

OWNER

ALVIS

CLUB

The Bulletin

No. 466 November/December 2000



THE BULLETIN

No. 466

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2000

www.alvisoc.org

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Cover Photo: George Grant, the Scottish Whisky Magnate with his brand new Speed 25 on a winter's day in 1939. See page 535.

Photo: via Ben Lenthall

Centre Spread: Wonderful period photograph of a 12/60 saloon. See page 507 for details.

Photo: Andrew Beacroft

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ALVACITY-

— A Round up of Alvis Matters —

I still find it hard to realise that I am the President of our club. When I joined the AOC in 1971, having acquired my Speed 20 SA DHC, I did not anticipate in any way how involved I was to become in club activities. The friendly welcome I received in those early days, from established officials and members, was undoubtedly an important factor in encouraging my active involvement and happily it is that aspect of friendliness which is still the greatest asset of our club.

It is a great honour to be appointed President and I am very pleased to have an active involvement with the Council once again especially at this very important time for the club. The move to incorporation has taken place and what an essential step that was given the way of the world these days. However the advantages do not stop there, it is an ideal opportunity for many aspects of the Club to be looked at afresh and consideration given to regularise, clarify or amend various aspects.

As we now move towards the year of our Golden Jubilee I look forward to a reversal of the recent trend of falling attendances at certain Club events. I am quite certain that organisers will wish to make events for 2001 something special and certainly our International weekend at Blenheim Palace and Keble College will be very special. I urge all members to take an active part in as many Club events as possible during this important year.

I wish you all, Club members and your families, a very happy Christmas and good health in the New Year.

DEREK BRADBURY
President

The last Bulletin of the year yet again. As usual, this is a time to reflect and also look into the future. The latter is an activity that one pursues at some considerable risk, as predictions about the future are notoriously ridiculous. I can illustrate this with the following quotations:

- This "telephone" has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us." – Western Union Internal Memo 1876.
- Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible. – Lord Kelvin 1895.
- Everything that can be invented has been invented. – Charles Duell U.S. Office of Patents 1899.
- I think that there is a world market for may be five computers. – Thomas Watson Chairman IBM 1943.
- Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons. – Popular Mechanics 1949.
- There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home. – Ken Olsen Chairman Digital Equipment Corporation 1977.
- 640K ought to be enough for anybody. – Bill Gates 1981.

Now the interesting thing about these quotations is that whilst one might have expected to be able to laugh at hopelessly wrong Victorian predictions about the future, one does not expect that we could be so wrong in modern times. Yet as far as computer technology is concerned even twenty years ago people who were in the midst of the industry were completely wrong in their predictions for the future. It is quite evident that it is not sensible to say that something is impossible or that it will not work or that people will not want it. What this means is that one has to keep an open mind to all these advances, and in many cases make use of them.

What has this to do with the Alvis enthusiast? Well, not a great deal except that on the 1st January 2001, we really do enter a new century and a new millenium. In addition the Club will be celebrating its first fifty years of existence. Can we predict what the future will bring? I don't think so.

However, we live in an age of ever-increasingly rapid change and there can be surely no doubt that the Club must move with the times and there will be changes. With the right motivation and sensible management (which the Club has always enjoyed), I see no reason why the next fifty years of its existence should not be as successful as the first.

My involvement with Club affairs is more or less restricted to the role of producing The Bulletin to as high a standard as possible, and whilst I do not promise to do this for the next fifty years, I have no doubt that my successors, as did my predecessors, will maintain a quality journal which will be enjoyed by Alvis enthusiasts world-wide.

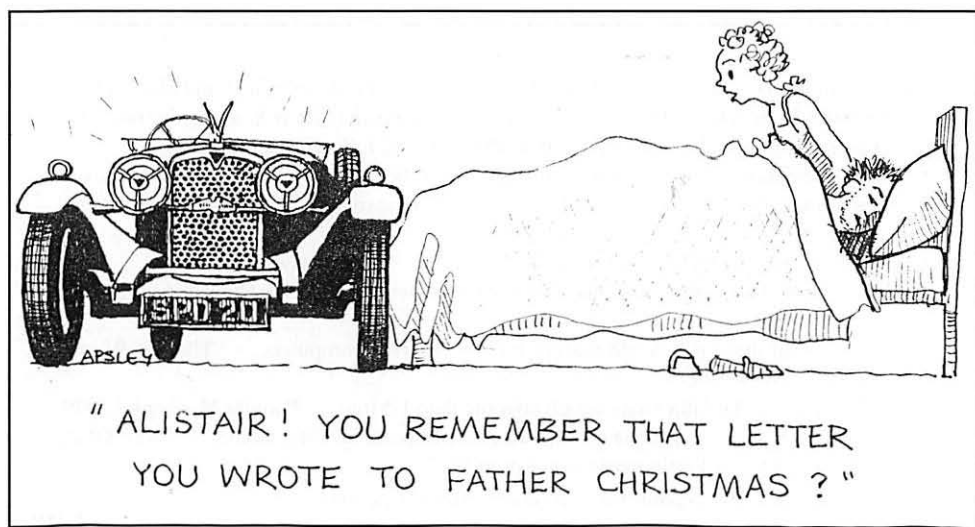
The good news is that members continue to provide splendid material for publication and from the Editor's chair, I see nothing but an extremely high level of enthusiasm. Long may it continue.

The marque continues to receive good publicity in the motoring press and the November issue of Classic & Sports Car carries an excellent piece on Peter Galea's Alvis Healey. Peter has also written an article on this rare car for The Bulletin and it will be appearing in due course.

In this fiftieth anniversary year of the Three Litre, I have been able to feature some excellent TA 21 material, courtesy of Dave Culshaw and Malcolm and Jennie Kindell. I hope that in the future I shall be able to feature many more anniversaries of various Alvis models.

Finally, this issue may be slightly late. This is due to a holiday which was extended to deal with problems of my house in England. Sometimes, The Bulletin has to come second!

J.N.B.C.



17th July 2000

An historic moment – the Club is now a limited company.



**CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION
OF A PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANY**

Company No. 4034465

**The Registrar of Companies for England and Wales hereby certifies that
ALVIS OWNER CLUB LIMITED**

**Is this day incorporated under the Companies Act 1985 as a private
company and that the company is limited.**

Given at Companies House, Cardiff, the 17th July 2000

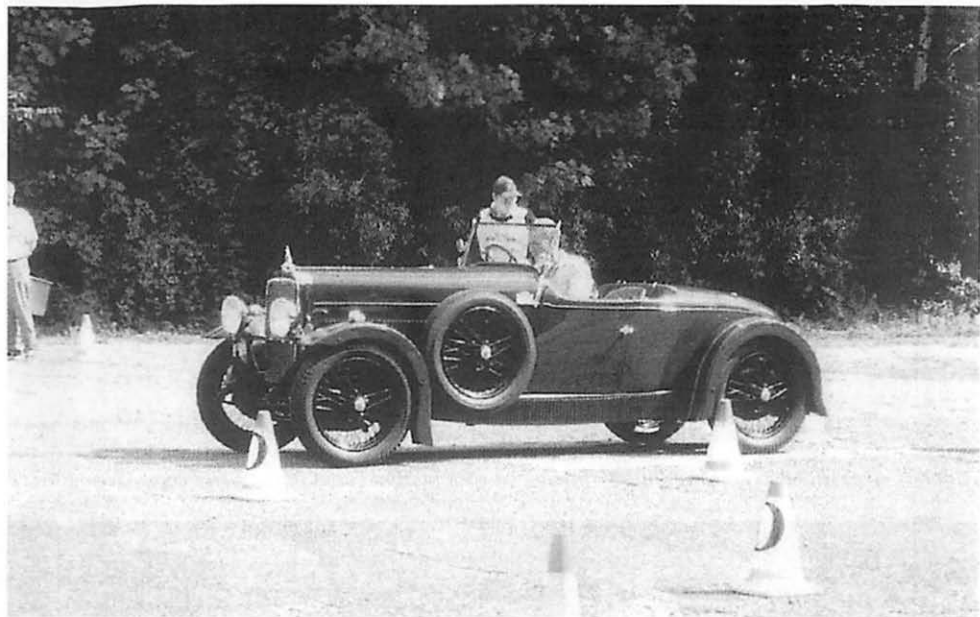


C O M P A N I E S H O U S E

HC007A

SOUTH EAST ALVIS DAY AT BROOKLANDS

– 3rd September 2000 –



Bernie Mulvany's 12/60 Beetleback takes part in the Driving Tests.

Photo: Jackie Howells

Everyone who reads this will, in all probability, have an interest in motoring of past decades. With most of us, it will go beyond a casual interest and be an intense interest. With some of us it will classed as an obsession.

Now the ideal place to indulge in such an obsession for motoring of the past and based in the south east of England, is of course Brooklands. Brooklands has a uniquely haunting atmosphere, where one can let one's imagination wander to the sights and sounds that occurred in the twenty years before World War Two, when the circuit was in use. (*A bit more than 20 years. Brooklands opened in 1907. – J.N.B.C.*)

Since its reopening as a museum, it has been transformed from a derelict and abandoned aircraft manufacturing complex to a display of historic motoring and aviation without equal. Visitor facilities more or less have kept pace, and have moved on from the primitive, to the acceptable. Each year it gets better.

So given that it is situated geographically in the centre of the South East Section, where else could we possibly hold South East Alvis Day?

For the eighth successive year, and for the first time this century, we came back again to soak up the atmosphere. For the second successive year, we were fortunate enough to have ideal weather with bright sun throughout the day, but with a slight "nip" that reminded us that autumn is forthcoming.



Albert Sparrowhawk's 4.3 Litre tourer with coachwork by Rod Jolley.

Photo: Jackie Howells



Richard Hollis' TD 21 Series I.

Photo: Jackie Howells



Steve Horne's SD Speed 20.

Photo: Jackie Howells



Idris Francis' SC Speed 25 DHC.

Photo: Jackie Howells



Jim Tatchell's TA 14 saloon.

Photo: Jackie Howells



John Carpenter's Firefly/Speed 20 Special.

Photo: Jackie Howells



Arthur Fairburn's TA 21 saloon.

Photo: Jackie Howells



John Pretty's TE 21 Series III saloon.

Photo: Jackie Howells



Peter Galea's Alvis Healey.

Photo: Jackie Howells



John Well's TD 21 Series 1 DHC.

Photo: Jackie Howells

Entries were numerically a little down on previous years but that had been anticipated given the proximity of the USA tour. However the standard of the cars attending and the diversity of the models represented was quite outstanding. Indeed, the members that were attending for the first time could be forgiven for thinking that this is as good as it gets.

Now given the high standards, one would think that the organisers would be overwhelmed with entries for the concours, but it was not so. Entries for the driving tests were also very thin on the ground, but the standards of both competitions were as high as ever.

An especial mention must be made of the members of "Mike Baker's Gang", who started their day in the small hours, drove down to Southampton Docks to commence loading the USA tour cars at six a.m., then drove back to Brooklands arriving around mid-day. Such loyalty to the AOC cause. Mike and Reg Gross actually went back home and got their Alvises.

So the magic formula was there again. Good weather, historic surroundings, excellent cars and best of all, the Alvis Owner Club members, who make it such a great day.

Thanks to all the organising team, and to the ladies who organise the raffle and the refreshment tent.

DEREK TOURLE

RESULTS

Concours (Class's A, B & E Combined), Pre-War

1st	George Butlin	Speed 25 Vanden Plas Saloon
2nd	Bernie Mulvany	12/60 Beetleback

Concours (Class's C & D Combined), Post-War

1st	Roger Cooper	TC 21/100 Mulliner Saloon
2nd	Chris Reynolds	TD 1 Park Ward Saloon
3rd	Tim Anderson	TA 14 Tickford DHC

Driving Tests (Class's A, B & E Combined)

1st	Neil Marshall	Speed 20 Vanden Plas Tourer
2nd	Steve Horne	Speed 20 Charlesworth DHC

Driving Tests (Class's C & D Combined)

1st	John Chamberlain	TA 14 Carbodies DHC
2nd	Tim Anderson	TA 14 Tickford DHC

Best Pre-War (Arthur Hardy Award)

Steve Horne

Best Post-War (Tony Sanders Award)

Tim Anderson

Best Overall Of The Day

Tim Anderson

LOST AND FOUND TA 21s IN THE U.S.A.



The two cars have been stored for many years in the open.

Photo: Ed Halemán

An e-mail from Ed Halemán brought news of these two sad TA 21s on Long Island. Ed takes up the story of the two cars. – J.N.B.C.

The history, from my end, of these two TA 21s is that about five years ago, I was showing my TA 14 at a local classic car show when one of the people attending the event mentioned that he had two Alvises. I took his name and telephone number and put it in the glove box of my car for future reference. Last December, I came across the paper and decided to give him a call. After many attempts to reach him he finally called back and said he was going out of town and would call me upon his return in a few weeks. I never heard from him again until last month when he called to tell me he was moving house and wanted to sell both cars. I envisioned two perfect cars awaiting new owners. What a shock to see his TA 21s in a state of total ruin. They had been left out in his field for many, many years with just a cloth cover. In addition, you can see that the DHC No. 24728 is a real mess. After a lot of looking, I finally found the identification number, and also found a small metal tag indicating that it was "sold and serviced" by a Marley Motors in Hillgrove, Rhode Island, U.S.A. The auto reference number on the tag was No. 130.

The two cars have been identified by Malcolm Kindell and it may be of interest to publish full details of the original specification of these two cars. They are as follows:

The Tickford Drophead Coupé

Chassis No.:	24728	Engine No.:	24728
Type:	TA 21 LHD	Body:	DHC
Body Manufacturer:	Tickford	Body No.:	20172
Colour:	Maroon (Glasco No. 227226)		

Trim: Metalescent Nebular Grey (Glasso C3407)
 Maroon CL 289 (Connolly)
 Hood Blue Melleroid to match (Mellowhide Ltd.)
 Date Completed: 13 June 1952 Date Delivered: 23 June 1952
 Delivered to: Fergus Motors, New York

Special Features:

- Fan pulley G 7078
- Belt pulley C 7079
- Modified jets fitted in carburettors
- Trico windscreen washer
- Dip switch
- Air diffuser fitted to bulkhead
- Bonnet ventilators
- Lucas headlamps despatch 056206B
- Polished wood cappings to screen pillars
- Twin carburettors and heat deflector shield fitted, part of MOD, BDO 1997
- Sun visors
- Protective hood covering
- New bumpers fitted C7242 and C7243
- High speed fan
- MPH speedometer
- White walled tyres
- Licence holder not required
- Continental lighting

The Mulliners Saloon

Chassis No.: 24826 Engine No.: 24826
 Type: TA 21 LHD Body: Saloon
 Body Manufacturer: Mulliners Body No.: M2563
 Colour: Grey (Glasso C3407)
 Trim: Red (Vaumol VM 893)
 Date Completed: 10 July 1952 Date Delivered: 14 July 1952
 Delivered to: R B Sampliner Esq., Los Angeles California, U.S.A.

Special Features:

- Fan pulley G 7078
- Belt pulley C 7079
- Modified jets fitted in carburettors
- Trico windscreen washer
- Dip switch
- Air diffuser fitted to bulkhead
- Bonnet ventilators
- Lucas headlamps despatch 056206B
- Roof slide rubber
- New back light glass
- New type rear wing spats
- Twin carburettors and heat deflector shield fitted, part of MOD, BDO 1997
- Sliding roof MOD BDO 106
- Bulkhead insulation MOD BDO 109



Chassis No. 24728 with Tickford drophead coupé bodywork. As can be seen, the car is in a pretty sad state.

Photo: Ed Haleman



The second car, Chassis No. 24826 is a Mulliners saloon and is also in a poor state.

Photo: Ed Haleman

- New type bumpers C7242 and C7243
- High speed fan
- MPH speedometer
- White walled tyres
- Continental lighting

The Owner was moving house and the two cars had to be sold or go for scrap. Thankfully at the last moment, Wayne Brooks has bought the two cars and taken them back to Pennsylvania. They will now have "proper" final years as either spares or restoration projects.

EDHALEMAN

E-mail: ehaleman@juno.com

This is a sad situation where two 3 Litres have been allowed to get into such a state. Thanks to Ed for sending this story. – J.N.B.C.

Attention Alvis Aficionados



www.alwiluk.com

“The Alvis web connection “

ANCESTORS

– Dave Culshaw looks in general at some of the experiments which led to the TA 21, and at one of them in particular –

As pioneers of independent suspension, not to mention front wheel drive, there must have been a number of engineers at Alvis Ltd. in 1945 who found the reversion to beam axles for the post-war model, retrogressive in the extreme. This was of course in response to economic dictats originating elsewhere, but was nevertheless irksome. However, experimental work had always gone on at Alvis, and it went on before, during and after the War, and those aspects of it that we have come to know about are mere fractions of activities about which we will probably never know, as the vast majority of it was covert. The development of a Silver Crest with a form of air suspension, has previously been written about, but arguably the first true ancestor of the TA 21 had been a specific Speed 25 Vanden Plas two-door saloon, chassis 14638 which had been mothballed during the War in a location such that it escaped the conflagrations in Coventry. It emerged to be first registered FDU 517 on December 31st, 1945. This car was unique in that it was converted to coil spring I.F.S. in place of the heavy transverse leaf spring arrangement. It is not clear whether this conversion had taken place before or after first registration, but it certainly was to influence the pattern that the TA 21 would take. This car has not often been photographed, so I am indebted to New Zealand member, Bill Clark for a 1950 shot of it which has not been published before.

Another "conversion" to coil spring front suspension originated in drawings dated March 1947, and was incorporated into a TA 14 chassis, the original number of which has never been established, but nevertheless been the subject of some conjecture.

This suspension was very close indeed to the production TA 21 version – with one notable exception: the lower wishbone was in three separate sections facilitating the removal of the coil spring itself, and the replacement of bushes with as simple an instrument as a hydraulic car jack (try doing that with any production Three-Litre).

This chassis was used as a mobile test bed for the experimental six cylinder three litre engine, drawings of which also date from early 1947. The 16 inch wheels of the TA 14 were retained, but the gearing was raised by the use of a TB 14 crown wheel and pinion set, and the brakes were hydraulic, but with drums of a strange dished profile not seen on any other model – and probably sourced from some other make of car which used the E.N.V. back axle at this time.

This car initially had a four door saloon body of unknown origin – unknown because the only photograph to have survived of the car in its original form is unfortunately not a profile but "head on". (See John Price William's book: *Alvis, the Post War Years*, page 22.) It is indeed feasible that the very first road tests of the three litre engine may have been conducted initially prior to the coil spring conversion, but even in this, much surgery would have to be accomplished in the re-siting of cross members and steering geometry. The lack of rigidity in an essential area would have shown up very early, and have led directly to the "conversion" drawing. It would have had a hard life which in turn led to a second phase in its existence, when in July 1949 it was totally rebuilt, using a new Mulliners body shell (number 1374) from the production line. It was in this form that it escaped from the factory, re-registered as JDU 674 as part of the retirement handshake of Captain G. T. Smith-Clarke. It was at this point that trace of its specific TA 14 origin was lost, and it was numbered "3L3", both on its new log book, and on its chassis plate, although it had actually preceded the two other recorded prototypes.

By late 1948, the engineering side of the new TA 21 had been finalised with the two other running



Speed 25 Vanden Plas, Chassis No. 14638, Registration No. FDU 517, at the Works in 1950. This is the car converted to coil spring independent front suspension.



A TA 14 chassis converted to coil spring front suspension. This photograph of the chassis shows the details of the conversion, including a unique steering idler box and a slimmer cross-member than the production version.

prototypes: 3L1; HWK 768 registered February 1949, and 3L2, HKV 778 registered June 1949. The former was a four door six light saloon virtually indistinguishable from a Jaguar Mk VII. It was certainly not a copy of the Jaguar however, as the Mk VII was not to appear until October 1950. The other car, 3L2 was identical to 3L1 from the B-posts forward but had a quite elegant utility body which closely resembled the Harold Radford Countryman versions of the Mk VI Bentley. 3L2 may also have been the first automatic transmission Alvis, though it is not known exactly when it received its Borg-Warner box.

Chassis design of these two cars was not identical to what would become the production TA 21, with chassis members now upswept over the rear axle, instead of the underslung of the TA 14. The chassis was 3½ inches longer than the Fourteen in wheelbase, and the rear axle was now sourced from Salisbury's rather than E.N.V. Wheel size was reduced from sixteen to fifteen inch diameter, originally with 6.00 section tyres but increased to 6.40 for production.

By late 1949, the body contracts had also been finalised. As with the TA 14, Mulliners of Birmingham were to make the vast bulk of production. Dimensionally there would be little change between the two models. Constructionally there would be considerable change, as there would now be very little timber in the framing. Mulliners would use a system of aluminium castings bolted together in lieu of an ash frame. This system had already proved itself on Mulliners bodies constructed on contemporary Daimler chassis.

Visually, apart from the enclosed headlights, the main change was the disappearance of the spare wheel from the bootlid, to under the floor. The resulting 'cleaner' tail was complemented by elongated rear wings with the occasionally troublesome spats. The pre-production Mulliners bodies retained the



The prototype 3-Litre, 3L1, Registration No. HWK 768, prior to being written off in an accident.

TA 14 feature of horizontal glass louvres at the top of the doors before changing to front quarter lights for production.

These two pre-production cars were chassis 23803 – JWK 290, and 23804 – KDU 439, and there was also a pre-production Tickford drophead on 23805, whose registration is thought to have been NPP 743, but this is not yet confirmed. The first batch of definitive production cars are numbered 23806 to 23820 onwards. The final TA 14's (23821 to 23830) then go through, and uninterrupted TA 21 production commences at 23831. Once again the Club is indebted to Bill Clark for the splendid, and hitherto unpublished photograph of some of these very early TA 21 chassis on the production line, a model line which would continue with many refinements until 1967, when the last variant of the Three Litre was made.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch – as they say in the movies – a set of parallel circumstances are beginning to unfold whereby your Honorary Registrar gets drawn into this prototype story, and it is a story which led to one of these cars being saved, so here goes.

After my farmer grandfather, who staggered through the snows of 1947 to bring me a Meccano set, I owe all my automotive interests and engineering ability to one man – my uncle, William Mort born 1900. William Mort was himself a served apprentice with the well-known Wigan heavy engineering firm of Walker Brothers Ltd., who were also constructors of the Pagefield commercial vehicles.

William Mort was promoted initially to Leyland Motors Ltd., where he was to meet people like Newton Iddon, who had worked with Parry Thomas on the Leyland Eight car. Just prior to the outbreak of war, William Mort moved on to Daimlers where he spent the war working on military vehicles, and thereafter with the bus division. As a child, I was afforded many visits to Daimlers – usually on a Sunday morning, observing static lines of DB 18's and Lanchester Tens. The absolute



Prototype 3L2, Registration No. HKV 778 in September 1965 at Job's Lane. At the time, it was powered by a TD 21 engine and had a Borg-Warner automatic gearbox. The following spring it was dismantled on the orders of J. J. Parkes.

highlight of one such visit was my sitting in a special Lanchester VDP Allweather tourer (actually a Daimler DE 27 with Lanchester grille), in course of construction for the Maharajah of Nawanagar.

Whilst at Daimlers, William Mort bought (strangely one might think in the circumstances) from Reg Parker, an Alvis TA 14. This was HWD 252, chassis 23069. It was this car which was instrumental in your Honorary Registrar applying to join the Alvis Owner Club in December 1955 at the tender age of 16, and being allocated number 662.

Now, about this time, the new Centurion tank factory was under construction at Leyland – to be managed by the lorry makers, and William Mort took the opportunity of leaving Daimlers and returning to his former employers as Chief Inspector-Tanks, so the TA 14 came north. It was at the aforesaid tank factory that the next key stage in this circuitous tale occurred. One morning, when looking out of his office window, William Mort had to blink as there appeared to be not one, but two Alvis TA 14's parked up below. One was of course his own, whilst it transpired that the other belonged to a visiting Inspector from the Ministry of Defence. Subsequent conversation between the two men revealed that the visiting Alvis, though superficially a TA 14 actually had a mysterious six cylinder engine. Unfortunately, William Mort never remembered the name of the visitor, nor did he note down the registration number of that car, and indeed at this point the matter might have been lost for ever but for an amazing coincidence. On the same day, somewhat later, and fifteen miles further south, the young member 662 cycling along the A49, observes an odd-looking TA 14 approaching at a goodly rate of knots, and as was his wont – even then – jotted down its registration number; JDU 674. Marrying these two facts together in a subsequent conversation with William Mort, it became apparent that both sightings must have been of the same car.

Quite a number of years now elapse. I had passed my driving test in 1958, and begun to pester



Early TA 21 chassis on the production line at the Works in 1950.



William Mort and the "donor" TA 14, 23069, Registration No. HWD 252 in 1954.

William Mort to sell me the TA 14. He finally relented after the Leyland/Triumph merger when Heralds could be bought at concessionary rates by Leyland employees. I bought HWD 252 in 1963, and began to campaign it in AOC events whilst doing a running restoration.

In 1964 – (The Bulletin of April, that year to be exact), there was some correspondence about the Three-Litre prototypes 3L1 and 3L2. I responded in the May Bulletin, pointing out there had probably been a third also. This was put to David Michie, the Service Manager, who indeed then remembered JDU 674, and its basic format.

It was at this point that I really got to thinking that this car ought to be found and examined. But how? It had never been observed again at the tank factory, and all I had to go on was a registration number. At that time I had a chum who was a Police Officer, and enlisted his help (he too had been an Alvis owner). Fortunately he was able to pull a few strings, and after a few days produced the name of one George Paterson, and an address in Hightown, which is a coastal village between Liverpool and Southport.

A George Paterson was in the phone book at the address concerned. With some trepidation I rang the number.

Yes, he was the Paterson who owned JDU 674.

Yes, he had been an M.O.D. Inspector.

Yes, he remembered meeting William Mort at the Centurion works.

Yes, he especially remembered driving through Wigan on the same day, as the local constabulary had just pinched him for exceeding the limit.

JDU 674 was still in his garage – in a somewhat parlous state, not having been run for several

years but I was most welcome to come over, push it out and photograph it.

An appointment was duly arranged – 9th May 1965, and a comprehensive photograph shoot took place, and some history filled in. It had been a company car of Docker Brothers Paints, and it had then passed to one W. V. Mitchell of Sevenoaks, who had taken it on one of his postings abroad – Lagos, Nigeria to be precise, which probably explained all manner of strange lepidoptera wedged in the radiator matrix. The car had seen better days but it ran, and apart from a perforated exhaust, sounded healthy.

A couple of months elapsed, then it was my turn to receive a phone call. It was George Paterson. If I thought that I could do something with this car – come and collect it – it's yours for a tenner. I bought it in the July, and it was at this point that I was to find the name of G. T. Smith-Clarke in the Log Book as the distinguished first owner.

It was dragged home behind a friend's TA 14, but the tow rope parted in the centre of Ormskirk, and the dusty entourage coasted to a halt in front of two Constables and an Inspector. I need not have worried. "Give these lads a push", says the Inspector to his men. "I can remember when we had Alvis Patrol Cars in this Division."

JDU 674 had some minor cosmetics done to it, was put through an M.O.T., but remained both shabby and incontinent, as I could never with confidence go anywhere except with three gallon cans in the boot – one each of petrol, oil and water, yet slowly sinking into my mind was the fact that historically, JDU 674 was more important a vehicle than my semi-restored Fourteen, but how best to proceed?

A decision was precipitated following an incident when JDU was struck on the off side rear by an errant Commer van, bending the wheel, its mounting studs, smiting off the mudguard, and disturbing an already shaky frame whose main strength up to this point had been derived from the Nigerian termites



Hightown, 9th May 1965, 3L3 is found at last.



And finally, Dave Culshaw with the rejuvenated 3L3 in 1975.

holding hands. An unusual, nay crazy idea took hold. I would replace entirely the Mulliners body M1374 with the restored body M1309 from HWD 252, transferring the only different component: the steering column housing, from one bulkhead to the other – it was only pop-riveted anyway.

And thus it came to pass. JDU 674 was speedily dismantled to the last nut and bolt. Leaking oil had preserved the chassis very well, which was relatively quickly blasted, re-enamelled, and re-bushed throughout.

Very reluctantly I decided not to use the engine. It was one of the prototype blocks (actually 3L2 from the utility). It had obviously disgorged a connecting rod through the side at one time, and such items as head, water pump and sundry castings were not interchangeable with the production version. I elected to use a standard TA 21 block which had once done service in a Healey G-series. It had already been reground and re-bored, and I took the opportunity to uprate to "Grey Lady" specification, with the higher compression and superior manifold. The single Solex had been thirsty, and thus twin SU's were to complete the mechanical transformation.

The already refurbished body was carefully removed from 23069, and carefully aligned on the frame. I had already found extra holes in 3L3's chassis gussets which seemed to confirm that even M1374 had not been its first body. Continued detail work ensued – (making your own wiring harness is a sobering experience), but eventually I had a most presentable Q-car which once again was worthy of its distinguished first owner.

Owning a prototype is a sobering experience too, and a voyage of discovery. I was to learn much of development processes, not to mention idiosyncracies brought about by a need to use the Works parts bin. Take its Speed 25 radiator for instance. Its lower pipe was in the shape of an hour-glass so that the track rod could move. There were occasions in hot weather when this constriction would result in some form of protest. It never failed to complete a journey, before or after restoration, but like

a favourite hound, had subtle ways of informing you when something was not well.

If this car had an Achilles heel, however, it was in the gearing. Even in its original 80 b.h.p. and Solex form it had been phenomenally fast for its day with the 4.3 to one c.w.p., but by the time 80 m.p.h. had been reached, it was getting breathless. In endowing it with a further 20 b.h.p., I had made it even more accelerative, without improving the top end performance. The "Works" solution to this had been to standardise Salisbury axles for the production car, with a wider choice of ratios than E.N.V. (4.09 initially, then 3.77, and also 3.54 later brought into use).

I was, of course, unable to do this to the 3L3 prototype without changing the axle entirely (and that meant wheels, tyres and brakes as well). I was later to learn that the E.N.V. had produced rear axles for the very first Jaguar XK 120's with a c.w.p. of 3.64 ratio. This would have been my preferred solution as it was conveniently close to the Grey Lady's ratio of 3.77 to one. I could never locate one of these during the time I owned the car. I have one now – for a future experiment when time permits.

So the low gearing problem remained, but in everyday town and country use 3L3 was much livelier than a standard TA 21, being quite a bit lighter. The economy improved too, being very little different to the 27 m.p.g. I was used to with most of my Fourteens. I had the most incredible amount of fun with this car until 1979, when I decided to sell it – a decision which I have come to regret ever since. Of the twenty-odd or so different Alvis I've had over the years, it was JDU 674 which was the most charismatic – by far.

DAVE CULSHAW

A fascinating piece from Dave Culshaw. I wonder if a comprehensive article on Alvis prototypes would be possible. Any volunteers? – J.N.B.C.

CENTRE SPREAD

We are greatly indebted to member Andrew Beacroft, of Abingdon, for this charming period photograph.

It relates to one of the very last 12/60 TL saloons to be built. This one is Chassis No. 9776, Works-registered in July 1932 – recorded as being in Black, with green wheels and Silver Eagle headlamps. Despatch was to Hamshaw's of Leicester. The first owner is given as W. J. Lorrimer, of Leicester, and the second: D. Crispin of Sheffield.

The gentleman in the photograph is Andrew Beacroft's great-uncle: Stanley Matthews who was at that time partner, with one Victor Thomas in the firm of R. Cripps & Co. Ltd. of Nottingham, who sold a number of Alvis cars. The Cripps company was sold to Bertie Henly in 1958. We must draw the conclusion, from other information received from Andrew that the 12/60 must have moved later (though not much later) from Sheffield, to Cripps at Nottingham, where the car was apparently sold to Lady Ann Bentinck, daughter of the Duke of Portland. The house in the background is Annesley Hall, Nottinghamshire.

There is no recent information about this interesting car – unless a reader can tell us otherwise.

DAVE CULSHAW

OUR NEW ZEALAND TOUR

– The Trip Of A Lifetime. November/December 1999 –



Rob Edwards' 1934 Crested Eagle and 1951 TA 21 DHC. A splendid pair.

Photo: Clive Taylor

To celebrate our Silver Wedding Anniversary, Val and I decided to visit New Zealand, having traced her school friend Pam Young, who with her family emigrated in 1967. John and Olive Hebron, who live in Eastbourne, Wellington, sent us a set of AA travel maps, which we studied and found very informative. We also obtained a New Zealand Touring Atlas by Hema Maps through Stanfords, Long Acre, London, to study the geography of New Zealand before we arrived.

Our flight with Air New Zealand to Auckland via L.A. was pleasant and without incident. The food and service was excellent. An interesting feature was an experimental camera placed in front of the front wheel of the aircraft and this provided a pilot's eye view of the take-off and the immediate aerial views over London and also coming into land at Auckland were awe inspiring.

Pam and Stuart had travelled from Tauranga to meet us and our early arrival in Auckland at 5.30 am gave us the chance to visit Auckland Harbour, which was filled with the yachts for the Americas Cup. We had full access to the perimeter area and we were immediately aware of how clean everything was that we could see. The seabed in the harbour was easily visible, without any debris on the water's edge or around the piers. Wonderful.

Heading southeast, we stopped at a new BP Station at Papkura, which generates its own power from solar panels. We ate scrumptious local food and noticed that the articulated trucks had short

wheelbases and trailers with very long "A" frame couplings. Plenty of Kenworth, Peterbilt, White and International trucks mixed with Hino and Scania, hauling timber trunks to the paper mills and for export. Our route to Tauranga took us through Paeroa, home to a tough "Battle of the Streets" meeting held every February.

We arrived in Tauranga, with the Kaimai Hills just visible in the southeastern distance. Reminiscent of the Lake District, few people and a relaxing peace. The next morning looking through the bedroom window we were welcomed by the local Fresian herd looking at us curiously over the slatted boundary fence. True rural life was just about to begin. Our first visit to local motoring contacts was to Rob and Jo Edwards, who made us very welcome. We were able to see their imposing 1934 Crested Eagle (ex-Riddiford MP and John Hearne) and their superb 1951 silver TA 21 DHC.

The next day we ventured south towards Rotorua and I made a quick visit into the Te Puke Motor Museum. On the front cover of the promotional leaflet, there was a PVT Alvis on display. Would it be there for me? Yes! I found it by the front entrance and while I was told it was not for sale I could look at it closely. I recorded the car No. 17404. Later, checking my U.K. records indicated Speed 20 SC, Chassis No. 12129, Engine No. 12579, Tourer VDP Body No. 3368, Despatch date 30th April 1935. Ex AOC members 5782 and 6092. There was vast selection of cars on display, some for sale, others displayed on loan by residents. A nice touch was the area on the first floor to peruse at leisure the books and workshop manuals.

I hoped to return again after our trip to the South Island time permitting. Our next stop was in Rotorua at the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute. We had arrived just in time to watch Te Amokura of Rotorua. The dance sequences and songs were very moving and we felt privileged to have been able to watch the display and we bought the tape as well. On Friday, Pam and Stuart took us to Napier to see Pam's sister Christine and her family. The route was via the Huka (Foaming) Falls. The water falls were stunning and the sound of the water was deafening. Our next stop was at Lake Taupo looking across Acacia Bay towards Turangi. It is so long, you cannot see over the horizon line. The lake is the largest in New Zealand, over 40 km long by 30 km wide with an average depth of 65 fathoms and is 357 metres above sea level!! It is vast and makes you feel very humble. Onwards to Napier through the Tarawera Forest, on a weaving and hilly road dropping down into Napier at dusk.

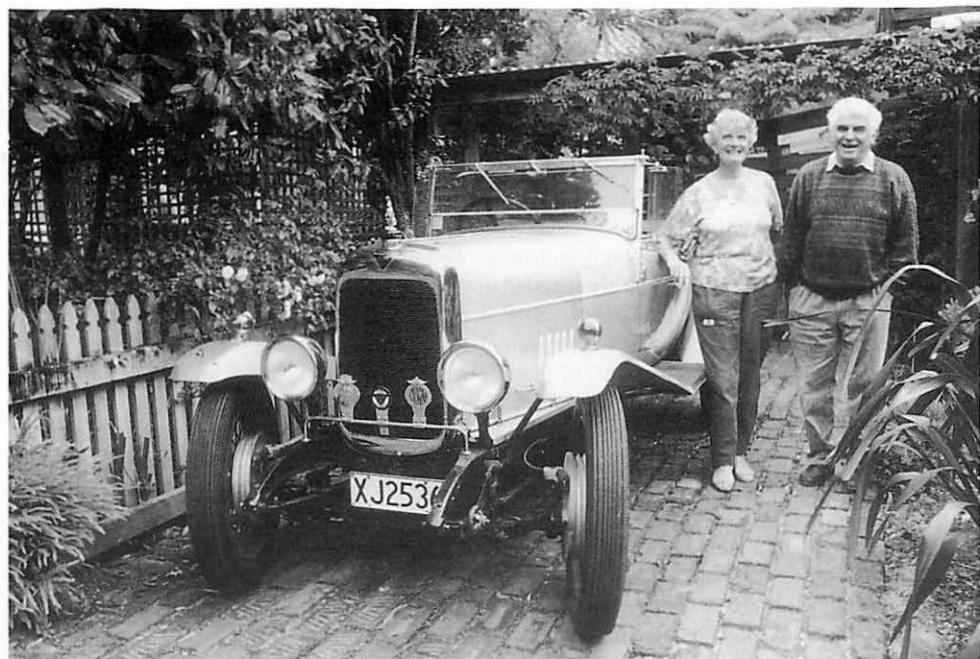
From our hillside location we had a superb uninterrupted view across the immense Hawke Bay and the next morning Valerie took an early 5.30 am morning fishing trip to check the pots for Crayfish, and I stayed on the quayside writing postcards.

Soon we were on our way south again to Dannevirke on Highway 2 with the immense snow capped mountains of the Ruahine Range on our right side for most of the journey. We stopped at Norsewood and purchased our winter hats and gloves. Little did we know that we would be using them as soon as we got home. In Dannevirke we met Tracey, (who was three when she migrated) and her family. The views of the Ruahine Range in the distance were very picturesque looking across the open fields backing onto their property.

We made our way to Wellington, via Woodville and Masterton, onward to Upper Hutt and the continuous climb between the Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges and then dropping down the other side through Lower Hutt. Anxiously looking at the map I had been given by John and Olive Hebron, we found Petone, Lowry Bay and their quiet cul-de-sac cut into the hillside.

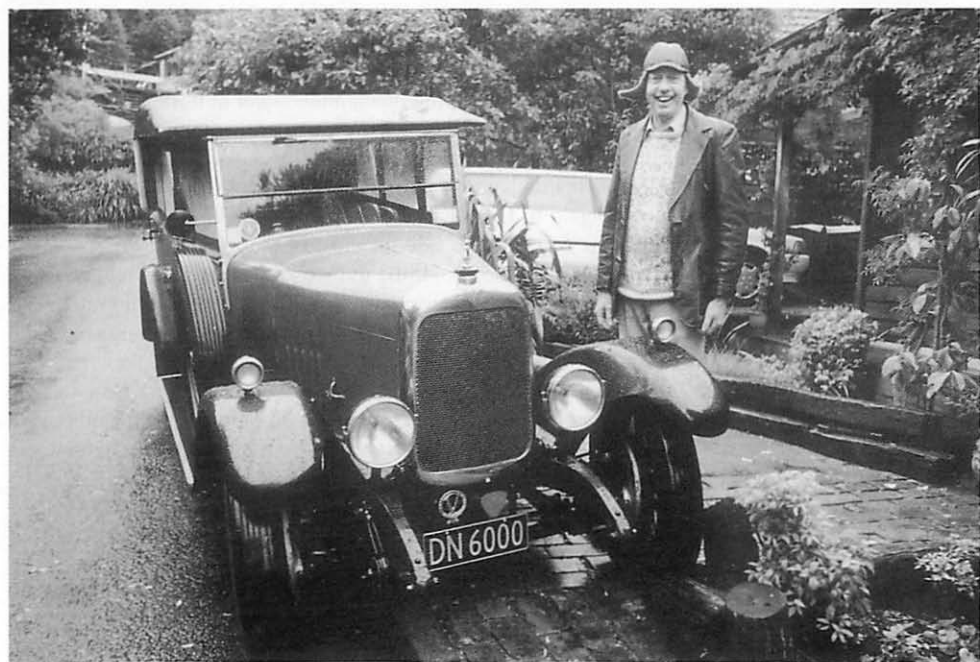
Stuart and Pam made their way back to Tauranga through the evening and night, a mighty drive home. The weather started to close in and the rain came down and kept dropping continuously, closing in the views usually seen across the Harbour and towards the Cook Strait.

John showed me his superb 1926 12/50 TG Ducksback (ex tourer) Car No. 9950, Engine No. 4984 (L200) Chassis No. 4625 Despatch date 5/10/26 original Body No. 30012. We enjoyed Olive's home baking and cooking. Wonderful. On Sunday we met Michael and Jane Curry who drove over from Upper Hutt and they had braved the torrential rain to bring their regal green 1926 12/50 TE Tourer



John and Olive Hebron with their 1926 TG 12/50 Ducksback.

Photo: Clive Taylor



Michael Curry with his 1926 TE 12/50 Tourer.

Photo: Clive Taylor

for us to see.

That evening John showed me a copy of the latest Beaded Wheels magazine. What a magazine. Excellent standard and nearly all in colour, magnificent. I was impressed and started reading it from cover to cover. Val retreated to bed and I got stuck in reading previous editions. The reports were varied and the rural events caught my eye, such as the Irishman Rally and descriptions by Jim Riley of tussock driving inspired me. (We would meet Jim later with Peter Croft in Christchurch).

The next day, John and Olive took us to the terminal for the crossing to Picton. The weather had not improved, and the ferry sailings were delayed all day. We made use of the time writing cards and reading for our trip ahead. It beats me why some travellers get so angry and aggressive towards the staff. They don't control the weather and as I was informed a ferry had been lost some years ago and they did not want another repeat. Sound decision. We eventually left late afternoon, and the sea was still choppy, just to remind us of who is the boss. I saw the "angry travellers" later and their green gills was evidence of justice paid out. We arrived in Picton in the late evening, having come through the Queen Charlotte Sound. Those jagged rocks a clear reminder not to chance a crossing in gale winds.

We had hired our car through Pegasus, and Lillian had waited for us despite our very late arrival and she was excellent, helping us to get under way to the Americano Motel. Here the service was excellent despite our late arrival.

Early, next morning, I walked through the High Street. Squeaky clean and a real picture. I started to look at property for sale, and found some real beauties along Queen Charlotte Drive. After a quick breakfast we started our drive and headed west along the coast road, Queen Charlotte Drive. Excellent views of the entry into Picton Harbour and the lagoon coves along the way.

Shopkeepers had warned us several times about the bends on this particular road, and they were spot-on. We quickly understood that road signs really do mean what they say, and we had a fabulous cruise. We stopped to have a look in Tai Tane Pottery, run by Renate Millen. The home-made pottery is unique and we collected some special pieces for people back home. The road eventually took us into Havelock. A quick change over and Valerie headed towards Nelson on Highway 6, we marvelled at the Bryant Range on our left side.

Our night stop was booked for Greymouth, so we kept on Highway 6 towards Westport. We crossed and re-crossed the Buller River, passing over countless bridges leading into Merchison. Staying on Highway 6 the road led us into the Upper Buller Gorge area, wonderful rustic and rural scenery through Newton Flat onto Inangahua. We continued towards Westport passing through Lower Buller Gorge, watching how the riverbed stones changed their size and colour.

The river generally was low and many times the flow reduced to a small stream but the bridges crossing over the long expanse of the river bed could be 200/300 metres long. Every creek we crossed had an interesting name and never repeated. Although sometimes the distances between towns were short the road followed in minute detail the craggy contours of the gorge rocks, without taking short cuts across some of the enclaves the road followed. Having passed through the Virgin Flat area we could see the sea again on our right side. The road led us to the coast at Charleston. Stunning clear views, with the road winding alongside the coastline and nothing on the water, gave a sense of real solitude.

Occasionally we stopped to take in the views and we could hear the sea lapping onto the coastal rocks and small beach areas, heading south we stopped at Punakaiki (Pancake Rocks). Our arrival was spot-on to see a nearly full tide coming into the blow holes in the rocks and a small enclave area, where the spray shot up through the vertical shaft blowholes and out into the atmosphere near the top of the cliffs, 30 metres above sea level.

As we made our way to Greymouth, the Paparoa Range was constantly visible on our left side. Crossing the bridge into the town in late evening. We found our the Greymouth Motel and Annette recommended going to Jones Bar in Tainui Street for dinner where Paul and Gaylene prepare the menu.

All the food is home made on the spot and the place was full. It was excellent. Highly recommended.

We planned our next stop for Wanaka and left Greymouth at 9.30 am. Approaching Arahura, the road and railroad share the same level on the bridge. The signs gave advance warning and this was my first experience of this kind of bridge. Looked left and right, all clear I maintain 30 kph as the signs indicate. Halfway along the bridge, Val looks up from reading the map, and looking through the screen and has a "Blue Fit" to see the railway lines ahead (shades of Laurel and Hardy!!). Just at the end of the bridge the road turned away sharp right and the two systems separated again, the road going to Hokitika

The weather started to close in as we approached the Southern Alps. Occasionally we could see the tips of the mountains through the wooded areas and looked forward to seeing the Franz Josef Glacier. We were surprised to see how many opossums were dead on the deserted road. We lost count of them the nearer we were to the Glacier Region. By the time we had arrived at Franz Josef, the weather had closed right in and the cloud base was zero, which scotched our plans (mine) to pop up in a small plane for the tour around.

We pushed on through to Fox Glacier, and headed to Haast for food, drink and fuel. The food was great, home-made sausage rolls and cake too. But no fuel, so we left and followed the road on the west side of Mount Aspiring National Park. We had some spectacular views of the Haast River and followed the road between the Mataketake Range and the Mark Range. Climbing upwards we came through the Haast Pass and stopped on high ground at Makarora and filled up with fuel at the rural station.

The road ran very close to Lake Wanaka, a tranquil setting and crossed over through Isthmus towards Lake Hawea. The sun was setting in front of us as we approached Wanaka and arrived in the centre of town. The recent heavy rains which had flooded Queenstown had left their mark here too, flooding out the shops in front of Roy's Bay.

Our planned route to Arrowtown was to pass through by the Cardrona Hotel on Highway 89. Our hosts Mr. and Mrs. Cooke advised us that the road was closed as the recent flooding had taken out six bridges, four private and two public and that the hotel and area was closed, we would have to take the easy route via Queensberry, Mount Pisa, Cromwell and on to Arrowtown.

Arrowtown is in such a quiet tranquil setting we walked around and spent a lot of time here and felt really relaxed and at home. The tree lined Buckingham Street masking the Miners Cottages, now listed historic buildings.

We headed out of town to Queenstown hoping to use the road to Arthurs Point, but we made an error and came back on to Highway 6. As we approached the town we could see how the main road was cut into the hillside, as the houses on the right were at street level, and on the left usually just the ridges of the roofs visible.

We found our way into town and the mooring of SS Earnslaw, took some pictures and departed again. The impressive Remarkables were in full view as we made our way to Frankton, and we managed to photograph these majestic mountains. Lake Wakatipu kept us company until we arrived in Kingston, then on to Five Rivers, where we turned right onto an unclassified road to Mossburn. We picked up Highway 94 and eventually arrived in early evening at Te Anau. Our rural accommodation was fine with Teresa and Dave Hughes and we found an excellent Chinese Restaurant, Ming Garden in Loop Road.

Milford Sound does not look far on the map from Te Anau, but it is 130 kms/80 miles each way and we had allowed a full day for travelling and going out on the boat (three hours). It is essential to book ahead to avoid disappointment. The road is not quick and stopping off to look down the gorges all takes time. As we got nearer The Sound the weather closed in and heavy mist shrouded the huge mountains, so much so headlights were required and inside the Homer Tunnel which is cut and hewn out of the rock, it was a murky darkness.

We boarded the Milford Wanderer and our guide was humorous and informative. The size of the sheer faces of rock was really impressive, some with water cascading down to the Sound water. We sailed out to the mouth of Milford Sound (named after Milford Haven in the U.K.). As the vessel had a flat bottomed hull, as we turned around you could feel the swell under the vessel. This area was one of the high points for us in the whole trip.

The next day we left Te Anau, heading for Dunedin to visit Tony Carroll and his parents. We had tried to link up with Alistair McIntosh in Invercargill but he had to leave one day earlier than we could get to Invercargill, so we changed our route to Lumsden and Gore on Highway 94 and then via Balclutha, Milton and Dunedin on Highway 1.

The town and surrounding area is quite hilly. We met Tony Carroll and his parents Jack and Louise, such nice people. Tony took us to meet Tom and Juli Oakley in Roslyn who have a sleek black 1935 Speed 20 Tourer in the garage. Tom allowed Tony to take me for a drive around the area, and it was my first run in an Alvis in New Zealand. It was a real treat and we took photographs to record the occasion. All too soon we had to leave as we had booked our accommodation in Warrington, on the north side of Dunedin.

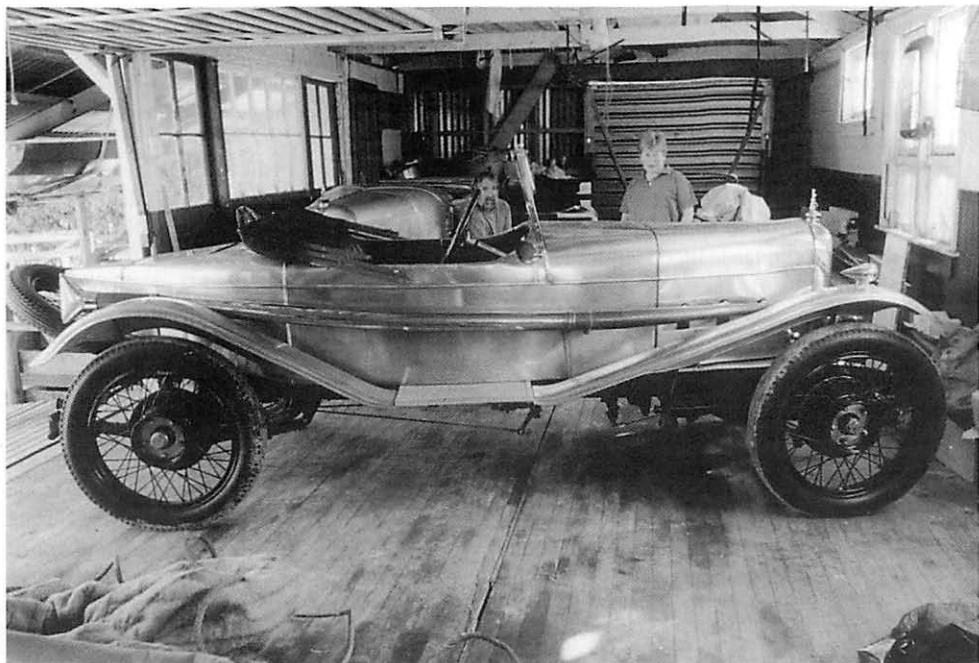
We were welcomed by Angela and Maurice Corish who have a beautiful home and very quickly we asked if we could stay for two days. Exquisite home-made food and good company, and they made us feel really at home. Top marks for our food and accommodation, we did not want to leave. During our brief stay, we were able to visit the Albatross Colony and see the planned breeding programme. We were also taken to see the Yellow Eyed Penguins breeding behind the sand dunes on a secluded private beach nearby.

Eventually we had to leave, having booked ahead for our visit to Mount Cook. Our planned route was to be via Ranfurly and the Kyeburn Diggings, but our need for a bank took us into Oamuru. We made our way to Kurow and found the Hakataramea Pass. We traversed the road to Cattle Creek, on to Hakataramea Downs, where we encountered a huge flock of sheep. Trying to get past them was not easy. Every time we stopped they stopped. They were running faster than we could drive, but they knew where to go and dived off to their pen field and we managed to get past them.

This was our first chance to drive through open rugged tussock country and Val muttered, "what have you done taking me through this type of terrain?" "Good experience for you", I said as we wended our way onward and upward towards Burke Pass. We only met two cars, coming towards us since we left Cattle Creek. The car felt as if it had slippers on driving along Highway 8 westward to Lake Tekapo and Lake Pukaki, both with a stunning deep light blue colour caused by the volcanic structure. We found our next stop at Rhoborough Station on the road to Twizel.

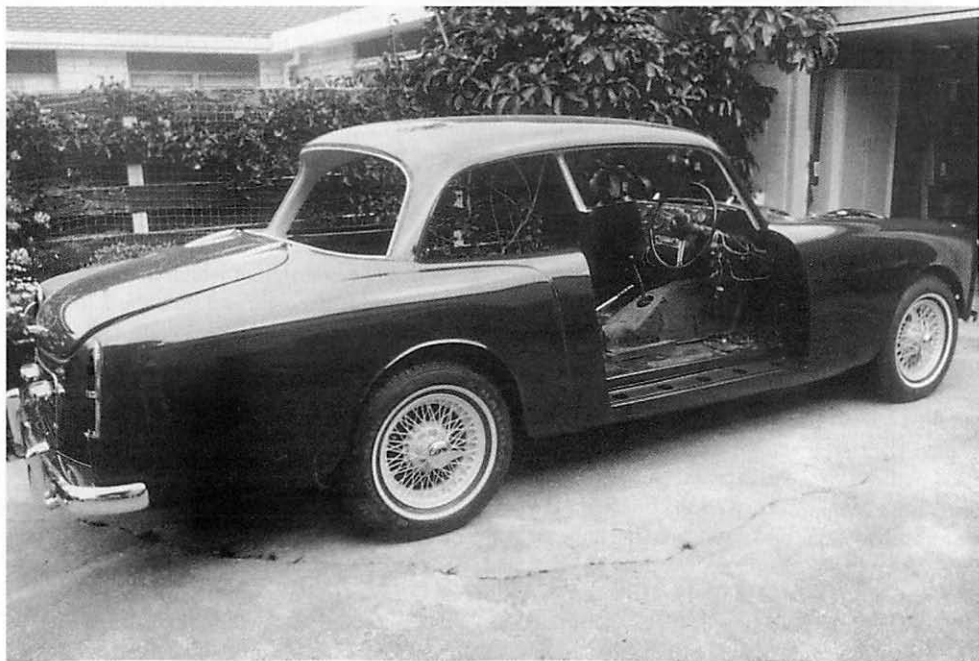
Roberta Preston welcomed us. Her family had built the cattle station which had been in the family for over 120 years and Roberta gave us a short history of the area, and how the family had established themselves at Rhoborough through some very difficult times. A lovely lady full of character who made us feel like family. The peaceful setting was very relaxing. The next day we set off Mount Cook for a possible aerial tour and a visit to The Hermitage. We were running late, but stopped several times to photograph Mount Cook, which always seemed to be just out of reach. We visited The Hermitage, where there was a good walk through museum displaying the simple equipment used in those very early days. We watched an excellent video show about the history of the various ascents on Mount Cook. As the time delays for flying were too long so we made our own excursion into Tasman Valley and discovered the huge dry volcanic lake, looking towards Lake Pukaki about 40 kms. away in the distance. We had to leave and make tracks for Christchurch as we had made arrangements to visit Michael and Sherryn Lavender on our way to stay with Peter and Kate Croft.

We back tracked over Highway 8 through to Fairlie, entering the town through the Avenue of Trees planted in remembrance of the soldiers who fell in WWI. We made a quick phone call to Michael "We are on our way, just a bit behind time". "Don't worry get here when you can." Such nice and



Peter Croft and Val Taylor with the former's 1924 SC 12/50 Ducksback.

Photo: Clive Taylor



Dougal Dickson's 1960 TD 21 Series 1 during restoration.

Photo: Clive Taylor

understanding people. We pushed on to Geraldine and found Highway 1, speeding towards Ashburton and into the southern area of Christchurch.

Finally we met Michael and Sherryn. A warm welcome and much discussion where we had been and our future plans discussed and reviewed. Michael showed me the supercharger he was trying to indentify, which is to be fitted to his Speed 25. As dusk came, we had to leave and with the aid of a street map on loan from Michael we sped towards the eastern coast of Christchurch and found Peter and Kate Croft's house in the Morten Settlement district.

We spent two busy packed days with Peter and Kate and their family. They looked after us really well. Peter took us to meet Jim Riley and his dog and enjoyed his Derbyshire accent, still so strong as we walked to the top of the hill to survey the aerial view over Lyttelton Harbour. Peter took us around Christchurch and several rural districts including Taylor's Mistake (apt for us) and had our photographs taken for the album.

We had a recce in Christchurch the next day and I managed to buy a copy of Reeds New Zealand Atlas which Peter and Kate had shown us, from Whitcoulls the Newsagents in Christchurch. It is fabulous and highly recommended. I enjoy reading maps as well as books (motor racing and biographies). I had heard a lot about the shop Fazzazz in Litchfield Street, so I made a bee-line for it and had a good look around. There were various cars for sale, and some interesting racing motorcycles my other passion – it is in the blood. In the evening Peter introduced us to Gavin Bain in Governors Bay a fitting end to our sight seeing in Christchurch.

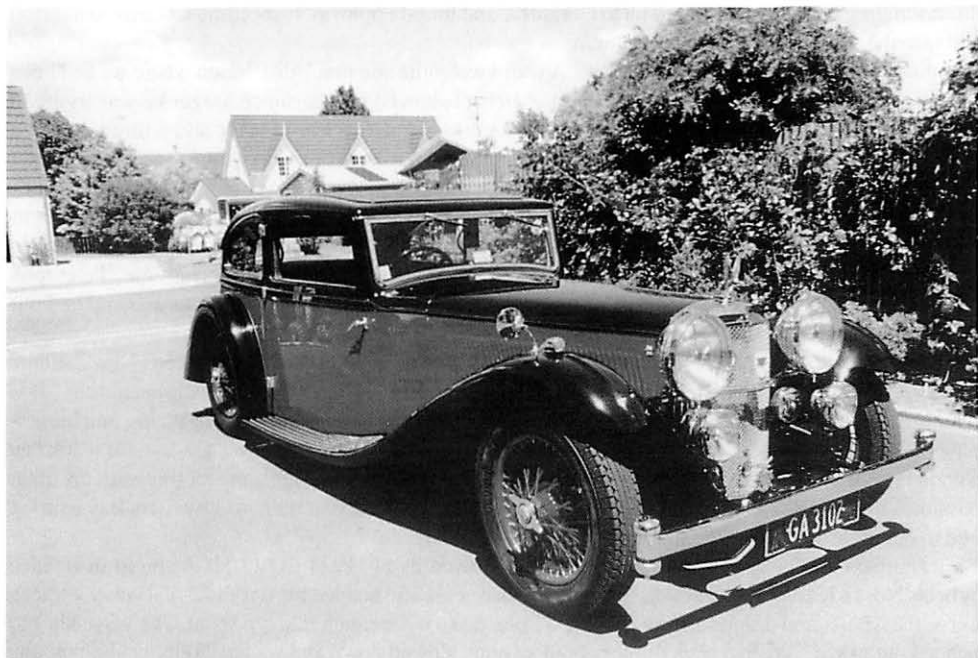
The next day before we had to leave Peter showed us his 1924 SC 12/50, featured in Beaded Wheels No. 241. We made our way north on the east coast and headed for Kiakora. Val was very keen to see the whales and dolphins if we could. We boarded a large catamaran type boat, The Wawahia and headed out to sea. We had been out for about an hour, slowed down and waited, bobbing about on the water. Eventually, we were treated to a special sight and Val managed to take some good shots of the whales, but we did not see any dolphins on the trip. I was glad to get back on firm land after about three hours bobbing up and down, it was a great trip and we would recommend the trip to anyone. In the late evening we headed for Picton, having booked again at the Americano Inn and arrived in the dusk 9.30 pm.

Our round trip in South Island covered 3315 kms/2071 miles. We had a really grand time meeting so many people from all walks of life. Everyone had been really welcoming, without any reserve and made us feel a part of their family and friends. We did not want to leave anyone, it was so good. The next day we returned the car to Lillian at Pegasus who was more like a "mum" to us and boarded the fast ferry, The Interlander, crossing The Cook Strait in about 1 hr 45 mins into Wellington Harbour. There we picked up another car from Pegasus and made our way to see John and Olive Hebron in Lowry Bay.

The weather had settled two days after we left Wellington, but the day we had the ferry cancelled the coast road to Eastbourne had been lifted by the sea and by the time we had returned the road surface had been replaced and just needed white lining again. With much talking about our trip, people we met and our experiences, we started our next stage of the tour. Saying good-bye to such solid friends is not easy.

We headed towards the West Coast and met Murray and Jayne Watson in Raumati South. Their spacious house looks over the sea and Jayne gave us masses of useful brochures, that she had collected for us. Our next stop was a very quick visit to the Southward Car Museum at Papaparaumu. The display is comprehensive and we found several interesting cars and managed to photograph a few of them.

I purchased the museum catalogue and also my first copy of Beaded Wheels No. 240 and pinned one of our Alvis badges on the Visitor Board. Soon we had to leave and make our way to Palmerston North. There we met Doug and Jan Dickson. We had a good look at the green 1960 TD 21 Series



Joe Marsden's splendid 1934 SB Speed 20.

Photo: Clive Taylor



David Betterton's 1928 TG 12/50 Wide Two-Seater.

Photo: Clive Taylor

I Saloon that Doug has been rebuilding. Hopefully soon it will be on the road again.

Our end of day destination was New Plymouth and we were running late. On the way we stopped at Tariki and made a surprise visit to see the brother of a work colleague of Val's. John and Judy Bance, who ran the Tariki Tavern could not believe it. "Hello, I'm Val, I work with Ian at Attlees in Dorking, Surrey, England and as we are passing we thought we would pop in to see you." Much nattering and excellent food and in the dusk we headed for New Plymouth. We stayed with Daphne and Murray Warman in a lovely colonial style house, with large rooms and high ceilings and super Breakfast.

While we were in New Plymouth, we visited the shopping centre and ordered a copy of the famous Sunset Eruption, Mount Ruapehu by Craig Potton and eagerly awaited our copy to be sent home to the UK for us. We were now heading away from Taranki and did not see the peak of Mount Egmont as it was shrouded in mist. We made our way long the coast Highway 3 northwards to Mokau and then inland to Te Kuiti, where we had scrumptious chips and hot sausage rolls.

Our route took us through the Pureora Forest Park to Mangakino, Tokoroa, Putaruru and Tapapa. There we ascended the road to the Kaimai region, one of my favourite views, down the other side to Omanawa, Taurangato. Reunited with our friends Pam and Stuart we recharged our batteries and discussed our adventurous round trip.

We had missed visiting Joe and Norma Marsden before we had to head south for the round trip, but now it would be possible and we met in Matua. Their 1934 Speed 20 SB Car No. 15787 is a real credit, finished in Black and Claret Red and reminiscent of the ex Reg Parker 4.3 in Derbyshire. In superb dry and sunny weather Joe and Norma took me for a drive to Minden Point near Te Puna on Highway 2. There we had a clear view across the Bay of Plenty and Joe pointed out the Mayor and Alderman Islands named after their namesakes in London. It was good to meet them and I managed to take some photographs for the album. Here's to the next time we can visit.

The next day we planned to tour around the Coromandel. Using Highway 2, we went up to Paeroa and this time I managed to take a photograph from the hotel on the corner opposite the hairpin used in the local motor cycle race series. We headed north on Highway 26 towards Thames and were fascinated by the close proximity of the small bungalows on the edge of the bay area in the Firth of Thames. The road twisted and turned sometimes acutely but eventually we arrived in Coromandel. We had seen several established 'Christmas' trees by the roadside, some overhanging the width of the road towards the sea. It was so peaceful here and relaxing.

We did not visit Colville as the car hire conditions prevented us from doing so, instead we cut across to Te Rerenga over the hills using the shale road leading to Highway 25 and followed the coast road meandering through to Whitianga. We made our way to Hot Water Beach, but were out of luck with the tide and did not find any hot water under the sand. The road was slow and we took in the sights climbing along the edge of the Coromandel Range towards Whangamata, Waihi and then back to Tauranga on Highway 2 in the late evening.

With only two days left, we decided to split. I headed North and left Val with our dear friends Pam and Stuart, who had given us a base to travel from and we really appreciated their help and support. I headed for Auckland via the Kaimai's, and took more shots before I had to leave. The road descended in a series of large curves, turning off to Matamata and pushed onto Mangatarata and Pokeno.

I found my friends at Drury, John and Nina Humphries and then headed into Auckland. I had been recommended to visit Jason's Bookshop in Lorne Street. I managed to squeeze on to a parking meter, which felt funny bearing in mind where we had travelled without seeing another car for maybe an hour or two. It was a magic shop masses of good quality books and I found a good book about New Zealand Houses by Michael Fowler and Robert Van de Voort and also "The Golden era of New Zealand Motor Racing" by Graham Vercoe. I was delighted to find these books at such a late hour in my

travels, having looked around most towns for books on both subjects without any success.

I left Auckland heading north, and caught a glimpse of a grey V12 E Type by Victoria Park, before crossing over the bridge to North Shore for Silverdale to meet John and June Hearne. A very warm welcome again and arrangements were quickly made to meet Norman Holloway, who came over from Whangaparaoa. John showed me his beautiful 1929 Alfa Romeo 6C. Later that same evening we squeezed a visit to Tom and Hilary King in Epsom and we saw his very smart Riley Falcon and Bentley MkVI. Last but not least we made a very late visit to meet David Batterton in Hillsborough and we had a great chat in the garage looking at his 1928 12/50TG wide two seater resplendent in light and dark blue and also his 1953 TA 21 saloon. Thank you all for your patience and hospitality.

John and I retreated to Silverdale after midnight and he gave me a copy of the current Beaded Wheels magazine, what a treat, especially as it had Peter Croft's 12/50 on the front cover. I knew I just had to join the VCCofNZ when I got home. He also gave me a copy of The Alvis Car Club of NZ Inc. I burnt early a.m. oil reading Beaded Wheels and writing up my notes.

Saturday morning arrived and I had to say goodbye to June. John made sure I found the Pegasus Depot to return the car and he stayed with me until Pam and Stuart arrived with Val. Total distance North Island 1,855 kms/1,159 miles; South Island 3,315 kms/2,070 miles. Total 5,170 kms/3,230 miles. We felt we had covered as much as possible in four weeks, but we could have used another four weeks to cover the cross over roads in South Island and the Northland area. Next time we visit we will.

In our last few hours in Auckland, we headed into town and a surprise for us we visited Kelly Tarlton's Under Sea World, which uses the old towns sewer system route and huge clear pipes which you can walk through and observe the marine life swimming over you. Here we also saw the penguin colony reared at the centre. Our last treat was to visit the Sky Tower, built by Grayson Engineering. The circular viewing platform gave us unhindered views across all of Auckland, the sea, shoreline and quay areas. What better way to end our tour. Our trip to the airport was quick and in the late evening, came our farewells with Pam and Stuart. It is not easy saying good bye and we look forward to returning again in the not too distant future.

CLIVETAYLOR

We used the following information for our tour and you may find it useful. Maps: 16 paper folding maps covering North and South Island available from the AA. Published by the NZ Automobile Assoc. Inc. 99, Albert St. Auckland P. O. Box 5 Auckland. New Zealand Touring Road Atlas. Scale one cm to six km by Hema Maps, Brisbane, Australia Phone: 61-7-3290-0322 Fax: 61-7-3290-0478. ISBN: 1-875992-90-1. New Zealand Atlas, Publisher Reed 1999 ISBN: 0-7900-0400-3.

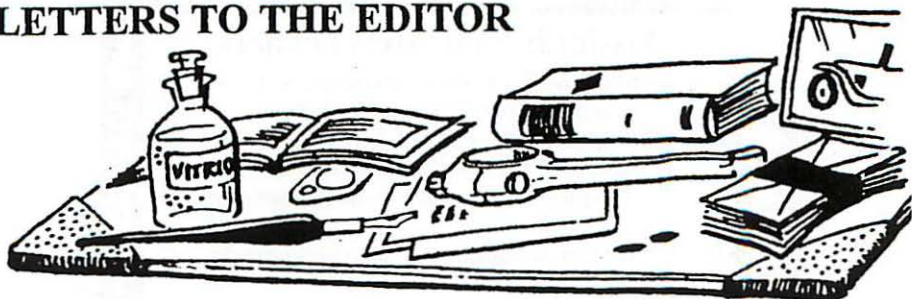
Accommodation: The NZ B&B Book, P. O. Box 41022, Eastbourne, NZ. (Softbound Book, with line sketches of some of the accommodation premises. Excellent Book.

Southward Car Museum: Softbound Book 96 pages with Index Excellent production ISBN: 0-473-05583-X.

Guide to New Zealand by Readers Digest ISBN: 0-86449-395-9. Excellent Book.

As Clive says, the trip of a lifetime. I am especially pleased to be able to feature New Zealand Alvises in this issue and I hope in due course, more enthusiasts there will write to The Bulletin. — J.N.B.C.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Walkspool
Kingston
Kingsbridge
Devon TQ7 4PY
E-mail: info@denham productions.co.uk

Dear Editor,

Of all the cars which took part in the London-Peking Rally I am sure that few, if any, received such a magnificent welcome home.

The Grey Lady came home on a slow boat from China and there were half a dozen members of the Alvis Owners Club to greet her at the container depot in Suffolk. The noises emanating from the loose flywheel were worse than ever and the old girl looked decidedly battle weary, but she started the final leg of her long journey with an escort of Alvises which all looked and sounded splendid.

Arriving back in Devon another dozen Alvises were waiting to escort her home. They made a magnificent sight in convoy along the A38 and the event was reported on the local television news.

I felt truly honoured and moved to have been given such a reception and rather wish I had done more to justify it. Next time we'll win!

My sincere thanks to all those who turned out, particularly John Dixon who made so many of the arrangements. I owe him and all the others a beer or two.

Yours gratefully,
Chris Denham

Pathhead
Kingham Lane,
Maidenhead
Berks. SL6 7QG

Dear Julian,

I recently decided to take my Firefly on a fun photograph shoot to the Firefly Public House at



Stuart Holmes' Firefly outside the appropriately named pub.

Photo: Stuart Holmes

Bourne End, Bucks. Some of the photographs may be of use to you in order to fill in space in future publications of the magazine. I could not obtain much information about the pub from the landlord, Ray Bristol, except that he has leased the premises from Punch Taverns for the last thirteen years. The building dates from the late 1800s and was originally called The Station Hotel, sometime the name was changed to The Firefly because it was renamed after a sailing dingy.

I have enclosed a copy of the build sheet for my Firefly, which still retains the original engine and gearbox. The engine has been bored out to 20 thou', so I suspect that the car has not done a great mileage. It was taken off the road in 1962 and stored in the rear of a Smithy in Hampshire until I purchased it in 1993. It had lain slowly rotting away, or being eaten by vermin and woodworm for 31 years. I completely stripped it and rebuilt it over a period of five years, doing as much work as I could myself. Machining and trimming I had done by others.

Yours sincerely,
Stuart Holmes

Another pub with an Alvis connection! I hope that Stuart will write an article on the rebuilding of his Firefly in due course. – J.N.B.C.

5 Rose Valley
Brentwood
Essex CM14 4HZ
E-mail: sue.sanders@ukgateway.net

Dear Julian,

Bruce Pilborough's mention of Alvis Stalwarts in a film (August Bulletin) stirred memories of a BBC radio drama of Georges Arnaud's *Salaire de la Peur* – Wages of Fear. This was in the days of Dick Barton and Paul Temple and was a really ripping adventure. I believe the story was about two jailbirds who were released to drive two trucks loaded with highly volatile nitro-glycerine over mountainous roads in the Central American jungle. The explosive was needed to blast out an oil well fire. The climax of the yarn is when they come to an unmade road full of corrugations. The only way to do it is to drive very fast or very slowly. Of course one does not make it.

A Franco-Italian film was made in 1953 starring Yves Montand, Charles Vanel and Folco Lulli and was shown in Britain as the *Wages of Fear*. However, the vehicles used were Saviem trucks – not Stalwarts – but it was a good film all the same. There was a later American version made in 1977 under the title *Sorcerer* and this must be the one that Bruce saw. It starred Roy Scheider and Bruno Cr  mer. I understand it "bombed" in the States, which is probably why it has never been seen again.

While on about motor cars in radio drama, at about the same time was another gripping tale of an international road race through the length and breadth of Europe. Four mysterious competitors who sign in at the start are none other than the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Our hero discovers their dastardly plot and foils their attempt to spread wholesale death and destruction by secretly wiring up their ignition leads to the fuel tanks. No mention of Alvis though.

Yours sincerely,
Peter Sanders

5455 N. Front Street
Harrisburg
PA 17110
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Collins,

When I purchased my 4.3 Litre DHC back in 1987, I did not like the colour scheme: blue violet body and cream wings. Does not look British but may be American. The previous owner told me it was the original colour so I kept it that way.

Going through my collection of the club Bulletins, I found that one of the cars on the front cover of No. 378 of November 1988. It looks to have the same colour scheme when the Alvis car record indicates body and wings as "dark crimson lake" ... so I am puzzled and will appreciate, if possible, having a good copy of the picture of Bulletin 378.

As it looks, from the last Bulletin, that sparking plugs are of interest, I enclose a copy of the 1986 issue of the Champion catalogue cross reference list. This catalogue has a section of plugs for "old cars" but Alvis is not listed. I fit D16 and am satisfied.

By the way, for almost 20 years, there has been no leaded petrol in the U.S.A. As we did not know unleaded would be harmful, we used unleaded without any additives and without any trouble as far as my 4.3 Litre is concerned. So why panicking? So to know for sure if there are any problems,

why not ask the U.S. owners of Alvises what their experience is? And advise all the participants of the next U.S. tour that they will get only unleaded, but cheap at about £1 per gallon!

Sincerely,
Jean Gorjat

20 Ghyllwood Drive
Cottingley
Bingley
West Yorkshire BD16 1NF

Dear Julian,

I was most interested to read the article in the July/August Bulletin – "S C H Davis – Artist" – and cannot help but marvel at the many talents which this great man possessed. Sammy Davis was, as you mention, probably best known as a racing driver, not forgetting, of course, his abilities as a sports editor, author, cartoonist, trials driver and veteran car enthusiast.

I had been wondering, recently, how many appearances Sammy Davis made in Rallies and Trials. I arrived at the following and I do know that there are more!

- Monte Carlo Rallies – seven appearances between 1930 and 1939 (always "finished").
- R.A.C. Rallies – four appearances between 1933 and 1939 (always "finished").
- International Alpine Trial – 1932 (co-driver with C. D. Siddeley) – Glacier Cup.
- "Land's End" Trials – competed every year 1920 until 1930, inclusive.
- "Exeter" Trials – competed every year 1919 until 1929, inclusive. (In the 1928* Trial driving WK 8045 – front wheel drive Alvis – a Gold award).
- "Edinburgh" Trials – competed six times between 1919 and 1929.
- In the MCC classic Trials he collected no less than 17 "Golds" and 7 "Silvers".

His enthusiasm for Trials was beautifully demonstrated when he wrote, in 1932, – "That excellent body", the Motor Cycling Club, has provided the enthusiast with more fun for less money than any other club, I think, in the world".

Sammy Davis must, arguably, have been one of the best motor sport "all-rounders" during the first half of the last century. I envy the likes of Mike Worthington-Williams who knew him well.

Yours sincerely,
Donald Cowbourne

* Not 1929

Dentiste LSD
Rue du Tombois, 30
B-1370 Jodoigne
Belgium

Dear Julian,

AOC Bulletin No. 464 – The Alvis and the Bentley by Bill Borden
May I confirm the opinion of Bill, as I also own both motor cars.

1935 Alvis Speed 20 SC Car No. 12737 Charlesworth's DHC (since 1970).

1937 Bentley 4¼ Litre Chassis No. B69KU Gurney Nutting Pillarless coupé (since 1973).

Both deserve their reputation of pride and enjoyment. Both were not cheap. The Alvis at £850.00 was in the upper middle class, and the Bentley at £1,805.00 was quite expensive. Many Speed chassis were too heavily bodied to reach the performance of a Bentley. The rival of course was the 4.3 Litre Alvis but the war stopped the competition.

Another member who owns a similar Speed 20 DHC, traced the five sister cars built by Charlesworth. You can know more about this from Nick Simpson. Gurney Nutting used many times the same shape with little differences. It is said only three coupés like this one were made and are still alive. The aluminium body is very light and the feeling is much better for the owner driver than that of a Mark 6, a soft flying carpet that must be chauffeur driven.

The Speed 20 was never off the road except the years of war and scarce petrol. Both cars were rebuilt by experts like Red Triangle, Woodall and Nicholson at Halifax, during the seventies. I enjoyed the real motoring of "as new" cars which went without trouble to club events as far as Scotland, Denmark, Sweden and the Côte d'Azur. These journeys are a revival of the life these GT cars were designed for.

The Bentley has a large sliding roof. You understand its usefulness when the aluminium surroundings reach the engine temperature after some hours of fast driving. The Alvis is sensitive to overheating, never on country roads but every time she averages 60 m.p.h. on motorways. I counsel owners to buy every vital part coming on the market: they will never have a second opportunity. I keep on the shelf an ignition distributor, a complete cylinder head, a water pump, a crown and pinion gearing, a stainless steel exhaust system. They came on the market once in the past and these offers were never repeated.

Conclusion: Rolls-Royce and Bentleys are faithful spouses but Alvises, like Alfa Romeo vs. Mercedes, make you fall victim to their charms.

With best regards and wishes,
René Molle

"Sentosa"

Ronneby Close

Oatlands Chase

Weybridge KT13 9SB

Dear Julian,

The Speed 20 built for Sir Henry Birkin was driven in the 1933 International Trophy race at Brooklands by Sir Ronald Gunter. I believe it retired with a broken gudgeon pin. Davis and Gunter drove a Bentley into second place in the 1929 Double Twelve. I have photographs of the Speed 20 when owned by B. Spollon Past President of the VSCC.

Birkin and the American Whitney Straight drove Maseratis in the 1933 Grand Prix Birkin taking third place at Tripoli after burning his arm when reaching into the cockpit during a pit stop from which he died.

Whitney Straight had an illustrious racing and war time career. He and his brother were at Cambridge, the latter becoming involved with the notorious Anthony Blunt, which is another story.

I asked Sammy to become Club Patron and knew him and his wife very well. To help his finances I commissioned a 1930 T.T. Alvis painting in oils which I still have. I do my Alvis scenes in water!

Sammy was a wonderful and unique character and if you send me a draft of your article, I can no doubt add to it.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely,
Ken Day

The Cottage
Brick End
Broxted
Dunmow
Essex CM6 2BL

Dear Julian,

The contact with David Caldwell in Australia (regarding 3½ Litres) has proved most fruitful. As you suggested, he has proved a generous and informative correspondent, who has filled a number of holes in the Register's entry on his car. This proves to be of considerable interest; a Bertelli pillarless saloon, one of only two by Bertelli on this chassis, and pretty rare on any Alvis, I would guess. I enclose a photocopy of the car being driven to some purpose in Australia, though with no great hope that it will reproduce for the magazine. It does not show the car off as well another photograph David sent, but I am quite sure that it will simply print as a black blob. David's account of the circumstances is as follows: "The ... shot was taken at Winton circuit, Victoria in 1982. The car won three out of four reliability runs that day, beaten in the fourth by a 12/50-powered midget speed car which cruised past me while I was flat-chat". (Any connection with recent Bulletin pieces?) The car is now in the middle of a body-off restoration.

Kindest regards,
John Oliveira

See photograph of David Caldwell's car on next page. – J.N.B.C.

Abbots Way
Downs Side
Cheam
Surrey SM2 7EQ

Dear Julian,

Enclosed is a picture taken by one of the wags of my Speed 25, which as you can see disgraced itself. Normally nothing special but in view of the number plate it was thought quite witty.

Regards,
Mike Baker

See photograph on page 527. – J.N.B.C.



David Caldwell's 3 1/2 Litre.

Photo: David Caldwell

14 Inala Court
East Borwood
Victoria 3151
Australia

Dear Julian,

When I worked in Research and Development for Patons Brakes, which is the braking subsidiary of Repco, I had our test driver put his decelerometer on the windscreen of my SC Speed 20 to test the braking efficiency. He told me to accelerate to 30 m.p.h. and do a "panic" stop which I did. When he peeled his face of the windscreen he told me that we had "pulled 96% of 1 G (Gravity)". I said "is that OK?" He told me that most modern cars (late seventies) with assisted discs were only pulling 75 - 80% G. Bearing this in mind I don't understand the trouble that people are having with Speed 20 brakes.

Two things that make a difference are:

1. Undo both ends of the cables and pull them through from the backing plate end, and clean them with degreaser and then regrease them sparingly,
2. Remove the first two inches of lining at the pin end (fixed end of the brake shoe). This allows the rest of the linings to exert a much greater pressure on the drum because the lever effect of the shoe. This is because the lining next to the pin moves a very small distance compared to the lining at the other end. The result is that this area is under heavy compression and preventing the rest of the lining from reaching its optimum pressure.

This advice comes from a Repco man, who went out and started his own brake business. He is able through his vast experience to look at a design and say "you need to shorten the linings to there"

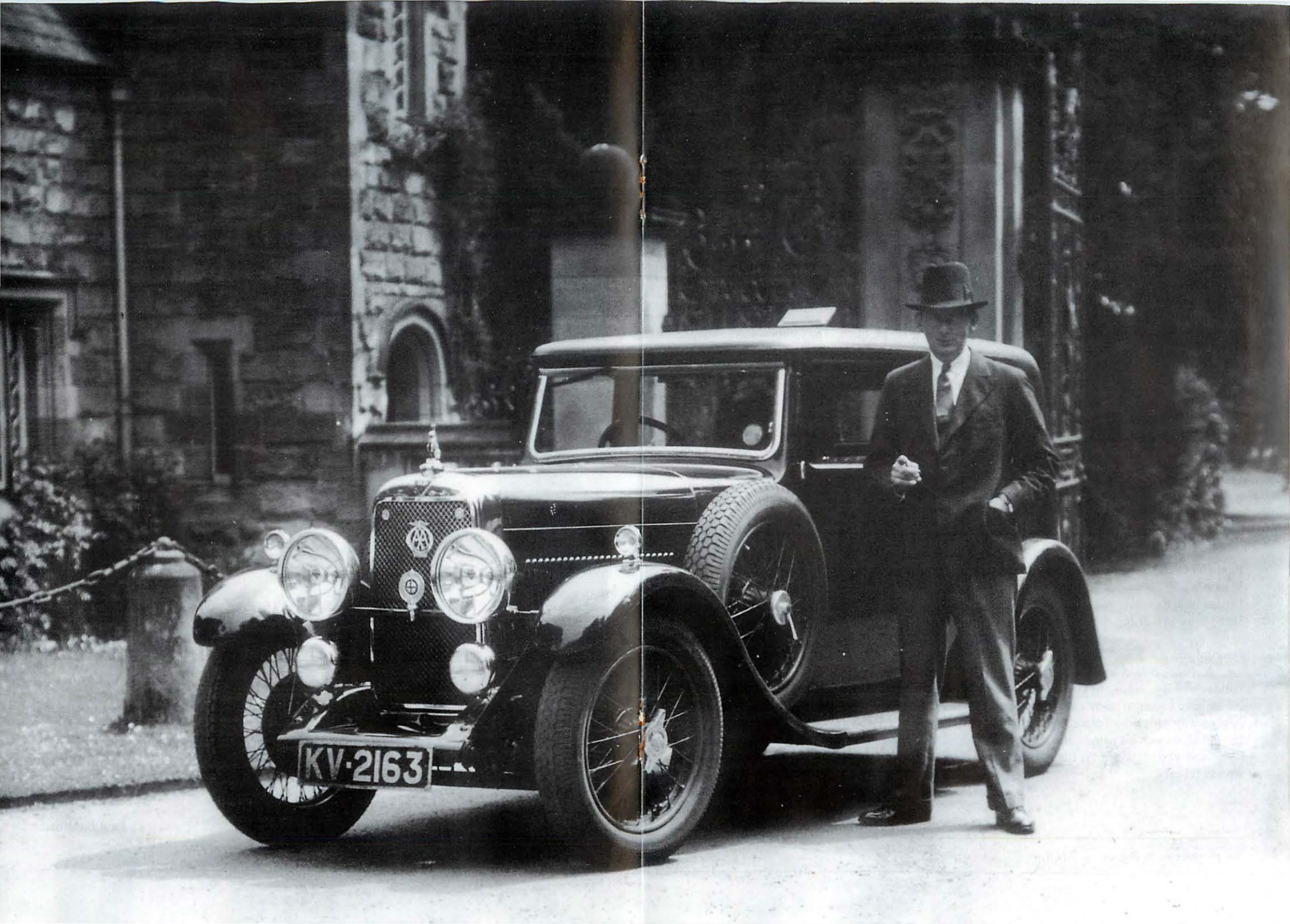


Mike Baker's incontinent Speed 25.

and point a finger at the desired point. He has forgotten more about brakes since lunchtime than most people ever knew.

As a general rule on linings, the softer the linings, the better they stop, and the quicker they wear out.

Regards,
Paul Bamford



Cherrylee
Romans Field
Silchester
Berks RG7 2QH
E-mail: DJobsonscot@aol.com

Dear Julian,

I was fascinated to read Nick Simpson's article on Three Litre cooling problems. I well remember the problems I had in the seventies when I used my TD 21 as an everyday car. She was retired in 1982 after having covered 214,000 miles from new. I particularly remember the scorchingly hot summer of 1976, when Joan and I drove my parents from Bideford to the very first South West Alvis day at Newton Abbot racecourse, with the temperature gauge on 100 all the way over Dartmoor! My car was fitted with a Kenlowe fan (not the modern flat type) from new, so normal motoring wasn't a problem. What did cause problems was getting stuck in traffic after having been cruising at 85 m.p.h. in overdrive on the motorway for hours on end. Each time the car was stopped, some water was vented and, consequently, the car ran hotter and hotter.

After that very hot summer, I was determined to tackle the problem. The solution was so simple: add an expansion tank to the radiator overflow pipe. The pressure cap goes on the expansion tank and a blind cap replaces the original cap on top of the radiator. Whenever some water was vented from the cooling system, it was retained in the expansion tank. The moment you start to drive again, the water is sucked back into the system. I never had any problems from then on. Of course, as Nick points out, the cooling system needs to be in good order.

Having just returned from the wonderful U.S.A. trip, I am sure that I will be one of very many who praises the organisers, especially Robin, for what was the experience of a lifetime. Just wait until all the photographs come back; you will be inundated!

Regards,
David Jobson-Scott

Bennetts Cottage
Martin
Fordingbridge
Hampshire SP6 3LN

Dear Julian,

A chance conversation with a stranger in a restaurant on the shores of Lake Trasimeno, while on holiday in May, led me to Gubbio the following day to see the Mille Miglia Historica passing by. Never have I seen so many exquisite cars assembled in one place. For me, however, it was the two Alvises who had pride of place. I spoke to the German gentleman who owned the green one (BRV 55), but failed to catch his name. The red one (DHP 551) also appears to be re-registered in Germany. I wondered whether you or the Registrar can shed any light on their owners and the history of these two wonderful cars?

Yours sincerely,
John Kelly

See pictures on next page. – J.N.B.C.



The two Alvis Specials spotted by John Kelly in the Mille Miglia Historica. Does the Club know these cars?

Photo: John Kelly



Carrickness
Oldfield Drive
Heswall
Wirral CH60 6SS

Dear Julian,

My wife and I returned yesterday from the USA Tour. It is not my intention to go into any details as I know scribes, better qualified than I, will attend to that!

However, I would like to tell you that it was extremely enjoyable and very well organised by Robin Bendall. There may have been one or two minor "hiccups" behind the scenes but it was truly both memorable and rewarding. If there were an award for the person who has done the most to promote the Alvis Owner Club, well, you know who would get my vote.

Having covered some 2,500 miles in the U.S. I found that my car (TC 21/100 saloon) was going better at the end of the tour than at the beginning; a view endorsed by many others. So those of you (and I have been one in the past), who drive their Alvis only minimal mileages per annum would be well advised to increase the utilisation!

Regards,
Norman Silk

Castle Hill House
Middleham
Leyburn
N. Yorks DL8 4QW

Dear Julian,

Your article in Bulletin No. 463 and Nick Walker's observations in 465 triggered a time machine journey of my own.

I remember as a teenager drooling over the frontal view of a Speed 20 Alvis on the cover of a "Radio Times" in the very early nineteen fifties. I felt rather envious of its contented looking owner, the comedian Al Read.

I came to know him quite well in the latter part of his life and asked him about this car. He said, yes, it was a 1934 Speed 20 and that he had always regretted parting with it. It had originally been owned by the Earl of March.

I was very interested too in Nick Walker's comments on how quickly the Earl seemed to tire of this car. It rather mirrors the history of my own 1934 Speed 20 VdP which was originally owned by the Duke of Westminster who kept it for six months only.

One can only surmise as to why the Duke sold it so soon. Although it has all the trappings of a luxury car including air cushions, all round cigar lighters, a silent British Berkshire windscreen wiper motor and adjustable rear friction dampers, it remains a thinly disguised out and out sports car. I think the performance of this particular car, with its very light body, falls little short of that of an open SA Speed 20. Perhaps the Duke just decided that, at the time, it was not quite what he was looking for.

Yours sincerely,
Walter Williamson

18 Northumberland Road
New Barnet
Herts EN5 1ED

Dear Julian,

My wife and I have just returned from a wonderful rally to the USA and having noticed in The Bulletin that there is a new member with the surname of Alvis, I thought you may be interested in the enclosed extract from the North American Owner Club magazine, No. 5 1990.

As to the recent Rally, I am sure you will receive an official report, but the one thing that particularly sticks in my mind is that Robin Bendall had a front wheel spin-off whilst driving and I thought this only happened in cartoon films!

Yours sincerely,
John Barnett

We have several members with the name Alvis. Margaret Alvis-Smiley in Chicago who owns a 1965 TE 21 Park Ward DHC. In Phoenix, Alvis Moore has a 1959 TD 21 Saloon with air conditioning, I guess that's a necessity in Arizona. Alvis May in Ohio does not own an Alvis as far as I know. There was a Bill Alvis in Boise a few years ago but I lost track of him and don't know if he had a car.

7 Broadhurst Gardens
Eastcote
Ruislip
Middx HA4 9JQ
E-mail: KJennieKin@aol.com

Dear Julian,

The comments made by John Wheeley and yourself about the schoolboy prompted me to take a closer look at the boy's uniform. You can understand my surprise when I realised it was the uniform of my preparatory school, namely Rose Hill School of Tunbridge Wells, Kent. The emblem was a pink rose and the colours were pink and grey. I can therefore state that I actually dressed exactly like that in the late fifties.

Unfortunately, I cannot identify the boy. I am sure he was at the school before me as I can remember most of the names and faces during my few years at the school. This is a shame as it is probably the closest link that any club member might get to identifying the family in the photograph. Being a bit of a car enthusiast, even at that tender age, I got to know the boys whose dads had the interesting cars. A Humber Super Snipe, an Armstrong Siddeley and a Bentley R Series (which I got a ride in) were amongst the better cars of the day that I remember my friends boasting about. None mentioned Alvis even although we knew of the make.

Just to put the record straight, the car (Chassis No. 24301, Registration No. RPA 675) was one of six TA 21s delivered to the dealers, S. F. Erskine and Sons of Commercial Road Woking. This one being the third, delivered on 24 September 1951. The car was originally black with a tan coloured

interior and was fitted with ventilators to the bonnet sides not previously available on the very early TA 21s. The first owner identified by the guarantee record card as H. C. Coton of Tunbridge Wells Kent makes it all the more interesting bearing in mind the connection with boy in his uniform of Rose Hill School of Tunbridge Wells Kent. The car may have been returned to the dealers, S. F. Erskine and Sons as John states but this does not make sense if we are to believe the inscription on the back of the framed photograph which is dated August 1954. I can confirm that the car has never belonged to a club member.

Whilst writing can I make a plea on behalf of all Model Secretaries that any information gleaned or photograph discovered about any Alvis car is notified to the appropriate Model Secretary for club records. Model Secretaries along with the Club Registrar have detailed records of all cars under their jurisdiction and are pleased to enhance these records on every possible occasion. So please write to the appropriate Model Secretaries with any snippets of information no matter how trivial.

Yours sincerely,
Malcolm Kindell

Cypress Cottage
Valley Road
Finmere
Buckingham
MK18 4AL

Dear Julian,

I sold the above property on 20 September and all future correspondence should be sent to my new address below:

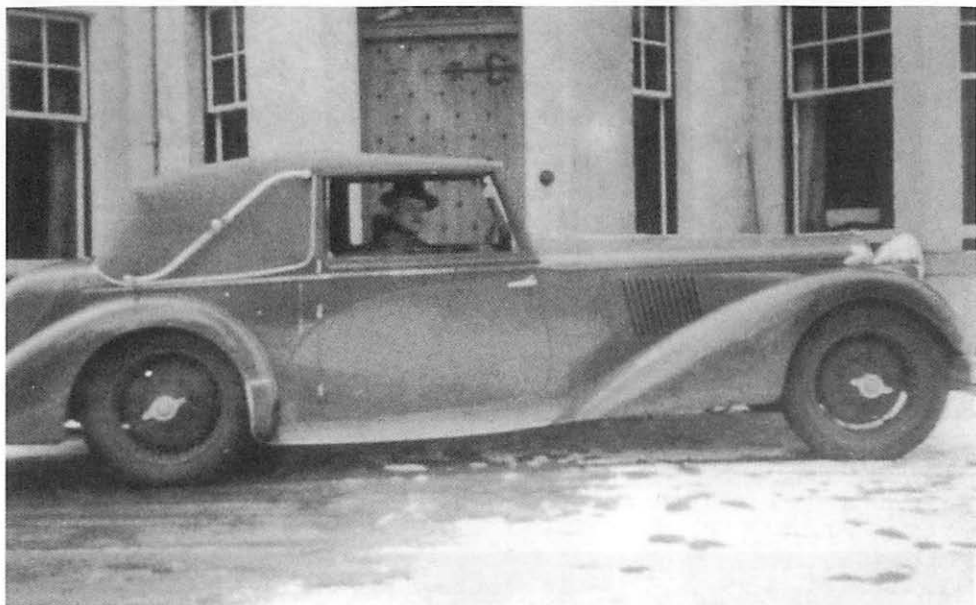
Fairways
College Croft
Hesley Lane
Rathmell
Settle BD24 0LG
Tel: 44-(0)1729-840-108
Fax: 44-(0)1729-840172

Please publish this in The Bulletin and change the entry under the Model Secretaries list.

Kind regards,
Dick Crabtree

THE REBIRTH OF A SPEED 25 SC DHC

– Part I –



Whisky magnate George Grant with his brand new. Speed 25 in 1939.

Photo: Ben Lenthall

Although, I've been lucky enough to own a fair number of Alvises (including two Speed 25s and two 4.3's) since buying my first in 1981, there was always something about the sight of Ron Buck's gold SC Speed 25 DHC that produced the greatest unashamed thoughts of envy. This model seemed to me to represent the ultimate in sophisticated pre-war Alvis motoring. Had the bombs not dropped and the post-war world not been so different, the Speed 25 would almost certainly have been further developed. As it was the 1939/40 SC not only represented one of the pinnacles of the company's pre-war achievement it was also one of the great Alvis head-turners.

So when in 1994 I heard through Jeremy Wade that a similar car was available for restoration from Eric Jones, I didn't hesitate to sacrifice my perfectly decent and roadworthy TD 21 drophead to clinch the deal. I knew that what lay ahead were several years of rapidly mounting bills as the restoration progressed and no Alvis driving for a while. But as long as the bank manager kept his nerve, it would be worth it.

The history of the car was sketchy. It had clearly been off the road for many years, probably since the fifties or sixties. Examination showed frost damage across the rear corner of the block so the cause for it being laid up was not hard to establish. Doug Thurston had acquired the remains in the mid eighties with the intention to restore it, though he must have been daunted by the task because it never happened. An appeal by Mr Thurston in the Scottish press at that time produced a flurry of letters that established some history. The car had been purchased new from Gaults in Glasgow by George Grant (of Grant's whisky fame) and registered on the 1st January 1939 in Banffshire as SE 5000.



The sound looking remains are loaded on to the trailer at Eric Jones' 1994. It was an illusion!

Photo: Ben Lenthall



The original rear seat showing the thick hide. The front trim was non-existent.

Photo: Ben Lenthall

According to his son (who sent in the period photographs of himself and his father with the car), it was laid up in 1942. It was subsequently sold following his father's death in 1949 to be replaced by a TA 14. Nothing much more is known apart from the appearance in the Club of its ownership in the mid sixties by a J. McDougall.

When I inspected it the car looked more or less complete and more or less sound. I guess I should have known better. In particular I should have realised that a car that had spent most of its life in west Scotland would be unlikely to have much of its wooden frame left. We were to find that all that was needed when the aluminium was peeled back was a dustpan and brush!

I entrusted the restoration to Tony Dennett at Hightone who in addition to being close to my home in Oxfordshire, has looked after my cars impeccably over the years. Work started in August 1994 with the dismantling of the remains.

Apart from the damage to the block the engine generally seemed in good condition – the head having already been removed and work started by a previous owner – presumably Thurston. Once back at Hightone the block and gearbox were removed, the steering and suspension dismantled and the body taken off without much resistance.

It was clear once they were stripped that the wings were in poor condition (aren't they always?) so the opportunity presented by a Speed 25 SC saloon in the workshop made the possibility of getting accurate reprofiling of the wings much easier.

Once the chassis was shotblasted and repainted, the steering, springs and brakes were rebuilt with few problems. The famously robust synchromesh gearbox looked in good condition and was therefore reinstalled after cleaning without further investigation. The front drive flange was removed and the couplings renewed and the jammed sliding joints freed off from the drive shaft.

By the beginning of 1995 the rolling chassis was virtually complete. The availability of the pattern car also meant that the wings and spare wheel well had been welded by this time. The extent of the new metal needed made necessary constant offering up to the car for all parts to ensure correct fit.

By now it was clear that only about two spars from the original wooden body frame could be retained and most of the aluminium below the waistline also needed to be replaced. There was also a lot of discussion about the bulkhead firewall with its toxic asbestos covering. In the end a covering was sprayed on using 2K sealer primer. The bonnet sections were separated with great difficulty as the steel rods had seized into the hinges. By the end of April the body frame was complete. Just as the possibility of a complete car began to take realistic shape, the bank manager asked if he could have a year off!

Work resumed in 1996 with the stripping out of the instruments and rebuilding of the hood frame. At the same time the wheel arches were created and the rear body panels repaired and welded in until the entire rear body skin was ready for reassembly. Most of the metal below the waist line on the doors and scuttle were then wheeled up to shape and fitted and welded in. By now the radiator had been rebuilt and was fitted and offered up to the rad surround and bonnet. The new scuttle sides were aligned to the bonnet and once the striker plates were repaired the doors were adjusted to give good fit and profile. At the same time the sills and sill supports were made. The petrol tank was also cleaned, flushed, lined and fitted at this time.

As the body was being prepared for painting in primer, the mechanical work was progressing apace. All the core plugs had been replaced in the head, which had been refaced. K line inserts were fitted to the valve guides, the valve seats were recut and the whole pressure tested before the head was reassembled with a new set of valves. Similarly the core plugs were replaced in the block. The frost damaged broken corner was welded back into place and the bottom deck resurfaced. The block was also pressure tested before being rebored to +30 to take the new set of pistons. The crankshaft centre main caps were beginning to show signs of cracking so these were sent for remetalling. A new fan



The engine bay with the block still in place.

Photo: Ben Lenthall



The rear body framing before removal.

Photo: Ben Lenthall



The nearly bare chassis prior to cleaning.

Photo: Ben Lenthall



The remains of the steel scuttle panels.

Photo: Ben Lenthall

pulley was found to replace the defective cracked original, water and oil pumps were rebuilt and the brake servo and electrical ancillaries were also attended to.

By the beginning of 1997, the engine had been rebuilt and installed, the body, including the wings, had been fitted and was in primer.

As readers of The Bulletin may remember, I had been fairly preoccupied at around this time with the whole question of appropriate colour scheme. The car had originally been in two tone grey, with grey upholstery, wheels and hood. It would have been tempting to revert to the original colours. However a fairly high proportion of cars still exist in exactly this scheme and the upholstery was beyond repair (despite being made from a far thicker – almost saddle quality – leather) so I wasn't tied to matching that. I decided to go for something different. I also decided to resist the temptation – which the prominent line of the Charlesworth coachwork provides – of going "two tone". Two things persuaded me of this. One was how great Ron Buck's car looked in a single colour (I'd love to have seen members' faces at the time Ron's car was rebuilt when he explained he was thinking of painting his pre-war Alvis "gold"!)

the other was the difficulty these days of getting a wide range of hood colours, particularly if you wanted a duck or duck equivalent, as I did. With so much hood area visible you would have to find a good match or a good contrast. To do that against two body colours and then add in considerations of wheels and upholstery seemed to me to be almost impossible.

For a car with such striking looks I had in mind a kind of thirties dull brick red, something like the old LMS steam locomotives. For months I would drive around looking to see if I could see any modern cars on the road in the right colour. The nearest thing I got to was a Mitsubishi van but even that was not quite right. All this time the Alvis stayed in primer. In the end I went to the local specialist railway model shop and bought a selection of model paints including one that seemed just right. After many frustrating calls to the paint manufacturer and many false starts, it turned out to be a bog standard BS colour – Deep Indian Red. The important thing is that when the car was finally painted the result was what I had hoped for and although like all questions of colour it will not be to everyone's taste, it suits me and is I believe appropriate for the car.

I have gone on about this colour question at some length because it really did take up a great deal of time and although there were many other jobs being done to progress things, Tony Dennett at Hightone was incredibly patient as we went down first one blind paint alley after another.

By the beginning of 1997 the body had been adjusted and marked out and drilled for the chromium plated accessories. The hood frame had been built up together with the hoops and caps. Much of the rest of the year was spent waiting for various bits of rebuilding from a whole succession of craftsmen who could not be hurried! In the meantime work progressed on such things as preparing the bumper blades, repairing the radiator shell and other bits for re-chromium plating; making new pins for the door hinges; making a new starting handle cover and replacing the damaged corners for the bonnet sides. As the instruments were either repaired or cleaned they were refitted and the panel rewired. A stainless steel sleeve was made and fitted to the steering column (in place of the original chromium plated one). The battery trays and cables were fitted as was the choke control. Rev. counter, choke and wiper cables were sent off for replacement. Over the winter of 1997/1998 the car suddenly seemed to start to take shape. The original self-cancelling steering column indicator switch was rebuilt and wired. The rest of the wiring was installed as were the fuel pumps, wiper and horns. A stainless steel double exhaust system was installed and a carburettor heat shield modified and fitted. A new sump oil filter was made.

With the fuel lines then fitted and the ignition and starter wired it was time to start the engine. There is nothing quite like the sound of that 25 unit and it leapt into life as if it had never been silent for all those years. With the ignition timing adjusted it began to sound better and better. Wires that had been disconnected while the engine was started were now reconnected and all the stator tubes and other linkage connected to the steering column were rebuilt, fitted and adjusted. The steering wheel was then

fitted together with its new horn push and the missing round ends for the steering wheel controls were found from somewhere. The scuttle drain hose sizes were identified, sourced and fitted and the brake linkages greased.

By Easter 1998 the car which had been standing on its old tyres was again up on blocks as the wheels and all the body parts were painted. The floorboards were made up and fitted with the gearbox tunnel. Most of the remaining parts – too numerous to mention – were then sorted and fitted. Some of the small problems that we had always been aware of but not been able to solve now became urgent. For example there were no seat runners with the car and little hope of sourcing any, so with a test drive becoming dependent on some form of rudimentary seating, some TD 21 runners were modified and pressed into service! Similarly the window winding mechanism on the driver's side had long since ceased to be operational so again the nearest equivalent was modified and installed. Various other devious strategies were employed to arrive at a satisfactory set of bulb holders and glasses in the modified TA 14 rear numberplate box.

Many of the remaining body parts were now painted including the bumper mounts, the petrol tank neck pipe and the spare wheel cover. Brackets were also made up to house the rear indicator lights, which were mounted on the rear bumper and also painted body colour. The front and rear shock absorbers were fitted at this stage and notches were cut in the inner rear wheel arch to allow for clearance. Wing stays, bonnet sides, catches and rubbers were finished and a fault on the wiper motor diagnosed to a broken brush arm. Road tests revealed a noise in the clutch/gearbox. On stripping down burrs were removed from the cardan shaft and the flange was removed from the bellhousing and replaced with flexi drive shaft on the opposite side of the flange.

BEN LENTHALL

– To be continued –

I am so pleased to be able to print this restoration article by Ben, which will be continued in the next issue. – J.N.B.C.



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HOT AIR IN WEST SUSSEX



The Alvis Team. From left to right: David Saunders – TD 21; Reg Gross – Silver Eagle; Victor Pegler – Grey Lady; John Taylor – Speed 20 SB; Derek Tourle – Firefly; Brian Neale – TF 21 and David Larkin – TD 21.

Photo: David Saunders

You know how it is. You're in the local late on a Friday night. It's deep mid winter with a hard frost and you don't want to go home. It's well past closing time, the curtains are drawn and you are talking cars. In this case it was with a VSCC and BRDC member. And then a mutual friend joins in and says "... aahh – cars! You two know a thing about them. Can you organise a good collection of old cars to come and display themselves at the village steam festival in August?" With all the bravado of a few pints of best, you immediately say "No problem".

That was the easy bit. As the fair drew closer reminders were issued and I turned to South Eastern Section Secretary Derek Tourle who, as ever, came up trumps with a list of near local members who would be interested. On the day I am delighted to report that the Club fielded an impressive selection of cars which as a marque dominated and complemented an esoteric display of nearly 30 cars ranging from an early Aston Martin to Austin 7 to Lancia Lamda.

The Fair attracted large crowds keen to see the traction engines, organs and static displays. Vintage tractors and heavy horses ploughing were also on display. There was also a big contingent of military vehicles (sadly no Alvis though). The enthusiasm and interest for our cars was remarkable. We had to field some very knowledgeable questions but also a lot of basic ones – the most common being "where is Alvis today?" A fair question given that the other marques represented are all still in production in one way or another.

We were invited to parade round a very bumpy field and stop one by one in front of the

commentary box. The commentator was well informed about most vehicles but Alvis did stump him a bit! However, with a few loud whispers from the drivers he managed to impart a brief description of the marque and its history.

It was all in a most worthy cause and over £10,000 was raised for the local Scouts. A big thank you to all those who gave up their day and helped demonstrate to a small corner of West Sussex some of the best cars ever built to an appreciative audience. I was particularly pleased that the Club was able to put up such a good show and help me keep a promise made many months before!

DAVID LARKIN

THE MACMILLAN CANCER RELIEF RUN



Malcolm Woodward and friend supporting a good cause.

Photo: Footman James

If only our local MP had refrained from abusing the occasion to promote himself, we would certainly have enjoyed even more generosity from shoppers at our starting point, the Tesco Supermarket in Bury-St-Edmunds, but despite a traumatic one hour and forty minute wait on the hard shoulder of M11 (A10) just outside Cambridge for the RAC to arrive at 1.45 p.m. to change a wheel after I discovered that the jack inherited from the previous owner of my 12/70 was too tall to fit anywhere useful, we arrived at the House of Commons via Little Berkhamstead in Hertfordshire and West End

traffic congestion with just one minute to spare before the 4 p.m. deadline.

After restorative cups of tea and biscuits on the Terrace and the usual formalities, we all received Finisher's Awards from Sir Stirling Moss O.B.E., which included a bottle of his own brand Tyreshine and enjoyed a conducted tour of the "Mother of Parliaments" with the added bonus of being able to stand briefly at one's preference of the two Dispatch Boxes in the holy of holiest and dream a few dreams!

For the record, this year's 64 entries ranged from a 1914 Rover to a gaggle of Jaguars, Rolls Royces and other post-war exotica to a 1993 Lamborghini Espada and raised a record £20,199 which Chris Todd of Footman James and Company volunteered they would make up to £23,000, and if anyone doubts that a 12/70 can sustain 60 mph and more without overheating, I have a copy of the RAC patrolman's timed Call Sheet and the word of two charming policemen and a WPC to prove it.

Fortunately, the latter were merely guarding the House of Lords car park!

MALCOLM WOODWARD

THE AOC WEB SITE

A revised version of the web site is now up with more/better photographs, but there are still more to be added. Work has been too hectic over the last few weeks to get much done but I am hoping for a quieter couple of weeks before the next panic! May be I'll even get into the garage. Edgar has promised to fax me some stuff from the U.S.A. trip, so perhaps that will provide the impetus to get some sort of Bulletin Board set up. The "Cars for Sale" bit – the genuine version – will start next month. I had one serious enquiry resulting from the previous facetious version, but will spare the member concerned's blushes, and from where he originates!

Constructive comments, suggestions and material for the site are always welcome – my e-mail is rfg@culvan.freemove.co.uk. Web site is still www.alvisoc.org. New contact web addresses are being organised with the ISP.

ROBIN GILBERT

CLUB VICE CHAIRMAN

Club Vice-Chairman – Applications, duly proposed and seconded, are invited for the post of Club Vice-Chairman from (suitably qualified)* members. These should be with the Club Chairman prior to 1 February 2001.

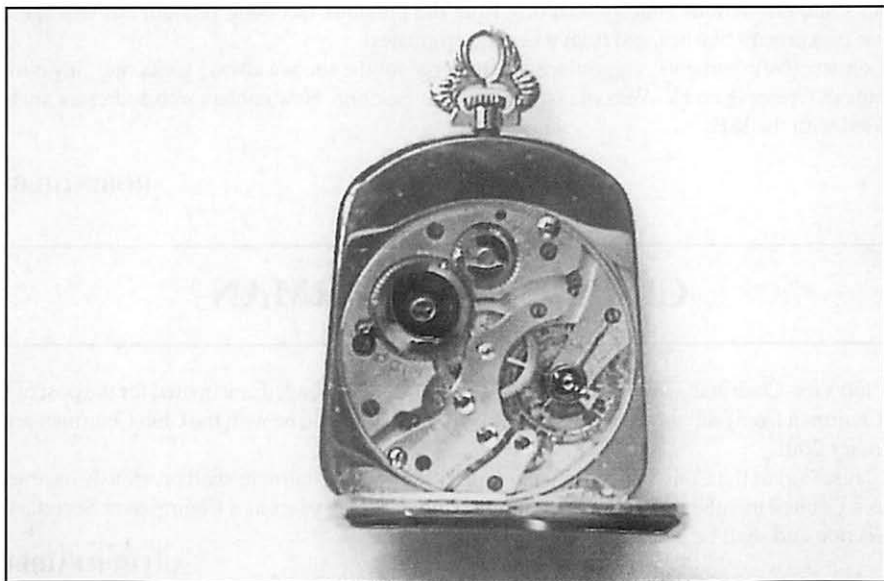
* Clause 7(a) of the Constitution (in part) states, – and Vice Chairman shall previously have served as a Council member or served a minimum period of three years as a Chairman or Secretary of a Section and shall be elected at the Club A.G.M.

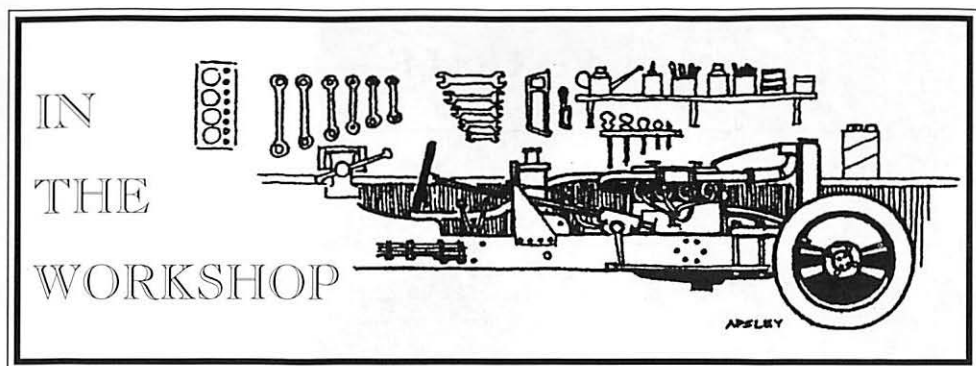
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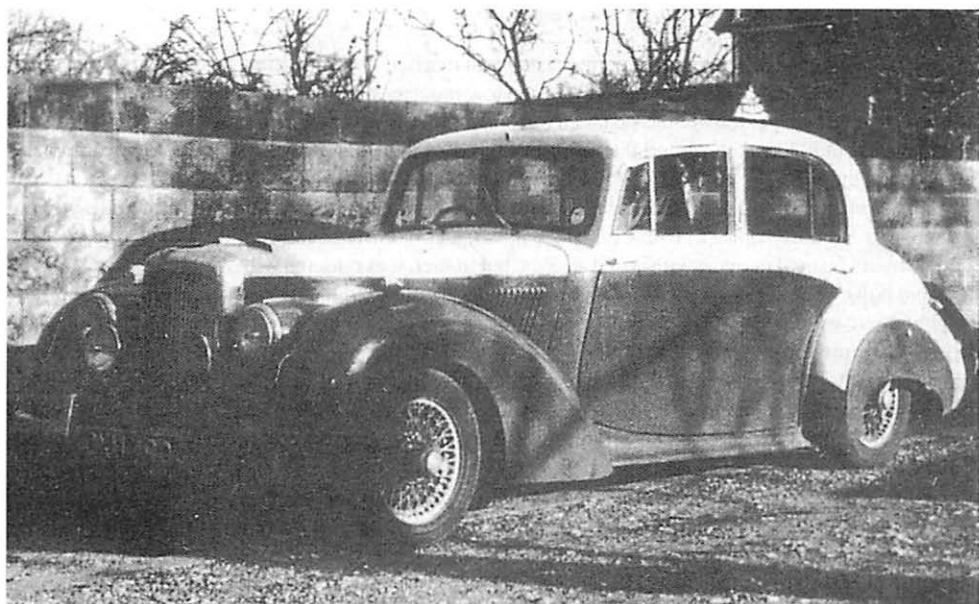


18 Carat yellow gold, open-faced pocket watch in the shape of an Alvis radiator; with an enamelled red and white logo. Very good condition. £1,850. Laura Offord: 01962.867772.



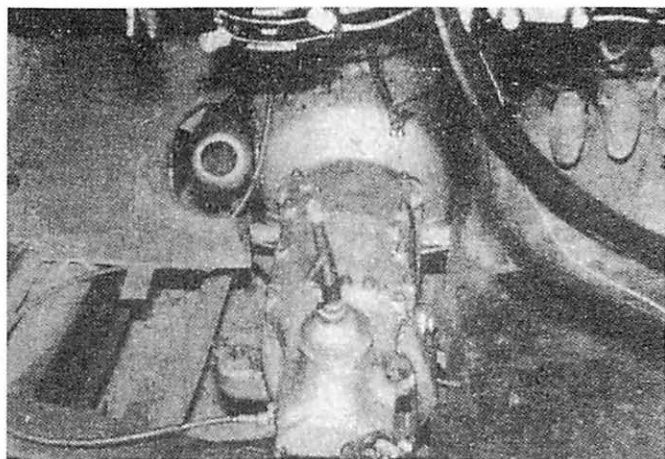


ALVIS GREY LADY GEARBOX



Shortly after we purchased the Alvis Grey Lady, an ominous knocking was detected on third gear. This was diagnosed, as a chipped tooth somewhere in the third gear train and as at that time the Alvis was a 'front line' staff car and there was no replacement vehicle available, we decided that the car should soldier on until we could afford to take it off the road for remedial treatment. The car continued to give sterling service, carrying me to club rallies up and down the country throughout the summer and autumn.

One evening I was driving up a hill and changed from second to third gear when the aforementioned ominous knocking became a machine-gun staccato — that chipped tooth had become detached and the gearbox was letting me know. The car remained driveable in the remaining three forward gears but was, in fact, taken off the road immediately for a replacement 'box, supplied by



The cable to the left is the Speedometer drive.

reader Malcolm Boote, to be fitted by Ted Landon.

Replacing a gearbox can be a daunting task, particularly if it means lifting an engine the size of the Alvis three litre straight six out of the way first. How much easier it would be if the engine could stay where it was and the gearbox could be taken out some other way. On many older coach-built cars, the floor-boards could be taken up and the gearbox taken out that way — and of course, this was exactly how we did the job.

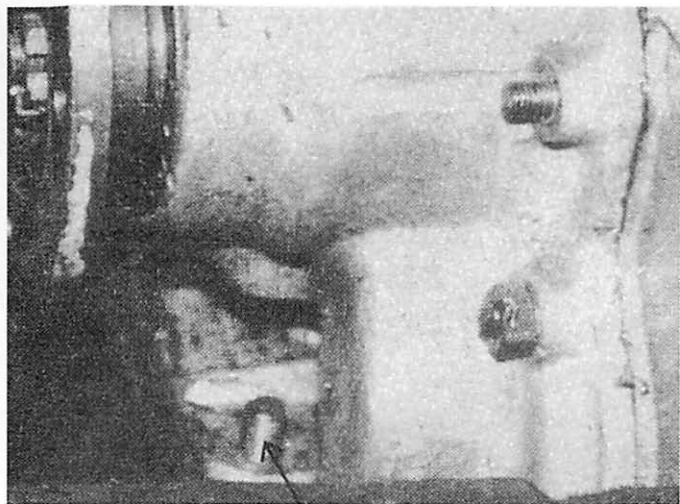
The front carpet and underfelt were lifted to reveal the floor boards. The wood, although showing signs of age and thirty years of hammering from feet, was in fairly sound condition. The transmission tunnel should be held in place with wood screws, but in fact, was retained with a mixture of screws and nuts and bolts. The dip-switch sits on the tunnel and this also had to be removed, taking careful note of which wire went where! The passenger side floor came out quite easily, but the screws holding the driver's floor proved awkward and rather than risk breaking them then having to drill out the remains, Ted decided that there was enough room to work in with just half of the floor removed.

The propshaft is held to the rear flange by four bolts with castellated nuts, some of which were secured with split pins. The nuts, all Whitworth of course, were quickly freed and the propshaft dropped away quite nicely. It is particularly important, if working underneath a car, to support the propshaft when removing the flange bolts — a falling propshaft will injure you if it can.

The hefty cable entering the side of the box is the speedometer drive and this was released by removing the bolt from a clamp and pulling the cable out. The gearbox is held to the bellhousing by four studs and access to the nuts is good so they proved to be no problem. The rear mounting is a bonded rubber block between a chassis cross member and 'feet' at the base of the gearbox; just below the rear flange. This was the only real problem area.

Because of the mechanical nature of a gearbox, it has to be drawn backwards before it can be lifted and because the rear mounting bolts were vertical, the box actually needed to be lifted before it could slide backwards. One solution would have been to undo the engine mounting bolts, but we were able to just scrape through by jacking the bell housing up so that the engine turned slightly in its mountings (not too far in this case, or the fan blades would have been pushed through the radiator.) What we were able to do was lift the engine/gearbox assembly sufficiently to remove the rear mounting block and then the gearbox could slide back quite nicely.

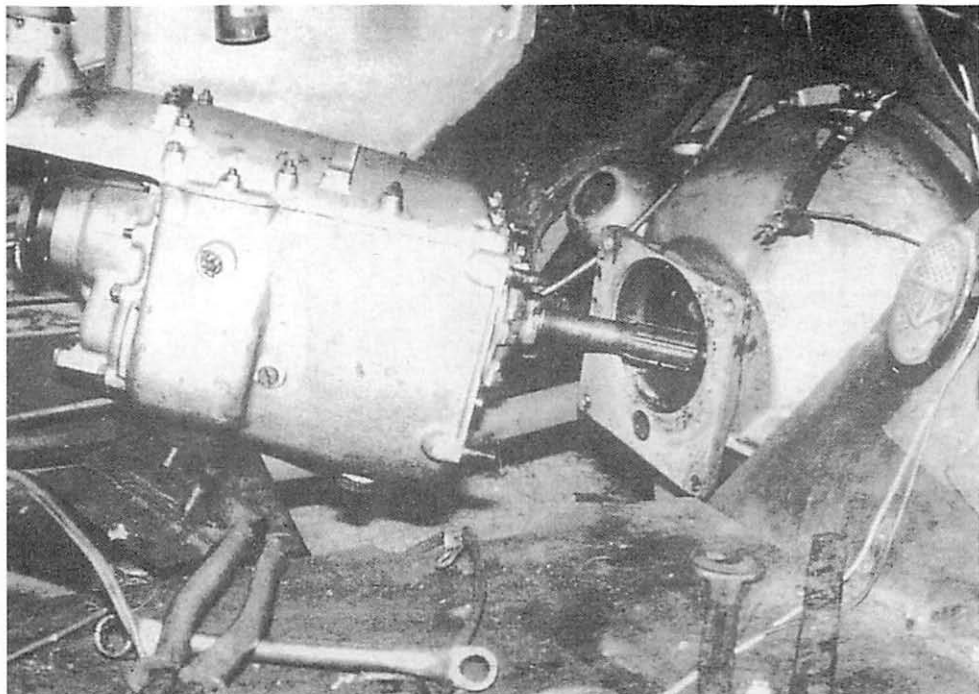
The gearbox which came out showed signs of fresh sealing compound around the top plate, and I suspect that the third gear problem may have been investigated in the not too distant past and had



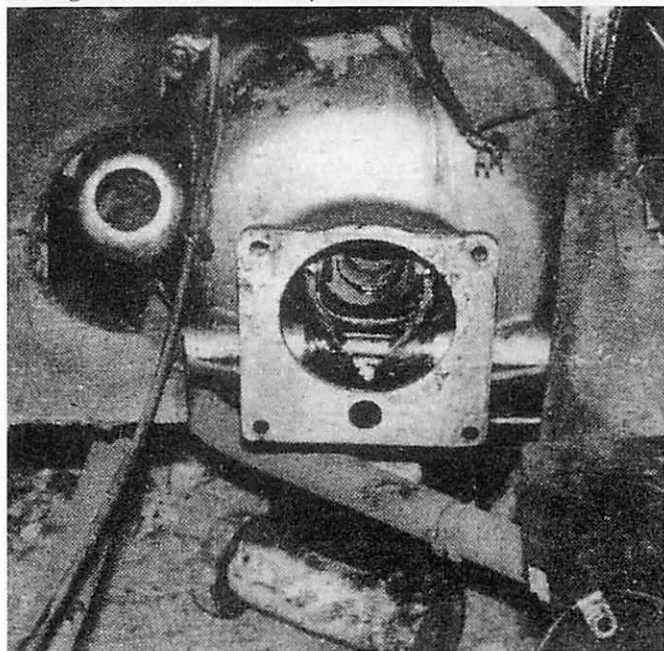
The rear mounting (arrowed) proved awkward but not impossible to negotiate.



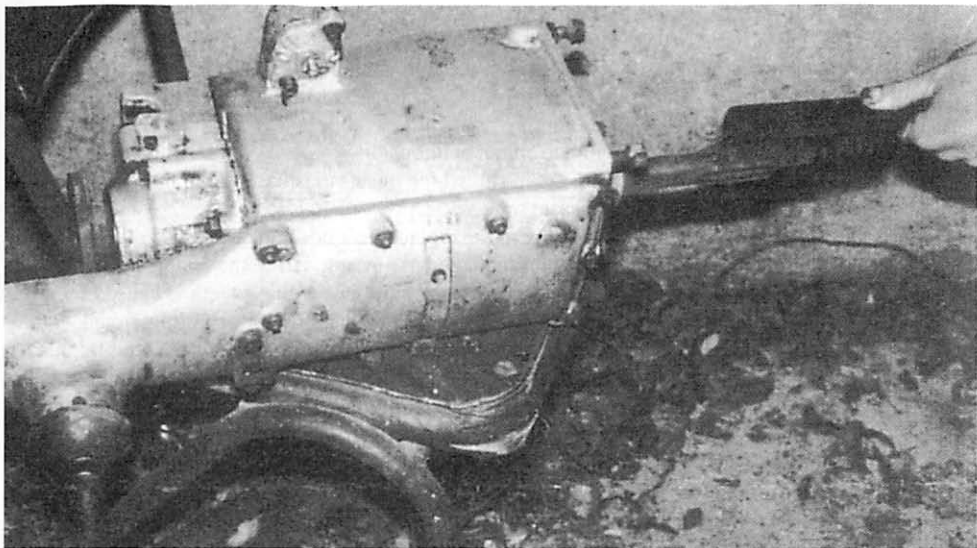
With the bellhousing jacked up, the box could be drawn backwards.



The top plate of the original gearbox showed signs of sealing compound indicating that someone had investigated the contents recently.



The simplicity of Alvis design is a delight. The circular hole to the left of the bellhousing reveals the starter gear.



The splines on the replacement gearbox were carefully cleaned to prevent binding.

proved then, as now, to be an expensive fault to rectify while not preventing the car from being driven.

The replacement box was cleaned, with particular care being given to the splines and the area of the shaft where the clutch bearings would sit. All we knew about the box was that it had not been used for many years and that the person from whom Malcolm Boote had acquired it had assured him that it was in working order. The gear lever was certainly moving in the correct manner and by twisting the flange at the same time we could determine that something was being selected. As ever, though, the only way to test the component was to fit it and drive the car.

Fresh oil (SAE 30) was added and from picking up the gearbox to final slotting in took less than five minutes. The propshaft flange bolts were treated to new split pins all round after Ted had discovered that the bolts which had not been locked with pins still had the sheered off remnants of old pins stuck in the holes. With a little care and patience, he was able to drift these out with a fine steel drift.

The presence of a reversing light switch on the replacement box threw me to start with — in my ignorance I had not noted that the car even had a reversing light, but a quick check revealed that there was one, in the rear number plate light unit. The reversing light switch was checked and proved to be making and breaking satisfactorily. The light itself still doesn't work, even though I replaced the bulb. I must check the wiring through. This could be made a little tricky by the colour coding used, at least at the gearbox end, which was black wire to the top terminal and black wire to the bottom terminal.

The speedometer cable was replaced, the rear mountings bolted up from above and below and the floor and tunnel replaced, remembering to fiddle the dip switch wires through the hole provided. Crunch time! The car was reversed out of the workshop and driven off into the night. At first, gear selection was a little stiff, but this quickly freed during the following few days and the box has proved smoother and quieter than the original ever was.

This article is reproduced from the March 1984 issue of Practical Classics with grateful thanks. — J.N.B.C.

Technical Editor's Comments

This article was originally written in 1984 and standards have changed a little in the intervening period. To save making a mess and wasting money, the following points might be worth noting:

- 1) This article applies to all Three Litre TA/TC 21 and 100 Mulliner and Tickford cars.
- 2) Drain the gearbox oil before attempting removal!
- 3) Most gearboxes are in unit with the clutch bellhousing — not so on the Alvis. This box can be removed leaving the bellhousing in situ which means the clutch pedal linkage and thrust mechanism stays behind — a useful time saver.
- 4) Take the time to remove the top cover of the replacement box and check the condition of the gear teeth. The teeth most likely to be damaged or missing will be the double helical wheels and pinions for 2nd and 3rd ratios. The loss or chipping of these teeth is caused by loose pieces of tooth displaced from 1st/reverse due to a careless driver or failing clutch. These broken pieces are carried round the box when the oil is cold and can become trapped in converging herringbone teeth. Basically, there is nowhere for the bits to go and a tooth is easily broken by the considerable forces. So, a warning to Three Litre drivers! Engage your gears gently — the grating noises might remove material from your pinions with little ill effect initially but it's where those little chips end up which might cause the bigger problem!
- 5) There are fewer 'spare' gearboxes around today so there is more likelihood of finding a spare box with the same problem. So, when choosing your spare, just whip the top off and check those teeth before spending that cash and before spending all those hours fitting what may be a useless spare. A full strip and new bearings is ideal but not always practical.
- 6) On no account should the clutch pedal be depressed while the gearbox is out. If this occurs the clutch plate will drop and it will have to be realigned with a mandrel which you may not have handy on a Sunday afternoon!
- 7) When refitting your box be very gentle lining up the first motion shaft splines into the clutch plate; the box is heavy and allowing it to dangle half-jammed into the clutch plate after an abortive attempt at alignment can easily damage the plate. Similarly, large up-and-down movements to clear the rear mountings should be minimised.
- 8) Quite a lot of time can be saved by using pinless Nylock nuts on the propshaft and the clutch assembly, should it have been removed.

Historical Notes

The TA/TC gearbox is descended from the 1936 design for the 12/70 four cylinder cars and also used in the TA14. The design was strengthened for the Three Litre in 1950 with uprated gears and bearings. The detent pressures seem firmer as well and allied to the rather short stubby lever clean changes are a little haphazard. At the expense of cosmetics, a longer lever ex TA14 cranked to clear the fascia makes gear changing a lot less of a chore on these models.

Alvis introduced the 'herringbone' pattern gears in their late '20s 'Silent Third' boxes and subsequently in the all synchromesh box in late 1933 for two reasons:-

- a) Double helical gears are self-aligning and require little end thrust control on the shafts.
- b) They were the quietest indirect ratio gears around in their time and this was a considerable marketing 'tool' at a time when almost all gears wailed, howled and made grinding noises!

They were a significant advance for their day and the problems of displaced broken teeth were fairly remote with synchromesh on all forward gears — reverse being the only possibility. The synchromesh box also has a very clever sump/trap built into the bottom cleaning plates in which the churning of the ratios feeds dirt and solids out of harms way and where they can be removed at service. Not so I'm afraid on the Three Litre box so drive carefully!

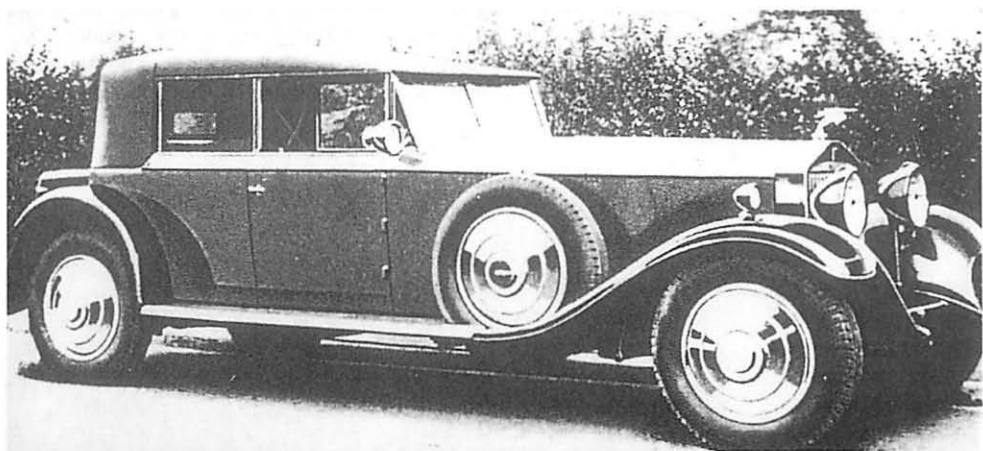
NICK SIMPSON
Technical Editor

POSED, PROBED AND SOLVED

– The Registrar's Column –



"THE MALVERN LINK"



The Morgan family Rolls-Royce, possibly bodied by Morgan. Note the stork mascot in place of the "Spirit of Ecstasy".

Mention the name "Morgan" in an Alvis context, and most likely someone will remember the Morgan "Zephyr" lightweight body fitted to many of the early 10/30 models, of which the familiar Works car, registration BO 2481, is a notable example. If you had lived in the Principality, you might also venture the name of F. H. Morgan, the Cardiff Alvis agents who were instrumental in selling a substantial number of examples of the marque over a long period.

There is however a further angle which has not received much coverage, and that is with the Worcestershire sports car makers, and this link, if you will pardon the geographical pun, goes back to the mid-twenties. This long-established family firm is certainly as charismatic as Alvis, with a similar following of diarchads, and the connection with a rival make might at first sight seem illogical, but let us remember that the first Morgan four-wheeler was only to appear in 1935, so what did the Morgan

family use when they needed transport which could not be provided by their ubiquitous three-wheelers?

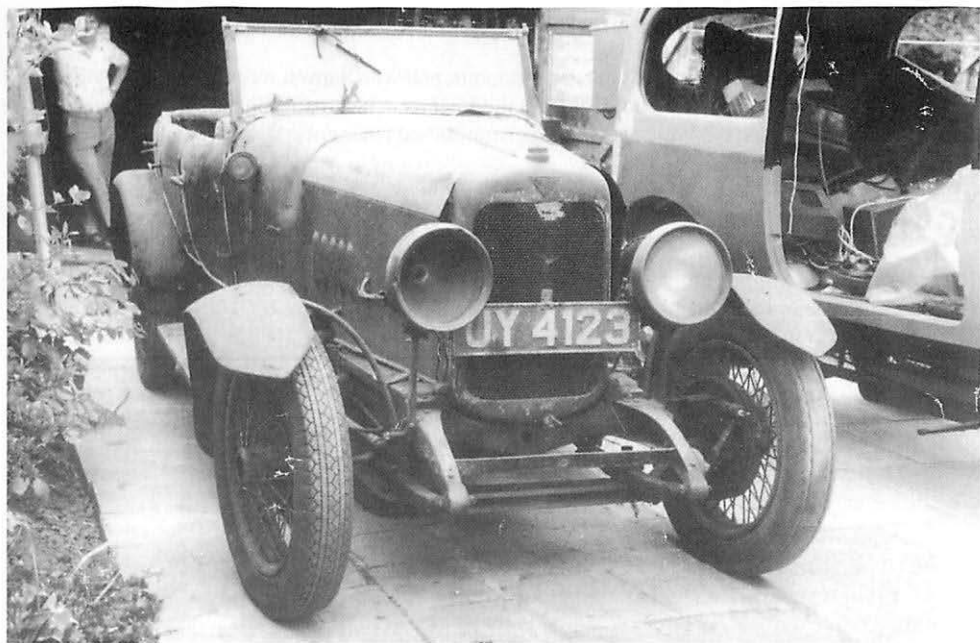
There were Rolls-Royces, of course, though equipped with Morgan's Stork mascot instead of the usual "Spirit of Ecstasy". Perhaps the first of these was registered 27th May 1925 as NP 1070 (Chassis No. 76 SG). This is known to have survived at least to December 1951. An old registration record has it in the hands of a Mr. E. Allen, of 57 Sandy Road (town unknown as it has been cut off). Also unknown at this stage is whether Morgan bodied it themselves, but what is certain – and this is where we get involved – is that on 27th April 1928, a new TG 12/50, Chassis No. 6695, was delivered to Morgans. The firm is known to have bodied it themselves taking their time over it, as it was not road-registered until 3rd October 1928, as UY 4123. A photograph of this car recently turned up in the collection of Peter Cameron-Clarke, which I have referred to previously in this column. This showed the car being driven (apparently) by past member, Bert Tempest (1903), – I say apparently because this photograph cut off the dumb irons, which would otherwise have showed it being towed by Peter's TA 14 Woody. It was at that time on its way to Register Member, Laurie Eccles' establishment at Chorley. Laurie has kindly let me have some subsequent photographs, which are highly interesting as they show much detail of Morgan's construction.

No doubt buoyed by the success of this exercise, Morgans took delivery of a further Rolls-Royce chassis. This was numbered 138 XJ, with engine NJ 35, and was registered UY 8853, 2nd October 1930. This was certainly bodied by Morgan, but by 1956 it had lost this interesting body, being then recorded as "Goods", in the ownership of Monty's Car Service, 8 British Street, Bow, London E3.

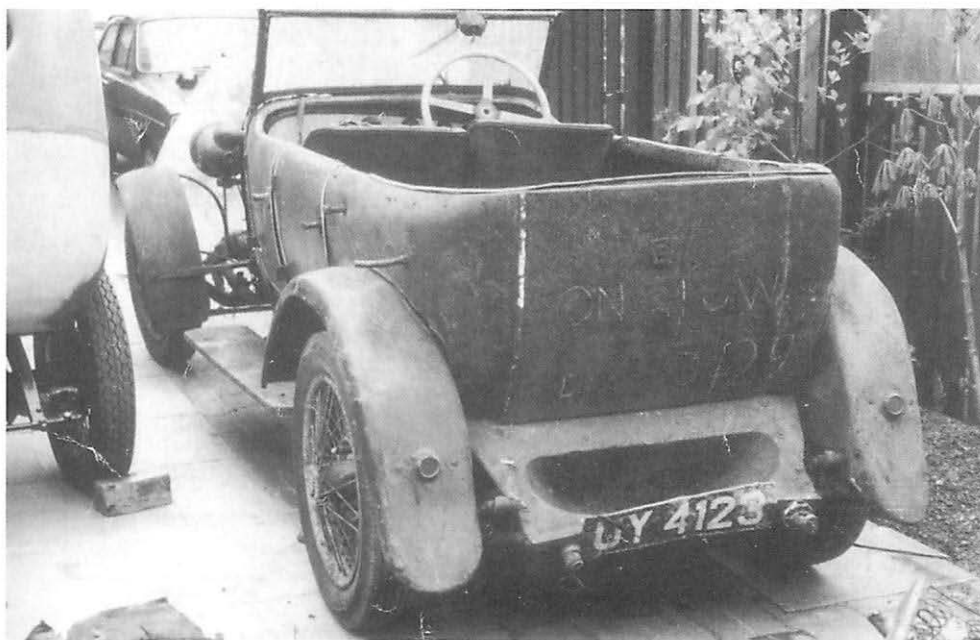
It is not yet known when the 12/50 Alvis left the Morgan family, but the story does not end there, for on 15th March 1934, the Morgan family took delivery of an SB Speed 20 Charlesworth saloon,



The Morgan bodied 12/50 being "driven" by Bert Tempest.



Above and below: Photographs of the Morgan bodied 12/50.

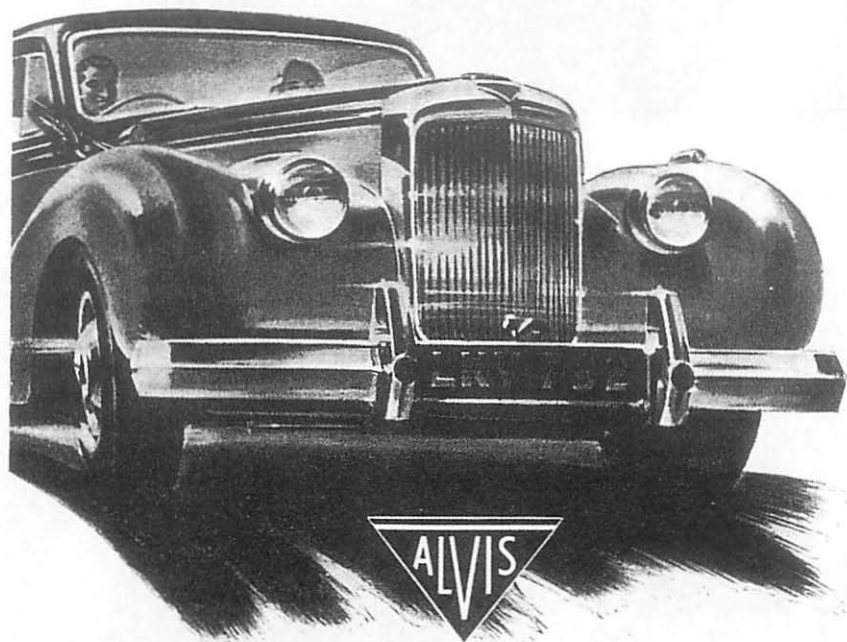


Chassis No. 11255, which we know to have registered as WP 5462. A year later, and Morgan would start to build their four-wheelers.

Enquiries of this nature are, of course continuous, and who knows, we may yet find evidence of other Alvises in the Morgan household. Information – if readers have any, please to the Registrar. As with Morgan works cars, the Worcestershire registration sequences of AB, NP, UY and WP, are likely to have been used in that event.

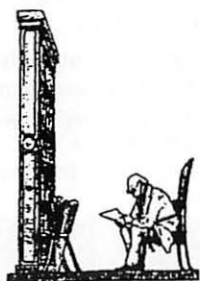
DAVE CULSHAW

Footnote: In the Morgan biography by G. M. Bowden, there is a photograph where a Speed 25 dhc has crept into the background. It is 13362 - CXJ 203.



AL310

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ARCHIVE

— A Selection of Pictures
from the Past —



For the 50th anniversary of the TA 21 Malcolm Kindell, the Model Secretary, has compiled a fascinating selection of photographs.

PMB 545 – Chassis 25015. The car was known to the Club in the early 1960s. The clothes would suggest the photograph was taken in the mid-1950s when the car was nearly new. Is that a Triumph Mayflower in the background? The car was Mercedes Red over Grey and was supplied to Parkers Ltd. of Bolton in December 1951.

Photo: Ron Buck



Chassis No. 24536, registration number RFP 392. Photograph taken by Tony Phillips-Smith at Bridge in Cornwall in October 1998. The club records show owners of this car for the 1980s and 1990s. The car was supplied to S. F. Erskine and Sons, Woking in February 1952 and was originally maroon.



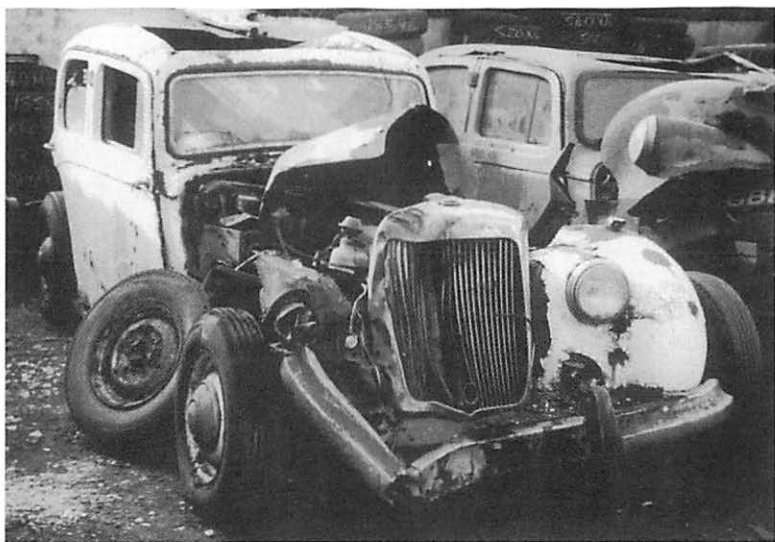
Chassis No. 24525, original registration number MUU 445 later WEW 1 and then WEW 576. Photograph taken by Malcolm Kindell in 1974. Malcolm scrapped this car after an accident when his best mate's girlfriend drove the car into a brick wall. Note the kinked chassis to the front of the front offside suspension. Parts salvaged from this car have been used by Malcolm to restore "The Mistress" (24077) and "Maudie" (24912). The most valuable part being the camshaft. The car was originally grey and supplied to Brooklands of Bond Street, London in February 1952.



JPY 733 Tickford DHC – Chassis No. 25034. Photograph taken by Malcolm Kindell in 1973. The car caught fire in 1971 and lay in this field for several years and is probably scrapped. The car was originally black with a fawn hood and was supplied to Leedhams Ltd., York in April 1953.



GBK 211 (2 photographs) – Chassis No. 24204. Photograph taken by Malcolm Kindell in May 1993. This car was thought to have been purchased as a donor of spare parts to restore 24160, registration number JCR 747 parked next to it. Both cars were towed away in 1993 and have probably been broken up for spares. GBK 211 was originally maroon and was supplied to Wadham Bros., Waterloo in July 1951. The Club holds no other history on the car.



Chassis No. 24160, registration number JCR 747. Photograph taken by Malcolm Kindell in May 1993. The car was to have been repaired following this serious accident. It is understood that Chassis 24204, registration GBK 211 parked next to it was intended to provide spares for the repair. The car was towed away in 1993 and has probably been broken up for spares. The car was originally maroon and was supplied to Munn and Underwood, Southampton in July 1951. The Club holds no other history on this car.

2

The Autocar

NOVEMBER 28, 1952



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ACE Rimbellishers Advert—Chassis No. 24677, registration number LKV 220. Last recorded history March 1965. Car was supplied to Cornercroft Ltd., Coventry in April 1952 and was originally coloured maroon.

Photo: Ron Buck

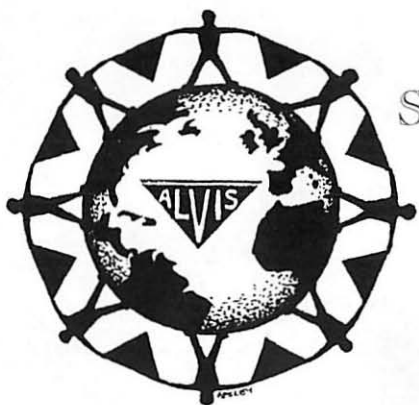


CHRISTMAS Meetings . . . and Christmas Greetings . . . these are Joys of this Festive Season . . . And even the final partings are the happier when they precede a journey home in the exquisite comfort, the care-free certainty of an Alvis Silver Eagle. ¶ Every Alvis Owner is enthusiastic about the masterly performance and brilliant qualities of the Alvis, and the 1930 Silver Eagle is even better than its famous forerunners !

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A seasonal advertisement sent to the Editor by Donald Smith.

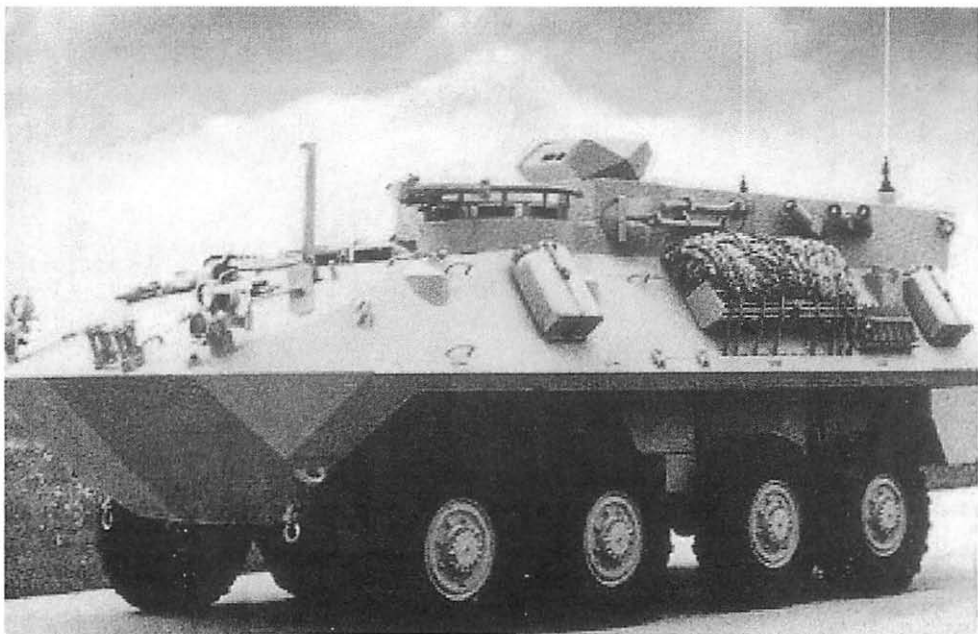


SECTION NOTES

– **Alvis Activities
From Around The
World –**

MIDLAND SECTION

ALVIS VEHICLES LTD. FAMILY DAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER 2000



An Alvis Piranha.

Photo: Alan Wildin

Alvis Vehicles opened its factory and grounds at Hadley Castle Works, Telford, for employees and families and invited club members to attend. The Company is conscious that the majority of its people are young former GKN employees and wished to present a representative range of vehicles



Alvis Scarab.

Photo: Alan Wildin



Alvis Warrior.

Photo: Alan Wildin

from its illustrious past, both passenger cars and military vehicles, of which Alvis is justly proud.

The event was conceived only a month before, yet visitors were treated to a range of attractions ranging from a factory tour and rides on the latest 30 ton tracked vehicles to a kid's playground, live music and (key point this!) a beer tent and plentiful food. All proceeds went to the NSPCC and Shropshire Air Ambulance.

In spite of the short notice, many cars already being on board ship for U.S.A. 2000 and South East Alvis Day taking place on the same day, no fewer than sixteen Alvis cars were lined up for inspection, ranging from the 1930 Silver Eagle 16.95 of Alistair Graham Bryce, through a Speed 20, a trio of Speed 25s, to a pair of 4.3s. The youngest pre-war car was the Speed 25 Charlesworth Saloon of Ernest and Marjorie Shenton, not released until 1940.

Post war honours were upheld by John Hill with his well-known TA 14 Lindley Shooting Brake together with a pair of TC 21/100, a TD 21/11 drophead, a pair of TE 21 and two Graber Super Coupés. It was good to have seen John Pryer from Northern and Ted Sayer from South West sections respectively. We also welcomed Mike Robins with his TE 21 drophead to his first club event. Tony Parkes, having made some lame excuse about having loaded his TA 14 for the States, fielded his MGA fhc, which was joined by a TR 3A and a Plus 8 4.6 fresh from its box, the latter as "tender" to Geoff Hopton's Speed 25.

The sun shone throughout and everyone felt pleased to have been associated with the Company in some small way. If Alvis Vehicles repeat the event, perhaps it will bring out a Unipower 6x6 airfield tender with over 700 b.h.p. of turbocharged two-stroke Detroit Diesel Allison power up the rear. 120 k.p.h. in that must be quite a ride.

"CASEY"

COTSWOLD RUN, SUNDAY, 20TH AUGUST 2000

For all this past year has been condemned as one of poor weather, it has to be said that a remarkable number of Club events during the year have taken place in the dry – and often in sunshine. Certainly the sun shone on the twenty-two members and ten Alvis cars which took part in the Midland Section's Cotswold Run this year. The decision to start more to the west than usual – near Junction 9 of the M5 near Tewkesbury – seemed to have encouraged some new faces this year, and we were pleased to see Richard Booth who had come some distance from Melton Mowbray in his SA Speed 20 drophead.

Those who started at this point were then treated to another of Roger Pulham's country-fane routes – by general agreement one of his best yet. It started by taking us round the foot of Bredon Hill, then through Winchcombe into the North Cotswolds proper along lanes which steadily became narrower and narrower until there was grass growing in the middle. Unscathed, we arrived at our first objective, the Donnington Brewery, to meet others who had made a weekend of it and stayed in the area overnight.

By now, we had all ten Alvis cars together, equally split between pre-war (the Booth and Walker Speed 20's, the Boothman and Ody 4.3 saloons, and Dick and Audrey Gilbert's Firefly Special) and post-war (the Parish Grey Lady drophead, the Barrett and Keighley TE 21's and the Cameron and Pulham TF 21's). Also present was the welcome sight of Geoff Hopton, recovered in amazingly short time from major heart surgery, but still banned from cars without power steering (thus ruling out his Speed 25).

The brewery itself is a gem, hidden away in the countryside in idyllic surroundings beside a lake. The proprietor, Claude Arkell was as delighted to inspect the cars as we were to look round the

building and sample his wares. Then we were off to Bourton-on-the-Water, for lunch in the familiar surroundings of the Olde New Inn and then a visit to the Cotswold Motor Museum over the road. We were allowed to park our toys in front of the museum, where they attracted at least as much attention as the exhibits inside (partly, we suspect, because our show was free). Then it was home for everyone – still in glorious sunshine.

NICK WALKER

**SOUTH WEST AND WALES SECTION
TREDEGAR PARK, NEWPORT, HISTORIC VEHICLE SHOW
SUNDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER 2000**



Yet more impressive Alvis cakes on the AOC stand. In the background, Steven Loveridge's Silver Eagle engined 12/50 TG Sportsman's Saloon.

Photo: Andrew Robison

The weather was kinder than last year and thirteen out of the expected nineteen Alvises booked to attend arrived. Once again, every decade of car production at the factory was represented.

Club concours winners in the post-war saloon class should be grateful that Tom Richards does not list "pot-collecting" among his hobbies, as I do not recall seeing a better presented TC 21/100 saloon anywhere this year.

Alex Simpson displayed the family Graber Special, complete with a comprehensive restoration file. This very glamorous motor car, with no external Alvis badges because Graber workshops had

modified the engine before its sale, was the focus of remarkable interest on the stand throughout the day.

As may be observed from the accompanying photographs, the standard of Welsh Alvis catering continues second to none. My thanks on behalf of everyone who enjoyed this show again to John Harris for his hardwork and warm welcome to all.

ANDREW ROBISON

SALADIN

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ALVIS LIMITED COVENTRY ENGLAND



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