

GOLDEN JUBILEE

OWNER

ALVIS

CLUB

The Bulletin

No. 468 March/April 2001



THE BULLETIN

No. 468

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Cover Photo: Nick Simpson's newly restored Graber Special. Full story in this issue.

Photo: Nick Simpson

Centre Spread: Total elegance. The girlfriend of Jimmy Nervo of the "Crazy Gang", poses with his SA Speed 20 clothed in Bertelli coachwork. A photograph from the collection of the late Rivers Fletcher.

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ALVISCITY-

— A Round up of Alvis Matters —

Firstly some news from Nick Simpson concerning the murder of Peter Black. Nick has sent me the following details.

"I guess most of you were aware that Peter Black was murdered some 2 ½ years ago during the course of a most vicious attack in his home and we have been awaiting developments.

The case came before the Vacluse Assizes on 24th/26th January. One Piotr Gabalski, described as a 26 years old Polish itinerant/backpacker was sentenced to 15 years in prison for Peter's murder. He has to serve a minimum of 10 years (less his remand time of 2 ½ years) before he will be considered for parole. When released, he will be immediately deported back to Poland and will have a lifetime ban on entry to France."

I am sorry to say that the advertisements for Hightone Restorations Ltd and Solent Vintage Engineering have been omitted from the last three issues of The Bulletin. This is purely due to editorial incompetence and I apologise most profusely to our loyal advertisers for this omission.

I have also failed to draw attention to the competition organised by the Club PRO, David Larkin, for the best article concerning the USA Tour. All entries are now in and the judging will be by Derek Bradbury, David Larkin and myself. Winning entries will of course be printed in The Bulletin.

I read recently in one of the classic car magazines of the opening of the new banked circuit at Rockingham in the UK. Although designed and built to allow American style oval racing to be brought to Britain, one wonders if more vintage events will be run there. It would be rather interesting to be able to re-create a bit of Brooklands outer circuit atmosphere.

A cutting from The Times December 14 2000 sent to me by David Larkin, brings news of another Alvis success. The report headed, "Alvis wins £300m Swiss Contract," continues "Alvis, the armoured vehicle maker, saw its shares motor 8p to 106p yesterday after the company signed a £300 million contract with the Swiss ministry of defence for 186 infantry fighting vehicles.

The contract, which included options for a further 55 to 135 vehicles, is reported to be the second-largest armoured vehicle order in the world this year. It increases Alvis's order book to a record £620 million." And so the company continues its commercial success.

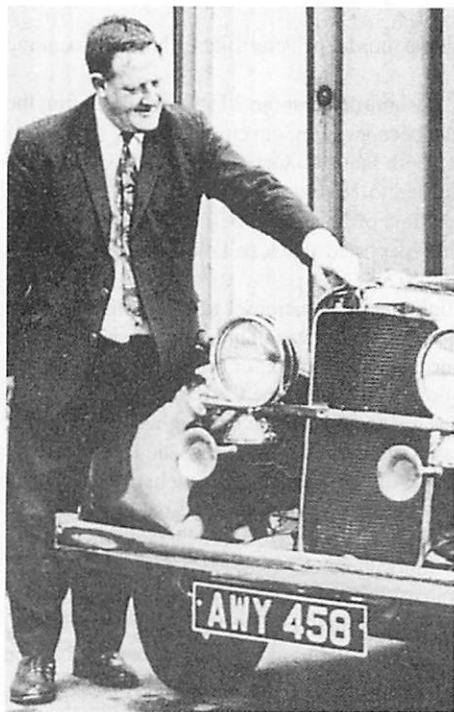
I had the pleasure of a visit from Mike and Jan Baker in Singapore in January. They had been on a trip through the east and this included trying to track down a Speed 20 in Bangkok. Its always a great pleasure to receive visiting Alvis enthusiasts here, and if you are passing through, do contact me.

J.N.B.C.

*Alvis suspension eliminates
all driving fatigue*

OBITUARIES

JAMES KARL HARDAKER



It is with great sadness that I write to record the death of Karl Hardaker. Karl was a well known Northern Section character, particularly in the 1970's and 80's. He and his wife Betty along with friends Pauline and Tony Ainley, ran Keighley Alvis Sunday at the Sun Street Printers, Keighley where Karl was the manager. These Sundays proved extremely popular and combined driving tests with visits to the Peter Black car collection, the Worth Valley Steam Railway or canal boats on the Leeds-Liverpool canal. All were augmented by wonderful home-made "goodies" served in the works canteen.

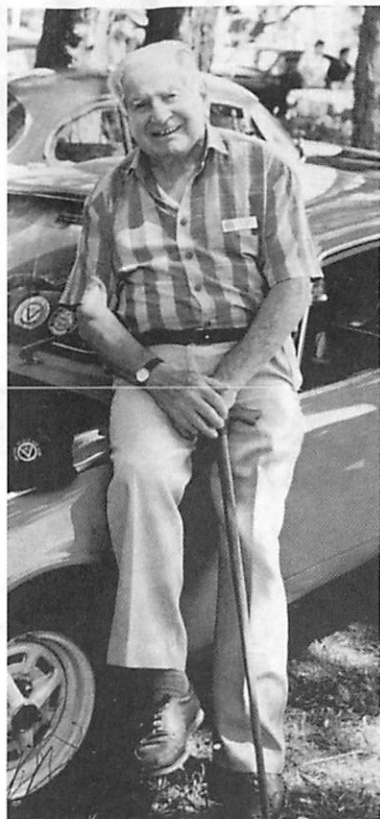
Karl was the proud owner of a 1936 silver eagle saloon which was a member of the family and even boasted a chassis number the same as his date of birth (13434). He used the car regularly until heart surgery made it heavy for him to steer. He was prevailed on by the family not to sell the car and Ian, one of his sons, has taken the car to America to continue with the family Alvis tradition. Karl had many other interests, a keen caravaner, a regular radio ham which changed to the internet as technology progressed. His neighbours and friends benefitted from his computer skills whenever they had problems. He was

also the D.I.Y. lawn mower repair man for anyone in trouble and much to his delight had discovered a lawn mower scrapyard here he was able to get spares to keep the vintage mowers working for a few extra years. Karl will be remembered by all who knew him for his lovely Yorkshire sense of humour and willingness to help anyone in trouble. We extend our sincere condolences to Betty and sons Ian, Mark and Steven, in their sad loss.

Terry Popplewell

CHALENOR BARSON

I am sad to announce that E. Chalenor Barson passed away on 25th August 2000 at his home in South Africa, aged 90, after a long illness. Although, perhaps typical of the man, he made it to celebrate his 90th birthday surrounded by virtually the whole of his family including his brother from England.



He was born in London in 1910 and educated at Caterham College after which he became a draughtsman and gained a degree in mechanical engineering at night school. His early interest in cars started him on his life-long quest to build the perfect special. In the thirties he built some nine specials. He competed in various sporting events ranging from the London to Brighton veteran run to racing the Barson Special No. 7 at Brooklands. He was also a founder member of the VSCC. It was during this period that he became involved with the late Gerald Palmer (later associated with the Jowett Javelin and MG Magnette) in the design of the Deroys sports car. At the end of the thirties he joined the Nugget polish company and was sent to South Africa.

He served in an SA Armoured Division during the war and afterwards returning to civilian life, married Pearl Corey and built his own house at Llandudno on the seafront near Cape Town. He was then involved in setting up various factories for Reckitt and Colman (formerly Nugget). He gave up active participation in motor sport in 1948 but became a scrutineer rising to become the Chief Scrutineer for the RAC in South Africa, a post which he held for many years.

Chalenor Barson was a great special builder and, for Alvis owners it is Special No. 11 which has particular interest. Members may remember my article in Bulletin 445 May/June 1997 in which I described my visit to South Africa and meeting Chalenor as well as the history of the Barson Special. I will not go over old ground but I can add a few more details. The Barson Special actually started as No. 9 when the Lagonda 2 litre engine was replaced by the Alvis straight

eight 4.4 litre engine and everything in front of the bulkhead was changed thus becoming No. 10. Shortly after this he and his commanding officer collided at a crossroads this prompted a rebuild and the car became No.11. In this form it survives to this day in USA having been actively competed in racing events over the years.

Although I only met Chalenor the once, I found him a fascinating person with whom I was very privileged to enjoy his company for all too a short a period. I can do no better than to reiterate the sentiments of his friends from the Crankhandle Club, Frank Hoal and Ron Peffers, who wrote "He was a man of many interests and talents, an exemplary husband and father, a true gentlemen in every sense of the word and a real friend to so many of us who knew him and respected him". The last word belongs to his son Brian who said, "he was a 1910 model with very high mileage with one careful and loving owner." To his wife Pear and the rest of the family our deepest sympathies.

Charles Mackonochie

GOLDEN JUBILEE WEEKEND

OXFORD, JULY 6TH – 8TH

Our Club was formed exactly fifty years ago, and we are holding a massive party to celebrate the occasion.

It will take place on July 6th-8th (Friday to Sunday) in Oxford—partly at Keble College, partly at nearby Blenheim Palace. There will be a free coach service between the two, throughout the weekend, and security protection for the cars.

Many cars will have set out the previous day as part of a Section “run”, so as to reach Oxford on the Friday. Numerous overseas members will be joining in.

On the Saturday there will be a choice of activities to take part in—runs in the country, tours of Oxford, even (if you’re lucky) a tour of the Benetton/Renault Formula 1 factory.

On the Saturday night there is a gala dinner for 300 (max) in Keble’s dining hall.

The Sunday events take place in the grounds of Blenheim Palace (a World Heritage Site). They will bear little resemblance to an “International”—more like a funfair which happens to be full of Alvises.

Costs of accommodation at Keble, and entrance into Blenheim, are being subsidised by the Club. Entrance into the Palace itself is at a concessionary rate.

Fuller details, and booking form, in both March and April Calendars—or see the special Jubilee Weekend website on <http://freespace.virgin.net/alvis.midlands/Index.htm>

Book now, before it’s too late!

Don’t miss this part—there won’t be another one for 50 years!

Friday, July 6th

- Section “runs” and other cars arrive at Blenheim
- Free coach transfer to Keble College

Saturday, July 7th

- Morning and/or afternoon “runs” in the Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire countryside
- pub-stop at midday
- Sightseeing tours of Oxford throughout the day
- (for winners of the draw) Visit to Benetton/Renault Formula One factory
- Gala Dinner in Keble hall

Sunday, July 8th

- “Funfair” in the grounds of Blenheim Palace
- Concours d’elegance, with crews in dress appropriate to the car’s date
- Crazy driving tests
- “Golden Jubilee” cavalcade
- “Fifty Years of Alvis Graber” cavalcade
- Jazz band
- Section stalls
- Barbecue food
- Autojumble
- “Cars for Sale” area

THE ANNUAL BULLETIN AWARD

2000

AD 2000 does have an aura of its own even if it was not the true millenium. Recognising this the years' Bulletins contain a notable collection of contributions which even include a stalker, albeit not entirely denuded.

The first issue, No.461, carried a report by Andrew Robison on the T G John Memorial Weekend. This had been held the previous September to effect the placing of a commemorative plaque on number 6 Church Street, Pembroke Dock, the true birth-place of John, not Argyle Street. Some of John's family descendents were present, the event culminating in an invitation for those present to attend a civic reception. An appropriate end to some excellent research by the South Wales members of the AOC.

Followers of Continental rallying will have both enjoyed and sympathised over George Melville's account of the 11th Classic Marathon, also last September, from Le Mans to Biarritz via the Pyrenees. As well as heat he coped manfully with an incredible 51 flat tyres and an accident to friends in an Austin Ulster.

Earlier in the year, 'Sightseer' was busy traversing the north coast of Spain in his Part II of the "Pilgrimage of Eagles" rally. His descriptions of the country were both evocative and fascinating. Staying mainly in Paradors the route provided challenging driving as well as spectacular scenery. A visit to the magnificent cathedral at Santiago de Compostela was undoubtedly the highlight of the whole event. In the words of 'Sightseer', "... this place was unique. I have run out of superlatives." Definitely an area for more leisurely exploration.

A diversion was provided by a brief article on the Robocop, now used by the Manchester Police in situations requiring remote control investigation, i.e. airport hijacks etc. A reminder of the vital part played by this Alvis invention in Northern Ireland and suspected bombs on the mainland.

Ineligible he may be but your Editor's account of his visit to Victoria, Australia deserves mention. FWD's seem to abound with the well-documented Alf Edwards car now being restored—what other Alvis can boast of participating in three Grand Prix?

David Manson continued his excellent two-part story of the Garlick racing car. A splendid typically detailed account supported by period photographs as well as a drawing by Robert Shepherd. David's dedication and dogged persistence has resulted in a virtually complete 2929 chassis for display.

"A Bad Case on Tin Rot" by Roy Gilbert conjures up visions of early post-war Fiats and Lancias suffering from poor quality steel—never Alvis, surely? It is, however, a lively tale of life in one of the less populated parts of the U.K., where the traditional resourceful mechanic comes into his own. Brora may not be the furthest north but the Scottish Highland climate is less kind than in the 'deep' South (well, it used to be so before global warming!).

In Bulletin No. 462 that indefatigable rallyist, George Melville, described his latest jaunt—the historic "Monte Carlo Challenge", held in the proper month, January 2000. To convince himself of the many Alvis virtues (excluding tyres) he competed in a Series I Lancia Aurelia of mid-Sixties vintage. Although not without problems the road-holding and performance abilities of the car were clearly appreciated. (A variation on your Editor's request for articles comparing Alvis with other marques).

To balance the picture George included the comments of Steve Gipson and Bill Jiggins who competed in a 12/60 beetle back. In spite of an open, heater-less drive in bitter cold they secured second in Class and third vintage prize. An excellent performance almost marred by big-end failure virtually on the finishing line. Then came Robin Myerscough in his 'modern' TD 21 competing for the third time. After a trouble-free ride (and warmer?) he was rewarded with a third in class and 19th

overall out of 100.

Henk van der Weiden, who had recently passed away, was remembered by his son, Coen, in a moving tribute "On being the Son of a Dutch Alvis Enthusiast". Enthusiast is indeed the right adjective. Henk van der Weiden was a man with a catholic taste in motor cars ranging from a USA Auburn to a Citroen 2CV plus motorcycles while dinghy sailing occupied any spare moments. A chance introduction to the marque Alvis changed all that and Alvis soon became the love of his life after his family. A Speed 25 tourer was the first to join the motor stable in 1976. Not content with restoring the growing fleet to first class concours levels he organised a successful Dutch branch of the AOC. Chairman for ten years he set high standards to ensure all members were properly motivated Alvis enthusiasts. His dedication to Alvis has passed on to his family. An exceptional man who will be sadly missed and long remembered.

"Albert and I" by Gillian Redfern-Rones is a delightful cameo on the pulling power ('street cred' today?) of Alvis and Mrs. Redfern-Rones' adventures (in the 1950s?). Wishful thinking, perhaps, for a modern female teenager to be equally smitten with the sight and sound of a vintage Alvis "six".

Mrs. R's first Alvis, UU 8244, appeared in the Alvis Register's records in 1956 and then disappeared so that it is good to know that the car survives in America. The re-bodied TU 12/50, SS 3382, an early recruit to the Register in 1952, has yet to surface.

"Lancaster's American Dream" proved to be an amazing story written jointly by Barry McLoughlin and Tony Rigby. The latter's plan to track down all the American derivatives of Lancaster in Lancashire turned out to be an unexpectedly mammoth task. The first stage was to build a car for the undertaking which made the whole project quite extraordinary. Tony Rigby, after one abortive attempt, took an obviously tired TC 21/100 and transformed it into an extremely handsome two seater sports car which then carried him for two years all over the United States in his search for the elusive Lancasters. Oh, yes, he discovered 29 – there could be more.

"The Autocar" re-print on preparing for and competing in the 1955 Monte Carlo rally in a 1953 3-litre makes interesting and enthralling reading. It also reminds one how the motoring world has changed and not for the better.

The half-way point in the year, issue No. 463, was distinguished by a cover photograph of a superb 12/50 ducks back—the sole Alvis in Singapore—what better model to represent the Company?

"Things which go Tap Tap Tap in the Night" by Brian Neale was a salutary little tale which admirably demonstrated the value of the expertise available from professionals such as Red Triangle Services.

Henry Stonor's "The Alvis Firework" was not another new product from Paine's but the trials and travails of a Speed Twenty in the Far East. Thirteen years into its life as a Follett inspired two door saloon the car suffered a comprehensive fire when in Singapore and spent the next eight years as a moribund chassis. It eventually emerged as a 4 seater school "bus". Fifteen years later, with the same 4 seater body, the car competed in the Singapore Grand Prix. After three laps the Speed Twenty cried "enough" and reverted to custom by bursting into flames. This calamity resulted in the car being given more appropriate coachwork in the form of a Zagato type 2 seater. This was more acceptable to a respectable Speed Twenty so in 1974 Henry Stonor rejoiced in a vintage class win in the annual Malaysian Grand Prix. Stable companion to the Alvis was a Railton Straight Eight which provided an interesting comparison on the respective conering and speed abilities of the two cars.

The Registrar's Column, "Posed, Probed and Solved", this time on cranes, both ornithological and mechanical, was of especial interest to the writer. Two photographs featured 12/50s. One, the Morgan owned and bodied UY 4123, which first appeared in the Alvis Register in 1954 and was one of several Alvis owned by the famous Morgan family. The second car, YC 6068 a 1929 de luxe wide two seater by Cross and Ellis, was very active in the Plymouth area in 1955 and 1956 so where and when was the photograph taken?

"Pet Hates" by A. Judge laid out valuable guide lines for would-be trophy hunters. Perusal of contemporary Motor Show Reports in "The Autocar" and "The Motor" will not only constitute a valuable aid for those seeking originality but will underline the validity of "A. Judge's" comments.

The first contribution to issue No. 464 featured the now traditional visit to "Peter Black country"—Alvis Club de France 1999. 'Sightseer' ably portrayed the delights of Provence and, as usual, participants were blessed with good weather.

Next, deepest Cornwall revealed a well kept secret. The new Far South West Section of the AOC. Robin Everall reported on the first meeting, unfortunately the date is not known. However, some twenty-six cars attended ranging from open 12/50s and FWDs through Speed 20s, Speed 25s, 4.3, Grey Lady and even four Grabbers. Remarkable. Strangely, Robin's report omitted the names of the owners, merely quoting the body manufacturers. It is believed that the full membership of this new Section is 49 so far. Another meeting is planned and hopefully there will be a 100% turn-out. Congratulations to Robin for organising this obviously flourishing and enthusiastic branch.

Richard Tonkin's stirring account of the 1,000 mile drive by Alvis owners in Victoria to attend the Golden Jubilee of the New South Wales Alvis Car Club is in marked contrast with the general reluctance in England to travel more than a handful of miles to a U.K. event (with a few worthy exceptions I hasten to add). The NSW rally held at Jamberoo south of Sydney (shades of Baden Powell and jamboree) attracted Alvis owners from Queensland, South and Western Australia (1,000 miles of the Nullabor Plain) as well as New Zealand.

The Victoria contingent crossed the Snowy Mountains which not only provided spectacular scenery but also a spectacular blaze in a Silver Eagle tourer. Quickly quenched by extinguishers (always carry one) the damage proved to be less severe as at first thought. The rally, judging from the photographs and description was a resounding success and the attendance of thirty-three Alvis, all in splendid condition, a tribute to both the organisers and owners.

"Why Did you Buy That?", penned by Bruce Pilbrough, is further proof that the Military Vehicles Section is definitely up and running. The author's determined search for a viable Stalwart is an entertaining read. To have a built-in crane to handle the spare wheel must make the neighbours envious.

Mike Meakin's regular reports on VSCC competitions, this time at Curborough, are always embellished with excellent photographs – twenty-eight, in fact, this year. He excelled himself with a picture of the "Ferris Wheel Bicycle" – an extraordinary device built by Geraint Owen (any connection with Owen Wyn Owen of Babs fame?).

Sammy Davis' talents as an artist were admirably displayed in a painting of Sir Henry Birkin's Speed 20 being tried out at Brooklands.

A recent Editorial commented on the possibility of articles comparing Alvis with contemporary opposition. "The Alvis and the Bentley" by Bill Borden constitutes an excellent start to this suggestion, while George Melville's comments on rallying his Lancia plus Henry Stonor's on Alvis versus Railton provides a base for comparisons in the world of sport.

Michael Lavender's "I Only Wanted To Stop A Leak" revived memories of late nights in the garage. A Warrant of Fitness every six months! Let us hope that our Government continues to associate New Zealand with lamb and only lamb. As to the replica Monte Carlo rally, although the area covered was in the north of South Island the scenery is still majestic with 8,000 ft mountains. His TC 21/100 had to work hard over the passes. As to his reference to "two 12/50s tucked in behind" I know of only two aluminium bodied Alvis in Christchurch. One, the 1924 SC 12/50 ducksback known as the "Muriwai" car because of its win in the 1926 Muriwai sand race and the other, not a 12/50, but a 1922 10/30 ducksback. This car is believed to be the first Alvis to be exported from the U.K.

The penultimate Bulletin issue No. 465, led off with a review of International Alvis Day by David Larkin. The occasion, much enlivened with the appearance of a streaker properly coached to streak round the arena, was caught, nonetheless, by Mike Meakin's camera. A truly international occasion

with members from Australia, Holland, Kenya, Switzerland and, since devolution, Scotland. The presence of nearly 150 Alvis included four front wheel drive cars, specially gathered to celebrate 75 years since their debut as the first British FWD production model. There were also innumerable 3-Litres relishing their Golden Jubilee while the previously mentioned Streaker, the tracked Alvis personnel carrier, or armoured MPV, represented Alvis life after motorcar manufacture.

The 1930s saw the first properly recorded long distance drive in an Alvis if two extensive Continental tours in the 1920s are discounted. Indian Civil Service Judge, R.W.H. Davies elected to drive home to England from Bombay when he retired. He covered some 9,000 miles in 1931 in his 1927 12/50 sports saloon, accompanied by his Indian servant who doubled as mechanic/driver. The next marathon drive was in 1960/1961, a 29,000 mile "run" by Rob Gunnell and his wife in his 1925 12/50 tourer "Smokey". They drove from Australia to England via India, the Middle East, taking in most of Europe as well as Scandinavia on the way. The trip lasted ten months.

This effort was rapidly followed by Paul Redfern and Fred Barnet in a 1926 12/50 sports tourer which was piloted from London to Moscow via Finland. The way back led through Georgia, Iran, Turkey and across Europe, a total of nearly 10,000 miles. In 1977 Stephen Denner thought it would be nice to drive home. The U.K. to Australia via Malaysia, then Perth to Melbourne. He went alone as his 1926 12/50 beetleback was somewhat short of space.

In "Slow Blokes to China" we have a post-war saga of different complexion. Chris Denham and Rob Bendall crewed a 1954 Grey Lady DHC from London to Peking, the first half of the Round-the-World rally thus making two notable "firsts". The first post-war Alvis to join the exclusive ranks of the "Alvis Long Distance Endurance Club" and the first Alvis occasion when endurance driving was against the clock. Entered in the Historic Car Class the Alvis faced stiff opposition from Aston Martin, Jaguar XKs, Mercedes and Porsches amongst others. By the time the Chinese border was reached after 5,000 miles the Alvis was still leading her class – a marvellous achievement. Eventually fatigue between the flywheel and crankshaft slowed the car and first place was missed by four seconds. A devastating disappointment but a moral victory and an astonishing performance by both crew and car.

The reprint of W.M. Charnock's story of the life and times of Rumbold, the well-known Silver Eagle, is always a refreshing read.

The "In the Workshop" series benefited from a comprehensive review of the cooling system overhaul by Nick Simpson. The principles applicable to virtually all water cooled engines.

The prototype test in 1959 for the Saunders-Roe Hovercraft was the subject of another reprint. At the time the versatility of the Leonides aero engine was successfully demonstrated but now the concept has succumbed to the faster and more viable high-speed ferries.

Finally, No. 465 featured a lively report by Linda Galea on the annual Parliamentary Classic Car Run, a most worthy event in aid of the MacMillen Cancer Relief Fund. Motoring in a rare Alvis-Healey with the hood firmly furled in spite of steady rain, Linda and her husband were rewarded with tea on the terrace at the House of Commons and the satisfaction of helping to raise a record £21,000 for the fund.

In Bulletin No. 466 we spotted a brief report by Malcolm Woodward driving 12/70 on the annual Parliamentary Classic Car Run – oh dear, it is bi-annual. Then we remembered; Linda Galea had mentioned another Alvis being present, a 12/70. So this worthy cause is well publicised with two reports.

This last issue for 2000 closed the year with no less than 66 photographs, equalling the total in the first Bulletin for 2000. Complementing this pictorial offering is a notable collection of . . . sorry, this is how the 2000 review began. Well, the year does end on the same high level of quality.

Dave Culshaw, as well as providing fascinating comment on the connection with Morgan cars opened up an intriguing aspect of Alvis research and experimentation with his article on the develop-

ment of prototypes.

"Our New Zealand Tour" subtitled *The Trip of a Lifetime* by Clive Taylor turned out to be just that. A marvellous record of several thousand miles of travel over both North and South Islands. The diversity of scenery, mountainous, wooded, lakes and rivers, the challenge and enjoyment of driving through uncrowded countryside – clearly, New Zealand is the country to visit. To add to the physical attractions there is the warm hospitality of New Zealanders. A tribute to the enthusiasm and dedication of Alvis owners in NZ.

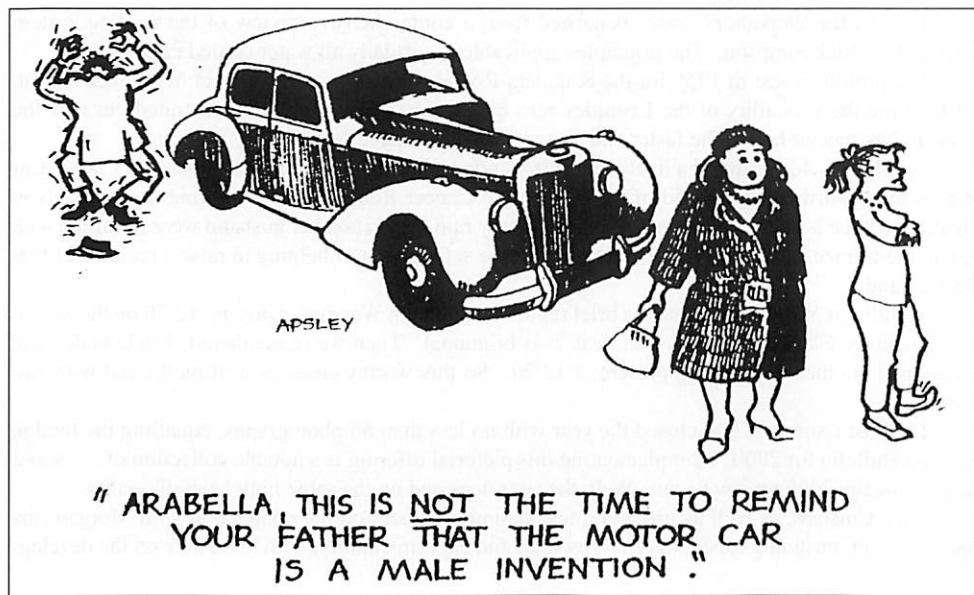
A total rebuild of any of the early vintage Alvis is a daunting task. To tackle a Speed Twenty-Five and a drophead coupé to boot, is a monumental project. Ben Lenthall's description of the rebirth of his 1939 SC model demonstrates what can be accomplished given conviction, time and an accommodating bank manager. As always, unexpected problems arise but gradually order evolves from chaos. The rebuilt engine finally runs, body parts are painted, instruments return overhauled etc. The completed rejuvenation of this Speed 25 will be covered in Part II. Hopefully the car already retains its distinctive registration number. If not, the number is retrievable.

The visit by the Midland Section to the Alvis Vehicles Ltd open day at the latter's factory and grounds helped to encourage interest in military vehicles. While Scarabs and Warriors are familiar, the Alvis Piranha, an obvious eight-wheeled amphibian, sounds lethal albeit weaponless so what is it?

Of the many excellent articles this year "Pilgrimage with Eagles", the tribute to Henk van der Weiden and "The Trip of a Lifetime" are all specially commended. The award goes to the Grey Lady for being the first post-war Alvis to join the "Alvis Long Distance Endurance Club". A tour de force.

NORMAN JOHNSON and PETER HULL

Once again, thanks to Peter and Norman for spending the time and congratulations to Chris Denham – J.N.B.C



GRAND GRABER RESTORATION

– The Story of the Birth, Loss, Discovery, Rescue
and Rebuild of an Alvis Graber Special TC 108/G –



25929 at the back of Wayne Brooks' home in Pennsylvania. This was my first view of the car!

Photo: Nick Simpson

I had previously owned and restored a Graber-bodied TA 21 and during this time had come into occasional contact with later TC 108/G cars with both Graber and Willowbrook coachwork. Eventually I got the "hots" for a Swiss built version of one of these rare machines; the problem was finding one as Mr. Graber only built 24 examples, Willowbrook's about fourteen and survivors of either seldom come to market. It seems that the Works assembled these 38 chassis as a stopgap to keep Graber and Willowbrook going as the Grey Lady TC 21/100 production had been terminated suddenly in 1956. I expect the Works had a lot of finished parts on hand! This sudden interruption to Alvis production was caused by Standard-Triumph taking over Mulliners, the Birmingham contract coachbuilders who built the Grey Lady coachwork. Mulliners was already building a large proportion of Triumph bodywork and Standard-Triumph were making themselves ready for production of their new volume model, the Herald.

A worldwide search for a TC 108/G ended in the U.S.A. where I discovered Wayne Brooks had one and might be persuaded to part with it. However, 25929 had led a somewhat chequered career before coming to me and I think it's worth relating it briefly.

TC 108/G 25929 was dispatched as a "Chassis Only", with left steering from Holyhead Road to

Carrosserie Graber at Wichtrach, near Bern on 4th April 1957. Records show that it cleared Swiss Customs on 15th April 1957. I guess that Mr. Graber had already started work on the body before the chassis arrived as the car was completed by 29th May 1957. It seems that the average body took around 2,000 hours to construct so that even with five men working, it would have taken around ten weeks to build. Mr. Graber designated this bespoke creation to be one of his "Specials" as opposed to his more usual "Standard" or "Super" models. The design comprised a compact, two-seater coupé, built low, narrow, short and very light. The standard chassis extensions are cut back at both ends of the car. The entire front coachwork, roof, boot, bonnet and doors are hand-made in aluminium on a paper-thin sheet steel substructure with an ash frame. The rear "seat" is an illusion, just an upholstered luggage compartment; rear legroom is non-existent. It is believed that the engine was tuned for extra performance. The complete car with a full tank and fluids weighs-in at only 1,370 kg. These early "Specials" are believed to have had no warranty from the Works and carried no official Alvis red triangle badges as Graber made too many changes from the standard specification. It is said he was even in trouble with Rolls-Royce for using "their" Silver Cloud rear light clusters.

The car emerged from Carrosserie Graber with right hand steering. Apparently the Swiss regularly ordered expensive, imported cars with right steering as it was a status symbol. 25929 was finished in white with salmon pink leather, and was registered and delivered to a Mr. Brachotte in St. Imier, Switzerland on 29th May 1957. It was numbered with Graber No. 705 and finished off with a set of Boranni alloy wire wheels. The Graber chassis register shows the car transferring later to a Mr. Bieri of Rubigen so it might have been part-exchanged by the Graber Garage for a later model by Mr. Brachotte. By this time it had been repainted in blue metallic.

Somehow, around 1974, the car appeared in the U.S.A. still wearing its Swiss export plates, a new colour, bleu metallise and owned by one Gero Hoschek of Detroit. Some scraps of ephemera indicate he may have been a press reporter or photographer involved with motor sport. Here, the trail goes cold until around 1986 when Richard Truett, a reporter for the Daytona Beach News Journal, wrote a newspaper article about a Florida man who had a collection of cars. The collection, including the Alvis, was sold by the U.S. Federal Government following some sort of a scam. This involved four packages from Europe to Florida. Richard went to see the Alvis which had found its way to a junkyard and remembers the car well. "I was a European car nut in those days and really liked that Alvis – I didn't know what it was or anything about it. The guy in the junkyard wanted more for it than I could afford". So he forgot about it.

25929 seems then to have been bought by one Jerry Hicker of Daytona Beach, Florida followed by Jim Trevarthen of New Smyrna Beach, Florida. Jim found the car in the same scrapyard in Daytona where it had become very sad and battered. Somewhere in between it was taken to pieces. Eventually the Graber was secured for posterity when U.S.A.-super-Alvis-enthusiast Wayne Brooks discovered it and trailered it home to Pennsylvania in 1986.

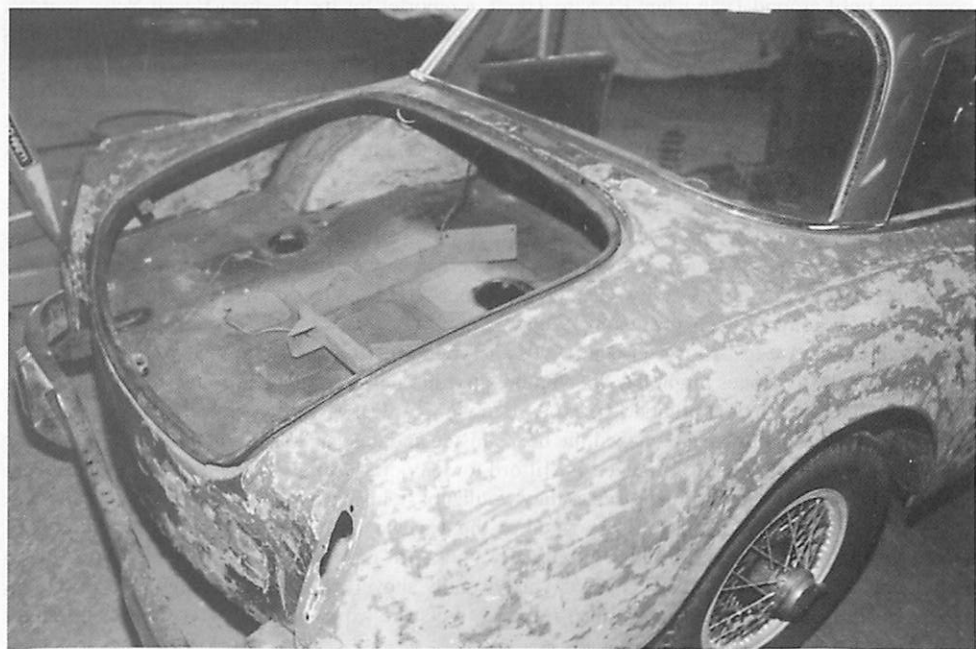
At this point we fast-forward to the 1990s and yours truly took a trip to visit Wayne and review 25929 in the flesh. Bones might have been more appropriate! The sills had rotted so far up that the remains of the wooden door pillars were exposed to view. A deal was struck in 1995. Wayne carefully packed all the parts into boxes, stacked the boxes inside and the car was "flatbedded", as the Americans call it, over to Bruce Earlin's place at Milford for temporary storage. The tangled bumpers were temporarily bolted in their normal place as they would not fit inside. Brucie could not believe his eyes when he viewed the wreck that was deposited on the driveway of "Staircase" that day and thought I must be mad to take on such a project! Eventually a place (a "marriage" in shipping lingo) was found in a double container and Graber No. 705 was virtually shovelled into it and shipped to Europe in 1996. Needless to say, Brucie was much relieved to get the worm-infested wreck out of his smart storage barn.

I collected the mortal remains from Stansted airport. At this point the idiots in charge of moving



Parts packed into car for shipping.

Photo: Nick Simpson



The rather depressing view of the rusty back end.

Photo: Nick Simpson



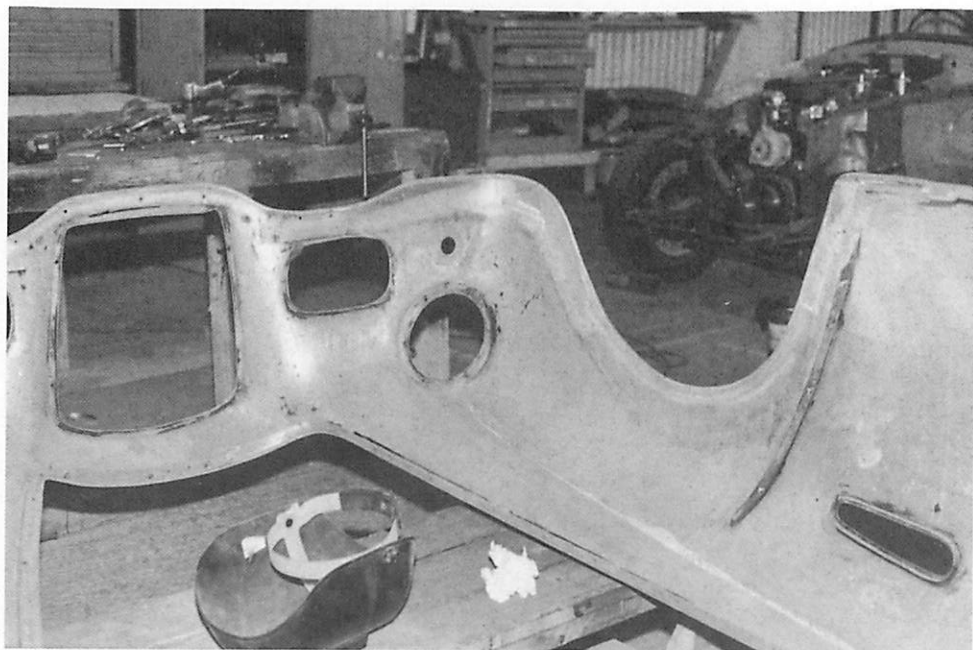
The Graber substructure and new ash door post can be seen.

Photo: Nick Simpson



The engine was completely rebuilt, the electrical system rewired, converted to negative ground and electronic ignition installed.

Photo: Nick Simpson



Repairs to the alloy body front end and wired beading edge.

Photo: Nick Simpson



Completed door and screen pillar ash frame work.

Photo: Nick Simpson

cargo around the loading dock let it run free down a slope and five of us ran after it and only just managed to stop it, fortunately without mishap.

Work began in my workshops in 1996. The car had to be completely dismantled to get to the roots of the corrosion, wood rot and some old accident damage. The engine and transmission were removed for attention and the entire steering and suspension removed for reconditioning. This gave the opportunity to remove the body outer panelling in its entirety and reveal the substructure. It is this steel and wood substructure that is impossible to repair satisfactorily with the panels in place.

The photograph shows the clever Graber design where the twisting moments from the front suspension are transmitted back through the triangulated and welded bulkhead structure into the centre of the rear. It combines the chassis and bodyside into a sort of monocoque. This increases rigidity enormously and improves the handling of the car. Some of this structure was found to be cracked due to the incredibly thin gauge of steel employed and necessary repairs and strengthening were carried out.

Removal of the front-end body assembly revealed the need to replace the rotted wooden door and screen support pillars on both sides of the car. They were replaced with best quality air-dried English ash. This in turn necessitated the removal of the roof and I began to wonder if the car would ever come together again. The front-end body section required a lot of work as it had been badly distorted during the sojourn in the junkyard; probably through being "shunted" around by pushing with other vehicles.

By 1997 it was the turn of the doors and sills to be attended to. Both doors had suffered excessive wet rot in the joints of the ash framing and had to be de-skinned to fit new timber. All sound wood was retained. The hinge pins had worn too, allowing the doors to flop about, losing their precision closure. New ones were made in the machine shop. The rebuilt doors were then trial fitted to set the panel gaps. It is interesting that Graber apparently never "wheeled" any of his panels. Myriad small hammer marks could be seen on all the panels when the paint was removed. This showed that all panels were hand beaten in small sections over sand-filled leather bags and welded into main assemblies on a wooden former before final fitting to the substructure. The sills are steel and both inner and outer sections on both sides of the car had to be made new as the originals had virtually vanished due to corrosion. At this stage the one-piece front-end was refitted taking care to insulate the joints between alloy and steel to prevent electrolytic corrosion. While all this was going on, the overhauled steering, brakes and suspension components were gradually refitted enabling the project to be moved around the shop as required on a set of "slave wheels".

The next job was fitting the overhauled engine, gearbox and transmission. This was fairly straightforward although several modifications were incorporated during assembly. Great care was taken with regard to cooling arrangements and fuel pipe runs to help with running under present conditions of heat and fuels and to allow Continental touring. A new wiring harness was made up and fitted at this stage.

1998. Now it was time to tackle the steel rear end of the body. It was badly corroded and full of holes. The roof was refitted and a jig made up to support the rear deck so that the underpinnings and wheel boxes could be replaced and/or repaired. An enormous amount of corrosion had taken place and the boot lid closure panel as well as the outer wing panels were extensively cut away and rebuilt with hand-made panels.

With the roof back on it was time to check and trial fit the chromium plated trim items. The major parts like bumpers were sent away to be stripped before working on them. They and the overriders had taken a beating in the scrapyards as the car had probably been moved around by means of pushing it with another vehicle. The bumpers were returned stripped to bare metal and altered and repaired to ensure a perfect fit on the car. They then went back to the platers for heavy copper plating before applying the chromium plating. The rear bumper wrap-arounds were rotted right through and had to have large intricate repair sections fabricated and welded in place. The front bumper had survived the



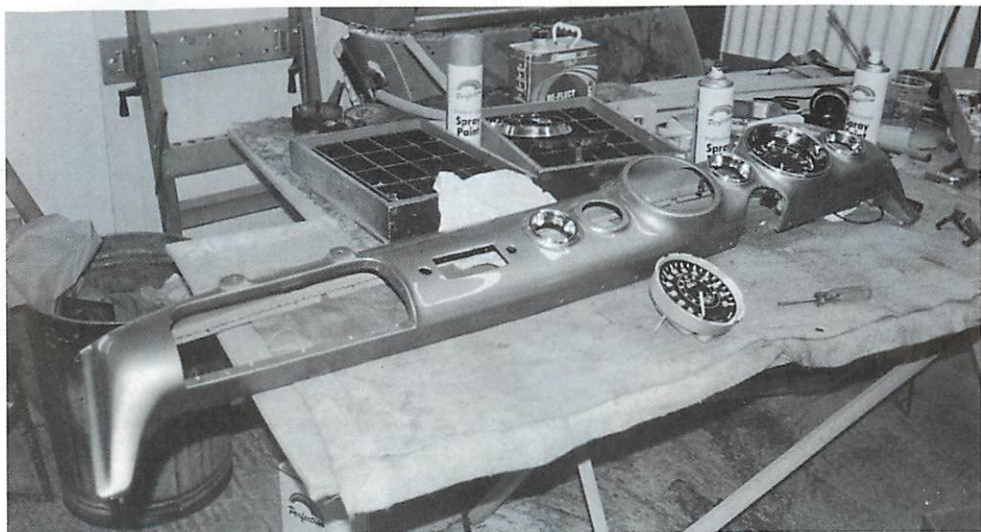
Roof back on, back panel partially cut away and installation of rear wing repair sections.

Photo: Nick Simpson



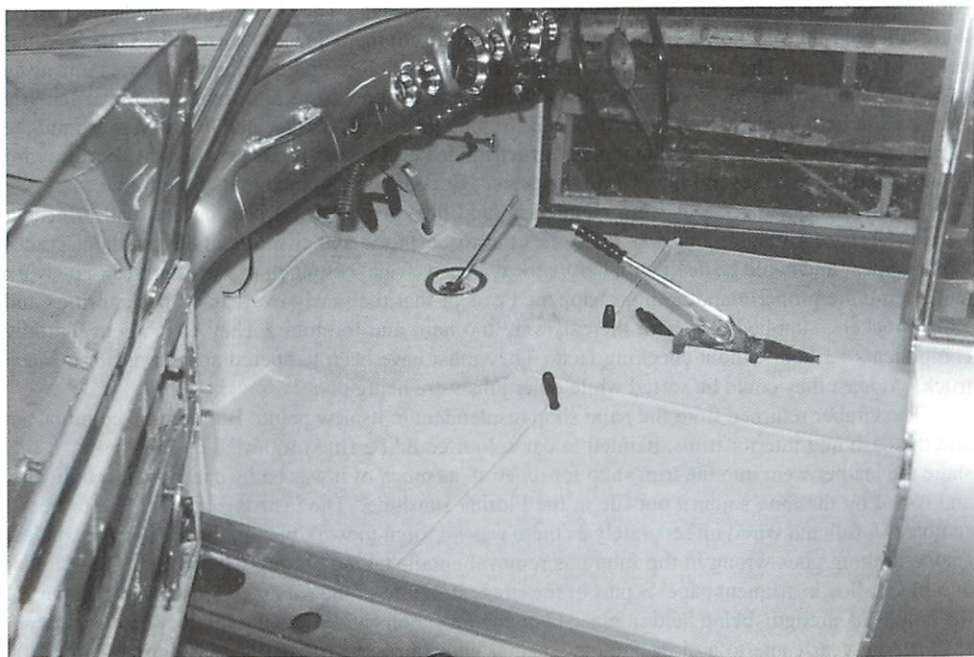
Before we knew it, the Millennium was upon us and there was still a lot to do. Profiling of the body surface was followed by priming and stopping. Here, the first stages of colour are being applied.

Photo: Nick Simpson



Building up the instrument panel prior to installation.

Photo: Nick Simpson



Re-trimming the interior.

Photo: Nick Simpson



Fitting-up.

Photo: Nick Simpson

battering better than the overrides; they were in a desperate state. They looked like standard Alvis TC items until close inspection revealed that Mr. Graber had cut them down to correct the scale for "his" design of front end. The same process was repeated, but not before a pair of donor units was sent away to be de-plated so that our surgeon could perform. The window trims and frames were particularly delicate and held in place with literally dozens of long set screws that located in drillings around the timber screen frames. A quarter light glass turned out to be a Perspex replica so this was sent away for copying and returned several times until the correct fit could be obtained in its little frame.

At this stage the services were coupled up and the car was test-driven on the road in primer without glass or fittings. This was to "settle" the wood frame and ensure that any faults or cracks would appear and could be dealt with before the expensive final colour coats were applied. The work had been done properly and nothing happened except that the newly overhauled back springs and Koni shockers, supplied new with the car, were too hard and too high. They were about the only components I fitted without checking first. They must have been tempered and set up for a Mack truck. At least they could be sorted while other jobs were being done.

The Graber returned from the paint shop resplendent in its new paint. Building-up commenced and the dash and interior trims, painted to car colour could be fitted followed by the glass. At this stage the leather went into the trim shop for renewal, as much of it was badly damaged through wear and rotted by the long sojourn outside in the Florida sunshine. The instrument panel had to be assembled in full and wired up separately as there was no room to work behind it once it was installed. I hope nothing goes wrong in the future as removal entails taking out the windscreen! The Graber one-piece alloy instrument panel is part of the stress structure of the car and forms an integral part of the bulkhead strength, being held in place by many nuts, bolts and rivets around the screen frame.

As the year came to a close the new leather and trim were fitted. The headlining came first followed by the rear sides and door pads, all faithfully copied to a stitch, from the originals. Damaged parts had to be carefully repaired and all chromium-plated screws were replaced with stainless items for a longer life. Now she was beginning to look like a car again. What was so surprising was that



Job done!

Photo: Nick Simpson

almost nothing was missing, down to the smallest little chromium-plated brackets, screws and trim. Wayne must be complimented for packing it up so carefully all those years ago. Apart from the quarter light glass, only one item had to be made, and that took a man two solid days filing at the bench, the "Grabber" signature badge for the left front wing. I suppose somebody prised it off as a souvenir. It had to be filed, by hand out of solid stainless bar.

The Millennium celebrations came and went and there was still a lot to do. The underside had to be painted and the exhaust system fitted. The fuel tank and spare wheel tray were next. New 185 x 15 tyres and wheels were obtained and fitted. The spare would not go into the tray and the wheel arches seemed overfilled with wheel. Some research was done and on reading a Swiss Graber brochure, it was discovered that the TC 108/G was fitted with 165 section tyres. By this time the Borannis were back from rebuild (ouch!) so a second set of 165 section tyres were procured and looked much better. The spare slipped into its tray easily as well, so now we know, ten wheels and tyres later. Ouch again!

March turned into April and there was little time for serious testing. John and Nadine Fox's Lincoln Weekend on the 14th was set as the target for debut. Tuesday and Wednesday, 11th and 12th were spent coping with multiple punctures until it was discovered that one of the tyres was faulty with wires escaping from the tread inwards and pricking the inner tubes. Lots of phone calls and a super-human effort from North Hants Tyres produced a decent set of tyres and tubes an hour before leaving for Lincoln. The crew set off, as they say, "Head forward and trusting in the Lord".

As it turned out, our "Debutante" gave us an uneventful trip on its first Club outing. This was followed with a visit to International Weekend at Ragley Hall and the Graber Treffen at Neuchatel in Switzerland on the next weekend. From there it provided everyday transport in France for the Annual Holidays before a trouble free return trip to Blighty.

NICK SIMPSON

An incredible restoration by Nick which shows what can be done if you have the necessary skills and time — J.N.B.C

GOING RACING

– Part I –



George MacArthur ("Mac") Job at the wheel of the original MacJob Special.

Photo: Alvibatics

I suppose that it was inevitable that when I became involved with old cars it was only a matter of time before I would wish to use them in a competitive way. Everything I have ever been involved with on a recreational front has ended in a competitive way whether it be cycling, fishing, football, cricket or even skittles and darts. The nature of the beast does not change.

I joined the Alvis Owner Club in 1983 and was fascinated to read the competition reports in *The Bulletin*, originally by Brian Chant and then by Clive Taylor. The exploits of "Speed Sparrowhawk", "Rocket Spiers" and "Brutus", amongst many others, was eagerly awaited each month. When I moved to the South East area in 1986, my nearest "noggin and natter" was hosted by Clive Taylor and I was soon, under his influence, enjoying the spectating delights of Silverstone, Donington, Wiscombe and Prescott. It was not long before I resolved that I had to have a go at this and the only surprise was that it took until 1998 to get started. I should point out however that I have sat in the wrong seat of a classic rally car since 1994.

I think it was at the Prescott Hill climb in 1997 that I mentioned to the then owner of the "MacJob Special", Phil Owen, that unless I could find a suitable Alvis for speed competition very soon I would have to consider buying something like a Riley! This chance comment prompted Phil to make up his mind to sell the "MacJob" so that it was used regularly rather than residing in a barn in Sussex. Nearly a year later, some harsh negotiating and a very good bottle of red wine, the "MacJob" was mine. All I had to do now was to take the RAC course to get a racing licence so that my ten-year lust to be part of the racing scene could be satisfied.

The "MacJob Special" is a 1925 12/50 that was first modified for competition, in Australia, in the 1940's. Eric Cunningham has given his kind permission to reproduce the following article which first

appeared in *Alvibatics* in 1956 and gives much of the early history of the car. This article is preceded by a letter from Eric Cunningham to the late Peter Black who reproduced the same article in "Le Magazine", the newsletter of the Alvis Club de France of which Peter was the founder and President until his untimely death. In his letter, Eric Cunningham wrote, "The history of the MacJob Special could best be given by those who have been closely involved in its development as a Vintage racing car. Indeed, the original builder of the Special has given a history of the car's metamorphosis from a Ducksback 12/50 into a high performance racing car. A series of articles by George MacArthur ("Mac") Job appeared in "Alvibatics" in 1959/1960, and I am sending copies to you in case you feel your readers may like to see the background of this interesting car in a serialised form. The basic data on this car is:

Chassis No. 3537, left the factory on 21st May 1925, as an SC Series 12/50 two-seater fitted with a polished aluminium body (No. 3823) by Carbodies. The next twenty years or so are shrouded in mystery but the car was acquired by a Mark Kirby who, like "Mac" Job, was a founder member of the Alvis Car Club in 1950.

The near derelict car was acquired by Job who proceeded to convert it into a sports car suitable for competition. This phase was moderately successful but MacJob felt more drastic measures were required and this second development transformed the car into its present guise.

The car was sold to someone who converted it into a road car, complete with headlights and mudguards, etc., and it was becoming rather shabby again. In this form it was acquired by Alan Griffin, in 1957, who proceeded to restore the Alvis back into its MacJob racing mode. Then, with assistance from Robbie Rowe, the car was refined and further developed along the lines it was assumed MacJob would have taken had he retained this Alvis.

In this later phase the car was campaigned at Historic Racing Car meetings in a very professional manner, which reflected the diligence and money spent on its development, and made the Alvis a very successful racing car.

It was sold at a Sotheby's auction, in 1987, to a Richard Barber in U.S.A., and then went to Britain where it again passed through an auction saleroom to its new owner who, I believe, still has this MacJob Alvis."

What follows is "Mac" Job's own story of the car, reprinted with thanks from Alvibatics.

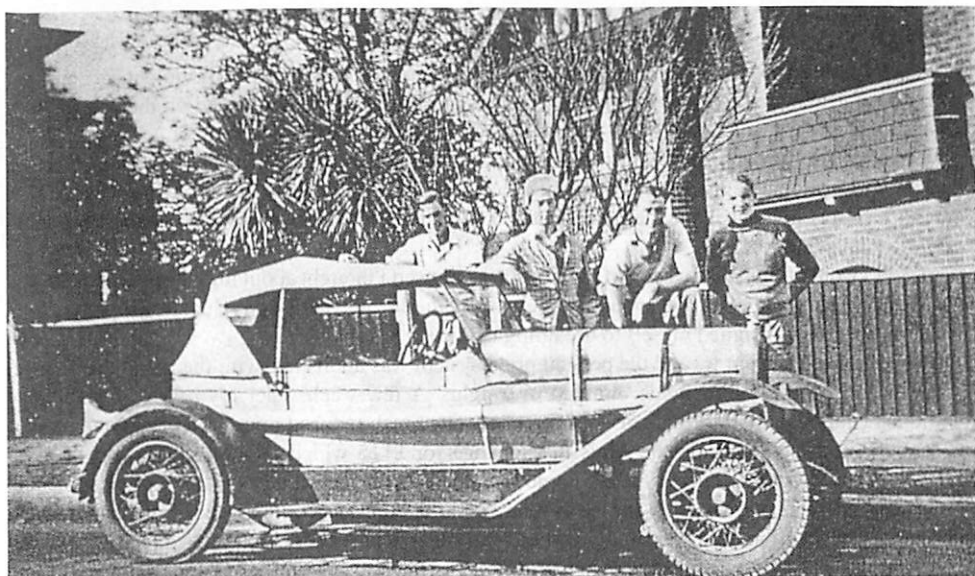
It was during the winter of 1948 that old NZ-217 first came to my notice. The car at that time lived in Ashfield N.S.W., being owned by the cousin of a certain female office acquaintance who, on learning of my professed interest in "that sort of car", lost no time in advising me of her cousin's reluctant decision to dispose of his pride and joy.

Frustrated at that time by the painful and financially disastrous ownership of a succession of sporting Austin Sevens of questionable pedigree, I was enthralled by the very thought of owning such motor car as an Alvis. The mention of the name alone was sufficient to inspire in one the most hallowed veneration and surely would silence for all time the scorn of some individuals who failed to share one's enthusiasm for these things!

And so it was to Ashfield I went one evening to inspect and have demonstrated this highly desirable means of transport.

My first glimpse of the old car standing by the kerbside in the light of the brightly lit shop windows confirmed the vision. The high dignified radiator, complete with steam coil, standing directly above the front axle, the low mounted headlamps on the protruding dumbirons; the fixed starting handle and the three branch outside exhaust pipe pouring from the side of the long narrow aluminium bonnet which was strapped down in the traditional racing style, seemed to epitomise all that a motor car should be.

I really knew little about motor cars at this time and less about Alvises. "Is it a front wheel drive



Mid 1948. A youthful MacJob (right) and friends with his newly acquired 12/50. Note the non-standard tail, "MG-ised" by a previous owner.



The car later in 1948.

model?" I enquired.

"No!" I was told, "It's a 12/50." (Whatever that meant!)

Then followed the demonstration drive by the owner, an impressive affair of violent acceleration and howling gears, punctuated by lightning changes of ratio, both superimposed on the ear-splitting exhaust note emitted from a huge fish-tail which poked out behind the spare wheel.

I needed no further convincing that this was the car for me. But there was one very serious obstacle. Government pegged prices were still in vogue and had succeeded in holding used car market values at a falsely high level and the figure of £180 asked for this lovable monster was much more than I could lay my hand to.

I said I would think about it and in the days that followed I thought about little else. But there was no way out – I simply didn't have enough money to buy the 12/50. Sadly and reluctantly I put the idea out of my mind and resigned myself to dreaming of Austin Sevens.

Several months went by and the pegged price system was abolished, with the result that market values throughout the motor trade tumbled overnight. A few weeks later my office acquaintance mentioned cautiously that the car was still for sale – at a much reduced price! The final outcome of this remark was my acquiring the Alvis in exchange for £115 which seemed satisfactory to both parties to the transaction. I drove the car home with the air of a man who has just inherited a fortune.

The initial thrill of ownership started to wear thin after the first couple of weeks and then it began to be apparent that although "everything worked" and superficially NZ-217 seemed a really sound old car, it had in fact been driven many, many hard miles in its long life and all was far from well. The radiator had a large patch in the honeycomb, the chassis frame had been broken and welded beside the handbrake mounting, a hole in the crankcase had been roughly patched directly opposite the number three connecting rod and the bodywork from the driver's seat squab rearwards was very obviously non-standard. My growing knowledge of Alvis lore told me that the car had been a "duck's back" of 1924 vintage fitted with the earliest form of front wheel brakes, which at that time were an optional extra. It also had the small port 10/30 type cylinder head with the 30 mm ports. There were numerous minor afflictions to worry about. The discovery of such items as a hole worn in the steering drag-link by the offside front tyre, rotting timber in the scuttle frame, and a hand throttle linkage held together by string, began to mock my original opinion of the machine.

All this was most disheartening, especially by comparison with some of the superb vehicles owned by members of the Vintage Sports Car Club, some of whom were now becoming known to me and whose club at that time was a real vintage motor car club. I resolved that I would not be content until my 12/50 had been rebuilt to a similar standard.

Having absolutely no workshop facilities of my own (the car's "garage" was the kerbside at the front of a Cremorne boarding establishment, to my landlady's very considerable distaste), the car was ultimately placed in hands of Alex MacKinnon for a long list of attentions. That I could now afford such indulgence was due only to the inattention of an unnamed M.G. motorist who happened to run into me one night as I was crossing the Pacific Highway disguised as a pedestrian. The M.G. broke my leg and in due course, I was paid the princely sum of more than £200 for my trouble. Thus Mr. MacKinnon was able to give my 12/50 a fairly comprehensive overhaul and this was carried out in several stages extending over a number of months. When finally completed, I had a car which from a mechanical point of view, was eminently suitable for touring, one which was economical but yet possessing a very handy turn of speed. The bodywork, however, remained almost untouched and utterly spoilt what favourable qualities the car had regained and it was quite obvious that something would have to be done about it.

By this time I had been lucky enough to obtain a garage and so the task of body rebuilding could be tackled with some confidence. (At least so I thought!) Wings and valances were thus enthusiastically removed and a start made on improving the unsightly square tail which had been endowed the car

by some previous owner. However, having reached this stage, I decided to have a run in a forthcoming Foley's Hill event to be run by the V.S.C.C. and so for the time being the modifications came to a standstill.

The day for the Hill Climb eventually dawned, and in company with Doug Shannon and Digby Cooke, each in their respective Alvises, I drove down to the Mona Vale rendezvous.

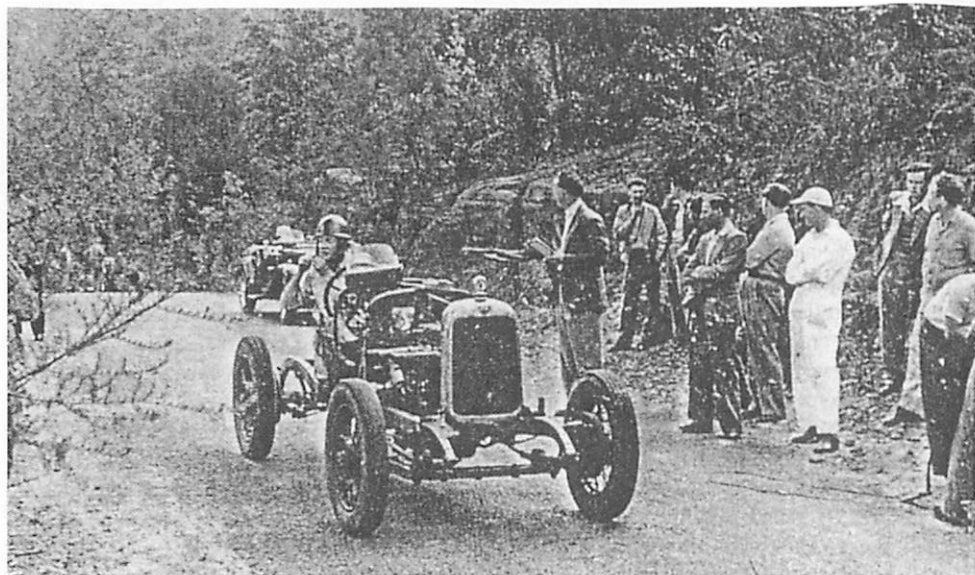
It was not an auspicious competition debut. During the previous weekend, I had made a few runs up the hill and had convinced myself that it was possible to negotiate the elbow at full throttle in second gear. The theory nearly proved my undoing. A little keyed up for my first run of the day, I was determined to put on a brave front for the benefit of spectators and other drivers alike. When my turn came I succeeded in getting the car smartly off the starting line and with exhaust bellowing, roared around towards the elbow. I held the car out wide, right foot hard down and at what I thought was the last moment, applied full left lock. According to my scheme of things, this should have carried me swiftly and cleanly through the bend and well on my way to the finishing line. Alas! Matters did not go according to plan and in a moment the offside front wheel on full left lock was off the edge of the bitumen and sliding badly on the gravel. In another moment, I thought, I would be in the ditch! "Escape road", flashed through my mind and I flung the wheel over the opposite lock. The result was more than surprising! The car leapt six feet across a ditch, missed the escape road and a very substantial gum tree by inches, and literally plunged into a tangle of small trees and undergrowth through which it proceeded to bound, throttle still wide open and driver desperately clinging to the wheel, for a distance of sixty feet before coming to rest against a group of saplings.

Incredibly, damage to the car was slight. I was a little dazed by this unexpected turn of events but was quite unhurt, apart from my pride. This, I regret to say was destined to suffer an even worse blow later in the day when Doug Shannon, competing in the same event in his Special bodied 12/40, went on to win the handsome Tankard which was the Class trophy! (This same car has since been very successfully rebuilt by David Manson.)

From then on I resolved that not only would my 12/50 be the equal of any vintage motor car in appearance, but it would also be developed into a first class vintage competition car. The rest of the old bodywork was therefore scrapped without further ado and the car was cleaned and painted in British Racing Green from the chassis frame upward. A new narrow two seater aluminium body was built up incorporating a rounded tail fashioned from part of an aircraft fuel tank. The inspiration for this sort of tail had come from the bodywork fitted to a very successful contemporary racing car, the Rizzo Riley Special, but it must be admitted that the final result was a doubtful sort of compliment to Mr. Rizzo! Mudguards of any type were dispensed with, a single aero screen was fitted, and the outsize fish-tail removed from the large diameter outside exhaust pipe. The overall effect was reminiscent of some of the early Brooklands Specials and was evidently better than I had supposed for it gained a favourable mention in a report covering the 1950 N.S.W. Hill Climb Championship meeting which was published in "Motor Manual".

To this event on the Hawkesbury Lookout Hill, Digby Cooke and I motored in pouring rain. Digby's 12/50 was also minus mudguards and the spectacle of the two stark looking Alvises, each flinging a plume of spray high in the air as they sped along the Western Highway in close company, presented an exhilarating overture to the day's sport. As it turned out, the meeting was abandoned because of the rain, after each competitor had completed one run but this experience was sufficient to prove that my ultra light bodywork on the standard 12/50 chassis had upset the designed weight distribution and made the car very difficult to handle on anything like a slippery surface. The weight borne by the rear axle was far too small a percentage of the total and gave rise to very excessive wheel slip during acceleration and braking.

For the re-run of the meeting a month or so later, I took the line of least resistance and ballasted the tail by filling it with about a hundred and twenty pounds of sand. Despite its crudity, the method



An intermediate stage in the 12/50's metamorphosis. The chassis has been shortened but the car retains its original suspension and small-port cylinder head.



First competition after completion. MacJob confers with his brother, Bill as he wants his twin for the timed handicapping lap at the Alvis Car Club's Castlereagh race meeting on 29th June 1952.

was effective and the car handled well and although the times achieved for the hill climb were far from spectacular, they were satisfactory from the viewpoint of experience.

Nevertheless a competition car with a vast mass of sand in its tail was hardly the thing aesthetically, quite apart from the fact that a considerable penalty was being incurred in the power-to-weight ratio. It was clear that the standard wheelbase was far too long for a car which was now only required to carry the driver and an occasional passenger. It was also plain that if the wheelbase could be shortened by the right amount and the engine moved rearwards a few inches, the weight distribution problem, even without bodywork, would be eliminated.

In search of more precise information, several evenings were spent in the Public Library studying and measuring old photographs of the specially built 12/50 racer which Major Harvey had driven to victory in the Junior Car Club's 200 Mile Race in 1923, and as a result I concluded that eighteen inches should be taken out of the chassis frame and that the engine should be moved back a further six inches from the front axle.

And so NZ-217 was dismantled again. The parts of the new narrow bodywork which would pass muster were stored away for future use but the unprofitable aircraft fuel tank-cum-racing car tail was unceremoniously dumped, complete with sand, in a deserted Mosman cove.

NZ-217's second reconstruction had begun!

The actual work of modifying the chassis frame itself was placed in the hands of Bill Clarke of Chatswood. The sub-frame and the centre section cross-member which supported its rear and were first of all removed from the main frame and the prescribed eighteen inches were cut from the central portion of the chassis rails. The rails were then welded and fish-plated on the inside of the channel section. To remount the sub-frame in the position required for it, a second front cross member was fabricated and fitted to the chassis frame six inches behind the original front member, which was left intact. The gearbox end of the sub-frame rails were meanwhile extended several inches to be attached to the chassis cross-member immediately in front of the rear axle, using the original sub-frame brackets. Clarke's workmanship was of a high order and to one unfamiliar with the standard 12/50 chassis, it would hardly have been possible to detect that the finished product was not as the factory designed it.

The nett result of all this work was such that the wheelbase had been shortened to 7' 8" and the engine and gearbox placed a further six inches rearward in the chassis while still retaining their same relationship to one another on the sub-frame. It was of course necessary to alter the location of the sub-frame centre supports and the cast aluminium foot plate to accommodate this re-arrangement. The steering column was retained in its original position except for a slight raising of the steering box by the insertion of a one inch block between its base and the chassis frame. This was intended to give the column a more comfortable rake and thus allow for a lowered seating position for the driver. I had always found it a long way to the foot pedals when the car was in its original form but for me now the new relative positions of the steering wheel and foot pedals seemed just right. So the task of re-assembly was continued to the point where it was possible to make a few trial runs on a little used stretch of road. The feel of the car proved entirely different to what it had been previously and it appeared to be highly sensitive and manoeuvrable and as it was now complete but for a body shell it was adjudged fit to run at the following weekend's Foley's Hill event.

On this occasion, both car and driver contrived to behave themselves by staying on the road and even managed to put up the reasonably respectable time of 28.5 seconds. The four runs which each competitor was allowed seemed all too few and the day was over all too soon!

Thus inspired, I decided that I should run at as many sprint meetings as I could and duly entered for the next event which was to be run a few weeks later—another hill climb at Hawkesbury organised by the Australian Sporting Car Club. In the meantime, however, something really momentous had occurred to hasten the development of the 12/50 as a racing mount.

– To be continued –

BRIAN MAILE

C.A.R.D.S

Consortium of Alvis Racing Drivers

Ruth and Jim Hulbert Trophy

Results for 2000

Thirty-three drivers competed with an Alvis in 2000 (47 in 1999), and qualify to have their names entered for points for the Trophy this year.

Congratulations to Barry Cannell who has won the Hulbert Trophy for the Year 2000

			2000	1999	1998			
Number of drivers in the Year			33	47	54			
2000 Place	Name	2000 Points	1999 Place	1998 Place	1997 Place	1996 Place	1995 Place	1994 Place
1	Barry Cannell	254	—	2	1	5	3	2
2	Frank Spencer	176	2	1	4	2	8	4
3	Brian Maile	171	1	28	—	—	—	—
4	Ray O'Beirne	131	—	5	—	—	—	—
5	Guy O'Beirne	130	—	13	—	—	—	—
6	Chris Podger	128	26	—	—	—	—	—
7	Nigel Walder	126	5	14	—	21	6	23
8	Adrian Paul	118	—	9	6	17	—	—
9	Malcolm Carter	107	14	4	—	—	—	—
10	Sue Harcourt-Smith	99	11	20	22	18	11	14
11	Bruce Riches	95	6	22	—	—	—	—
12	Mac Hulbert	94	7	10	—	6	1	1
12	Tim Courtenay	94	21	21	16	11	21	—
13	Peter Glover	93	—	38	—	—	—	—
14	Roy Spiers	90	14	—	25	27	6	7
15	Peter Plant	71	—	28	—	—	—	—
16	Ian Horner	65	4	3	3	9	2	6
17	Alan Fairbrother	64	13	—	—	—	—	—
17	Geoff Hogan	64	8	—	—	—	—	—
18	Roger Riley	63	24	12	24	24	—	—
19	Tim Fletcher	61	17	18	—	—	—	—
20	Jeff Edwards	56	18	26	—	—	—	—
21	Peter Donnelly	47	16	22	—	—	25	28
22	Chris Jackson	36	—	19	—	—	—	—
23	Alan Neale	33	10	16	8	10	14	18
23	Peter Livesey	33	15	25	9	8	9	8
24	Adam Frith	32	—	—	—	—	—	—
24	Christopher Rose	32	—	—	—	—	—	—
24	Clive Goodman	32	—	—	—	—	—	—

CLIVE TAYLOR

NORTHERN ALVIS DAY 2000



Margery and Les Siddle at full 'tilt' with the lance.

Photo: Adam Frith



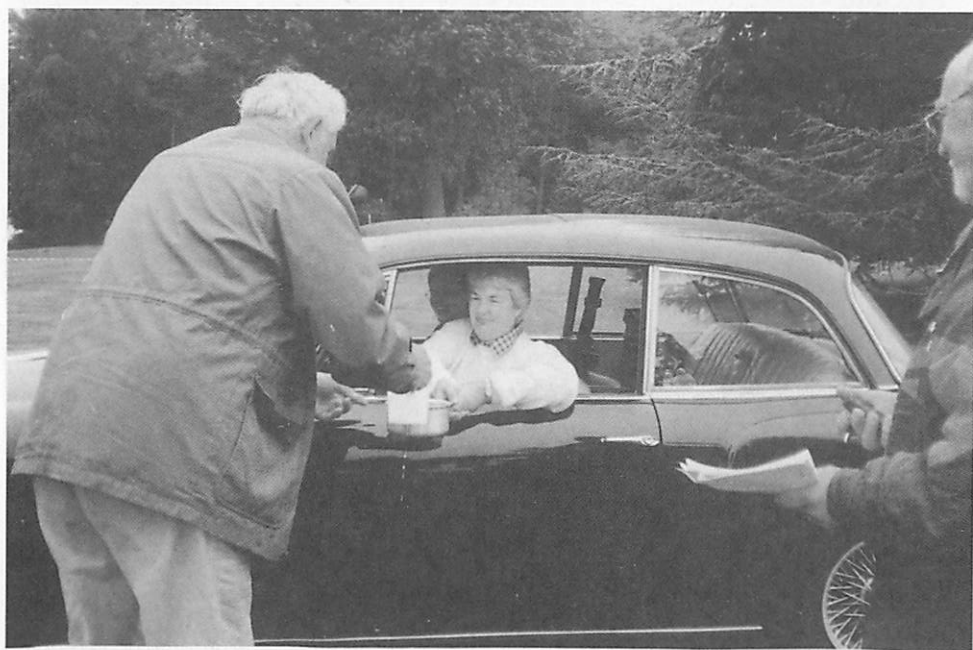
Squires Frith and Lakin with the tilting lance.

Photo: Adam Frith



A watery Test 3.

Photo: Adam Frith



The pitcher is filled for the Scott girls for Test 3.

Photo: Adam Frith

EAGLES FLY TOGETHER

In 1930, the era of Alvis works competition was drawing to a close. Despite a distinguished history of success and innovation, the financial burden was proving substantial, while the company's emerging up-market aspirations sat less easily with the activities of raucous straight-eight front wheel drives and crackling 12-50's.

As part of their swansong, however, Alvis entered a team of Silver Eagles in the 1930 Double Twelve at Brooklands. As Peter Hull and Norman Johnson have documented, these cars had their bore reduced to bring them into the two-litre class. What many readers will not appreciate, however, is the enormous increase in compression ratio that Alvis used for these cars. Somewhere in my documents I have the compression heights for these pistons, but the picture of the holed piston on page 319 of *The Vintage Alvis* shows a dramatic contrast with a standard piston. Clearly, Alvis, along with companies such as STD (whose team Talbots ran with compression ratios of 12:1) and Alfa Romeo (with their fixed head competition engines) recognized both the special requirements of competition, as well as the potential publicity benefits from a successful record.

In the event, the team was not as successful as might have been hoped. The highest finisher was the car driven by the Hon. Victor and Mrs. Bruce, which finished thirteenth at an average speed of 67.54 mph, albeit on five cylinders. In fact the car had dropped a valve after six hours. With the wisdom of hindsight (and having dropped more than one myself) it is clear that Silver Eagles, with their fairly short valve guides, are more prone to the dreaded valve wobble than other cars. The wobbling leads to premature failure, and one wonders whether in their eagerness to ensure that racing clearances were adequate, the Alvis mechanics had left excessive clearances on these competition engines. Ironically, as Hull and Johnson pointed out, had Alvis not lined down their engines, they would have won the three-litre class, since their average speed (on five cylinders!) was higher than that of the class-winning Talbot.

As part of the continuing celebration (at least among a knowledgeable few!) of the introduction of the Silver Eagle model, officially in 1929, a small group of enthusiasts decided that a re-enactment of this one and only works entry of the model, would be appropriate. Thanks to the generosity of two FWD owners, Peter Livesey and Ian Horner who relinquished their usual entries, and the support of Bob Wood, in charge of entries for the BRDC, it was agreed that a team of Silver Eagles would compete in the Pre-War Sports Car Race at the Coy's 2000 event at Silverstone.

Of course an agreement in theory is different from a team in fact. Indeed, because Coy's is an FIA-sanctioned International event, the execution of this plan was a great deal more complicated than it appeared. Not only did we have to find three Silver Eagles capable of competing, they also had to have FIA papers, which immediately rules out the "Specials" which so ably represent the Alvis marque in VSCC competition. Further, the drivers had to possess international licences, which imposed an additional burden. That these hurdles were overcome is a tribute to the enthusiasm and trust among the owners and drivers of these fine cars.

The Cars

For those who don't know him, I can assure you that there is no greater Silver Eagle enthusiast than Barry Edgerton. Owner of one of the more-renowned Silver Eagles, Ex-Will Day and Jane Tomlinson, his Beetleback competed extensively in the early 1960's when it was owned by the late enthusiast and professional restorer Barry Simpson. Though no longer in the highly tuned trim of its earlier years, the car still goes extremely well, as we confirmed when Barry and his charming wife Chris



The Silver Eagle Team. Left to right: James Edgerton, Ian Horner, Peter Liversey, Mac Hulbert, Barry Cannell and Barry Egerton. Rod Jolley is unfortunately not in the photograph.

Photo: Chris Edgerton

paid a visit to Gloucestershire by way of a health check (for the car, not the owners). Barry's car required little beyond fitting a larger fire extinguisher (note to Alvis enthusiasts: the extinguishers you typically carry are far too small to put out a typical fire in the engine compartment. The FIA recommends a 1.75 litre size, available for about £30. Why not protect your beautiful vehicle now?)¹.

The second car was generously loaned by that Alvis doyen, Alan Stote. Unfortunately, Alan's car had suffered a broken con-rod shortly before the Alvis Register Jubilee Race at Donington in 1998. Recently rebuilt, the car had been carefully run in and fine-tuned by Paul Haye, editor of the Alvis Register Bulletin. At the end of our annual fishing holiday in Devon, we picked the car up from Paul's beautifully restored farmhouse, and transported it to Gloucestershire for a pre-race check-up. The car is an exceedingly rare 1931 SE 16.95 Beetleback, the last sports model of the vintage Silver Eagle. Resplendent in red and black, it is a delightful road machine, with a high gearing giving easy cruising. As far as is known, the car has no competition history, having missed its debut at VSCC Donington in 1998.

The final member of the team was my own TC 16.95, with replica Carbodies tourer body by Rod Jolley. This car spent part of its life as a farm tractor, but since returning to the road in 1984, has been the perfect all-rounder, taking the family on numerous holidays in the UK and abroad, towing the caravan and, occasionally, the racer, as well as competing in a few sprints and hill climbs. The car had only two previous races, however. One was the aforementioned Jubilee race (which it won), and the other being Coy's in 1997, when Peter's FWD was unwell. With some minor improvements such as raised compression, a full-flow exhaust system and racing tyres all round, this car had acquitted itself well in competition, coming eleventh of 37 starters in Coy's 1997, as well as winning the Vintage section of its class in the VSCC 1999 Jubilee sprint at Whitfield.

¹ *Make sure you don't buy a powder extinguisher. They compact over time, and tend not to work when you really need them!*

The Drivers

As interesting as the cars, were the teams of drivers. Barry's car was crewed by his son, James, a well-known and experienced competitor in a Morgan Plus 8. Already holding a full international licence, business executive James had accumulated a lot of miles in his father's Eagle, so counts as an expert on several counts. His co-driver, Barry Cannell, is better known for his exploits in his elegant now-supercharged 4.3 special. New class record-holder at VSCC Curborough, builder/developer Barry is an experienced competitor, but one for whom Eagles and crash boxes were a new undertaking.

In charge of Alan Stote's lovely bird were two great Alvis enthusiasts and long-standing competitors, Ian Horner and Peter Livesey. Retired oil executive Ian has owned and driven a wide variety of vintage cars, in addition to his FWD and Speed 25 special. Competing in a vintage Silver Eagle was a new experience, but one to which he adapted very quickly. Ian's co-driver Peter Livesey was no stranger to competing in an Eagle, having co-driven with me at Coy's 1997. As a successful independent marketing consultant, Peter has to work hard to find the time for racing, to support his wife Suzie's increasingly active GN trialling activity and to edit the Bugatti journal "Brescia Bits", but somehow always seems to manage to do so.

Rod Jolley needs no introduction to Alvis enthusiasts. As one of the top bodywork experts in the world, Rod has also achieved a leading position in historic racing in his ex-Sir Jack Brabham 2nd litre Cooper Type 51. Despite his considerable experience, however, Rod had never previously competed in a Silver Eagle, but claimed he was looking forward to the experience. As the final team member, I have to confess to over forty years of driving Silver Eagles, and over twenty years of competition. I discovered recently that half my neighbours believe I am a vintage car dealer, but in fact I make my living in the quieter and less stressful vocation of university professor.

The Mechanics

No competition is possible without good mechanical preparation. All the owners either work on their cars, or have experts who help them. However, the preparation of all three cars was greatly aided by the expert assistance of Graham Millard, a superbly talented and thorough "technician" who has developed a great deal of Alvis expertise. During the meeting he was ably assisted by Neil Cox, a well-known and successful Formula Three club racer, and his wife Janie, who, together with the drivers and owners, ensured that all the cars were ready to depart the grid on time and in good order.

The Race

The Coy's race for Pre-War Sports Cars is viewed by many as the premier event of its type in the year. Designed to emulate the long-distance sports car races of the thirties, it is run in two parts, on the Saturday and Sunday of the Coy's meeting. Each car must be crewed by two drivers, and part of the spectator excitement derives from the change of drivers which takes place in the pits in full view of the Grandstands. A fast crew change can make up for quite a bit of time on the track, so that just as in modern Grands Prix, pitwork may be crucial. Realistically, we were all aware that the Eagles had no chance of winning the event, nor of their class, but we were determined to put on a good show and to remind the great crowd of the proud history of Alvis and the Silver Eagle. One of the attractions of Coy's is the complete freedom of the public to visit the pits, talk to the drivers and look at the cars first-hand. (At least one of us was asked for his autograph!) The box on the next page shows the information that was attached to each of the Eagles. Perhaps it is testimony to the interest shown, but I made five copies of the write-up, one for each car and a couple of reserves. By the end of the meeting all but one had been removed by light-fingered but presumably enthusiastic members of the public.

THE ALVIS SILVER EAGLE TEAM

In May 1930, Alvis entered a team of three Silver Eagles in the "Double Twelve" race at Brooklands, the British equivalent of the 24 hours of Le Mans. The three cars appearing at Coy's 2000 are celebrating the 70th anniversary of that entry.

The Silver Eagle was the first successful example of a long line of Alvis six-cylinder cars, which continued until the company ceased car production in 1967. Today Alvis is the leading European manufacturer of light armoured vehicles.

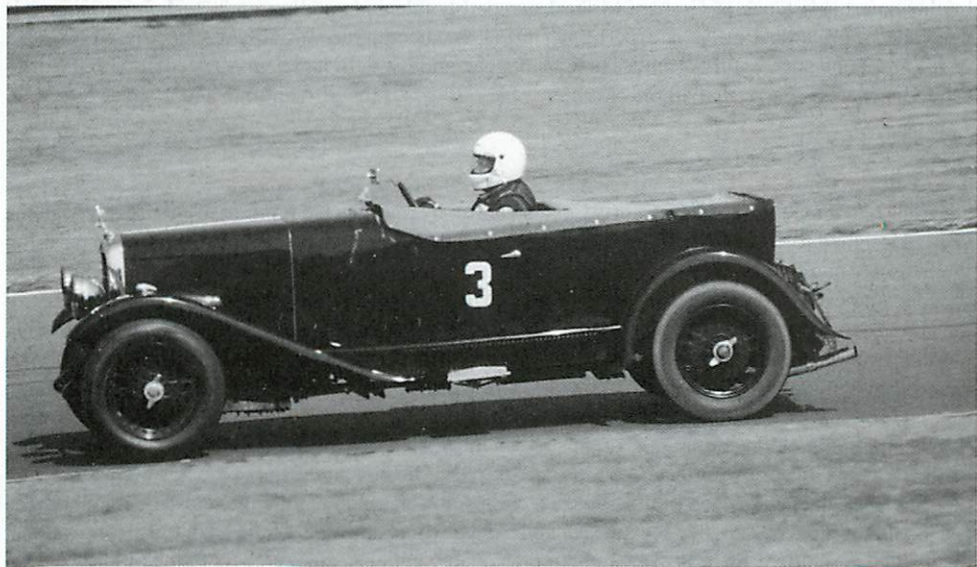
Although 1930 was the last year of works entries from Alvis, Silver Eagles racked up considerable success through the 1930's in the hands of such exponents as Anthony Powys-Lybbe, Philip Fotheringham-Parker, Ivan Waller, Michael May and others. Perhaps the most famous achievement was Michael May's winning the 1938 Irish Grand Prix. This car lapped Brooklands at 113 m.p.h.

Silver Eagles continue to compete today, primarily with the Vintage Sports Car Club, where they have established a good competitive record in all branches of motor sport.

Alvis team drivers at Coy's 2000: Barry Cannell, James Edgerton, Ian Horner, Mac Hulbert, Rod Jolley and Peter Livesey.

Alvis team owners: Barry Edgerton, Mac Hulbert and Alan Stote

The Coy's meeting uses the Historic Grand Prix circuit, which is almost identical to the Grand Prix circuit, with the exception of a few eased corners. Whereas modern Grand Prix cars get around in less than 1½ minutes, a fast lap by Rod Jolley in his Cooper would take just under two minutes, and most of the sports cars lap in 2½ to 3 minutes. Indeed, the circuit is so fast that many of the sports cars can be driven around the corners at close to maximum speed, and remain on full throttle for quite long periods.



The Hulbert Tourer in action.

Photo: Alan Dawson



Mac Hulbert demonstrates an extremely acrobatic driver change.

Photo: Janie Cox

The first practice took place on Friday morning, when the weather was warm and sunny. Each car and driver had to complete three laps to qualify, and all completed sufficient laps, with my tourer, as might be expected, achieving the best lap times. It was overheating, but a quick radiator flush that evening solved the problem. The Stote car, which was using an original Autovac for fuel supply, showed signs of shortness of breath, never apparent under road conditions, while the Edgerton car was running like clockwork.

Saturday dawned full of excitement. Since Rod Jolley and I were both racing other cars at the meeting, we decided not to practice during the brief additional qualifying session on Saturday morning. After some minor adjustments to carburettors to reduce the stress on the Autovac, Peter and Ian went out in this second practice session and established the maximum speed at which they thought they could lap so as to ensure finishing the race.

The Pre-War race was timed to start at 3.25 p.m. Peter Livesey, James Edgerton and Rod Jolley were nominated as starting drivers, and all made good starts. The tourer started ahead of the beetlebacks by virtue of its practice time, but had a difficult competitive position, being less accelerative than a number of the cars around it. The two beetlebacks were very closely matched in the early stages of the race, and came past the pits neck and neck on the third lap (did anyone get a picture of this?). Towards the end of Peter's stint however, his car was slowing with no power as the Autovac was clearly not up to the task of serving the carburettors. Peter pulled in, leaving the unfortunate Ian without a drive in the Saturday race.

After the race, Ian and Peter concluded that the best remedy would be to give the Autovac more chance to breathe. (For those unfamiliar with an Autovac, it works off inlet vacuum, which is non-existent when a car is running flat-out. Since the Grand Prix circuit is so quick, there was insufficient

² *The entire team was all for fitting an auxillary petrol pump (a simple task) but we remained true to our promise to Alan not to do so, even though this prevented the car from showing its true colours.*

opportunity for the Autovac to replenish the fuel supply).² Rod Jolley came in raving about the tourer's handling qualities. As noted he had never raced an Eagle, and was amazed to learn that the car's suspension, steering and wheelbase were exactly as Alvis had designed and built them. The TC chassis is a little wider and lower than that of the beetlebacks, and the 18" tyres lowered it further, but the fact is that all Silver Eagles handle exceptionally well, a tribute to their designers. Whereas James had driven his father's Eagle before, he had never raced it, and he and Barry Cannell were well pleased with their lap times, though aware that more was to come.

On the Sunday, starting drivers were reversed, thus ensuring that Ian got a drive! This time however, the Livesey/Horner car completed the race, albeit at a very steady pace. The Edgerton car improved its lap times to a best of three minutes and four seconds, a similar time to that achieved in previous years by the supercharged FWD cars of Pete and Ian. Rod Jolley and I were placed a little lower than on the Saturday, and due to the colder track conditions, never beat our Friday practice lap times. We did nonetheless finish ahead of all the Bentleys, including three 3-litres, a 4½ and a blower 4½. We also had a great dice with one of the team Talbots, BGH 23, entering the pits just behind it. Rod and I managed a very quick driver changeover, which the pit-marshall commented was fully up to FIA GT standard (whatever that may be!), and we got away ahead of the Talbot. However, the more experienced Talbot driver had taken over, and its superior speed took it away from the Eagle. Regardless of results, it is fair to say that all the Silver Eagle drivers had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend, enjoyed each others' company, and are very grateful to owners Alan and Barry for making the whole weekend possible.

Conclusions

We did not enter these three cars to win, but rather to re-enact a closing chapter in the Alvis works competition history, and to celebrate the only works entry of the Silver Eagle model. Many Alvis



The team and the cars.

Photo: Madge Hulbert

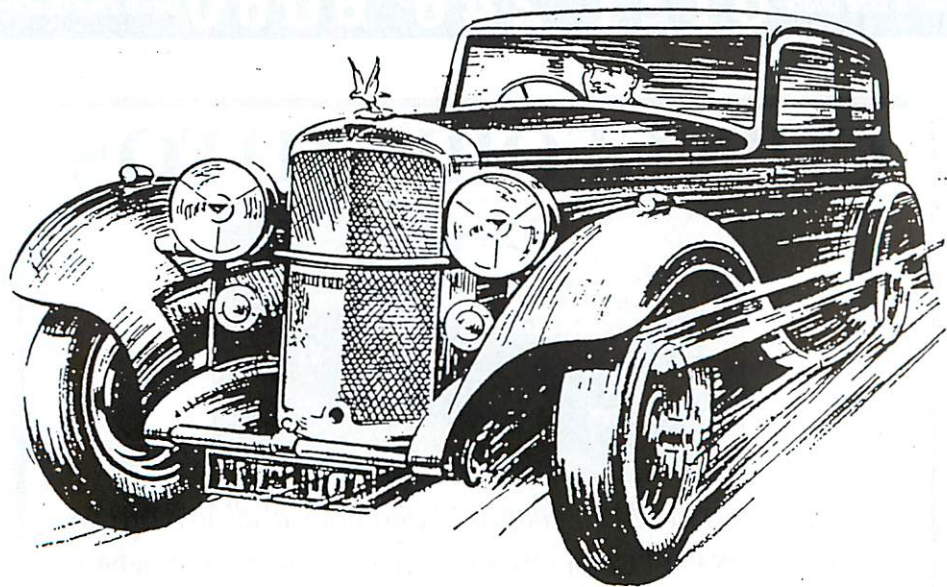
enthusiasts may be unfamiliar with the fact that Alvis were very supportive of the efforts of private owners in the thirties, just as the Alvis company continues to support the Owner Club and the Register today. During this period, privately-owned Silver Eagles sustained an excellent competition record.

The exploits of Philip Fotheringham-Parker, Powys Lybbe and Michael May have been well-documented in Hull and Johnson. We are fortunate indeed that their cars, the so-called "Black Car" and the "Green Car", the most famous private-owner Silver Eagles, survive today, and were re-united at the 1998 National Alvis Day at Brooklands. Perhaps less well-known is the record of Ivan Waller, father of sometime VSCC ERA driver Peter Waller. Peter told me of his grandparents' dismay when they found that within a few months the beautiful, brand-new Silver Eagle they had bought for their son had been stripped and modified for competition!³ I wonder if this car survives today?

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Double Twelve entry occurs in 2005. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we were able to re-unite three Silver Eagles with a 1930's racing record? Chris Podger is now actively campaigning the Green car. Can any Alvis detectives tell us what happened to Ivan Waller's car? And how might we motivate David Taylor to put the Black car back into competition trim?

MAC HULBERT

³ More information on Ivan Waller's competition history is contained in Bill Boddy's book on Donington Park, *The Motor Sport Book of Donington*, ed. W. Boddy, London: Grenville Publishing, 1973.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Gandria
Caverswall Common
Staffs Moorlands
ST11 9EU

Dear Julian,

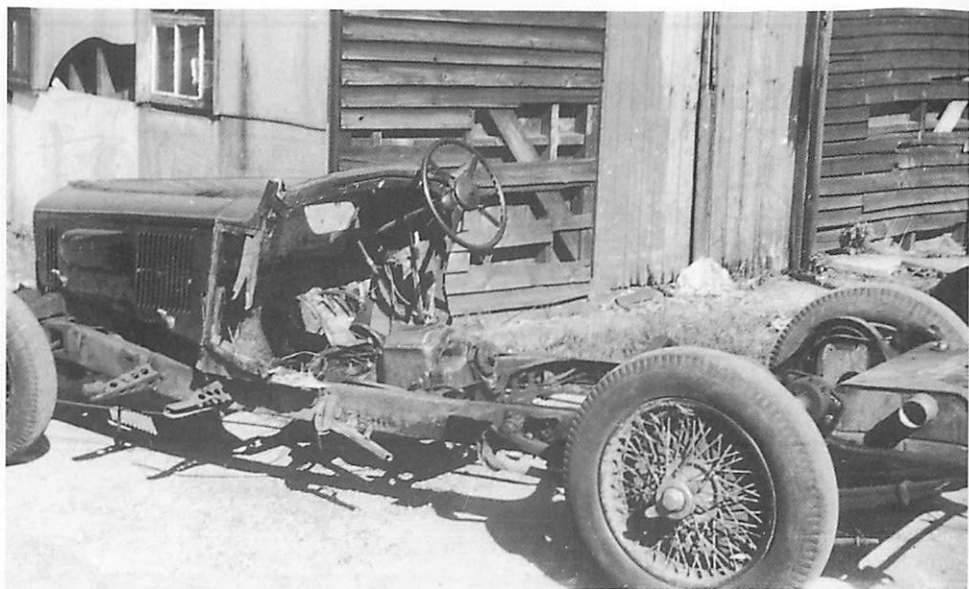
I think I can add a little in response to Mr. Kelly's letter as far as DHP 551 in concerned. (any digression from the narrative must be tolerated) On 10 June 1938 a Speed 25 Saloon was submitted by Alvis Ltd for road test (No 1200) by The Autocar – this being Car No 19436 – DHP 551.

In 1954, I was operating my garage (Ludwall Garage) ministering mainly to Alvises, and amongst my customers was a local solicitor, Gerald Oldacre who had acquired Crested Eagle TF 19.82 Sports Saloon DRF 62. This was well known to me through its two previous owners. At the same time Club Member K G Nicholas of the Blue Star Garage, Holmes Chapel, had for sale Speed 25 DHP 551 which had been slightly damaged on the near-side.

This was bought by Gerald for an engine transplant to provide him with the extra urge he wanted and so I got on with it. Engine 13639 (19.82) came out and engine 15057(25.63) went in. The opportunity was taken to change the 5.2 diff out of the Crested Eagles and fit the 4.1 from DHP and, as I had the bits available, I fitted the servo system from a larger Crested Eagle. Gerald was now happy. With large flat trunk roof-mounted and all family aboard, he was known to cruise this at as near 80 whenever he could on his frequent trips to North Wales (pre motorway days!) As it was about as aerodynamic as a garden shed, it wasn't bad.

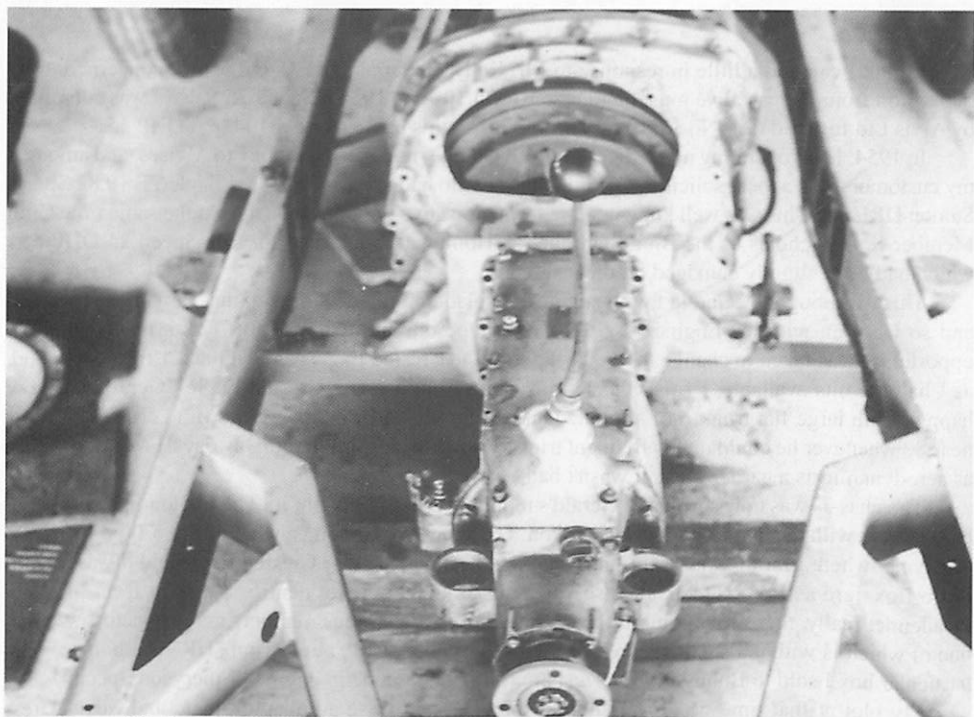
The chassis was now surplus to Gerald's requirements so I bought it. The photograph shows the bare chassis with the bonnet and scuttle still on. The keen-eyed amongst you will see a Type 150 ENV box lying—where gearboxes usually lie. This was from yet another Crested Eagle and it was a High Ratio Box—rare as Hen's Teeth. In case you want to know how to identify the High from the Low (academic, really, these days) on the top of these boxes are various numbers and inspectors stamps, one of which is within a small square box. This is usually "LR", but to find "HR" is a bonus. This particular box I sold to Bobby Baird as a spare for the Duesenberg—engine Emerson Special.

My plot at that time was to a) shorten the chassis, b) use an adaptor-plate and Silver Crest gearbox, c) move the engine back about 7", d) convert to hydraulic brakes. (I never did understand Capt. Smith-Clarke's rooted objection to hydraulics)



Bare chassis. Gearbox does not belong to car.

Photo: Ernest Shenton



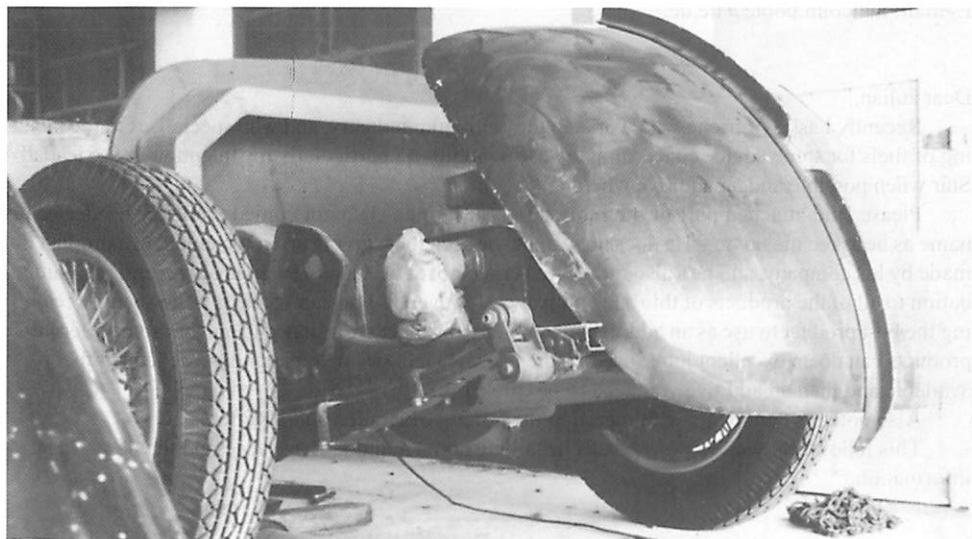
Chassis modified using 6"x2" square tube. Extra supports for bell housing and Silver Crest box, still to be made.

Photo: Ernest Shenton



Polished backplates before hydraulic brakes modification.

Photo: Ernest Shenton



Hoop of Steel 6"x2" square tube welded to chassis. Riley Sprite tail panel.

Photo: Ernest Shenton

Another photograph shows the steel stiffening hoop formed from 6" x 2" rectangular tube welded to the frame and which would have been concealed between two 16g steel plates, and actually did transform the rigidity of the back-end. The Riley Sprite tail panel gave an Alfa-like appearance to the rear.

When I sold the unfinished job to Malcolm Brydson (at a party at Gandria one night) he had acquired a modified short wheelbase chassis, a 4.3 engine which had been thoroughly done by the Works, new 6.00 x 18 Pirellis on flanged rims at the front, new 6.00 x 19 Indias at the back, cadmium-plated brake drums, Silver Crest box and adaptor-plate. I can't remember anything else- there probably was.

You will have to ask Stan Hicken for any later developments as I understand he bought it from Malcolm later in its life.

To forestall any rude comments - the broken-down old shed in the background of the first photograph was not my garage but a 1914/18 Great War Army hut, bought off Cannock Chase in 1919/20 by my grandfather, who gave it to the local Boy Scout Troop at that time where it stood on our land until the 1960's and they had occupied it rent-free for all the years in between.

Be prepared!

Yours sincerely,
Ernest Shenton

And there you have the authentic early history of this car - J.N.B.C

No 1 Berrington Cottages
Astley
Nr Stourport-on-Seven
Worcs DY13 0RG
E-mail: malcolm.boote@tte.de

Dear Julian,

Recently I asked a friend who works in the petroleum industry, and who specialises in the blending of fuels for some advice concerning the use of additives, particularly my intention to use leaded 4 Star when possible and an additive when not.

Please find attached part of the reply he's sent to me - I've not copied the letter header or his name as he asked me not to - He does not want to be seen to be giving an endorsement to a product not made by his company, and he's also rather concerned not to be seen to be giving a general recommendation to all of the products of this one company. However, as you can see he is quite specific regarding the best product to use as an additive in these circumstances - he has told me that some alternative products can do an excellent job if used by themselves - but when you intend to use leaded fuel if it's available and then an additive you need to be careful.

Also note his comments with regard to the mixing of Leaded and LRP fuel.

This fellow really does know what's he talking about and does have access to the best and latest information.

Very Best Regards
Malcolm Boote

Dear Malcolm,

Valve Seat Protection Additive

Following our recent discussion on additives for valve seat protection, I have now reviewed the latest research and spoken with key experts.

Where leaded gasoline is not available, I suggest you use an MMT additive (Methylcyclopentadienyl Manganese Tricarbonyl) in unleaded gasoline. MMT is available in a commercial additive – "Millers VSP Plus".

Adding Millers VSP Plus to unleaded gasoline protects the valve seats and also increases the octane quality by approximately 3 octane numbers. MMT is compatible with lead additives, so there should be no problems with repeated changes between unleaded gasoline treated with this additive and 4 star leaded gasoline.

I do not recommend repeated changes between leaded gasoline and LRP (Lead Replacement Petrol). This is because the chemistry of the additive used in LRP can react with the lead additive and result in valve sticking problems in some engines.

Le Théron
46170 Cézac
France
E-mail : Lenthallben@aol.com

Dear Julian,

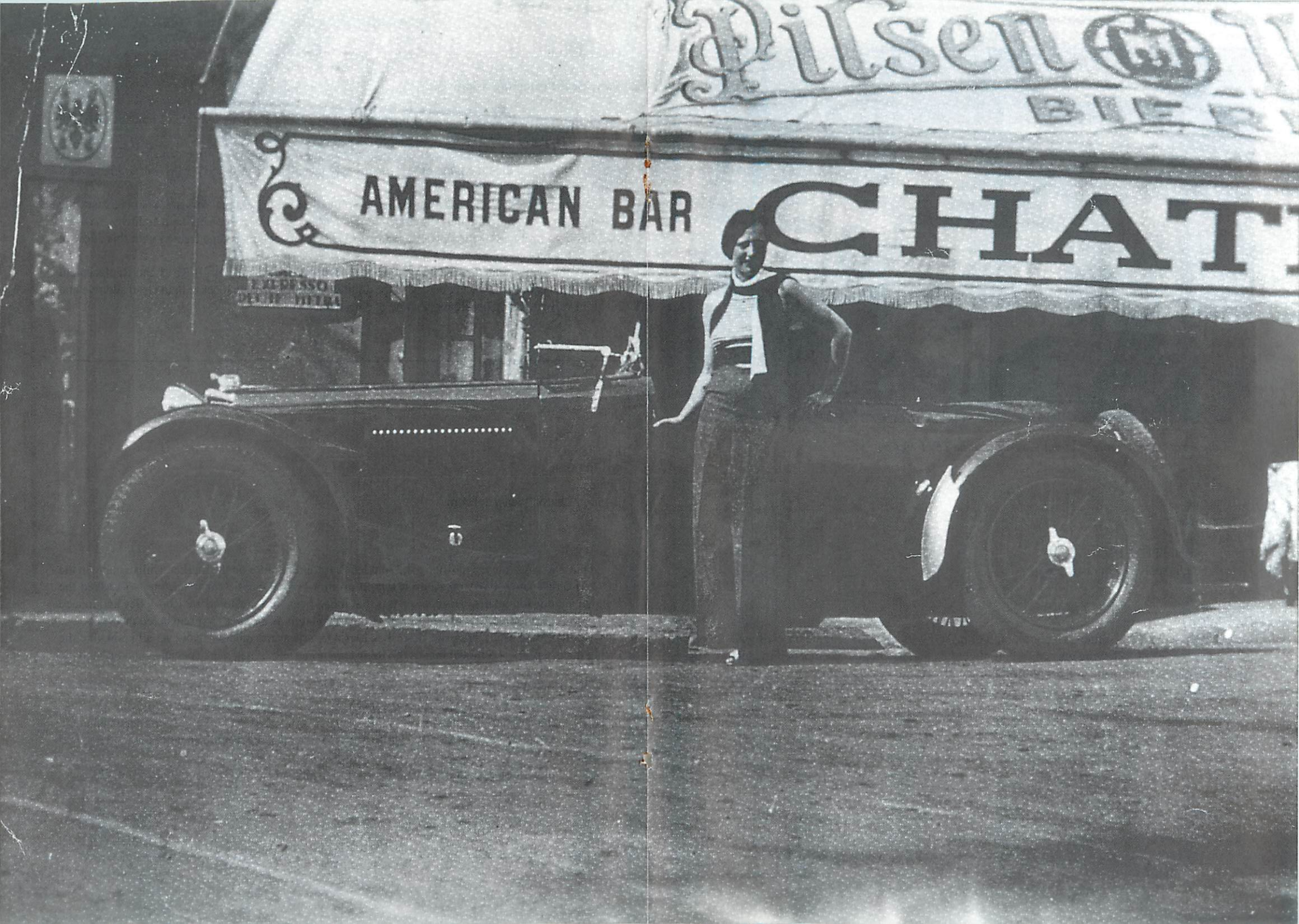
One is always interested when a 4.3 Vanden Plas tourer comes on the market. Unlike many in the AOC, I didn't know EWA 69 when it turned up in a French classic car magazine so I asked the Belgian vendor for details. His answer was that it had been 'fully restored' by Rod Jolley and indeed the car looked good with a copy of the UK V5 describing it as a tourer first registered in 1937.

But the AOC model Register describes it as a Charlesworth saloon. Now we all know that the racing history of the 4.3 model makes the Register a minefield of half cars, specials, rebodies and the like.

Clearly a car rebodied by Rod is something that any owner could be proud of. And I'm sure the Belgian dealer was in no way acting improperly in describing the car the way he did, but we Alvis owners are all guardians of social history in one form or another. So shouldn't all official documentation, particularly a V5, clearly state when a car has been rebodied in a different form, as opposed to restored as original?

Incidentally the price quoted for this car was 1.7 million french francs or about £160,000.

Yours sincerely,
Ben Lenthall





"Spot the error" Hugh Appleby about to re-install the TE21 engine.

66 Bluegate
Godmanchester
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire PE29 2EZ
E-mail: Hugh.Appleby@huntsdc.gov.uk

Dear Julian

Hopefully with this e-mail is a photograph of myself with my Alvis engine on a lift ready to put it back into my TE21 following our rebuild. It might be of amusement to Members if the picture was displayed in The Bulletin under the caption "Spot the Error". No doubt a number of TE21 owners will spot the error and I will be happy to donate say £10 to the charity of choice of the first person to contact you with the correct answer.

Yours sincerely,
Hugh Appleby

Anyone who can spot the deliberate error should write to the editor – J.N.B.C

The Cottage
Brick End
Broxted
Dunmow
Essex CM6 2BL

Dear Julian

Will the organisers of National Alvis Day confirm that their entry in the January Calender does not mean (as it appears to) that there will be No Driving Tests (Gymkhana?) at the event. This would be A Jolly Poor Show.

Yours sincerely,
John Oliveira

Goats Hays Cottage
Avening Green
Tortworth
Glos GL12 8HD

Dear Julian,

I had written before regarding availability of leaded petrol and mixing leaded with Unleaded plus additive. However, attached to this e-mail is a brochure that came with *The Automobile* which seems to endorse this product *Tetraboost* as a lead additive for unleaded petrol.

I have purchased this product but so far not used it, but according to the literature it is not a substitute but the real thing! It gives you leaded petrol. It would appear that this product cannot be bought from anywhere, so far, than from this company and you appear to have to be a bona fide member of a club to obtain it, as it would appear not to be on sale to the general public.

Is this what we have all been waiting for and will save us many pounds on converting heads to use unleaded petrol? and some of us such as myself with a Speed 20 do not seem to have the option of being able to convert the head to use unleaded petrol anyway.

I have also sent details to Nick Simpson, our Technical Editor to see what he thought. This product must be of great interest to a great number of our members, and if it is the real thing we need to encourage these people that it is a viable commercial product.

Best regards,
Graham Robertson

I cannot really advise use of the product as I have no effective way of testing it. All I can say is, that it is not on the 'approved list' of the FBHVC. I will not use it.

From what I could deduce from various experts during the fuel 'scare', Tetraethyl Lead is an extremely difficult, poisonous and carcinogenic product that needs handling with the greatest skill and care. I am also informed that the quantities needed are so small they cannot be accurately measured into tankfulls of fuel by the layman.

My advice to Graham is to use normal leaded Four Star which is readily available in his area and wait for some form of proper, scientific test of Tetraboost before using it.

I will stick to Castrol additive (easiest to measure) in my SA Speed Twenty along with unleaded 97 Octane. It runs perfectly. Incidentally, I have discovered that engine performance is reduced if too much additive is used – Nick Simpson– Technical Editor

Lapierestr. 4
D 89335 Ichenhawsen
Germany
E-mail: RRemp71690@aol.com

Dear Julian,

Some time ago, Mark Chapman told me to get a membership of the AOC. That will be the right club to get serious information and help, not only for Alvis car enthusiasts, but also for Alvis Military friends.

I'm a owner of three of these beasts: Saladin, Saracen and Stalwart – but I am not so interested in Alvis cars.

Last time I got the "AOC Military news" was in November 1999! Neither does The Bulletin pay much attention to Alvis Military Vehicles. If the promised "AOC Military news" no longer appears, I want to cancel my membership at once.

What's going on???

In 1996 I bought my first Stalwart in the Netherlands. Since that time I have had five of them and made three swimmable. The picture shows my last (till this time) FV 623 coming out from the first



Roland Remp's Stalwart demonstrating its amphibious abilities.

Photo : Roland Remp



Roland Remp's Saladin. A long way from Roland's boyhood Matchbox Model!

Photo: Roland Remp



Roland Remp's Saracen. Its really good to hear news of Alvis Military Vehicles other than Stalwarts.

Photo: Roland Remp

The picture of the Saracen MK.5.I took at a military meeting near Augsburg. It is in nearly new condition with only 2,000 Miles on the odometer. 1000 of them I've driven in two years myself. I got it in a swap for an OT 810 Czech Half Track APC in 1998. It's a fine runner and I never have any problems with it.

I bought my Saladin MK.2 at Manchester in November 2000. It was my dream since I was eight years old. Every summer the British Army was on exercise and I stood beside with big eyes. My first Matchbox Toy was a Saladin, as a gift from my father. He never knew what he had started with this! Now I'm playing with the original!

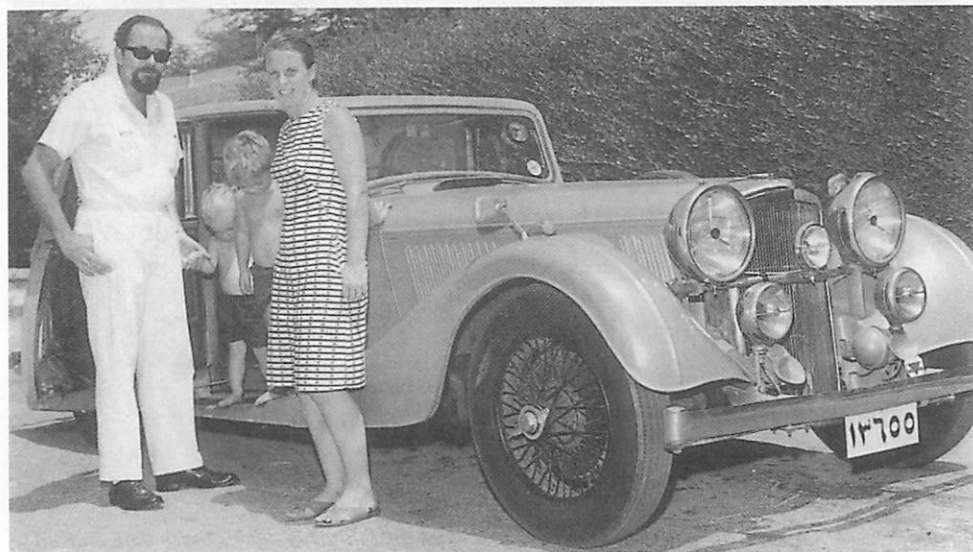
Regards,
Roland Remp

It is always sad to hear from a member who is not satisfied. In an exchange of emails with Roland, I explained that I publish all that I receive about Alvis military vehicles. The solution lies with members themselves. Please send material and let us know of your activities. I have yet to receive a report of any Military Vehicles Section Activities Meanwhile Roland has promised an article – J.N.B.C

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Dear Julian

Enclosed is a period photo, June 1966, of Dr. E.B. "Ted" Garner and family in Bahrain with '37 4.3 Litre SA Charlesworth 14303 Saloon 14319 14782 18820 UD 8768.



Ted Garner and family in Bahrain with their 4.3 Litre in 1966.

Photo: via Wayne Brooks

As you know I'm rather fanatical about collecting information on 4.3 Litre cars. I knew from AOC records that UD 8768 had been in Bahrain with Dr. Garner. Rumour had it that the car was still there, with a member of the royal family. However, confirmation had eluded me. When I learned that Dr. and Mrs. Garner would be on the USA Tour in their 12/50 Beetleback I saw an opportunity to obtain more information.

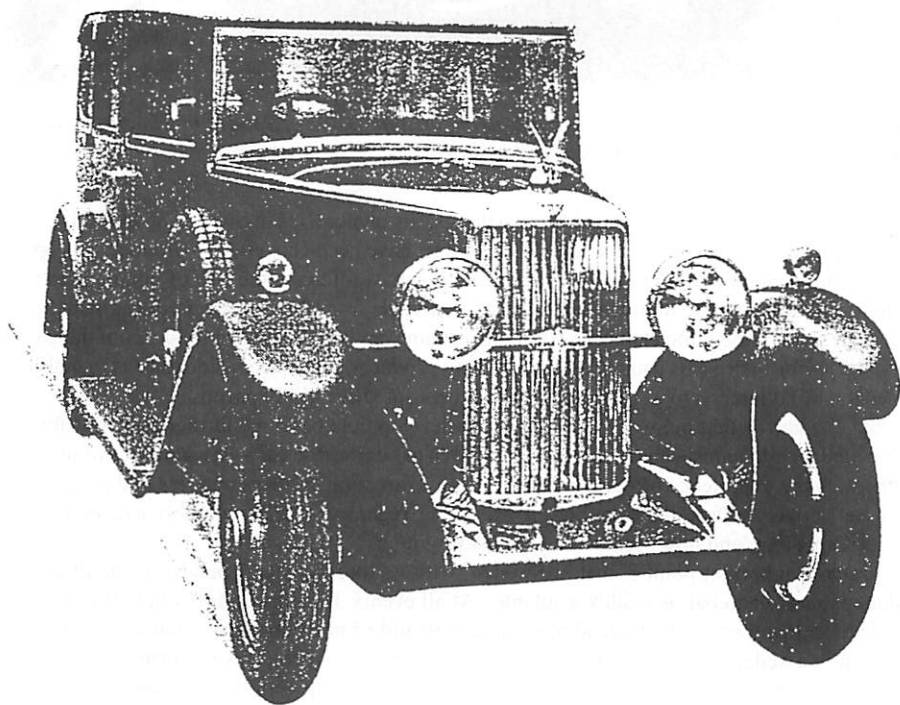
Conversations with Dr. Garner furnished some answers. He followed up with a letter in which he provided the following information.

"When I bought her from Mr. (Alf) Brown in 1964 she had been resprayed black, which, if I remember from details you showed me, was not her original colour. Anyhow her coachwork was looking a bit tired so with the aid of a good friend in the transport section we re-sprayed her metallic silver and did a general mechanical overhaul. As I recall there was very little that needed attention. We were planning to drive back in 1966, but an outbreak of cholera in Iraq meant that we were unable to cross into Iran as we had planned. When we left Bahrain in 1969 I sold her to a chap who very shortly afterwards sold her to, I heard, the Ruler. Personally, I think it is more probable that she was purchased by the Ruler's younger brother, Sheikh Khalifa, who was car mad!"

So, it appears there is at least one Alvis in Bahrain.

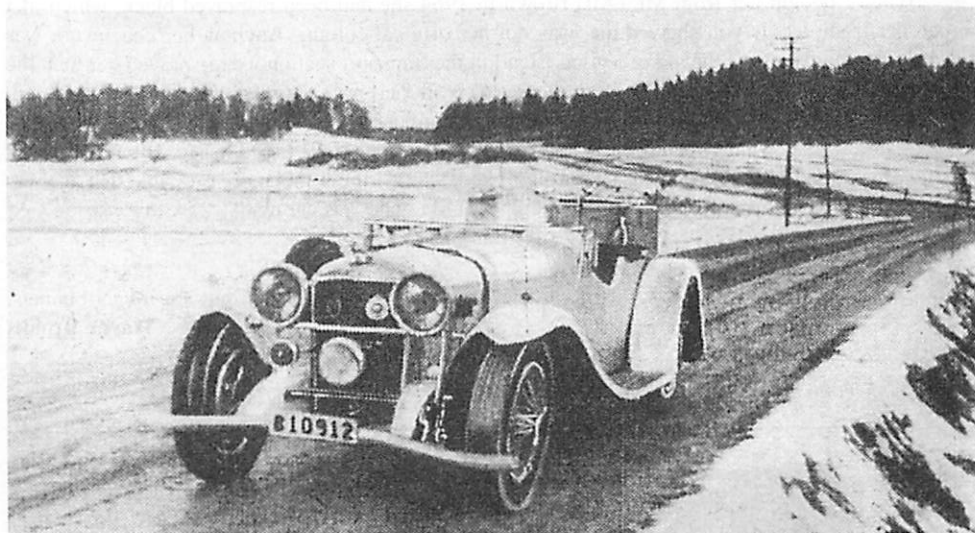
Yours for longer bonnets,
Wayne Brooks

Can anyone confirm this? — J.N.B.C



ALVIS ON "GAS"

– Swedish-owned Speed 20 converted to Producer Gas Operation,
Has a High Performance –



A view of the producer gas Alvis on the road, giving an impression of Sweden in winter time which will bring back memories to "Monte Carlo" competitors.

This week's sports car is unusual for two things. Its owner lives in Sweden and his Alvis runs on producer gas. Very few sports cars, to my knowledge, have been converted to producer gas operation in this country. As one reason, few owners of such cars would take the risk of engine deterioration arising from the foreign matter which reaches the internals from the average producer plant known to us here, in spite of the quite elaborate filtration systems devised to remove solids from the gas. Secondly, the performance loss usually associated with producer gas is so considerable as to make such a conversion of no interest to a sports car owner except for sheer utility purposes.

But one knows that in Sweden, producer gas development has gone further than probably in any other country, and I daresay that the performance of a gas converted car as known there would surprise anyone with the experience of our own efforts in this direction. Other countries had developed producer gas actively before the war; here it was never regarded at all favourably except as a purely wartime expedient, and now seems to be almost forgotten.

Another important point is that in Sweden, with its forests, what I believe is the ideal fuel for producer plants, charcoal, is readily available. At all events, it seems clear enough, this Alvis being capable of showing speedometer readings between 80 and 85 m.p.h. on "gas", that a thing or two must be known in Sweden about getting power from this alternative fuel. This performance has been obtained, too, without supercharging, a known means of extracting very much improved performance from an engine operating on producer gas.

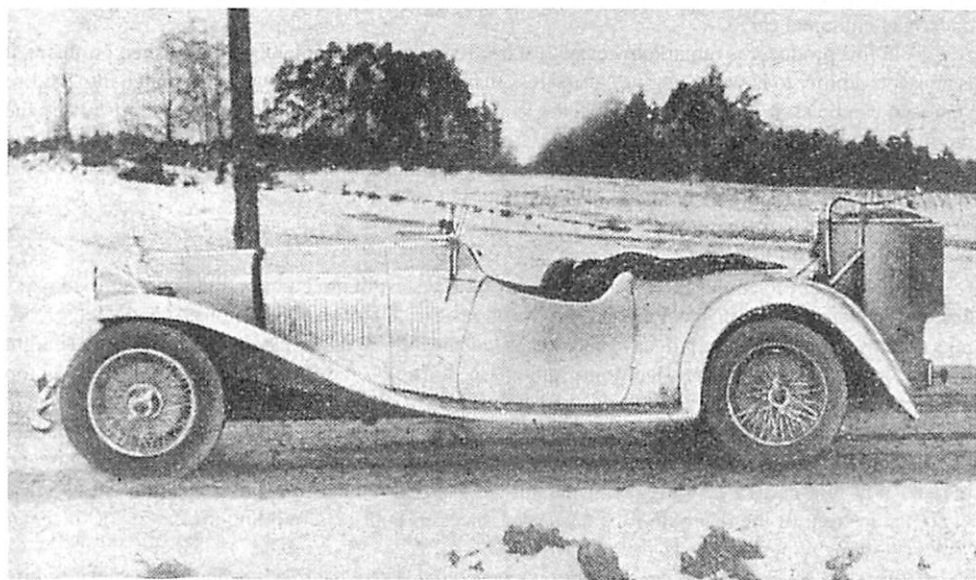
It is interesting to pierce the dark cloud, arising from restricted communications, in which the Scandinavian countries have been shrouded for some four years, by the receipt of these notes from the Alvis owner, Tommy H. Brahmer, of Rotebro, near Stockholm. I suppose Sweden has been known in this country from the motoring sport point of view only for the winter Grand Prix, held on a frozen lake—an event which, as Mr. Brahmer reminds us, one or two British drivers have visited—and to those Monte Carlo Rally competitors who started their run from Umea. Here are Mr. Brahmer's remarks:

"Interest in this country in motoring sport and sports car is almost non-existent. All kinds of motor racing are practically banned by the authorities, even in peacetime; consequently the number of sports and racing cars is very small. However, we are a small band of really dyed-in-the-wool enthusiasts; real lovers of supercharger scream (we call it song of course) and of the smell of pure Castrol R. We keep together in the recently founded Swedish Enthusiasts Club, whose mission it is to arrange enthusiast meetings, hillclimbs and so on in days to come—that is to say, when the petrol has returned.

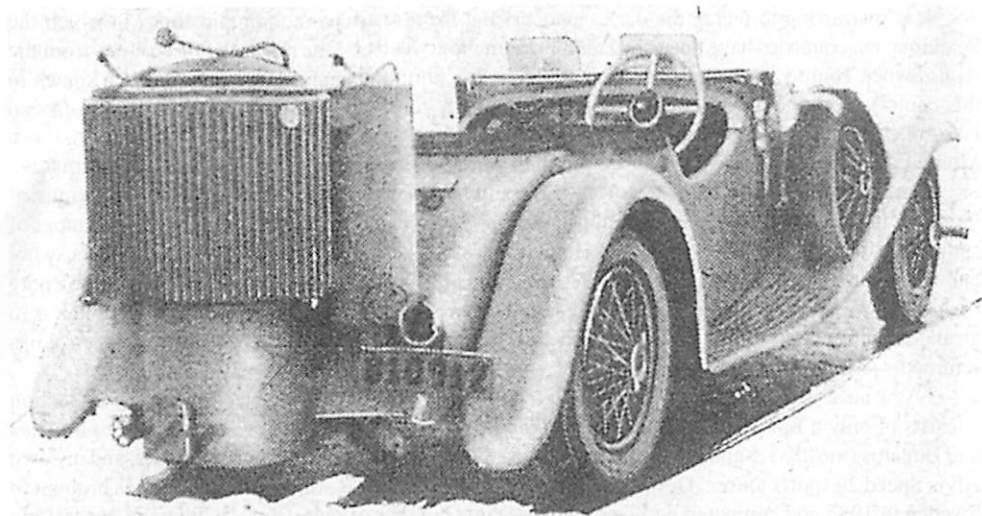
"As I have indicated, sports cars are extremely scarce here in Sweden. The whole collection consists of only a few M.G. Midgets and Magnettes, some Le Mans Singers, a handful of old Alfas and Bugattis (mostly 1.5 and 2.3 litres), some Type 328 Grand Prix Frazer Nash-B.M.W.s, and my own Alvis Speed 20 sports tourer. Despite being of 1933 vintage, this is still a grand car. It was brought to Sweden in 1936 and competed with some success in a number of races, among others in our last big ice race on the frozen Lake Flaten in 1937, which may perhaps be remembered. Ian Connell came over her to compete with his beautiful 1,500 c.c. E.R.A.

Better Than No Motoring

"The Alvis came into my hands in 1942 and had then been laid up for two years. Immediately before laying up it had been thoroughly overhauled and tuned by one of our foremost sports car specialists in Stockholm, and thus was in really good condition. As the prospect of driving the car at



A side view of the Speed 20 showing the massive gas producer at the rear. One wonders what this did for the car's handling on icy roads!



The slightly horrific rear view of the car with the producer gas plant installed.

once was extremely tantalising, and as no petrol was to be had, I decided to fit a producer gas plant. To choose the right one among more than 500 different types then on the market was no easy task. Finally, however, I decided on the Ello, which combined compact and straightforward design with light weight and long life, a choice that I have had no reason to regret. It is very easy to look after (though pretty dirty, of course). A dinner jacket is not the recommended wear when starting a producer gas-equipped car!

"But this producer is remarkably easy to start. Even with a completely extinguished producer, it is no impossibility to have the engine started less than three minutes from putting a match into the fire vent. As can be seen in the photographs, the spare wheel and luggage locker were removed and the producer was fitted in the cavity. The three S.U. carburettors were removed and a simple Bugatti-type induction manifold was made to fit, with one large gas carburettor. Bosch 95 plugs were found most suitable after trying more than fifteen different sets.

Performance Figures

"In its present form the car is certainly one of the fastest in the country and has a quite remarkable performance for an unsupercharged producer gas car. On several occasions, speedometer readings of between 80 and 85 m.p.h. have been recorded, the highest reading being 86.5 on a long straight piece of road. On third the acceleration is quite "rip snorting", and it is also very satisfactory on top gear. Recently the car covered 55 miles in 1 hour 8 minutes, on an emergency drive under adverse conditions, the journey being undertaken in darkness and rain on narrow twisting roads, an achievement which shows the fine performance capabilities. To improve the performance still more, I intend to fit a Roots blower off a 2.3 Litre racing Bugatti, and also have plans for shortening the chassis a foot or so just in front of the rear axle forward spring shackles and for rebuilding the car as a two-seater with cycle-type wings in true ex-racer style.

"The Alvis is a wonderful car to work on—everything is so easy to get at and it is a super quality job in every respect. The only trouble experienced has been front-wheel wobble, which was cured by carefully checking the toe-in and by balancing the wheels with lead weights. The radiator often boils,

but a new water pump with increased capacity will probably cure that, too. Otherwise this car has given excellent service. After the war, however, I hope to be able to come over to England in order to acquire a first-class super sports car, a 3½ Litre SS 100, 4.3 Litre Alvis sports tourer, 2 Litre Aston Martin or 1,500 cc H.R.G. Finally, I should like to send my greetings to all enthusiasts in England and my wish that *The Autocar* will soon bristle again with records of meetings at Brooklands, Donington, Shelsley and so on. May those days not be far off."

Taken from the Autocar, January 12th 1945, with due thanks and acknowledgements. I thought this article rather interesting and appropriate after my review of a book on Producer Gas. — J.N.B.C.

OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES

Some of the more eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed that the Overseas Section Secretaries have been renamed as Overseas Representatives.

The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, with the forthcoming incorporation of the Club we have to conform to certain rules and regulations. Whilst sorting out the various legal matters it was realised that Overseas Sections would have to conform to the same rules as the UK Sections and therefore, as such, did not exist as amongst other things they did not have committees etc. This does not mean in the future there will not be Overseas Sections; I and the rest of the Council hope that they will be created but they will have to be formed under the same rules as the UK Sections. So what about the enthusiastic band of people who were known as Overseas Secretaries (the title having been given historically in recognition of their work); obviously something had to be done. This leads on to the second reason for the name change. I looked at the role that this group were doing and it seemed to me that they were acting as representatives of the Club outside the United Kingdom.

Having consulted with the Council and those involved, it was accepted that the title of Overseas Representatives should be adopted. Their primary role should be to act as a local contact for the Club and to act as a communication route, on club business, to the Council via the Membership Secretary for the local overseas members. (For overseas members who do not have a representative, then they should raise matters for the Council meetings directly with the Membership Secretary as their Council representative). Also, depending on the circumstances, the Overseas Representative would distribute locally the Calendar and Bulletin and to collect the subscriptions as is done in America and Australia. There are other ideas in the pipeline which hopefully will in future be adopted.

It is hoped that this title change and other measures will promote a greater dialogue between the Overseas Members and the Club in the UK and help to make the Overseas members more part of the Club even if they cannot attend the various Club events. Please feel free to contact me with ideas and suggestions.

CHARLES MACKONCHIE

ALVIS CARS

ALVIS CAR & ENGINEERING COMPANY LTD., COVENTRY.

AN SA SPEED 20 SALOON



Chris Storrar's extremely handsome SA Speed 20 Vanden Plas saloon.

Photo: Chris Storrar

There has been quite a bit of correspondence on SA Speed 20 Vanden Plas saloons in The Bulletin, beginning with Ken Day wondering where they all are. Nick Simpson gave us an interesting essay on the total number built, and thought that mine, and a car in South Africa, were the sole survivors. I have since been in touch with Joe Marsden and Alastair McIntosh in New Zealand (who now owns the South African car – Alastair, that is) and can confirm that this car is now re-emerging as a tourer. Unless anyone knows differently, this leaves my car as the sole survivor, so she is a rather special Alvis.

Car No. 15049, Chassis No. 10123, Engine No. 10573 was despatched to Vanden Plas on 26th January 1933, and the coachwork, Body No. 1935 completed in March. All these numbers remain with the car – the toe boards above the gearbox are stamped 1935. The car is identical with the one photographed in Brian Smith's Vanden Plas book, including the art deco door handles, and this lovely book shows the enormous detail differences between cars of ostensibly similar design.

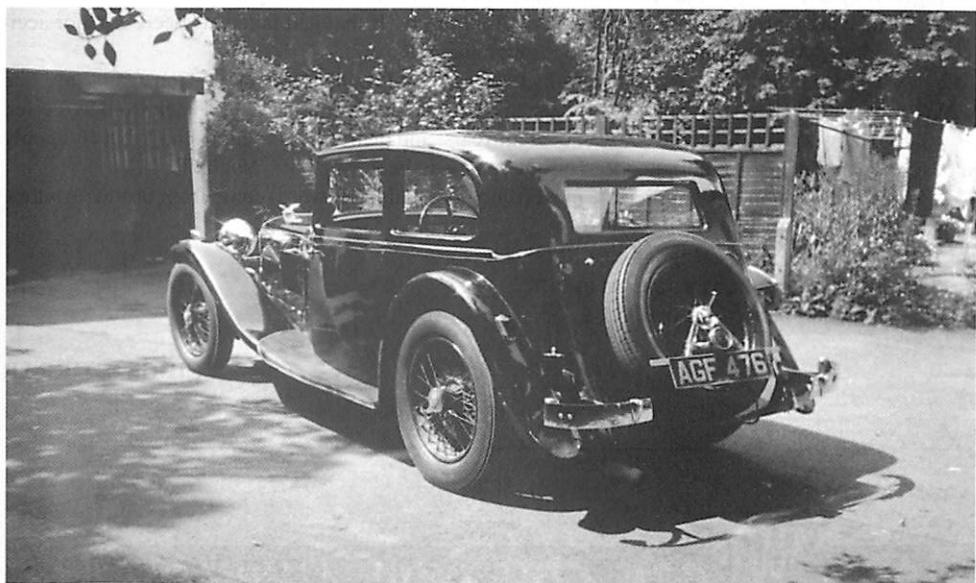
It was sold by Charles Follet of Berkley Square, London, and registered AGF 476 in London. From there, the history goes blank, but Nick Simpson has filled in more recent gaps. The car was part of the AOC team in the 1955 Silverstone six-hour relay race, which was written up and photographed in Bulletin No. 214, August 1971. Nick has also kindly sent me photographs of the car competing at Crystal Palace in 1959. Owners were: 1957 - 1961 R. E. Brearley, London NW3, 61 - 67 Olaf Lund, whom many will remember, of Tillingham Street, Birmingham (the flywheel housing is stamped O. P. LUND), followed by 1967 - 1972 Commander D. Jarrold of Titchfield, Hampshire.

It was in 1972 that I first made my acquaintance with AGF 476. Rob Ratcliffe was at school with



The engine during reconstruction.

Photo: Chris Storrar



The saloon's equally handsome near end

Photo: Chris Storrar

me, at the same college at Cambridge, and at that time we both worked for Mars, the chocolate people, and were rowing together at Maidenhead Rowing Club. At the time, I was using my 12/70 as my only car, and Rob a Bristol 400. I persuaded Rob to get something better – beginning with "A" – so he appeared with a Speed 20, a beautiful condition Charlesworth saloon which some idiot had sawed the roof off. I have to say I was very rude about the car (not nearly as rude as I would be now) and Rob sold it very quickly and came back with AGF 476. Now I was impressed.

Family and overseas business commitments meant Rob used the car for only a short while, and it lay like the sleeping beauty in a lock-up in Whitley Bay, Northumberland, until 1987 when Rob agreed to sell it to me. By then, the car had been standing for the past fifteen years. Red Triangle rebuilt the head and block, fitted new pistons and other work including coachwork, but after a year on the road, it was back to a sleeping beauty again when a slow speed knock developed at the rear of the engine. Funds were not available, and I had worries that the noise could mean crankshaft replacement.

It was not until 1999 that Tony Leech took on a thorough rebuild. The earlier Red Triangle work was of course good, but Tony has fitted hardened valve seats in the head. Very fortunately, the crank was found to be sound, but almost everything else had suffered in the long storage, and has needed replacement. The camshaft was very worn and pitted, and although the rods were not cracked, there was an obvious risk in not replacing them. Thank you to Red Triangle for all those bits too numerous to list and the friendly voice on the phone, but especially to Tony for his patience (with me as well as the car) and careful craftsmanship. The car now looks, drives and sounds beautiful – a tribute to his high mechanical standards.

We found a few surprises near the end. The knock was a chipped tooth on one of the gearbox twin helical gears, so a new pair was fitted. The petrol tank was found to be full of large balls of brown fibrous material, which smelt revolting. Since these were on all sides of the tank baffles and the tank itself was sound enough, the only conclusion is that these were the result of fuel degrading in the long storage. Tony got it all out and rebuilt the tank as new. Then on inspecting and setting up the brakes, Tony found a long circumferential crack in one front drum. If that had failed at speed, a major accident was likely. A replacement was found through the AOC.

I had hoped to have the car at International Alvis Day at Ragley Hall, but time ran against us. The 12/70 however did Helen and I proud, and we had a lovely open top run down and back from Leicester.

I have now known AGF 476 for twenty eight years, and owned her for almost half that. Not only a beautiful car, but also an unique one. Has the long wait been worth it? Not half!

Perhaps the comments I appreciate most (if not, being the last word) come from brother Andrew and John Burnell.

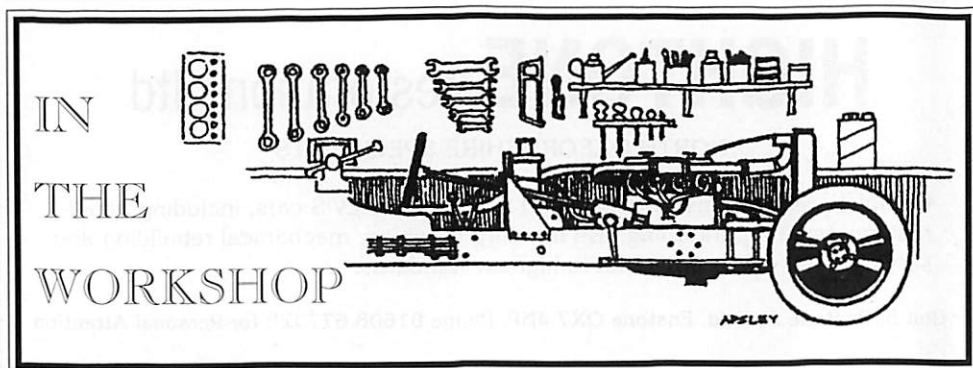
Andrew – "It's almost as good as a 12/50, Chris"

John – "Yes, and probably almost as fast"

What greater praise than that!

CHRIS STORRAR





NOTES ON IFS AND WHEEL TRAMP

There has been some correspondence over the years concerning wheel tramp on pre-war cars with IFS systems and the difficulty in eradicating it. It is known that the Alvis Service Department encountered the problem and therefore must have had a solution. So it seemed logical to try and find out a bit more about it. Some owners manage to reduce tramp or eliminate it, without realising how they did it. Sometimes unaccountably, it disappears and is forgotten.

Captain Smith-Clarke was very much in favour of IFS and, as a recent article in *The Bulletin* showed, he claimed it to be superior in avoiding problems of tramp and uncontrolled vibrations! This is only partially true in so far that a double wishbone IFS layout holds the wheel nearer to the designed plane during both compression and rebound of the suspension; the only connection between the front wheels being the steering linkage. The difficulty of the beam axle layout is that suspension movements displacing one wheel are automatically transmitted to the wheel at the opposite end of the axle by two means, the axle beam and the steering linkage.

W. M. Dunn gave an address to the Coventry Branch of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers in the early 1950s. Dunn was at that time the Chief Engineer at Alvis. The *Alvis Register* recently published some extracts from the text of his speech. Part of the text touched on problems with front suspensions and the admission of problems with wheel tramp. It seemed a good idea to investigate the subject and see what could be discovered. The extract from the text ran as follows:

- a. "However, with the introduction of larger-section, low pressure tyres the synchronisation of the three periodicities at the front of the car took place, and then tramp resulted."
- b. "Unless the periodicity of the suspension is made much lower, like the modern cars, there is the (same) tendency to transversely rock the front of the car if synchronisation takes place."
- c. "We soon found the means of putting different periodicities out of phase."

He did not expand on the remedy so it was necessary to make a study of 'Periodicity' and see if an answer could be found. Out with the trusty (dusty) old textbooks and there was something in the Springs and Suspension section under Periodicity. In spring designer's terms this is defined as:

"The number of complete oscillations which would occur in one minute." It goes on to state that: "Periodicity is a measure of shock transference from the road wheels to the chassis. No matter how fast the wheels bob up and down on a rough road, the chassis will rise and fall in accordance with the natural frequency. The whole object of providing springs is to absorb the shock which occurs in a

fraction of a second and then to transmit this shock to the chassis at such a slow rate that no discomfort is felt."

Not too much wiser!

Dunn, in his text, mentions three periodicities at the front of the car. Therefore if the spring is one, the other two must be the front tyre and wheel assemblies. There is nothing else at the front of the car influenced by the springs to oscillate, assuming the steering and suspension systems are in good condition and the wheels and tyres are balanced. The shock absorbers have little effect on this condition as they operate in a different plane to tramp and cannot help; tyre pressure variations might. It would seem that under certain undefined driving conditions, a front wheel/tyre assembly can oscillate in harmony with the front transverse spring. When this occurs, the motion tilts the chassis by means of the front cross member and transfers the motion to the front wheel on the opposite side of the car via the front spring. Thus a rocking motion is set up and tramp, or "synchronisation" occurs and shake is transmitted to the chassis and steering wheel. The cause of steering wheel shake is the change of camber on one wheel and gyroscopic effect due to the plane of the wheel tilting from its normal riding position; this results in a turning action which results in a steering "tug" being experienced. As both front wheels are interconnected by the track-rod, a series of transverse tugging actions of increasing severity on the steering will occur.

Unfortunately, Dunn did not go on to say how they put the periodicities out of phase. We will have to work that one out for ourselves. It appears to be as a result of a combination of faults or conditions. He did mention problems with "Large section, low pressure tyres". It has been noticed in recent years that there has been a tendency for some owners to fit tyres larger than standard. Sometimes there is no option – the tyre-shop probably only has, say 600 x 19 or even 6.50 x 19 available and when fitted, they look rather good with the broader section. 7.00 x 19 has been seen on some 4.3's. Sometimes it is a purely cosmetic solution for owners who think their Alvis should be equipped with the chunky look. It's mainly a question of weight; the larger the tyre, the heavier the tyre. With heavier tyres, the unsprung weight is increased and this extra weight can create a situation where the tyre/wheel/brake/hub assembly weight equals the periodicity of the front spring causing the symptoms mentioned. Heavier tyres increase the effect of gyroscopic forces. Maybe this is why the heavy cars manufactured by Alvis toward the end of the thirties did not have an increase in tyre size.

We have to reduce the possibility of "synchronisation". It is assumed that the steering and suspension joints are in good order:

1. The first thing to do is fit the correct specification and original size of tyre or reduce the tyre size. Borrow a set from a friend for test and see the difference. All the pre-war IFS cars were standardised on 550 x 19 tyres including the largest and most powerful 4.3 Litre models. There had to be a reason.
2. Check the front transverse spring for being too "soft". If it's nearing the stops have the main leaves stiffened a little. Heavy tyres and a soft spring will tend to harmonise the periodicities.
3. Check the condition of the front spring centre clamp and block. If of the alloy type, they are often cracked. The long threaded stud-rods that clamp the spring and block can also wear and cause ovality of the holes. These must be welded and re-drilled or the crossmember replaced. The underside of the spring should be checked to be sure that the spring-leaf locating dowel is in position and unworn. Cars have been seen with the dowel absent allowing the front spring to slide sideways under cornering loads. Front springs should be reversed every two or three years to avoid the build-up of excessive castor. This will reduce understeer a little. A longer spring-block and clamp, if you can find one, will stiffen the front

spring. This also has the effect of "shortening" the top "wishbone" (spring). This will sharpen the handling of the car. Short blocks were used on saloons, particularly 4.3s to give softer springing. The effect was to lengthen the top wishbone, decrease the rate and lengthen the travel. These are usually the worst for tramp. It is notable that other manufacturers like Bentley, Rover and Peugeot, to mention a few, used a longer lower wishbone, not a longer upper wishbone as on the Alvis. A longer, lower wishbone lowers the roll centre of the car and is preferable. Special builders please note.

4. Another Works "fix" was to adjust the lead weights in the round boxes at each end of the front bumper bar. At the time of introduction, this bar was christened the "Harmonic Stabiliser" by several car makers. The theory was similar to the circus act where the high-wire man could stabilise himself with the aid of a long pole. In the case of Alvis IFS, the long, weighted bar damped down chassis twisting and vibration in much the same way. The bumper should be clamped very firmly to the chassis extensions via Silentbloc bushes. These bushes should be replaced regularly as their tension is part of the damping action. Originally the IFS cars were produced with bumpers with "dumbbell" ends with a weight box above and a solid, plated lower weight below. A lot of weight was required on some cars. Many IFS cars may have lost their double containers because the bumper may have been damaged and could have been replaced with a single weight unit. Some owners remove them for purely cosmetic reasons without realising the purpose. Others have been mistakenly removed to conceal excessive visible twisting actions due to a weak chassis because of excessive corrosion or loose rivets.
5. A car that has "tramped" for years will need the chassis to be removed, checked, re-drilled and hot riveted as a matter of course. This might seem extreme but an Alvis with a newly riveted chassis is an unbelievable delight to drive.
6. Finally, many, many an IFS Alvis has presented cracks in the front of the chassis. These are usually underneath out of sight where the front crossmember joins the sidemembers.

Dunn went on to say that in "later designs" (Three Litre?) the periodicities were reduced when the problem had become better known. Later experience showed that it was necessary to spread the shocks from the front suspension over a wider area of the chassis than just the front cross member. This is why later cars have smaller, lighter tyre/wheel assemblies and the ifs coil springs are very close to the wheels, outboard of the chassis cross member. Smaller, lighter wheels and tyres reduce gyroscopic tendencies. These developments enabled more stresses to be transmitted to the chassis side members towards the centre of the car and not into the cross member. Many later designs of IFS use welded box section chassis members to increase stiffness. IFS became more successful with the advent of monocoque construction when the body/chassis structure became a truly stiff and integrated structure.

NICK SIMPSON
– Technical Editor –

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON OIL FILTRATION

My SB Speed 20 has run with its original brass gauze main oil filter in the whole of its career with me since I bought it from the late Peter Black in the early 1970's.

The lack of filtration, especially with modern detergent oils has been causing me increasing concern. My car covers about 1,500 miles every year, all long journeys, and yet at the annual oil change the old oil is always black and foul smelling; thus it was with great interest that I read Robin Everall's article on his solution in the January/February 2000 Bulletin.

I spoke with Robin over the phone and he was kind enough to talk me through the details of his conversion, and give me the reference number of the paper cartridge filter that he had used. In discussion with him I decided to dispense with the perforated metal outer wrapper that he had used, and allow the filter to take the oil flow uninhibited on a survive or burst principle(!) In theory there should be little pressure differential between the inlet and outlet of the filter, unless the filter is partially blocked.

I thought that perhaps a bit more research would do no harm. Firstly I quote, with grateful acknowledgement, from Micky Radford's Vintage Alvis Manual. (If you have not got a copy then rectify this omission immediately—see the review in The Bulletin):

"With vintage types of petrol and straight mineral oils, contaminants other than solid metal particles either diluted the oil and fouled it or were deposited as sludge inside the engine everywhere. Early practice was to change the dirty oil frequently. However this did not remove the internal carbon deposits. Up to 1984 a number of owners seeking a greater economy in wear set about improving 12/50 engine oil filtration by fitting various proprietary filters of the full flow or by-pass variety. This was a non-vintage modification and always resulted in the engine room being cluttered with extra pipes and bracketry. This was a pity because the technical advantages were undeniable. The problem slowly worsened as the lubricant suppliers gradually turned their over to detergent oils." The Manual goes on to say: "The need for a full flow oil filtering system for the 12/50, both to prolong engine life and to provide protection in the event of oil contamination, has long been recognised and has become even more necessary now that most oils have detergent properties which keep the contaminants in suspension".

The Vintage Alvis Manual also gives some guidance on oil and filter change intervals, and I quote again:

"John Cundy (*he designed the oil filter modifications for the 12/50-FC*) having done flow sums etc., recommends that the filter and the sump oil be changed together at 1,500 miles or yearly. If this filter mod is fitted to a dirty engine, it is suggested it is changed after say 50 miles and again at 500 miles before adopting the regular 1,500 mile interval."

This all seemed to make a great deal of common sense, and I ordered a couple of filters through my local Morgan garage. (Most helpful people – they also do the MOT on the Speed 20). These turned out to be Unipart devices reference GFE 104, and I next gave much thought as to how to install them in the simplest possible way.

At the next oil change I drew out the brass gauze filter and was able to confirm Robins's wisdom in that by carefully removing the top and bottom projecting lips of the paper filter it would just, and only just, pass through the opening that is revealed when the lid of the oil filter housing is removed. I then measured the base of the gauze filter and machined up a simple adapter in aluminium alloy that was a tight push fit in the base of the filter, seated perfectly in the base of the oil filter housing, and allowed the top of the filter cartridge to come flush with the top of the housing. A new gasket for the filter – housing lid, three gallons of fresh oil, and a gentle start gave the familiar cold 50 psi. Eureka! I thought, another problem solved with a happy ending, but life is never quite so simple.

After a few minutes running I noticed a small weep of oil from the cork gasket, which ceased after tightening down the four nuts, and I decided that all was well. However the following weekend I departed from Kent with my navigator at 6 am on Saturday morning, to travel to Lincolnshire for the VSCC Wolds Rally. After about ten miles, on a fairly quiet M20 motorway, we were suddenly enveloped, with no warning, in a truly impressive fog bank of white oil smoke, necessitating a hasty

visit to the hard shoulder. Opening the bonnet revealed that the aforementioned gasket had squeezed out from under the cover allowing oil to spray everywhere including on to the exhaust manifold. With great optimism we released the cap, squeezed the errant gasket back into place, tightened down the cap, and carried on. Just before the Dartford tunnel the familiar white smoke cloud appeared, fortuitously just before the toll booths enabling me to swing, via a no entry sign, into some sort of HGV compound. (Unkind 12/50 owners will probably think this highly appropriate for a Speed 20). Opening the bonnet revealed the same picture as before, the gasket had departed from its rightful position. Emergency action was obviously required. The new gasket was discarded, and after a clean up the joint remade with Hermatite instant gasket, allowing 30 minutes cooking time before closing everything up. Success! The remainder of the journey was covered with no problems, and we completed the Wolds Rally gaining only 30 penalty points, which was pleasing. (The winner gained only five points – how do they do it?)

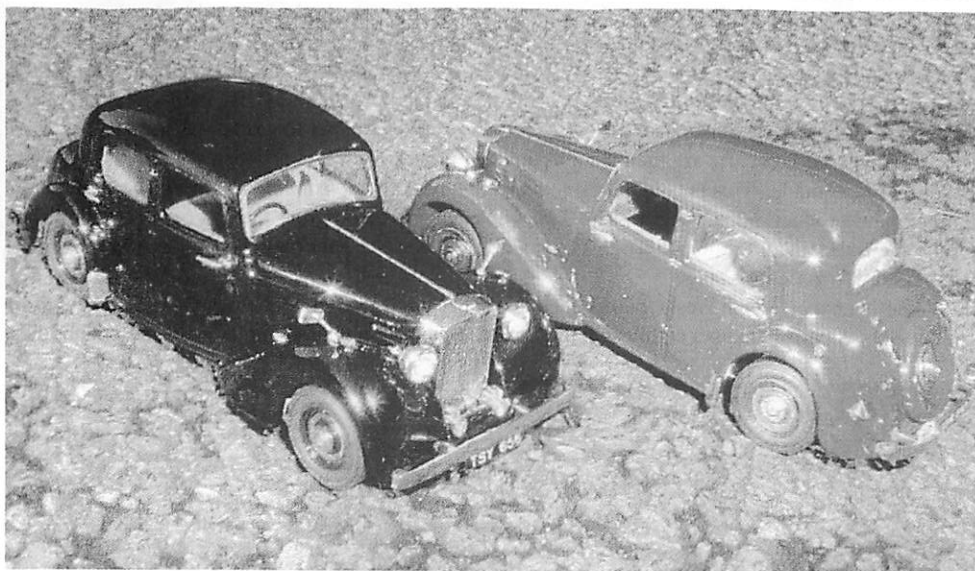
There does remain a factor that bothers me. According to my "Odams Automobile Engineering" the spring-loaded locating plate on the underside of the filter housing lid actually serves as a crude oil pressure relief valve in the event of a blockage. In my case there is still some travel left for the spring loaded plate, but because the new filter effectively fills the whole of the top of the filter housing, if oil wishes to escape from the pressure side of the filter where can it escape to? I wonder if this was a contributory factor in the gasket failure mentioned above. Does this also mean that an excess of backpressure is overstressing the oil pump gears?

Perhaps those more technically competent than I would care to comment.

FELIX COLLINS

MEN OF ACTION NEED AN ALVIS

A NEW 1/43rd SCALE MODEL ALVIS – THE TA 14 –



The super new TA14 Models.

Photo: Rob Smith

Some of you will have seen the first examples of a new Alvis model from J&M Classics – a TA 14 Saloon. Mike Rogers of J&M Classics purchased the rights to produce the beautiful Alvis models previously marketed by Top Marques. The range includes several 3 Litres, the TC 21 Grey Lady and the Charlesworth Speed 25. Mike has plans to increase this range of Alvis models and the TA 14 has been chosen to be his first new commission.

What most people won't realise is the phenomenal amount of work involved to take a new model from idea to reality. Lorraine and I recently sat down to lunch with Mike to review what has been happening in the last twelve months since the project began. The story started in October 1999 when Mike contacted me looking for information and some introductions to owners who might be helpful.

Consideration of the range of TA 14 coachwork available indicated that a Mulliners Saloon, a Carbodies Drophead and, of course, a Shooting Brake were in order! The model making process begins with the research and so Mike needed to inspect some real cars. Willing helpers were not hard to find and on a grey Saturday morning we convened at the home of David Jobson Scott to view David's well-known Carbodies Drophead. Jim Tatchell joined us with his smart Mulliners Saloon and also his Duncan for good measure.

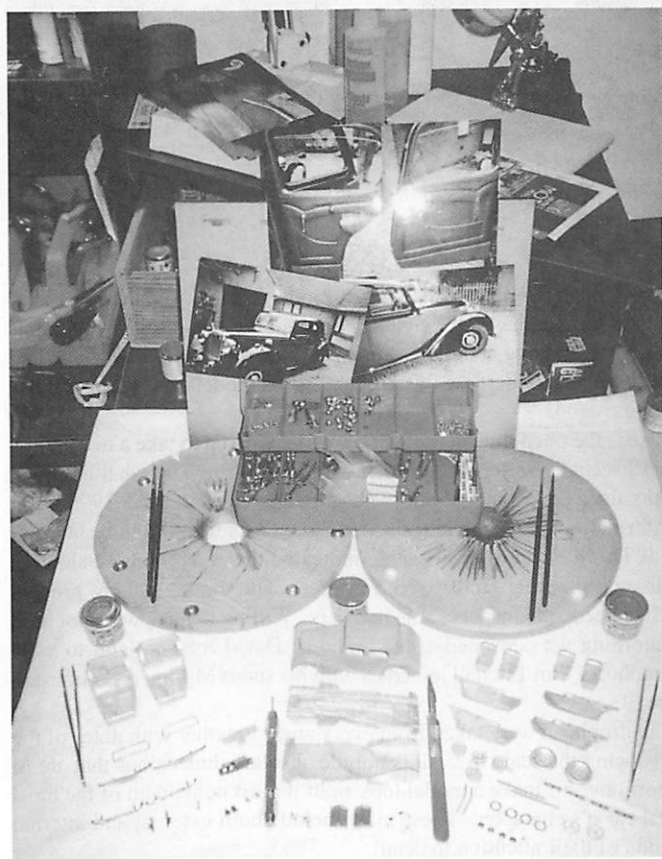
Photographs of the saloon and drophead were taken from every angle together with notes of the most important dimensions. In reducing the scale to 1/43 it is not the absolute dimensions that are of greatest importance, but the proportions. To make a model look right it must contain all of the most important details that give the real car its character. These must include both external and internal features as J & M Classics are proud of their attention to detail.

With photography and measurement completed we adjourned for a good lunch. Afterwards it was back to my TA 14 literature collection to plunder the library for more photos, brochures, chassis diagrams, colour schemes, etc, etc, etc—the list was endless. Mike then went off to consider the information and begin the next stage of the process.

Mike sorts this material to select the details that the pattern-maker must include in the finished model. He uses a pattern maker in the West Country—a skill that is becoming hard to find. The pattern-maker scales all dimensions down to $\frac{1}{43}$ and sculpts the body from a block of resin using small craft tools. This gives a solid shape but containing all of the detail needed. The process is repeated for the other components; chassis, door panels, seats, dashboard, bumpers, lights, wheels, etc.—again the list is endless. There are over 50 individual pieces to the TA 14 model. Smaller parts are carved from styrene plastic using needle files and fine sandpaper to shape and add detail.

The hand carved parts are then used to create a mould from latex rubber. From this the white metal master is made. This is cold-cured to make it hard and it is from this master that a new mould is made and production can begin. The TA 14 master proved so good that no modifications were required—a testament to the pattern-maker's skill. It took the pattern-maker 250 hours over a six week period to get to this stage.

Another expert in the West Country then takes these masters, creates a new mould and casts the first 50 sets of parts. He uses cellulose paint mixed to the origin Glasco numbers to spray the bodies.



The two halves of the circular moulds can clearly be seen the multitude of tiny castings ready for painting and assembly.

Photo: via Rob Smith



The production line in full swing showing ranks of completed cars and a row of black saloon bodies awaiting assembly.

Photo: via Rob Smith

The bodies are prepared, primed and then finished with three coats of topcoat followed by one of lacquer. Many bodies are sprayed together but it still takes a week to complete the task.

The smaller parts are hand painted by Mike with Humbrol enamel paints and the chassis sprayed with a silk black finish. Brightwork is cleaned and nickel-plated and then the parts are polished prior to assembly. Windows are created from clear plastic sheet and the headlight glasses from blobs of clear epoxy resin.

Mike is then ready to start assembly. Each car takes a full day to complete and is built in several sub-assemblies before the body is attached to the chassis. Number plates are added from water-slide transfer to complete the effect. The results of all this hard work must be seen to be fully appreciated.

The cars are carefully packed in boxes made especially for J&M classics, and lined in foam rubber. Details such as wing mirrors and door and bonnet catches are extremely fragile and must be handled very carefully. Each car has a chassis number painted on the base and comes complete with a certificate of authenticity. Chassis number one of the saloon is going to Jim Tatchell for providing the original subject.

The saloon is available in black, maroon, black over grey and black over maroon but bespoke colours can be produced for a small extra consideration. Sales are already going well, with supplies shipped to Australia and America and great reviews from the model press. For further information contact Mike Rogers at J&M Classics on +44 (0)1444 242762.

With the saloon finished work is now progressing on the Carbodies Drophead and the first chassis should be available before Christmas. Now can I get that Shooting Brake on the road before Mike's model is finished?

ROB SMITH

POSED, PROBED AND SOLVED

— The Registrar's Column —



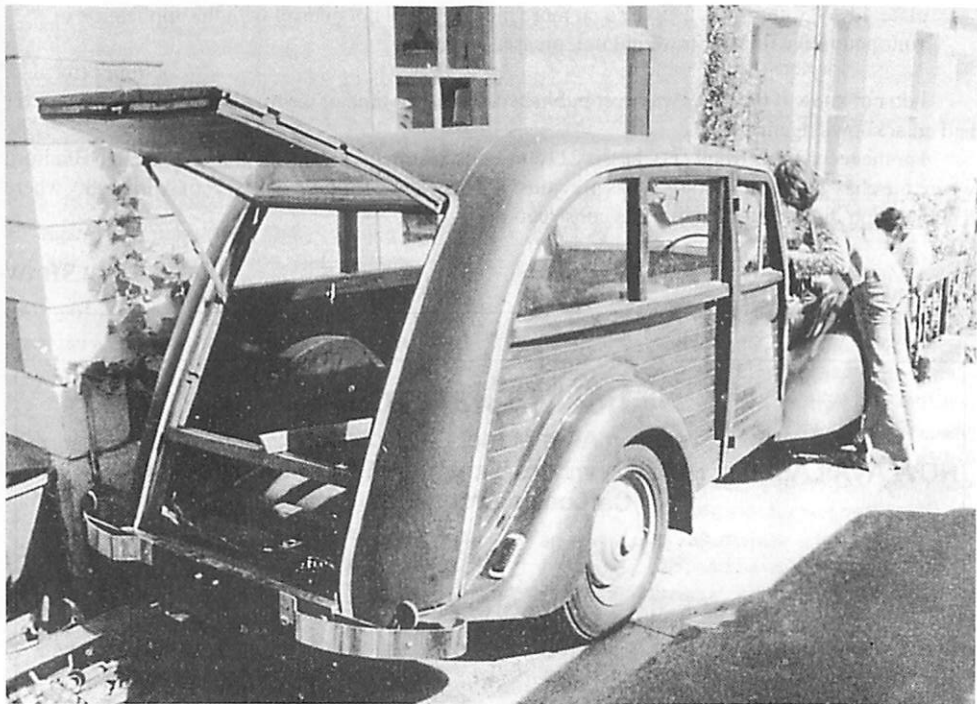
"NO RUSTINGS AT THE HUSTINGS"



Jack Straw electioneering in the past with the help of TA 14 21169 ex-FKW 3.

Photo: Courtesy Lancashire Evening Telegraph

Some controversy arose last summer when it became apparent that a ministerial Jaguar carrying the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, had been clocked exceeding the motorway speed limit by a substantial



The TA 14 Woody has previously appeared in The Bulletin, this picture being from issue 312, April 1980.

margin. The incident made the national press and precipitated much correspondence.

It was in this connection that our member Richard Entwistle handed me a cutting from the "Lancashire Evening Telegraph" for 26th July 2000, which paper is of course published in Jack Straw's constituency, Blackburn. The article was penned by their columnist John Blunt who had evidently dredged the files and come up with a photograph of Jack Straw using a TA 14 Woody on a previous election campaign. The point was made that if Jack had still been using this "old clunker", he would have been safe from prosecution. Now, knowing that TA 14's are in fact just capable of exceeding the motorway speed limit (especially downhill and with a following wind), I felt that this charismatic model had been unnecessarily impugned, and was in any case no clunker, so I seized a pen and leapt to its defence, in the following terms:

"Old clunker indeed??? Let's be fair please, and in proper context. At a time when scrapyards are full of cars under ten years old, a jibe is written about a car which must then have been approaching its fourth decade – and still earning its keep.

For some forty years I have myself been helping to preserve Alvis of all types, and particularly the Fourteen of your photograph. Whilst this model has never been a fireball, it remains one of the nicest handling and best engineered cars of the post war period. Those few woody estate versions were not, admittedly as refined as the coachbuilt saloons and convertibles, being a "tax-break" alternative. At least in this case there would have been no rustings at the hustings.

This classic has already suffered the indignity of having been robbed of her original number

plate, FKW 3, for EWA 295 B, so no more please. I will not quarrel with the application of your pejorative to Mr. Straw, but not, please, to the car.

Yours etc"

I do not know if the reply was ever published, but at the time of writing this feature, I have never had an acknowledgement.

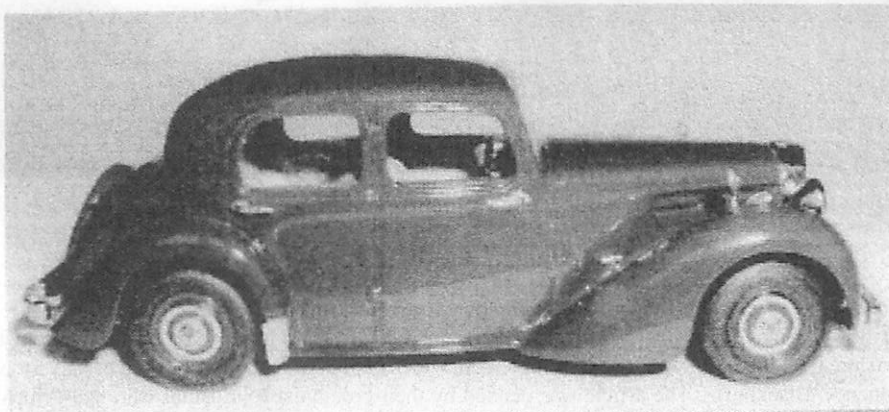
For the record, this woody is Chassis 21169 – constructor unknown, but probably local to Bradford where the chassis was delivered. It has previously featured in a Bulletin No. 312, of April 1980, where a photograph gives better detail of its construction.

DAVE CULSHAW

J & M Classics

Precision Alvis Model Car Collection

NOW AVAILABLE in limited numbers is our new TA14 Mulliners Saloons and Carbodies Dropheads



Models available

TA14 Mulliners Saloon
TA14 Carbodies Drophead
Speed 25 Charlesworth Drophead
TC21 Grey Lady Drophead
Many new models to follow including
TD21 Series I & II Saloons
TA21 Saloons & Dropheads
TA14 Woodies

For more information contact

Michael Rogers
J & M Classics
13 Junction Close
Burgess Hill
West Sussex
RH15 0NZ

Telephone / Fax 01444 242762



A Selection of Reviews,
Criticisms, Recommendations
and Personal Opinions by the
Editor and other Contributors.

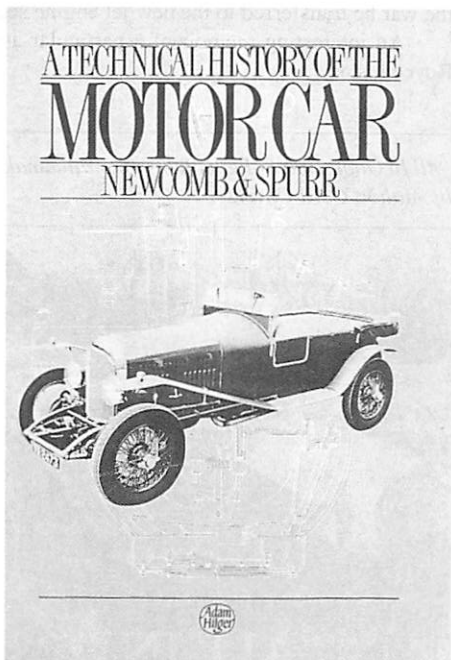
A Technical History Of The Motor Car by T. P. Newcomb and R. T. Spurr. Price £Unknown. 430 pp.
Published by Adam Hilger.

I was delighted when I discovered this book on the shelves of a large bookshop in Singapore, but not quite so delighted by the time that I had finished reading it.

The authors have crammed a great deal of information into the book's 430 pages, but it is mostly written in a breathless staccato style, which does not make for very entertaining reading. Although covering all aspects of motor car design, I found the layout and chronology used irritating. Nothing is dealt with in any depth and many items are covered by a few lines, whilst other matters such as styling, which hardly merit a place in a book like this, cover too much space.

Although well provided with line drawings from various contemporary technical publications, the book contains not one photograph, which seems comprising to me. There are only fourteen books listed in the bibliography which seems remarkable. Perhaps even more remarkable is that Harry Ricardo's book, "The High Speed Internal Combustion Engine", is not mentioned. This makes me wonder what sort of research went into this volume.

As I said earlier, there is a great deal of information in the book and I did learn something. But it could have been such a better book. A wasted opportunity really.



J.N.B.C.

Rolls-Royce On The Front Line—The Life and times of a Service Engineer by Tony Henniker. 285pp. Price £10.99. Published by the Rolls-Royce Heritage Trust. Card Covers.

This book is a very entertaining memoir. The author joined Rolls-Royce at the end of the nineteen twenties as an apprentice and this period coincided with many interesting activities at Roll-Royce. Entering the Service Department, he found himself sent to different aircraft manufacturers to look after the installation of Rolls-Royce engines. Surprisingly he was sent to Germany to work in the Junkers factory in 1936/37 helping on the installation of Rolls-Royce engines in Junkers civil aircraft.

At the beginning of the war he was seconded to the RAF and toured various stations, but was then sent to France. He remained there throughout the early part of the war, getting to know many of the RAF's early fighter aces. The is a most interesting part of Tony Henniker's story. On return to Britain, he continued touring RAF stations and then at the end of the war he transferred to the new jet engine section.

An interesting memoir of a particular aspect of Rolls-Royce history.

J.N.B.C.

ROLLS-ROYCE HERITAGE TRUST



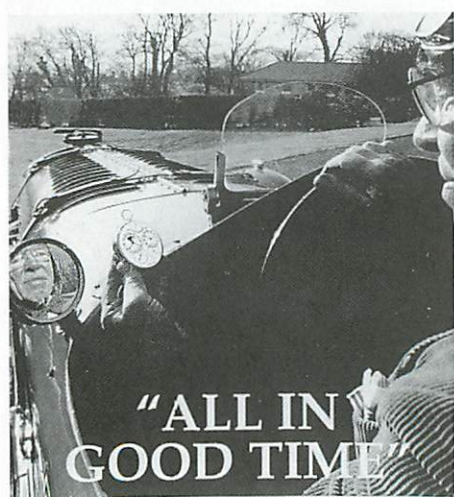
**ROLLS-ROYCE ON THE
FRONT LINE**

The life and times of a Service Engineer

Tony Henniker

HISTORICAL SERIES No 29

"All In Good Time"—Reflections of a Watchmaker by George Daniels. 159 pp. Price £35.00. Published by Author. Card Covers.



Reflections of a Watchmaker

George Daniels

George Daniels is the leading watchmaker of our age, possibly of any age, and at last he has written his autobiography. He had an almost incredibly poverty-stricken upbringing in north London in the thirties, which he describes in pitiless detail. His childhood was made even worse by his parents who seemed to be incapable of looking after their large family, the consequence of which was that Daniels had no regard or feelings for them at all. He describes this loveless family life in a horrifyingly calm manner. Going into the army at the end of the war was a luxury to him.

Even under the almost impossible conditions of his childhood, Daniels had started an interest in clocks and watches. After the war he became a watch repairer and gradually moved to becoming a restorer of antique watches, at the same time moving up the social scale. He met horologists like Cecil Clutton and Lord Harris and then decided to make watches himself. As a watchmaker, Daniels made every part

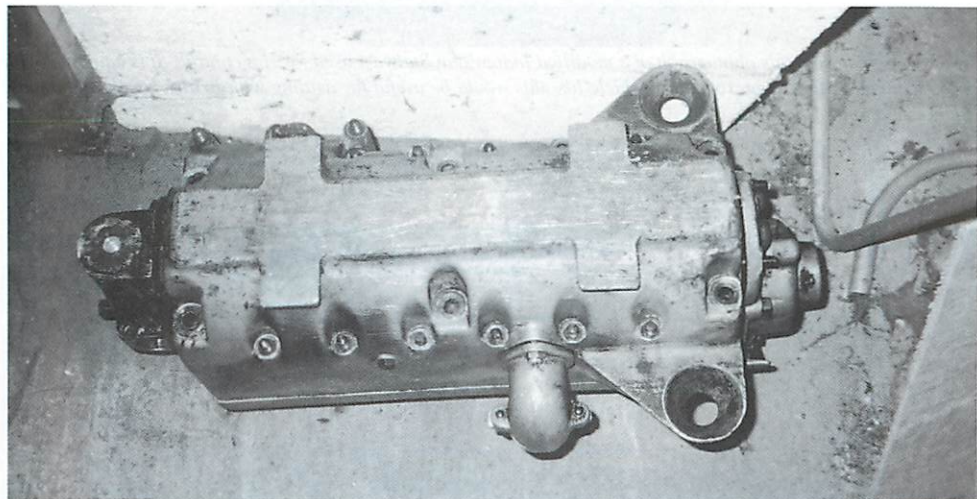
himself excluding the engraved dial and the spring and these complex pieces of horological art took up to a year each to make. They were consequently very expensive.

Daniels now became well known and continued with making extraordinarily accurate and well finished watches. He was still using escapements that had been designed two hundred years ago so he designed a new and better escapement, the Daniels co-Axial Escapement. Much of the book is about the patenting of this invention and then his long drawn-out battle to get the Swiss mechanical watch industry to accept it, which they finally did.

In the same way that many vintage car enthusiasts are interested in horology, George Daniels is a considerable vintage car fancier with a collection of mainly Bentleys. He describes how he acquired these cars over the years and restored and raced them. He also devotes a chapter to motor cycles to which he is also partial.

This is a most interesting book about a single-minded man. It is therefore a pity that it is so lacking in many ways. Daniels just does not spend enough time writing about many aspects of his life and work. The book is very badly edited with much repetition and it is full of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. There is no index. It is also far too expensive for a 159 page soft covered book. It is a "must" if your interests lie in the direction of horology, but still a disappointment.

J.N.B.C.



Doug Pound has provided this photograph which relates to an all-synchromesh gearbox in his possession. It bears the number 2338, which is higher than any recorded in the final 1940 production cars. The underside of the casting shown by the photograph is also slightly different to the usual version. Doug wonders if it is part of a military batch. Would any member having such a gearbox of this apparently later profile please advise the Registrar of its serial number so that a conclusion may be arrived at – Dave Culshaw

STALWARTS IN THE NEWS



Mark Chapman sent this photograph of a modified Indonesian Stalwart used for riot control. It is equipped with water cannon. Mark suggests that a vehicle like this would be useful for dealing with British soccer hooligans!
Photo : via Mark Chapman



This is very much more bizarre. A Stalwart painted in shades of pink with a giant lipstick on the top. It was part of a Boots Promotion for "17 Cosmetics". It is for sale. Both Mark and Robin Bendall sent details.

Photo : Mark Chapman



ARCHIVE

— A Selection of Pictures
from the Past —



A letter from Norman Johnson brought some interesting period photographs from 1957. The first photograph was taken at Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall at the send-off for the Second Anglo-American rally. In the picture is J. Clarke's 1925 TE 12/50, chassis 3833. This car was the winner in the 1954 rally.

Photo: Norman Johnson



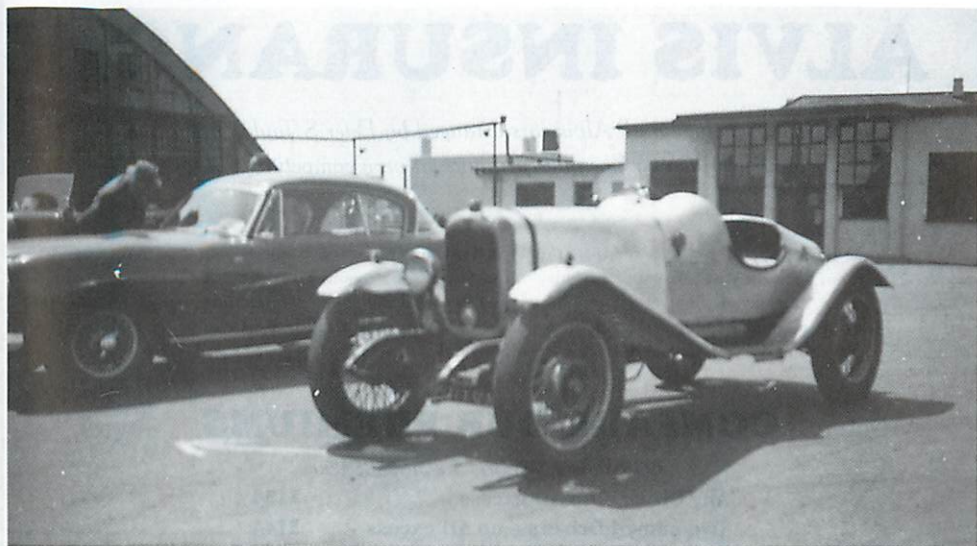
This photograph was also taken in 1957 at the Second National Alvis Day held at Heston. In the foreground is Norman Johnson's 14-75, Chassis No 6517.

Photo: Norman Johnson



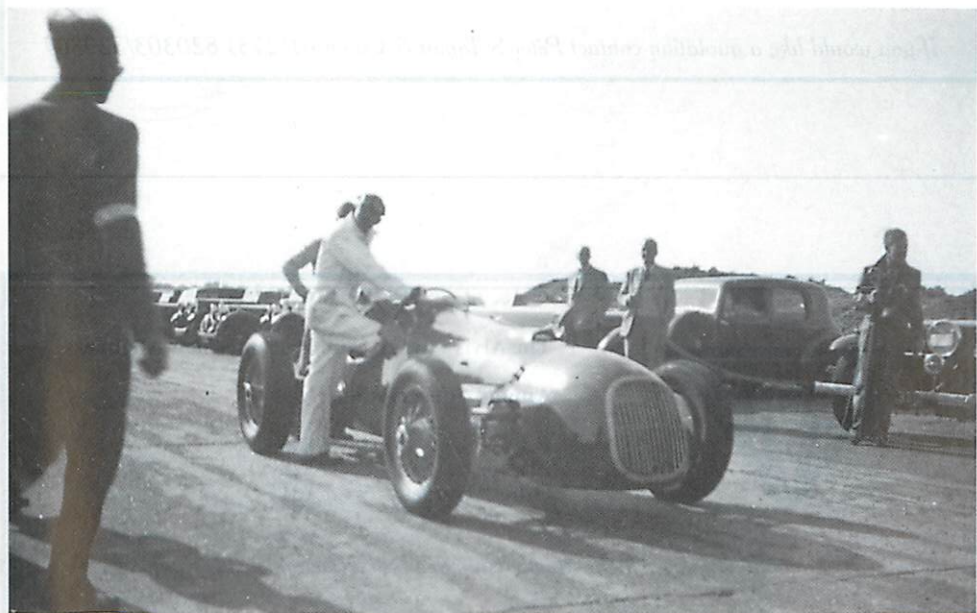
This is TC21/100 Chassis No 25858. The prototype and press car for the TC108/G Series. Norman recalls, "This was the first car in which I achieved 100 mph and this was on the Coventry By-Pass! Those were the days."

Photo: Norman Johnson



Dave Culshaw who identified the cars in the previous pictures, has also just acquired a couple of photographs probably relating to the Heston Alvis Day event. Here is the famous Racing Car No.1 HP 6161.

Photo: via Dave Culshaw



This is the Clinkard 4.3 Special in its early form. Always a welcome performer at Alvis Days.

Photo: via Dave Culshaw



SECTION NOTES

– Alvis Activities From Around The World –

EAST ANGLIAN SECTION AOC JUBILEE LUNCH – 14TH JANUARY 2001

The Alvis headed south from the Norfolk Broads on a cold but gloriously bright and clear sunny morning marred only by a dusting of salt on the main roads. Janette and I were rather sad at the empty space between us, usually occupied by our dog Gulliver, whom we had buried the previous day. A much loved and much travelled little dog who had paid his respects to—and probably upon—many an Alvis Day and faithfully guarded the Bootique.

After two hours driving we arrived promptly at the delightful old Bildeston Crown, in deepest Suffolk, only to find Frank Allwood and his "hareem" already esconced in front of the fire. The car park soon filled with the open specials of Ernie Constable, David Rouse and Mick Martyn, the open TE21 of the Stapletons and the smart emerald green TA14 of Noel Stone, the paws of its hare mascot well down to fend off the chilly air from its privates! The rest of the space was taken by the big pre-war dropheads of the Gallahers and Oliveiras and assorted tinware. We also welcomed the Moores, Heinleins (very senior being member No 583), Pierces, McClellands, Coopers, Jack Clover and Malcolm Woodward; apologies for absence had been received from the Goodings, Littles and Sheppards and greetings and good wishes came from Eric Oakman and Ernest Shenton.

As we sat down to a tasty piece of English beef we received one of these new fangled fax affairs which conveyed birthday greetings from Alvis friends in the Far South-West who were gadding about on Dartmoor and also celebrating: we returned salutations with interest. The archivist had dusted off the Club's incunabula to regale members with priceless nuggets of information on its foundation and details of its early birth pangs: it was indeed an unruly child and would have been put down had it not been rescued by Ken Day in 1953 but that is another story.* We paid tribute to the three wise men: Ken Day, Clink and Eric Oakman, without whom our club would not be what it is today and remembered that many of those present had done their bit for the Club such as Maurice Gallaher who had organised National Alvis Days at Crystal Palace and the tour of East Anglia, his wife Wendy who had been RAC Membership Secretary, Eric Stapleton who had served ten years before the mast as Bulletin Editor, David Rouse who as Competition Secretary had reinstated the Six Hour Relay Race and John Oliveira who had pioneered that aptly titled leaflet Direct Transmission, the forerunner of today's Pink'un. Finally we toasted "The Alvis Owner Club and Absent Alvis Friends" and devoured

a very large birthday cake made specially for us by Wendy Gallaher.

Long after the sun had set over Bildeston church and the night drawn in, the usual crew were still sitting around the fire chewing the fat and remembering mighty Alvis deeds of years gone by—probably much embellished. Indeed a memorable day and now for next fifty years: thank you for coming!

JOHN WHEELEY

* The full story of the Alvis Owner Club will be told in a Jubilee Celebration book, to be published later this year.

MIDLAND SECTION FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY LUNCH



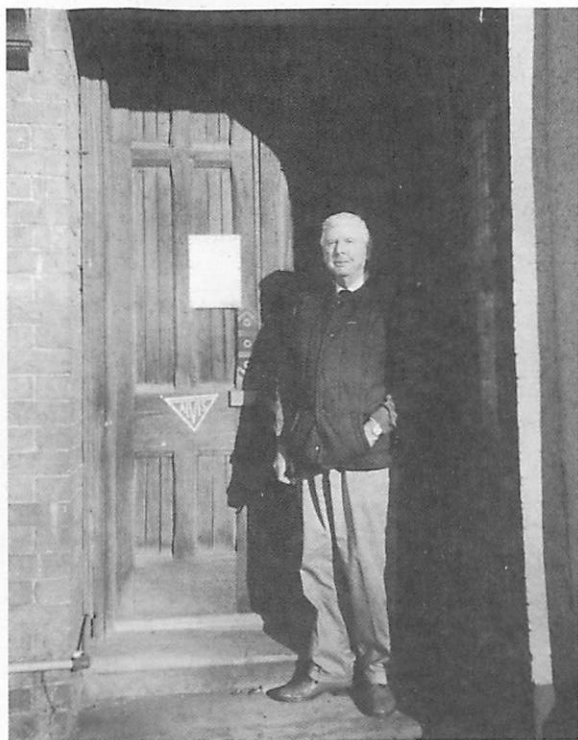
Where it all started, the Swan Hotel at Tenbury Wells. Unfortunately as can be seen, the hotel has not lasted as well as the Alvis Owner Club. Martin Boothman's 4.3 raises the tone.

Photo: Ken Cameron

Musing after a good dinner, my mind turned to the club and that it was almost exactly 50 years since a group of enthusiastic Alvis owners met together at The Swan Hotel at Tenbury Wells on January 14, 1951 and there resolved to form the Alvis Owner Club. I wondered whether any of the original members would have thought, even for a moment, that the club would grow to embrace world wide membership and affiliations and be stronger than ever in 2001.

Weighed down with a sense of history, duty and the prospect of a pint, I called Martin Boothman and we agreed that it was appropriate to pay homage to our founders by returning by Alvis to the place

where it all began. A further call to Ken Cameron revealed that the "Swan" was long-closed, in derelict condition with boarded up windows and a leaning "For Sale" sign. All was not lost, though, as just a mile down the road was an excellent hostelry, the Peacock Inn at Boraston. This was an old coaching Inn and the ladies were sure to like it (well, yes, they did!). Oh, and by the way, there would be two more for lunch.



Rod Yeend having just affixed an Alvis badge to the front door of the Swan Hotel. Well done!

Photo: Martin Boothman

Just before bedtime on Saturday, Ken phoned to confirm a mid day photo shoot outside "the place where it all started" and that he hoped that it would be all right if he brought a few friends along to the lunch. Come Sunday, the 4.3 and the TF21 were suitably (if precariously) posed outside the "Swan", a large Red Triangle ceremoniously attached to the peeling front door and without further ado, saving a small tear and a large thirst, off set the occupants in search of the Peacock Inn.

Our arrival was greeted by the happy sound of "the few friends" of whom Ken had spoken. With only 48 hours' notice, he had gathered 21 members and wives from the Midland and South West Sections. Alvis enthusiasts all, including Ron and Hazel Buck (members since 1952), Dick and Audrey Gilbert, Dennis Heath, David and Joan Lowe, Martin and Pat Parish, Nick and Pat Simpson, Jack and Anne Taylor and Alan and Margaret Wildin.

A comfortable private room had been reserved, a super three course menu agreed, commemorative menu cards printed and all the other details attended to whilst KC gave out the impression that this minor miracle was nothing out of the ordinary. Gratitude was expressed to Ken and Pat followed by toasts to Alvis and to the Club, past and present. We lingered over coffee. As four o'clock approached, Nick Simpson rounded off this most enjoyable impromptu celebration by passing around a copy of



Midland Section Members enjoying the lunch. Mrs Lowe, David Lowe, Joan Lowe, Ken Cameron, Audrey Gilbert, Nick Simpson, Dick Gilbert, Pat Simpson, Dennis Heath, Martin Parish, Pat Parish, Rod Yeend, Margaret Yeend.

Photo: via Ken Cameron

every version of the twelve types of Bulletin produced by the Club over the past Fifty years and by reading out an historic account of that inaugural meeting fifty years previously to the day. 26 people were present in 1951, we were 21, but co-opted the owner of the Peacock and her four attractive waitresses to square the numbers. Oh, and the sun shone all day!

ROD YEEND

MIDLAND SECTION HOWARD ARMS POST – CHRISTMAS LUNCH

There were forty-six members and friends floating in and around the Howard Arms at one time or another on December 27th. Fortunately only thirty-nine of them were able to stop for lunch, as the dining-room was near to capacity. And the display of nine Alvises outside was attracting its usual quota of non-members (maybe they'll be encouraged to join one day?). Car ages ranged from Peter Lakin's 1933 SA Speed 20 to Rod Yeend's 1967 TF21. Every section other than Scottish were represented, and we're working on them for next year. There seemed no lack of subjects to talk about as we sipped our beer and then tucked into the hot buffet. All too soon it was time to be off, to get home before dark – and fortunately a day before the snow arrived. Well done to all who made it, particularly

those who had come a long way—see you next year!

NICK WALKER

SOUTH EASTERN SECTION

SOUTH EAST SECTION CELEBRATES THE GOLDEN JUBILEE



Ena's cake.

Photo : Charles Mackonochie

Along with other sections, the South East Section remembered the inaugural meeting which led to the formation of the Alvis Owner Club. I doubt the participants realised what they were starting all those years ago but I am sure they would be proud of the current day format and strength of the club.

For those who demand accuracy; the meeting was held on 14th January 1951 at the Swan Pub in Tenbury Wells now boarded up and awaiting planning permission to be turned into residential premises.

For various reasons the Section did not manage to have an event on the actual day but had two either side of the Sunday. First occurred at the regular Natter and Noggin at the George and Dragon, Igtham on Thursday 11th January. Malcolm Davey wandered in with a cake under his arm—well it made a change from the usual spare part. Thinking that he had some last minute instruction from Janet to buy a cake for the family we all tactfully ignored this unusual sight. The regulars including self, Dave Sargent, Matthew Cannon, Jim Pearce, Ray McMullen, Brian Davis, John Chamberlaine, Mick Harrison, Richard Day and Richard Mitchell carried on talking as usual. The next surprise was Malcolm turning up with cake plus a Silver Eagle on top and plates. We all of course duly ate the cake and raised our glasses to the founding fathers.

The next opportunity to celebrate our birthday occurred at the usual New Year Dinner, 20th January, at the Black Horse, Pembury. As usual the food was good and the conversation lively. Actually the food was almost too good as I, for one, hardly had any room left for the special "50" profiteroles which appeared with the coffee. They were delicious and no prizes for guessing that Ena Whitton had prepared them. For those who didn't attend, perhaps worried about Kent disappearing under water, you missed a good night and Pembury is at the top of a hill! Those present were Ena Whitton, the Daveys, ourselves, the Tourles, the Neales, the McMullens, the Mailes, the Smiths, Tim Anderson, the Clarks, Bill Fryer, Mike Pratt, the Harrisons and the Everetts.

There was one notable absentee from the two gatherings and that was Norman Whitton whose suspension has run out of lubrication and is rather creaky. So Norman, we missed you, hurry up and get that infusion of oil or grease—I kid you not—and look forward to seeing you out and about soon.

Keep an eye on the Calendar, we still have more birthday celebrations to come.

CHARLES MACKONCHIE

EAST ANGLIAN ALVIS DAY – RESULTS

DRIVING TESTS

1	PREWAR	Ken Sheppard	14/75
2	PREWAR	John Oliveira	3½ litre
1	POSTWAR	Jim Oakman	TA21
2	POSTWAR	Tony Bannard Smith	TD21

CONCOURS

1	MASTER PREWAR	Jon Tracy	12/70
1	MASTER POSTWAR	Jim Oakman	TA21
2	MASTER POSTWAR	Eric Oakman	TC21/100
1	NOVICE PREWAR	Albert Markham	Crested Eagle
2	NOVICE PREWAR	Ken Sheppard	14/75
1	NOVICE POSTWAR	Arthur Fairburn	TF21
2	NOVICE POSTWAR	Tony Bannard Smith	TD21
1	SPECIAL	Jack Trigwell	Sp.20
2	SPECIAL	Tony Cropper	Sp.20

BEST OVERALL	Jim Oakman	TA21
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CARPARK AWARD	Rod Shelton	TA21 DHC
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