37 Bugatti and with the Hon. Brian Lewis at the wheel having a last-minute word with R. F. Oates. This car was also driven by Bill Humphries and Alex Hutton. CLF 399, a 2-door Vanden Plas Speed 20, shows

the influence on the design of the bodywork exerted by Charles Follett, pictured standing behind the car during the 1936 RAC Rally. Another of the car's drivers was Lord de Clifford. (See Bulletin 311.) *[to be continued ...]*

## South with Blacks

by Chris Bird

For some considerable time Peter and Marianne Black had been saying they intended moving to France. Each time they mentioned this those nearby murmured appropriately and changed the subject, knowing full well that Peter and Marianne are always having wild ideas. But this particular one persisted, and eventually when they announced that their house had been sold it seemed that they might after all be serious. Just in case they were, a Farewell Dinner was arranged by Clink, and by the time it happened they were almost on their way. Earlier Marianne had mentioned that it would be helpful if I could drive a car down to France for them, and on the basis at the time that the whole thing was still one of Marianne's wilder dreams and would never actually happen I readily agreed. By the time of the farewell dinner however it began to seem a serious matter after all, and I quickly arranged some holiday. We were due to meet at Colvin Gunn's house, near Dunmow where some of the Cars were temporarily stored following the sale of the house, and arriving late I discovered a somewhat motley collection of vehicles which were intended to transport us some 800 miles to the South of France. These consisted of a Bedford Dormobile, a 1600 Guilia Sprint Alfa Romeo, and an elderly Ford Anglia, the latter two without most of the documents which the English Authorities nowadays consider essential for road use, and the Ford Anglia being also full of Alvis spares. For this reason I was detailed to the Bedford which was something like legal. Being now foreign residents Peter and Marianne drove the other two, rather fortunately as it happened, since halfway to Dover the police took exception to the Alfa's lack of lights and after demanding various particulars indicated not only that there would be no further action taken but that the Alfa should not be driven again that night. Peter's subsequent description of himself giving particulars to the policewoman concerned made up to some extent for the aggravation she caused!

We eventually reached Dover and boarded a Ferry for Calais which arrived in the early hours of the morning. There followed a heated argument with the French Customs as to the reasons for three people including husband and

wife going to the same place for a holiday in separate cars and carrying substantial amounts of apparently rusty iron! Peter's explanation was eventually accepted and we started on the long journey to the South, pausing for a brief sleep in the Dormobile near Boulogne.

All went well until we reached Paris where I was deputed to take over the Alfa despite mild protestations about being unused to a 5-speed gearbox, left-hand drive etc. After very few miles the attraction of this car became apparent – quick steering, positive gear change, willing engine, and confident road holding – and I happily faced the prospect of the Paris traffic. This however was more than we had bargained for, and halfway round the Peripherique we became separated. My own impression was of being in the midst of a nightmare where I had no means of extracting myself from circulating forever along a road with ever increasing traffic squeezing in from all sides. Eventually one of the turnings off seemed to have roughly the correct destination on its sign and I paused at the central reservation for Marianne who soon appeared and confidently headed down this turning. I followed and after several miles having seen no sign of Peter we waited in the service area for him. He did not appear, and after further anxious waiting there was no alternative but to press on South which we did.

After a further day's driving we neared the Rhone Valley and the road led over the Ardecche Mountains where I was able to sample the sort of conditions the Alfa was built for, keeping well ahead of a couple of Frenchmen up the twisting road using the excellent gearbox and road holding to their full extent. Eventually we were driving through the Town next to Peter and Marianne's own village of Pujaut when I heard my name called and there was Peter having a quiet beer in the sun. He was apparently ahead of us all the time, having had an eventful trip. After collecting supplies of local wine from the Supermarket (both cheap and very good) we continued to their new home and unloaded.

Very soon it was time for dinner and Peter selected his Firefly from the stock of cars already delivered, which transported us to nearby

Villeneuve. The narrow streets of this old village combined with the Alvis' 40 feet turning circle made for some intricate manoeuvring, but this was executed with surprisingly few cross words and we dined well.

The following day was for sightseeing, partly countryside, partly Roman remains, but more particularly vintage cars. Of these one "stable" comprised two Amilcars, one a six-cylinder, Guyot Special and Georges Irat racing cars, the former incorporating a blown sleeve-valve engine if you please! Subsequently we came upon a museum whose proper exhibits including two Bugattis, six cylinder Amilcar, single-seater Salmson etc. were almost secondary to those round the back either being restored or awaiting restoration. Too numerous to mention in detail they included Grand Prix Bugattis, many Amilcars, Salmsons, Lombard, Rolland-Pilain, Chenard Walcker etc., etc. An Aladdin's Cave if ever there was one! If somewhat scattered there is no doubt France hides some of the most interesting cars possible. Further, the owners have the advantage of a pleasantly carefree atmosphere on the roads, and even Grand Prix cars can be driven without any feeling of guilt.

The next day it was time for me to return home in the Ford. Peter spent some time making it fit for the journey which it eventually accomplished

with surprising ease, after various rubbish bins by the roadside yielded sufficient materials to hold the exhaust together! The Paris traffic was at least as thick as before, but without the need to keep someone else in sight it presented surprisingly few problems. Almost the only one was when, having found the correct "Porte" leading out of the Peripherique, I was in the midst of congratulating myself just as I came to a sign saying "Lille and Brussels" neither of which towns I had contemplated until then. The resultant indecision forced me on to a road leading into the midst of Paris where with some difficulty on the "Pave" which threatened to shake the remains of the exhaust to pieces and amidst abuse from bus and other drivers, I executed a somewhat illegal U-turn back to the correct road. The trip to Calais was then easy, but the Ferry which appeared to be already and waiting was not quite so convenient after all, the French having surreptitiously put their clocks back one hour. The long wait however ensured that we arrived in England after dark, so decently hiding the decrepit Ford from officials gaze for the drive back to Dunmow.

Generally a most enjoyable trip, and we hope to hear more of Peter and Marianne's exploits from time to time.

## Technical Talk

### IMPROVED BRAKING ON TA 14

*by the late Albert Armitt  
(reprinted from Bulletin No. 165)*

Whilst the efficiency of the brakes on the TA 14 is quite good, it must be agreed that the effort required at the pedal is quite considerable compared with modern standards. For a few years now I have had a strong desire to modify these brakes to reduce the pedal pressure and also increase the efficiency.

The only known method to date is to convert to hydraulics and fit a standard hydraulic servo unit, a very expensive job. However, I have now devised a means of using a Clayton Dewandre cylinder Type T7, Series 2084. Servo No. 217 and control valve which can be hooked up to the existing Girling rod brakes. These two items cost me 30 shillings and were taken from a Speed 25 or 4.3. There must be quite a number of these units still available from scrap cars or it may still be possible to obtain them from the makers.

A few sleepless nights were spent in the pit under my 14 gazing up at the underside of the chassis. Taking measurements and details enabled me to design, make and fit the necessary linkage so that these units would give servo assistance to the existing rods. The results of this modification have proved to be really excellent and worthwhile, fingertip pressure on the brake pedal for the first inch is sufficient to apply the brakes by means of the servo cylinder. Further depression of the pedal gives additional braking on top of that given by the servo cylinder and really puts the stoppers on. For the benefit of interested owners the method used can be followed from the drawing and description given below and if carried out by DIY enthusiasts the total cost will be negligible.

The servo cylinder was bolted to the underside



# "Spliced in Style"

featuring the cars of

The Editor

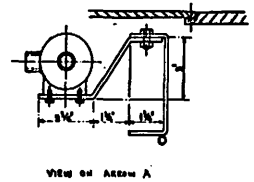
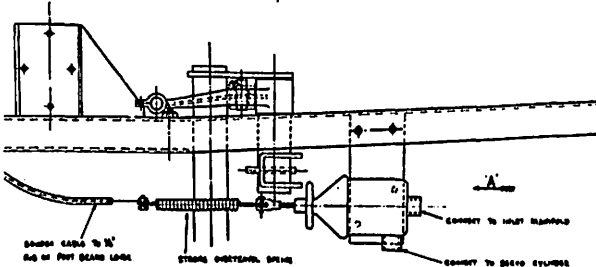
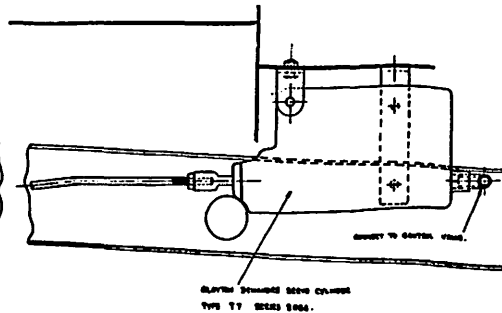
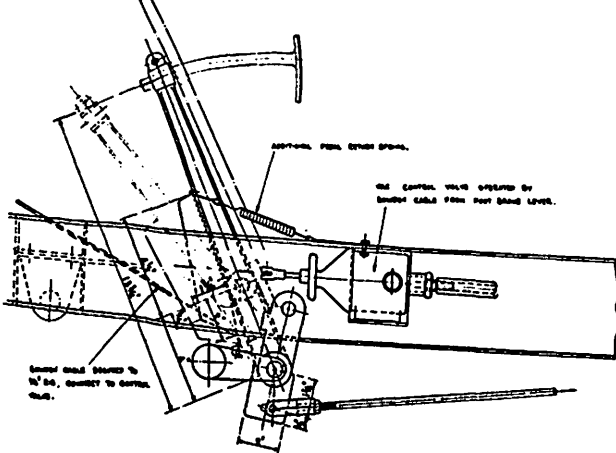


## The President, and



## The East Anglian Events Secretary and Chairman





TA 14. SERVO ASSISTED GIRLING ROD BRAKES.

of the rear passenger seat tray as far to the offside of the car as possible using two  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. x  $1/8$  in. steel strips and  $3/8$  in. bolts. Place the front end of the cylinder hard up against the chassis cross tube to take the thrust when the vacuum is applied. In this position the  $3/8$  in. rod from the cylinder to the foot brake lever just passes over the top of the cross tube without fouling. This rod should be about 4 ft. 9 in. long, screwed  $3/8$  in. BSF  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. up each end, fitted with lock-nuts. The foot brake lever is removed from the chassis and cut through with a hacksaw at exactly the position shown, which ensures that the control valve is opened at the first movement of the foot lever.

A  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. dia. boss  $3/4$  in. thick is welded to the upper portion, fitted with an oilite bush for  $1/2$  in. pin. The lower half having two  $3/4$  in. plates welded on to form a fork for the boss on the other portion, drill for  $1/2$  in. pin; the original length of the lever must be maintained exactly. A  $3/4$  in. plate rib welded on each side of the lever provides the necessary stops, the front rib being shaped to give  $1/4$  in. free movement at the bottom as shown. Another 2 in. x  $3/4$  in. plate lug welded to the underside of the lever at the correct angle is connected to the  $3/8$  in. cylinder operating rod by

means of a suitable fork link and  $5/16$  in. pin.

A  $5/8$  in. x  $5/16$  in. slot is required in the lug for this pin to allow full unimpeded travel of the foot lever if necessary without vacuum on the cylinder.

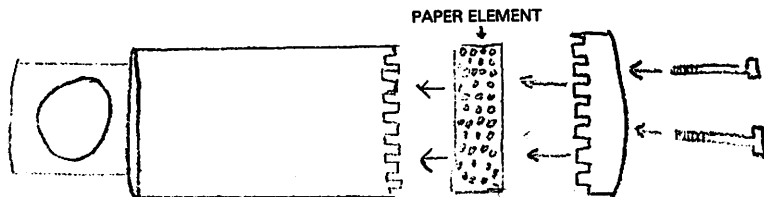
Remove the wooden floor board in front of the driver's seat and bolt a 4 in. wide x  $1/8$  in. thick bracket to the chassis with two  $5/16$  in. bolts, securing the control valve to the bracket with two  $1/4$  in. s'screws in the position shown. A very strong overtravel tension spring about 3 in. long is attached to the control valve rod so that the valve fully opens before the spring stretches. Now connect this spring to the  $1/4$  in. rib on the upper portion of the foot lever by means of a Bowden cable about 18 in. long. The overtravel spring is essential because the control valve only opens  $1/4$  in. and any further movement of the cable will merely break the cable or alter the setting which must be accurate.

A lighter tension spring about 4 in. long is attached to the chassis and upper portion of hinged brake lever to maintain the control valve in a closed position when brakes are not applied. Finally connect the control valve to the servo cylinder with  $3/8$  in. bore hose and to the inlet manifold with  $5/16$  in. bore hose which will withstand vacuum without the walls collapsing.

## TA 14

### PURIFICATION

by Hans Rainer



I have for quite some time been considering the idea of fitting an extra oil filter and an air cleaner on my TA 14.

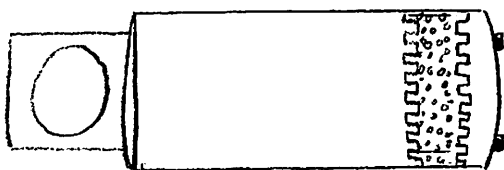
A while ago I had a severe engine breakdown so I had to dismantle the whole engine. When I examined the main bearings I was convinced that an oil filter is needed. The engine had not done more than 12,500 miles since the main bearings were renewed. They were already full of scratches because the oil had not been sufficiently cleaned by the original oil strainer which lets through far too much pollution. Perhaps I ought to add that I have always changed the oil at the regular intervals recommended in the instruction manual.

I contacted David Michie at Red Triangle to get his opinion about an extra oil filter. He did not think it would be possible to fit a full flow modern type oil filter to this engine but a by-pass filter could be fitted, taking the oil from the external feed pipe up to the rocker shaft and returning the oil from the filter through the rocker shaft.

Concerning air cleaners I think that clean inlet air is just as important as clean oil. If you let the dust in the air get into the cylinders it will cause unnecessary wear on the cylinder walls and shorten the life of the engine. The original air filter fitted on the TA 14 is more of an air silencer than a cleaner. I have modified this cleaner and made it possible to fit a paper filter.

I am quite fussy myself with sticking to the original when restoring motor cars, so I wanted somehow to keep the original air silencer and not deviate too much from the original. So, on the original air silencer I cut off the top part, modified things slightly inside and thereby made it possible to fit a paper element. The air silencer/cleaner became slightly longer but the modification did not change the original look too much. I used a modern Volvo paper filter, used on the Volvos with twin SU carburettors.

When fitting the paper element I had to make sure that there was no air leakage anywhere. If



there was, I had to seal it off with rubber. One has to be careful not to fit too big an air filter, otherwise there would not be enough room to close the bonnet.

### FUEL PUMP MODIFICATION

by Brian D'Arcy-Drake

Rather like the old human frame, the Speed 25 is fairly well equipped with everything in duplicate; dual ignition, dual batteries, dual petrol pumps, dual exhausts, dual horns and so on. In the matter of the SU electric fuel pumps it struck me that surely they must have been intended as 'main' and 'standby' for each is capable of pumping something like 20 gallons per hour. They are always linked in tandem though with the result that neither works hard and finally one becomes lazy.

I decided to alter mine into a true main and reserve set-up. A switch was fitted against the bulkhead, not metal to metal though, and the power line and a lead to one pump is taken off one of the switch terminals. Another lead is taken from the other switch terminal to the other pump and the two pumps linked by an earth wire via the terminals provided on the pump bodies.

Thus with the switch in the OFF position, the main pump will tick away merrily. In the ON position both pumps will blast away, or if one pump has expired, the reserve one will ensure a plentiful supply of the jolly old 'whatsit'. If you wish, an added little sophistication is a pilot light which if wired to the reserve terminal post on your switch and earthed - will glow as a reminder that you are running on that pump.



CUT OFF  
HERE

## Quaint Old British Customs

7 pm - dead on time - for car ferries run like trains - we came alongside and then astern into the corner of the ferry dock. Drivers on the car deck closed their doors and prepared to start their motors. I hoped mine would fire first time for it is embarrassing to hold up a disembarking column and then to submit to a push in front of a long outward-bound queue. The stern doors opened and the ramp was lowered and registered with the quay. The mate signalled and fifty cars traversed the link-span and hard round to the left and into the Customs baggage shed. Four columns shepherded by the representative of the Company under the direction of a Customs Officer advanced more slowly now. We had no goods on which we would have to pay duty and no goods subject to prohibition so we displayed our green sticker which authorised us to pass through (or, more accurately, as we found, into) the channel set aside for special concession of non-examination. I did what every other driver was doing - I kept my eyes on the two-foot distance between me and the car ahead and tried to comply with the urgent signs to keep going. A young Customs Officer was operating a gate like those used to send sheep through a dip (and learned later that this was precisely how he saw his duties). Was he pointing at me? Young though he was, there was menace in his look - or so it seemed for he was about to close the gate. Customs gates open only *towards* cars and the flimsy TD panels could not have resisted a slight scrape. He signalled me to go to the herring-bone area where I was halted in a bay furnished with a bench and a desk.

I rather thought he would explain in terms such as "Sorry you are the one-in-ten we pick out" but he didn't; he just operated the gate again in favour of all the other passengers.

I was interested and I hoped not to be unduly delayed. My wife was a little piqued that we alone should have been selected for scrutiny. The boys were agog and had to be rebuked for such comments as "Is it in the boot, Daddy?" A more senior officer came to the car "You have displayed the green sticker. Are you aware that this, in law, is a declaration that you have no more than the statutory allowance of dutiable goods in the car?" "Yes." "Then please let me see them." I had been prudent enough to put all the bottles and cartons together as I supposed all honest travellers do and they were soon produced and set aside on the bench. "Will you please get all your passengers out?" I was asked. This done, each was required to identify their own items - even odds and ends. The officer examined all the

baggage - even toys - and showed suspicious interest in drawings and notepads. "I'll get you to lay out the contents of the boot on the bench", he told me and this done, he asked "Would you like to give me a hand to get the seats out?" - saves scratching two-handed". He had been joined by a colleague - a one-ringer, young, but very hard-bitten. The seat backs were laid out upside down and the spring space soon examined. Freed from the seats the interior did not take long. Carpets were up and the customary apertures readily opened; the under-fascia space examined. The doors were done and I wondered about the door trim but I need not have done. The young officer asked "Are we doing the doors here or in the workshop?" I became distinctly anxious - they meant business.

The next ferry had arrived - its passengers come and gone - and we were still here. The officer replied, "Yes do them here, put the trim on the bench and then we'll get her on the lift. Don't forget to bring the handbook." I thought I knew my way round the car but I had not seen this sort of speed. The pins were out and the handles off in no time. Together with the screws of the aluminium trim they were put into tins while the handles were put on cloths. The fact that the spaces thus disclosed had not revealed any goods did not prevent a close examination of the marks and dust in there. There were pointed out to me marks in pencil which I had never seen and fluff which I had to admit was alien to the area. "We'll leave out the seats and push her up to the workshop now," I was told - and perhaps you would stay, Sir. Mrs. Hampshire might like to go for a cup of tea". I agreed. A very personable young officer was called "Is your car on the dock?" "Yes, Sir" "I'll get you to drive Mrs. Hampshire and her boys up the road and see if you can fix up a nice tea. Clear?" "Yes". The young chap handed them into his car observing that he had no doubt that time and circumstance would enable him to have an Alvis one day.

I was told "You'll stay with us of course and we'll get her into the shop" It seemed expected that I might want to help and quite clear that I must be present at the examination. We pushed her down and I was asked "Shall we have a cup of tea?" I concurred and he locked up the shop and put the key into his pocket; we returned to the office where the contents of the car were in the care of a young officer who had the foresight to make tea. "Please sit down. Sugar?" A pause and then "You take this calmly." I replied "What can I do? I suppose you have good reason and the authority to make this search?"



"Yes, ample but have a biscuit and we'll look at your handbook; haven't got a manual for this model." I picked up the handbook from the papers on the table and I must have looked puzzled for he at once asked "Capacity of the tank – still the same?" "Why, yes" I faltered, and I was told, "My young chaps will soon find out." Conversation was relaxed; about my holiday; about ships, the performance of the car; the qualities of the marque; the service provided by Red Triangle. The dates the car had been serviced and where were mentioned casually as though to make me rise. It only served to puzzle me. Did these chaps know everything? "Want a pair of overalls?" I was asked. I said, "Thank you" and then, "Off we go, then", I was told.

I was taken to the workshop where the door was closed against sightseers and a young chap brought a funnel and some simply calibrated cans – very clean. "Switch on". The senior looked at the fuel gauge which read 'half'. "Drain her, then", and the tank was drained into the cans. "Six gallons, guvnor" was the call. "Switch on." I obliged. "Empty." "Front splash plates, guvnor?" "Yes please". Someone put his hand on the hubcap and I ventured, "May I fetch my copper hammer?" "Thanks, we have one. I expect we strike off more wheels in a week than you do in a year – no need to worry". With the wheels slack the car was raised and the wheels struck off. When the splash plates were removed – they came off very smoothly – the servo system seemed to be the object of attention. A piece of sellotape and then a piece of nylon line were handed out. "Like to have a look?" I was asked in a deceptively polite tone which, in reality meant, "Look in and we'll study your reaction". A young officer rolled in five wheels which I didn't know had been away. "All the same and all correct, Sir" he said. The smiling answer to my unspoken query was "Weighed them". "Do you know the weights of all wheels with a variety of tyre?" "Not quite, but if we have one tyre off and it conceals nothing then, if the other wheels weigh the same as the first, all can be passed: provided they are the same – which they are on fast cars". I was reminded to look at the servo system which was the same as that on other TDs which I had seen and I said so. "What's the tape for?" I was asked and I said that I didn't know. Nobody spoke. Then the officer i/c: "Just finish off beneath and then get the wheels on. When that's done ask Mr. Hampshire to check his hub caps. I was uneasy for this was the second time he had used my name and it had not appeared on any document available to him. Had they been waiting for me? I asked "Did you know I was coming?" and got the reply I might

have expected "We know beforehand everyone and every registration mark on the ship" but it was not what I had meant. "Like to bang up your own wheels?" I took the hammer. "Now we'll go through the tools together and see that the battery has the full number of connected cells and we're through". I said "What if my anti-freeze is gin?" "It isn't – we've tried it" – so much for my attempt at humour. "Right lads, push her back and get the trim on the doors and then the seats in – but one of you make tea first, please."

Tea was brought and we sat in the office. The officer said, "By the time Mrs. Hampshire gets back the car will be just as she left it – except all the toffee papers are gone. Now, we don't need to offer justification for what we do and what delays are occasioned – if we act unreasonably we are liable to be punished like anyone else – but you have been pretty understanding and are now free to go..." "I must say I was a bit put out at first, but..." "...but we have done no damage and have been pretty quick." "Yes, can you tell me why such an examination?" "You bought this car on the 26th November, 1966 from Eastham Carriage Company. Its previous owner was an associate of criminals and took it abroad ten times each year on every occasion using a different port. As soon as you bought it you took it abroad to the same area and also came back through a port you had not embarked in".

"So I was suspect?" "Yes".

"What if I had had something?" "Your car would have been seized and you charged".

"Have you the power of seizure?" "Yes".

"Surely this is something new?" "No".

"How long have you had these powers?"

"More than a thousand years".

"When the Romans left Britain?" – sarcastically. "Well, about five hundred years before Chaucer became a Customs Officer. Now let me pour you another cup of tea".

There was a tap on the door and a young officer asked if he could bring in my wife and children. The senior stood and drew out a chair, saying "Did they get tea?" "Yes, Sir". My boys cried, "We had tea on the Queen Mary – supper really" "Is that right?" I asked my wife. "Yes, and a tour of the ship with this officer".

So I was free to go. I was late but I could hardly complain. My boys were full of ice-cream and petit fours and had seen the QM engine room while my wife had toured the ship and seen one of the galleys. Now someone was saying "If you are ready Sir, follow me out of town so that you don't miss your way".

# Applying the Kiss of Life

By Brian D'Arcy-Drake

The engine of the Speed 25 having been finally assembled and everything connected, the next job was to tow it, to turn it over, and then to start it, hopefully!

The morning of Sunday, 20th May, 1979 dawned bright and clear; so clear was it that I was able to take photographs at 6 am. I was up virtually at first light and rolled "Old Thirsty" out of the garage, down the drive and into the road. Previously, I strapped on a platform over the rear wheels and once the chassis was out on the road I loaded on pre-filled fertilizer sacks of sand. I plonked on about 6 cwt. the object being to assist the rear wheels to bite when they took the strain of trying to turn the engine.

Bill Grist and Musketeer Norman turned up and the 25 was hitched to Bill's Sunbeam Rapier on a solid bar (see Bulletin No. 309 if you are interested) and off we went. I hoped and prayed nothing would jam, fall off, burst or whatever,

for anything like that after all the work of restoration would have been as desirable as a butcher's pencil. At about three knots I dropped in the clutch in top gear, the Rapier groaned and gave up the unequal struggle. So we removed the spark plugs and tried again. This time the 25 flipped over like a good'un. But the air being exhausted through the plug holes whistled and six of them all chirping away sounded like breakfast time in an aviary. We stopped at the end of the road just to check that all was well and that I hadn't fallen off my perch (sorry about that!). An early morning mum dashed out of her house saying that she had not expected the delivery of manure this early and could we dump it to the left of the drive please? We carefully explained that appearances are sometimes deceptive and although it might look as though we were IN IT, we were not delivering IT.

"Forward" was the cry, so we rumbled and whistled out on to the A38. The tow was about



eleven miles long and we stopped intermittently just to check that all was OK. The block became steadily warmer and at one stage we nearly seized the engine – we happened to stop just at the right moment. The cause of the hot spot was diagnosed as the first camshaft bearing according to “Chief Engineer” Derek Fynn. We returned home, unhitched, nearly demolished a gatepost (one of mine) and adjourned to the Pub.

Everything having gone off smoothly, the next job was to attempt an actual start. First, though, I had to complete the exhaust system from manifold to silencer and attend to the carburettors. The carburettors were giving me a little problem in that when I poured some petrol into them just to see how tight they were – they weren’t! The cause of the trouble was the banjo bolts which are nipped off ridiculously short so that only about four threads bite into the float chamber caps. These caps are as soft as a new laid cowpat and if they are about forty years old as mine are, they won’t hold the banjo bolts securely. There was no way I could fiddle it. I tried all sorts of wheezes and finally called upon the resources of Andrew. Andrew is an amiable guy in the village who pokes his nose into the garage every now and then and ums and ahs appropriately, who under the guise of “jobbing builder” dips his bread in many a bowl of gravy and as a result has some good connections. “I’ll see Old Charlie” quoth he when appraised with the cause of my vexation. Thus three weeks and six pounds later I am delivered of three new brass banjo bolts – one quarter of an inch longer than standard – beautiful.

Another little aside to this saga (and here the “experts” might howl derision at my assumption – for that’s what it is) is that the engine was assembled during wintertime. By the time the year progressed to summer the attempts to turn the old thing on the handle resulted only in grunts and a rapid expellation of air from Yours Truly, but no movement from the jolly old crank. However, as winter loomed once more your Scribe one November morn in a little fit of impatience sneaked in through the back door of the garage, caught Old Thirsty unawares, gave the starting handle a tweak and to his surprise swung the engine through half a turn. Now, he not being of what might be described as of gargantuan physique, had either been eating his Bovril regularly, or had been doing more of his morning exercises and fewer of his nocturnal ones! What was more likely though was that metal expands and contracts with temperature and so the engine had tightened up on the assembly tolerances during summer, but had gone back to them when the colder weather came. This would probably

only happen to a “new” engine as a well used one has tolerances which have inevitably been opened up. All right then, you explain the phenomenon.

At last (I think I can hear you muttering to yourself) we were ready for the first attempt to start Old Thirsty. First of all, the team had to assemble. Musketeers Fynn (Chief Engineer), Roper Marshall (Senior Electrician), Yours Truly and Bill Grist at the muscle end of things. Time: the last afternoon of 1979.

I decided that as the engine appeared to be relatively free, the attempt would be made with jump leads from my modern four-cylinder vibrator with its engine running and the fully charged slave battery in the Alvis. So, master switch on, choke out, changeover switch to “start”, ignition lever retarded, deep breath – press tit. Well, it was worth a try! So the tow-bar was pressed into use again and Bill Grist very kindly acted as tractor with the trusty and lusty Rapier. After about eight tugs, each one more promising than the one previous, the engine fired on about five cylinders. It was uneven but the instruments all told a happy story and so we kept it running at about 1,000 rpm for about 45 minutes non-stop. No overheating and oil pressure about 50 lbs.

As far as I was concerned, getting the engine fired up was the best Christmas present I could have envisaged. It was achieved after seven years almost to the day because it was the Christmas Eve of 1972 that Tom Reader and I dragged home what was then a very battered and neglected “nobody wants me” Speed 25. It seems laughable now that the general opinion at the time was that at £375, I was rooked and maybe I should have let the guy from whom I bought it throw it away, which was what he apparently intended to do had I not come along. Anyway – Elle-Va!

Finally I feel I must draw attention to the fact that had it not been for the staunch support of Derek Fynn and Norman Roper-Marshall, there is no way that I would have achieved what I have with my rebuild so far. Apart from advice, etc., Derek volunteered to take on the job of rebuilding the engine apart from the auxiliaries. He took many moons over the job and did it meticulously, and I think it is safe to say that more care went into that engine than any professional workshop would have done – they can’t get a customer to pay for the hours that attention to detail entails. Norman looked after the electrics. He re-wired the whole chassis and overhauled the dynamo and generally leaned over my shoulder when necessary. Friends like those two are an absolutely priceless commodity and I publicly thank both of them.

# Readers Write

*From 'The Croft', Lighthorne Road, Kineton, Warwick, CV35 0JL.*

Dear Editor,

Over the years, particularly during the last ten years, most forms of motoring sport have changed radically. As with nearly all sports the escalation of costs, commercialism and sponsorship have changed the game.

Today the gap between professional sponsored sport and purely amateur activities has widened so much that each requires a different administration. For the well known rallies and formula racing events, where costs, stakes and rewards are very high, the administration by the RAC must be commensurate with that part of the sport. I am not knocking the RAC they have to play it that way for the big business, that is the way it has grown.

But we are not all in that league, and enough is enough! Now I suggest that the RAC should provide a two-tier organisation separating the two sides of the sport. Belgrave Square with its sophisticated rules and necessarily expensive administration, properly sited in the metropolis, should cope with the professionals but the RAC should have another office, out of London, to deal with amateur motor sport. That second tier of the administration should be far simpler and much less costly, with fewer rules and regulations.

The various committees working under the Motor Sport Council have done a splendid job, particularly the Historic Committee under Michael Bowler, but most are required to legislate or recommend a single policy suitable for widely different activities. It would of course be difficult to draw the lines, and there would be many problems but I believe that the RAC British Motor Sports Council should investigate the situation.

As things stand now it seems that clubs running amateur events, amateur drivers and newcomers to the sport are all carrying a disproportionate load, not only financially but in respect of rules and regulations.

For a large majority motoring sport is just that – a sport not business. I believe that a two-tier administration of the sport is required, and would provide a better deal for those at the grass roots.

Yours, etc. A. F. Rivers Fletcher 18.12.79

*From 49 Southway, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey, SM5 4HP.*

Dear Editor,

Early in 1979 I bought a 1938 Silver Crest TH

(Reg. BHR 790) in a somewhat delapidated condition, and the engine dismantled almost to the last nut and bolt.

I have made a start at restoration and made some progress, but I am stopped now and again due to lack of detail knowledge, though I must say I have already received valuable assistance from AOC members. Somehow I will complete the job.

I was thinking how good it would be for me, if I knew other owners of Silver Crests from whom I could acquire detail information. No drawings seem to be available or a workshop manual, but I can sketch a little, photograph a little and talk/listen if given a chance.

I would indeed be pleased to hear from owners of similar cars or similar engines to mine.

Yours, etc., D. N. Bingham 31.12.79

*From 30 Rue de Tombois, 5900 Jodoigne, Belgium.*

Dear Editor,

We still have to enter my Sp 20 dhc in her first AOC event. We hope the Diamond Jubilee occurring next year provides us a fine opportunity.

The Alvis enjoyably performed during 1979 in the two main events of the Veteran Car Club Belgium: Brussels-Rheims-Brussels, 500 miles in three days. The fun of our Alvis was nearly unfair facing the Edwardians as the route was made of short parts of narrow country roads. We even saw the two 1911 Renaults climbing in reverse for a better low gear ratio. Most of the car owners involved in such a slow running were in fact guilty – the perfection of their restoration had neglected the engine compression which was poorer and poorer as the engine warmed up on so long a trip! For example my Sp 20 was a lot quicker than an 8-cylinder Delage of the same vintage, the engine of which had been left in original (and tatty) condition!

The other long rally was a three days, 1,000 miles "affaire" to a French meeting in Rouen. It makes me confident for an entry to the 1981 Highlands Tour you are suggesting.

Yours, etc., Rene Molle 18.11.79

*From 19 Bridge End, Whalley, Lancashire.*

Dear Editor,

I enclose photos of my 1949 TA 14. I am trying to trace the coachbuilder and it is possible that someone may have seen something similar.

Yours, etc., Simon Rickard 31.12.79





*From Lovasgatan 3, S-57100 Nassjö, Sweden*

Dear Editor,

In February/March, 1977 I bought an Alvis 12/70 two-seater special 1938, formerly a drophead coupe. The body was nice but the wooden frame was very rotten and wormy. I was forced to manufacture a totally new framework, but as you can see on the photographs the car is now ready to go again. Mr. Barry Simpson (Barry Simpson Engineering) bought the car, in his

neighbourhood for me. A friend of mine, John Powell, had in that time his Alvis Crested Eagle saloon for renovation by Mr. Simpson, therefore I contacted Mr. Simpson too.

The car runs very well and I have a lot of spares (two extra engines and one gearbox) so I hope to drive it for many years. I shall, if it's possible visit England in the summer of 1980, and visit some of your members.

A Merry Christmas from an Alvis owner.  
Yours, etc., Lars Arrehn 23.11.79



*From 17 David's Close, Alveston, Nr. Bristol, Avon.*

Dear Editor,

May I put forward the suggestion that the rules pertaining to annual awards such as concours d'elegance be changed? I have often heard the remark following the public announcement of the winners "Oh! not him again!"

Now, I know this is a bit of an old chestnut but decide which you would declare the winner out of the following line-up of cars:

Last year's "Master" winner; last year's Novice winner (now entering as a Master); last year's winner from another section who has now entered your area; the car which has had a meticulously implemented re-build for which vast sums of largesse have been paid out by its indulgent owner; the guy who turns up with a completed re-build he has virtually done himself and

which is a highly praiseworthy effort despite two vehicles one of which is magnificent mechanically but not so hot bodily, the other representing the reverse of that order.

Whichever of these cars is chosen, the judges can be criticised for their decision so what has the winner won?

I suggest that concours, best car in the car park, best pre-war rebuild, best post-war rebuild or whatever other headings you like to choose for these "vanity" prizes be restricted to not being given to the same guy on more than two consecutive occasions. With two such wins under his belt he would "retire" for say five years with perhaps a sort of Victor Ludorum prize. After his retirement he would qualify again as a competitor. This is on the assumption that "he" keeps the same car for it is the vehicle which, really of course, gains the prize.

Yours etc., Brian D'Arcy-Drake 6.12.79

## BULLETIN BLEAT

by  
THE THREE MUSKETEERS

Another month dawns bright and clear.  
Good! The AOC Bulletin will soon be here.  
Here comes the postman (anxious, hope)  
Yes! He's got the right sized envelope.

Tear it open, out falls the Bulletin  
Wonder what this month brings therein?  
News of the Sections, articles and comment,  
Adverts, photographs and matters of moment.

What a pity all this has to be cut back  
To a tri-monthly magazine! Alas and alack!  
Our Committee bleats - There is not  
enough money  
To put jam on the bread let alone honey.

Then increase the sub! Goes up the cry  
Why haven't they done it? We don't know  
why.  
What's five bob a week to your favourite  
Club?  
We might lose a few members and there  
lies the rub.

Lose a few, gain a few - we're used to  
that -  
With or without them, Club wouldn't fall  
flat.  
It might though with a Bulletin only once  
in twelve weeks,  
But t'Committee, hell bent, decision made,  
it reeks  
Of not giving enough thought to the matter  
in hand.

---

That's it . . .  
We've said our piece;  
now we're just  
making every  
effort to  
ensure that  
this last line  
is as long  
as  
we  
possibly can!!!

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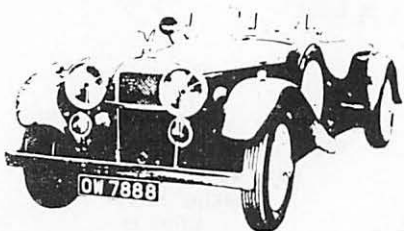
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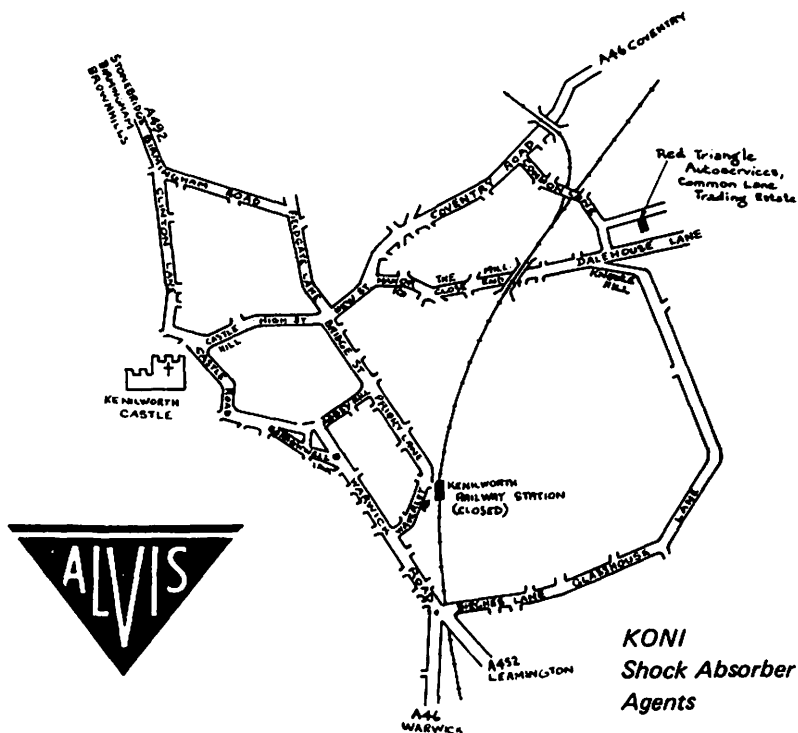
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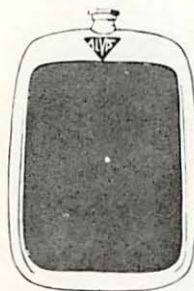
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