

GOLDEN JUBILEE

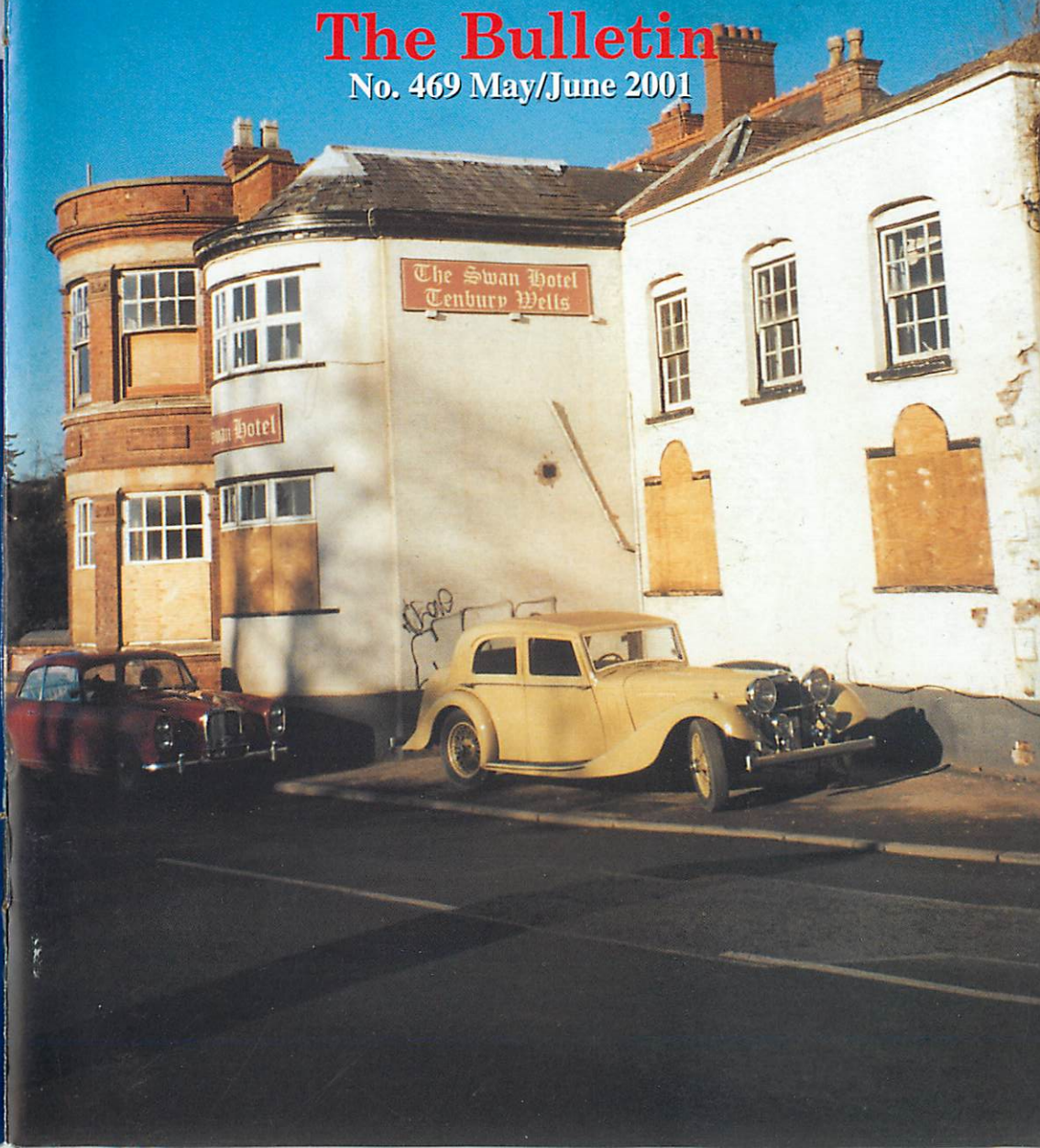
OWNER

ALVIS

CLUB

The Bulletin

No. 469 May/June 2001



THE BULLETIN

No. 469

MAY/JUNE 2001

www.alvisoc.org

Contents

Alvivacity	195
The 2001 AGM	197
C'Est La Vie	199
Rallye De Gstaad	203
German Section Alvis Day	207
At Least He Asked For Directions	212
Going Racing – Part II	213
Letters To The Editor	221
Twenty Years Racing DUU 900	235
Alvis Three-Litre Saloon Road Test	244
"With Strings Attached" Part I	249
Book Reviews	254
Behind The Wheel	257
Memories Of An Alvis In Singapore	259
Lighting Regulations For Alvis Cars	262
Mission Impossible	265
Archive	269
My Kind Of Car	273
One Year's Progress	276
Two Fat Gardeners	278
It's Not A Reliant It's An Alvis By Robin	279
True Lies	281
Section Notes	284
New Members	286

Front Cover: The Swan Hotel, Tenbury Wells graced by Martin Boothman's 4.3 and Rod Yeend's TF21. This is the place where the AOC was founded in 1951.

Photo: Ken Cameron

Centre Spread: This Speed 25 was photographed outside the Sydney Conservatorium of Music on the 5th March 1937. The epitome of Alvis elegance. The photograph originally appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on the 12th March 1937. It was sent to me by Eric Cunningham and is reproduced by kind permission of Fairfax Photo Library.

Display Advertisements: available on a per issue or annual (six issue) basis. Annual rates: £450.00 per full page, £275.00 per half page and £150.00 per quarter page. Per issue rates are £100.00 per page; £60.00 per half page and £35.00 per quarter page except for quarter page advertisements for personal car sales for which a special rate of £7.50 applies. Artwork costs extra if not supplied.

ALVISCITY-

— A Round up of Alvis Matters —

NEW CLUB VICE CHAIRMAN

Nick Walker, Midland Section Chairman, was elected Vice Chairman of the Club at the last Annual General Meeting. Nick has served as a Section Chairman since 1993 and to him must fall much of the credit for the successful International Alvis Days in 1999 and 2000. He has also served on the sub committee of the Council charged with investigating and implementing the incorporation of the Club.

The Council was unanimous in its decision to recommend his appointment having considered the personal qualities and experience required of an individual necessary for holding this most important post. I am sure that you will join with me in wishing Nick every happiness during his five-year term of office.

ARTHUR FAIRBURN

One of my major spare time projects, when not producing The Bulletin, is assisting John Wheeley with the assembly of the Jubilee Book, which will celebrate fifty years of the Club's existence. The story of the Club is absolutely fascinating. The early days were extremely fraught and the Club came within an ace of failing in the early fifties. This seems, perhaps, surprising now, given the Club's size and strength. However the early fifties was not an easy time and although I was only five when the Club was formed, I still remember well the modest lives we had in those early post war years. Don't forget that rationing was still in effect.

I think that The Jubilee Book is going to prove to be outstanding interest to members. So much has happened in fifty years and so many important characters have been involved. Reading the manuscript shows that many changes have occurred over the years both social, environmental, mechanical and of course legal. Whilst our interest in motor cars of the past leads to a general idea that things were better then, the history of the AOC shows a steady move to things getting better and better. Long may this continue.

Whilst I am by no means short of interesting material for The Bulletin, I am running a little short on technical material. I should be very interested in receiving technical articles concerning all aspects of Alvises from all eras. I should also like to be able to publish more restoration articles and at present I have none in stock at all. If you are restoring your Alvis, many of us would like to read accounts of this work, and as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words.

With the changes made to the Clubs Constitution, there are many changes in names and titles of officers of the Club and these are reflected in the lists which appear in this issue. As usual we need to give all the assistance we can to hard-working officers. In this connection, can I remind members that all matters in connection with address changes should be sent to Charles Mackonochie.

J.N.B.C

THE 2001 AGM

Some 70 members attended this year's AGM at the Allesley Hotel, Coventry on March 18th. After acceptance of the minutes from the previous year, reports were presented both on the year past and plans for the year ahead.

As is customary, the Chairman was the first to speak. This year, after commenting on the usual high standard of International Alvis Day and the Section Days, he thanked all those who work behind the scenes to make these and our other events such a success. He then turned his attention to the much appreciated support we receive from various companies, small businesses and individuals. In particular he thanked Alvis plc for their continued support and Red Triangle who are the principal sponsor for this years forthcoming 50th anniversary celebrations.

The Treasurer reported a reduction in the Club's financial position. He explained the reasons for this expected situation, much due to having to rejoin the VAT club, and predicted an upturn two years hence. The Registrar described how his investigations into archive material produce so many articles for The Bulletin and commented on the extremely high levels of detail and accuracy being achieved by the team of Model Secretaries in assembling Registers.

The Membership Secretary reported a small reduction in numbers. The Competition Secretary made reference to the outstanding performance of Chris Denham and Rob Bendall in the London Peking Rally. In domestic competition congratulations went to Jim Tatchel for the best individual performance for the third year running, Barry Cannell (1st) and Frank Spencer (2nd) for the Hulbert Trophy, Eileen Eve for the Ladies Plate and the South East for the Inter Section Shield. He was less happy to report a reduction in the number of members competing and especially in the number of members willing to travel some distance to compete. A committee has been set up to examine the requirements of members with respect to the format of future events.

The Technical Officer had dealt with a steady stream of enquiries and commented on his concerns regarding the rocker shaft in Marles steering boxes. The PRO thanked members for their response to his request for cuttings, photos, etc and presented a cuttings book. He was pleased with the publicity we have gained from the London Peking, various television programmes and increasing articles in magazines and newspapers.

Ken Cameron, the Midland Section Secretary, reported on IAD 2000. Nick Walker then provided the meeting with a progress report on the forthcoming Jubilee celebrations. Each of the Section Secretaries reported on the many and varied events of the year past in their respective areas. All the Section days had been well supported and the other events covered a wide range of formats demonstrating the thought and effort tirelessly given by the organisers. One sobering aspect mentioned by all the Secretaries was the possible effect of the current foot and mouth disease on the events planned for the coming year. At present most National Trust properties are closed and the MSA, under whose rules most of our events are run, have withdrawn all permits and waivers of permit. Contingency plans are being drawn up and we hope for a speedy end to the crisis.

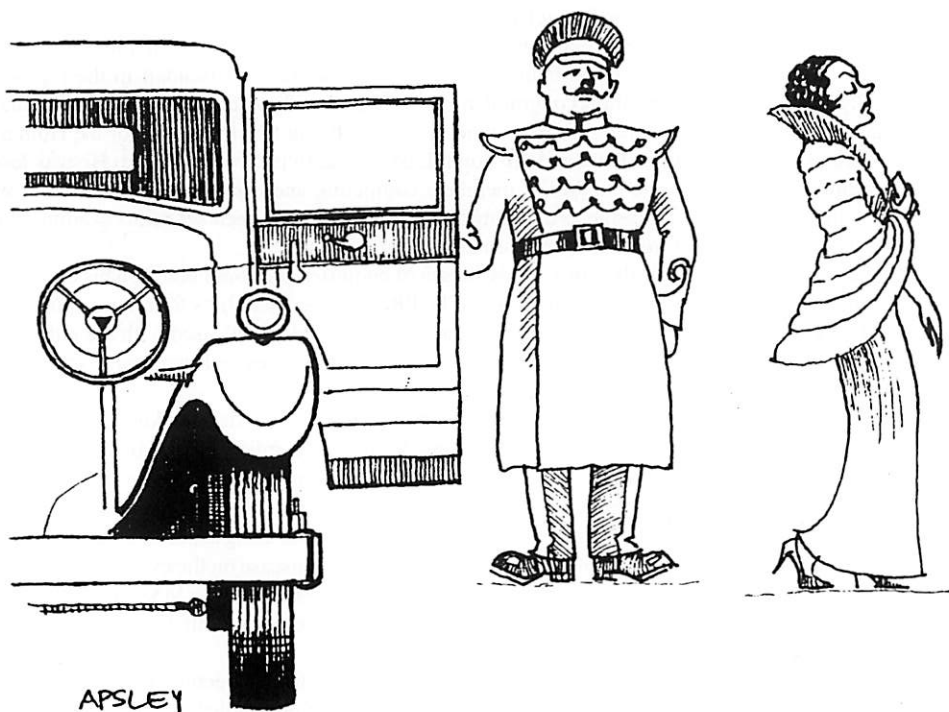
The appointment of Nick Walker as Vice Chairman was ratified by the meeting. Perhaps the most important part of the proceedings was the passing of a resolution which enabled the final elements of incorporation to be put into place. This resolution enables the passing of the assets and liabilities of the Club and indeed the membership to be passed to the Company.

Ray McMullen has stepped down as Regalia Officer and Malcolm Kindell's post as RAC Liaison Officer has disappeared due to actions by the RAC. The meeting thanked Ray and Margaret and Malcolm and Jennie for their considerable efforts and welcomed Brian Neale as the new Regalia Officer.

Malcolm and Jennie have now replaced Chris Watson as the UK link to the Bulletin Editor. The meeting ended with the usual AOB session.

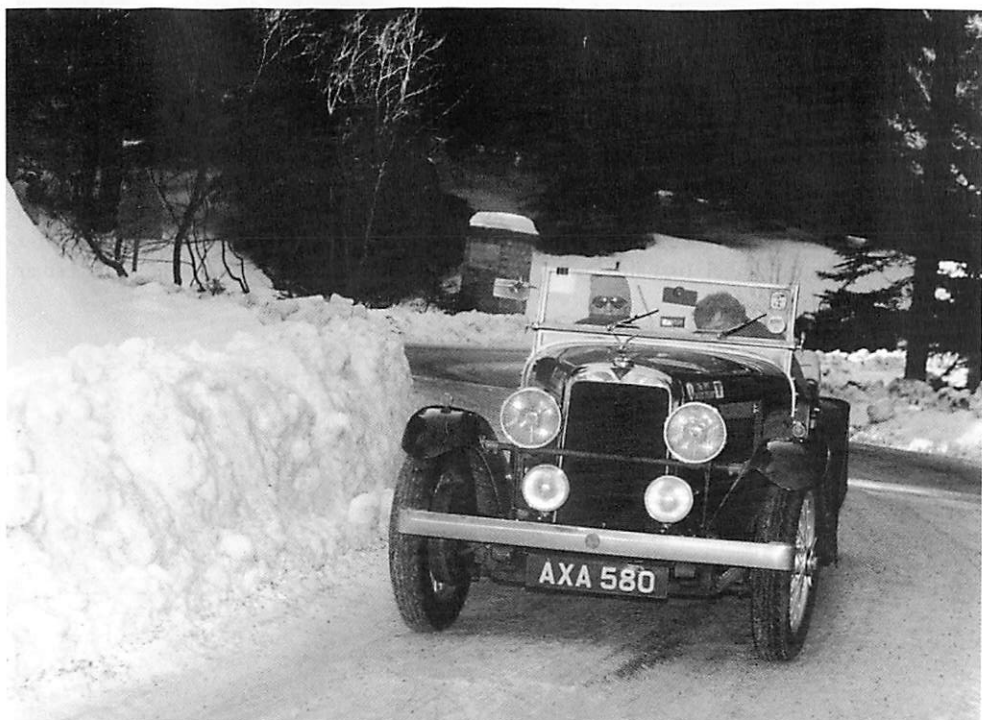
MALCOLM DAVEY

SHE (THINKS): UGLY GREAT BRUTE! IF HE SLAMS
THE DOOR OF MY NICE NEW ALVIS, I'LL SCREAM!
HE (THINKS): TOFFEE-NOSED BAGGAGE! IF THIS
WEREN'T AN ALVIS, I'D SLAM THE DOOR!



C'EST LA VIE

– The Monte Carlo Winter Challenge –



Sunshine and snow. Navigator head down in his maps.

Photo: Phillipe Fugier

“C’est la vie, c’est la vie” I must have uttered those profound words so many times whilst celebrating success in this January’s Winter Challenge (Monte) and again when drowning sorrows as part of our triumph was doctored.

Entries closed for this years event on December 1st, but texting the rally website three days prior to Christmas and reading the names of an array of friends preparing Astons, Bentleys, Lancias, MGs, Rileys, Austin Ulsters, and Lagondas, plus of course Steve Gipson in a lone Alvis 12/60, prompted a quick discussion with my Firefly. This led to a hasty phone call to Rally Office and a very late back door entry.

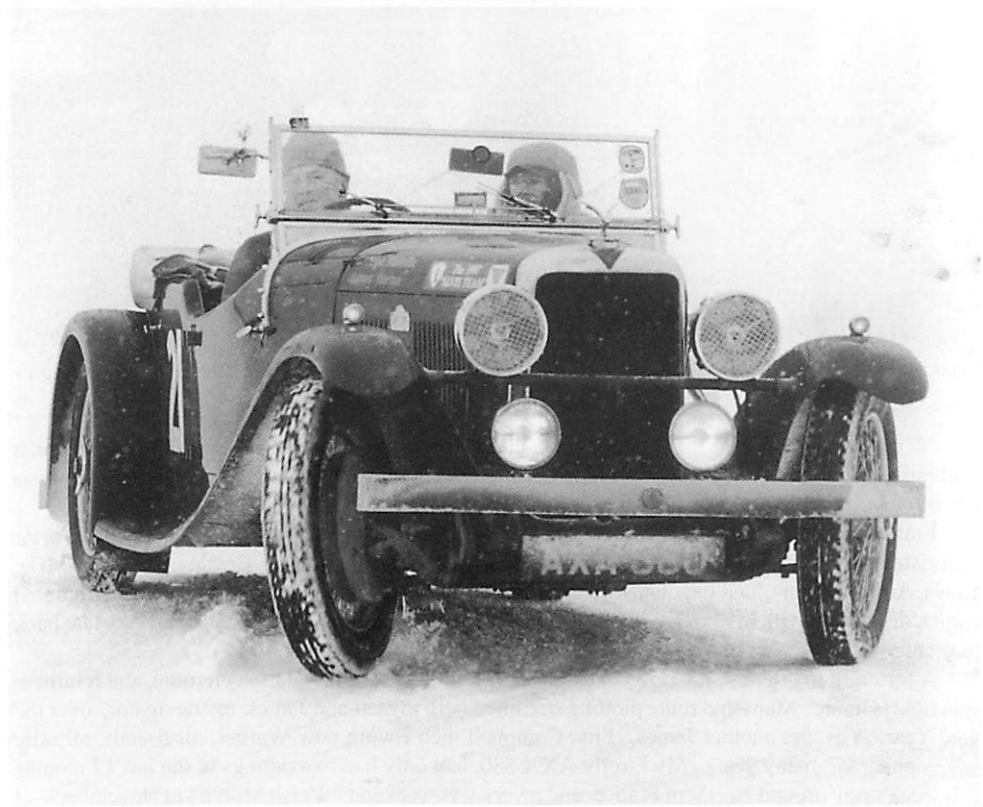
A fortnight to organise the car; Channel Tunnel tickets, accommodation en route, and returncar train tickets home. Maps and route plotting occupied both myself and James, my navigator, over the New Year. Yes, yet another James. First Campbell then Ewing now Warner, all friends, all rally campaigners for many years. My Firefly AXA 580, had only had two outings in the last 12 months — a week’s run around Northern France and a very wet weekend “Welsh Monte” in November — I had just bought a newly refurbished close ratio gear box from Robin Everall, but had no time to fit it, just time to change oil, grease everything, fit thicker inner tubes, tighten every nut and bolt, water–

proof scuttle/windscreen surround, change plugs, points, fit new spare fuel pump and second coil, and lastly recalibrate the Halda to adjust to tyre wear and inflated pressures of 50lbs.

The "off" was at Brooklands where I collected James III. James had never sat in the Firefly before that moment, nor had he ever navigated for me — I'm still cursing him!

The Winter Challenge (Monte) is divided into two main categories; (1) Sporting Route and (2) Marathon Route. The Sporting Route is for the more experienced "modern historic cars and drivers", the Vintageants (Pre War) cars are a sub-division of the Marathon Route, doing the same drive and times, but running either at the front or rear of the field so as not to impede the progress of the much younger cars. That is the theory, but this year the results spoke for themselves, as for much of the Rally the Vintageants either led or were in the top ten of the 130 Marathon entry.

We drove the rally hood down and no side screens, as this gave us another 5 – 10 mph. Weight was kept to a minimum, keeping spares pruned to basics. A few necessary tools, electrics consisting of necessary bulbs, points, plugs, condenser, distributor cap, dynamo and extra battery wired in. Inner tubes and half shafts tucked away with full set of gaskets. The essentials included fire extinguisher, snow chains, shovel, first aid, towing rope, warm and waterproof clothing as well as smart civvies for the finish.



Dancing on ice.

Photo: Phillippe Fugier



Crossing the line — sunshine and wine.

Photo: Phillipe Fugier

Brooklands bathed in early morning January sunshine is a splendid venue from which to be cheered away by the many hundreds of supporters; then down the M25, M20, under the Channel into Northern France. A further 500 kilometers through various Passage Controls and 9.30 at night into the time control at Nancy. AXA 580 was smiling having not missed a beat and now in battle with the elements and many new and old four wheeled friends and foes of previous campaigns. James and I

were smiling – that was the red wine.

Monday was a 6 a.m. start with Regularity Sections, Time Controls and awkward navigation through the Ardennes and along the Swiss border to Aix Les Bains where we encountered our first snow and ice. By nightfall we led the Vintageants on time penalties and were sixth in the Marathon overall. Steve Gipson's 12/60 was two places behind.

Tuesday was a large loop of 300 km through the high French Alps over a multitude of cols and then back to Aix Les Bains for a speed driving test by the lake. The Firefly had its finest ever day's rallying, pushing out more revs than it was ever born with; brakes, due to the extremes of cold, performing much better than in the past. James was spot on with direction and timing. The Bentley and Lagonda boys were never able to lose us, so by the end of the day we still led the Vintageants and were now 7th overall in the Marathon the 12/60 was having power problems so had slipped down the leader board with a build up of time penalties.

Day 4 was to be a day of attrition, the bright cold start was overcast turning to blizzards on top of sheet ice. "The worst blizzards ever". "Cars went hedging and ditching" – quotes from the news media. This change in weather became a leveller of performance and age. 20 inch wheels, narrow cross ply tyres, the accustomed ability to drive on the gearbox because of indifferent braking, meant that by the evening arrival in Gap, AXA 580 lead the Vintageants and now the Marathon overall, a situation never previously recorded in the event. Two Bentleys and a Lagonda were close behind.

Much of last day's route had to be cut because of impassable roads. By afternoon we dropped down from the mountains to the warmth and sunshine of the Mediterranean, crossed the finishing podium knowing we had surpassed all expectations.

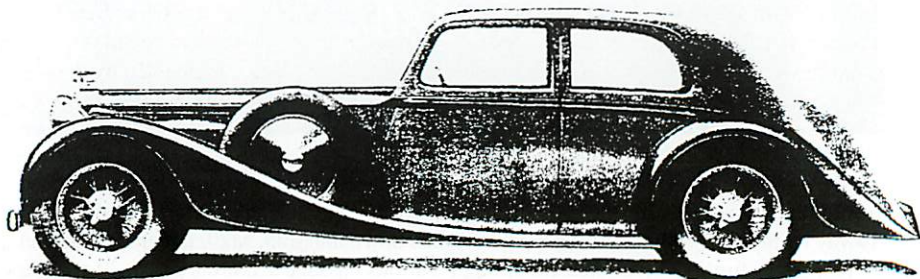
TV, interviews — the lot — but, yes a big but when our 7 minute 11 second overall penalties became 17 minute 11 seconds. Why? Well rules are rules; one can have digital watches on wrist, round neck, on clip board, but not on the dashboard. Our James had stuck with velcro a bedside digital clock on to the dash at Brooklands – at the finish all leading cars were scrutineered again.....

We still triumphed, first in class, first overall three car team along with Bentley and Lagonda, but the 10 minutes time penalty had taken us from 1st to 12th overall in the Marathon. We could, and should have created a little bit of Historic Rally history – another time; another place – "C'est la vie".

GEORGE MELVILLE

P.S. Was James III beheaded, or locked in the Tower? I've spared him for a repeat run in 2002!

A wonderful performance by George and James in the Firefly — J.N.B.C



RALLYE DE GSTAAD

— 23–25th June 2000 —



*Superb elegance. John and Nadine Fox with their well known TD21 Graber, in the Concours d'Elegance.
Photo: "Casey"*

Swiss Section Secretary Daniel Fischlin is also President of Veteran Car Club, Swiss Romand. The VCCSR are joint organisers of a superb event, the Cartier Challenge, based in Gstaad and now in it's 30th year. Ze crazy Engleesh, John and Nadine Fox, David and Annie Smith and Ken and Pat Cameron, Alvis Graber pilotes all, were in Switzerland for the annual Graber Treffen at Neuchitel the previous weekend. Strings were pulled and the touring team were duly invited to attend the Rallye de Gstaad. No fewer than seven Alvisses had been entered, our "team" being augmented by the Fischlin Speed 20, the Kilchor Speed 20, the Schweizer TC21/100 drophead and the Pirene TD21 Graber Cabriolet.

On arrival at the Palace Hotel on Friday morning, a trio of post buses was waiting to whisk us off to Saanamoser Golf Club for a superb buffet lunch and a putting competition. We were then ferried to the Rellerli ski lift for a diabolical bob sleigh contest, riding on glorified tea trays down a frozen chute. Just the thing to work up an appetite for the candle-lit dinner up the mountain. The atmosphere was excellent and our hosts made us very welcome. Back at the hotel, Fischlin mounted a coup *detet* on the jazz pianist and had the place jumping as we helped the Swiss with their alcohol surplus.



Some of the rally competitors

Photo: "Casey"



Oversteer with FWD? Easy!

Photo: "Casey"



More elegance. David and Annie Smith with their TD21 Graber Coupe.

Photo: "Casey"

Somewhat bleary eyed, fifty drivers and navigators set off on a regularity run on Saturday morning. This took us over Mount d'Or and down a normally closed military road, a spectacular descent, to Yvorne and thence to Montreaux. All was going well when we were diverted off this beautiful and empty road for more competition. A Mitsubishi had been fitted with castors in place of the rear wheels and the object was to negotiate a tricky course through the cones against the clock. Diabolique!

Lunch took place at the deeply impressive Chateau de Chatelard outside Montreaux. A restart against the stop watch (Swiss, of course), took us on to Aigle and over the Col du Pillon. Yet another surprise awaited us as we were flagged into a lay by and issued with a treasure hunt questionnaire to complete on the return journey.

The Gala dinner was a magnificent affair, with entrants dressed in period with their *vehicles ancient*. The company was excellent, the food and wine quite exceptional and the cabaret, two acts, entertaining.

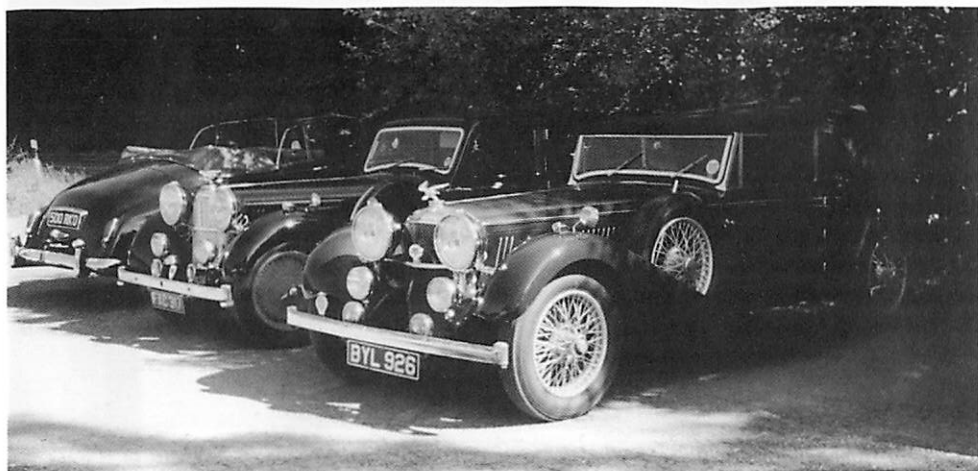
Sunday dawned (it is rumoured). With characteristic Swiss efficiency, we were marshalled into numeric order for a parade and *concours de legance* through the centre of Gstaad. Sadly, the weather, hitherto excellent, had broken but the rain did not deter the locals who came to spectate. Lunch, originally to have been an open air buffet, was quickly transferred to the Palace Hotel. The light hearted prize giving ensured that everyone received something. Oh, and *Les Anglais* did not come last by any means.

It was a superbly-organised event and the regulars were very welcoming and seemed delighted that we had driven so far to be with them. The privilege was ours. A big thank you to the Gstaad-Saanenland Club for a weekend to remember.

"CASEY"

GERMAN SECTION ALVIS DAY

— at Alzenan – Wasserlos —



Some of the entry.

Photo: Manfred Fleischmann

During a sunny afternoon on Friday 8th September 2000, most of the 23 cars taking part in the 3rd get-together of the AOC German Section arrived with their drivers and co-drivers. Some had serious problems getting fuel on the journey because of a strike in France.

The Alvis community for the weekend consisted of four couples from England, one from Scotland, two from the Netherlands, one from Switzerland, as well as couples from all parts of Germany. A fine selection of Alvis cars, three Speed 20s, one Firefly special, three Speed 25s, one Speed 25 special, two 4.3 litres, one 4.3 litre special, one TA 14 DHC, one TA 21 DHC, eight TD21s (including a Graber), a Rolls-Royce and a Jaguar XJ 12, took part.

The base for the weekend was the Schlossberg hotel. It was on a steep hill, completely surrounded by vineyards and its terrace gave a good opportunity to relax after a long journey, sipping a refreshing drink, looking at the fine view over the flat banks of the river Main and watching a sensational sunset.

Now fully refreshed, there was an evening walk from the hotel through the vineyards down to the village of Wasserlos to a wine cellar for a wine-tasting session and a noggin and natter. The vintner was expert in Franconian wines, and very bravely tried to explain in English the differences in the various regional wines. He was no fan of red wines, but his selection of whites was much appreciated by the group – so much so that some members had problems making their way back up the steep path to the hotel in pitch darkness. But all survived.

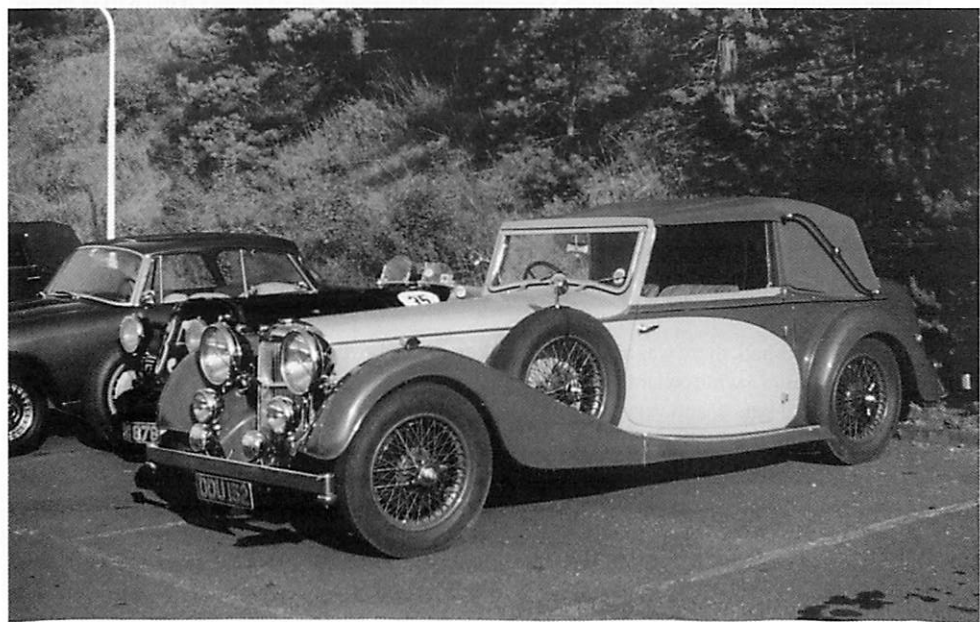
After breakfast, checking and polishing the cars for the forthcoming run was carried out with enthusiasm. The van Zweedens had arrived in the night with their 4.3 Litre Vanden Plas open tourer and a dead battery. After some help the 4.3 was able to take part. Other German members joined us during the day.

All participants were given a route chart containing maps and a comprehensive list of points of interest being passed during the run, to keep the group as close as possible.



The TD21 from Scotland, which travelled the longest distance to the event.

Photo: Manfred Fleischmann



Another elegant Drophead Coupé.

Photo: Manfred Fleischmann



TD21 and Speed 25.

Photo: Manfred Fleischmann

The flat region of the banks of the river Main was soon left behind, through quiet roads and along series of hills, valleys and woods, interrupted by small villages and beautiful views. The fine selection of Alvis cars, running in line in gleaming sunshine, looked very nice to passers-by in this area.

The first stop was at Mespelbrunn, a castle and hunting-lodge surrounded by water where we had a guided tour. The second part of the run took us back to the banks of the river Main. We passed through a number of small old towns, like Freudenberg and Miltenberg, heading for lunch in a garden restaurant close to Michelstadt.

There was plenty of time to relax and to discuss what we had seen on the route. After lunch we drove on to the medieval centre of Michelstadt, where we parked our cars in an old yard, which was reserved for us. After a short walk to the historic marketplace, surrounded by wooden framed houses and the world renowned town-hall, we left Michelstadt for the last part of the run back to the Hotel. Once again we enjoyed plenty of hills, fine views and quiet roads, which were good for an easy ride.

At 6 p. m. and after more than 150 miles of driving most of us reached the hotel without serious troubles. The Speed 20 of Walter Bruns broke down with a damaged valve (really sad). A broken exhaust gasket, one damaged tyre and some boiling radiators were the other minor problems.

The five course Alvis dinner took place in the restaurant of the Schlossberg hotel on Saturday evening. All the members enjoyed the evening with a good meal, good wines and a good team spirit. Greetings to the German section were made by members of the Netherlands and Scottish sections. Manfred was presented with an Alvis nut fashioned into a trophy and was duly pronounced one of the "Alvis Nutters"! He replied to the greetings and thanked everyone for coming.

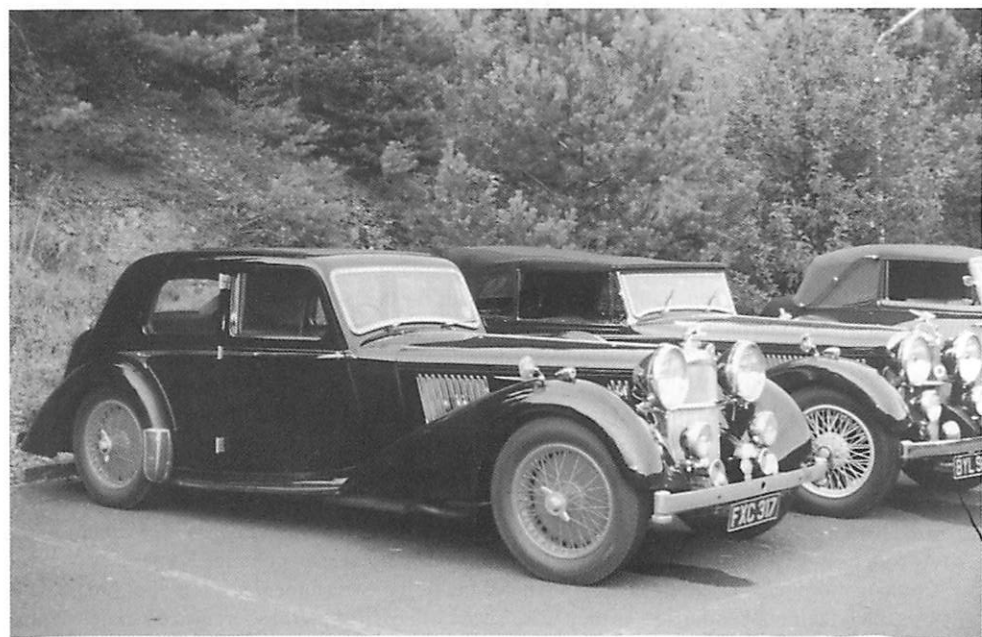
Sunday morning was sunny once again, but some of the British members left after breakfast in order to catch their booked ferries, as they were aware of possible petrol shortages en route. Walter Bruns had to trailer his Speed 20 home for repairs accompanied by Gerhard Kussler's Speed 20.

A sizeable number of the group was able to fulfil the Sunday programme which was centred on



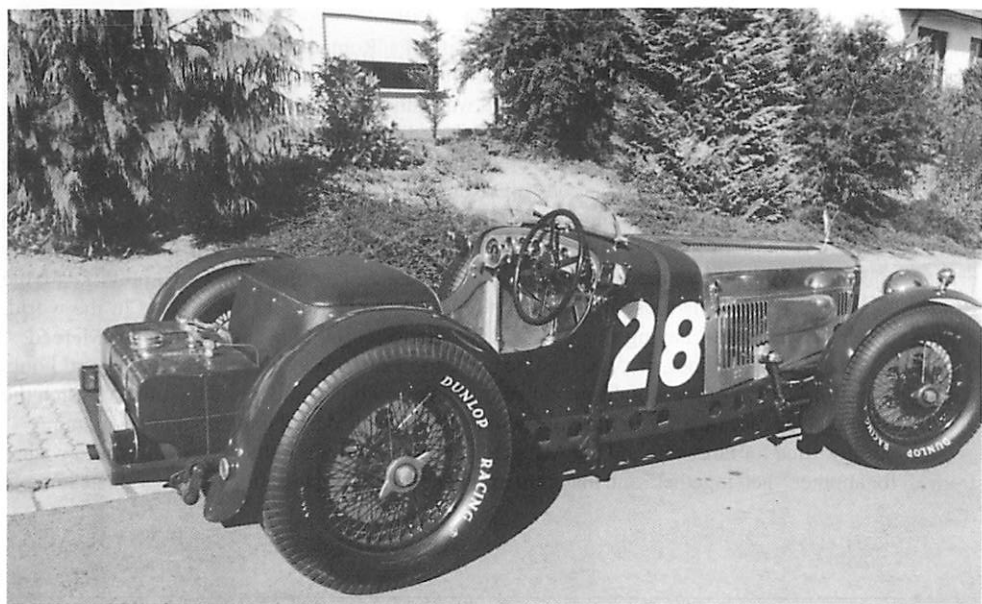
Speed 20 SC Drophead Coupé.

Photo: Manfred Fleischmann



Handsome saloon.

Photo: Manfred Fleischmann



Speed 25 Special.

Photo: Manfred Fleischmann



Another fine selection.

Photo: Manfred Fleischmann

the nearby city of Aschaffenburg.

The first stop was made at the Pompejanum, a copy of a Roman Villa standing on a terrace in a beautiful park high above the River Main. It was built in the 19th century by the Bavarian king Ludwig. Inside the rooms with their multicoloured walls and ceilings, water features, dining rooms, kitchen and mosaics, we learned a lot about the living conditions of aristocratic Romans.

After some photographs of the group outside the Pompejanum we took a walk through the park to the Castle of Aschaffenburg which was destroyed during the Second World War and reconstructed completely after it. It is a massive building built high above the River Main and was the seat of the powerful Prince-Bishops of Bavaria. There were large collections of fine paintings, furniture and other artistic objects. Having taken a more or less close look at these, we drove to our next port of call, the Rosso Bianco Museum. This museum contains the largest collection of sports cars in the world. Sitting inside the museum having our picnic lunch alongside famous sports cars like Mercedes, Maserati, Lotus, Ferrari, Talbot, etc. was an unusual experience. We stayed there for several hours having a close inspection of the wonderful collection of cars, while some found the time to watch the current Formula One race on a TV in the cafe, while others just had a relaxing noggin and natter.

It was now time for farewells and the Alvis cars departed for their home bases with warm wishes from all for another "get-together" and thanks to excellence of the organisation by the German Section.

JENNY RAMSAY

It is indeed a pleasure to receive details of this German event. Please let us have more news in the future
—J.N.B.C.

AT LEAST HE ASKED FOR DIRECTIONS ...

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a woman below. He descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The woman below replied, "You are in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You are between 40° and 41° north latitude and between 59° and 60° degrees west longitude".

"You must be an engineer", said the balloonist.

"I am", replied the woman, "How did you know?"

"Well", answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is I am still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help so far".

The woman below responded, "You must be a manager".

"I am", replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well", said the woman, "you don't know where you are or where you are going. You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise which you have no idea how to keep, and you expect me to solve your problem. The fact is that you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault".

GOING RACING

– Part II –

As a result of some very prolonged and secretive negotiation, I had eventually succeeded in acquiring a 40 mm big port cylinder head with ports already polished and complete with an inlet manifold which had received similar treatment. As if all this was not enough, the head had been machined to raise the compression ratio to 8:1. I already possessed an original Alvis big port brass Solex carburettor so it was altogether the sort of thing that enthusiasts dream about. The new head with its attachments was fitted to the engine (still in first class order as a result of MacKinnon's ministrations) and in anticipation of the improved performance, about half the metal was machined from the heavy flywheel-clutch housing. The car, still in chassis form, was then tried out on the same deserted stretch of road. After a push start by enthusiastic helpers, the engine was warmed up and the tappets carefully adjusted down to the minimum permissible clearance and the try-out began in earnest. On the first run the improvement in acceleration was amazing and with the car's very low all up weight, almost frightening. I began to entertain some very ridiculous thoughts about my future competition career!

The day came for the hill climb and this time the car was towed to the meeting. It was of course unregistered and the exhaust system consisted of three two inch diameter stub pipes which emitted a shattering bark when the throttle was opened. Besides this, the coachwork, comprising firewall, dashboard and bucket seat, hardly complied with the Road Transport Department's requirements. We arrived in good time and the Alvis was parked in its appointed place in the competitors' paddock. The stark old car looked rather like a poor relation among the sophisticated machinery of the Australian Sporting Car Club, and one felt that a lot of the amusement of the onlookers was more than a little scornful.

As usual, the first runs of the day, although timed, only counted as practice. There was a large entry but my turn came at last and the 12/50 was manoeuvred up to the starting spoon. First gear was selected and as the engine was taken up to about 4,000 r.p.m. the open exhaust system hurled a volley of ear splitting noise at the spectators. The cone clutch was engaged smartly but as smoothly as possible and at the same instant the throttle pedal was fully depressed. The rear wheels spun, the stark old Alvis leapt off the starting line snaking slightly as it did so and the patronising smiles of Hill Climb Officialdom gave way to genuine expressions of surprise.

Once off the line with honour satisfied however, I eased back, remembering the painful experience of that first Foley's Hill and that this too was my first run of the day and only practice. I was very aware of my unfamiliarity with the car in its new form so I felt my way up the hill using plenty of power on the straights but taking things gently on the bends. I was not disappointed when the time was announced as 72 seconds for I felt this could be much improved on later runs and perhaps lowered to 65 seconds which would be quite a respectable time.

Alas, this was not to be! On returning to the pits at the foot of the hill I found that it was not possible to engage third gear and a quick look inside the gearbox revealed a bent selector – apparently my "snap" changes during the climb had been a little too zealous! I was not too discouraged and I informed the pit marshal that I would continue with the day's runs using first and second ratios only. But I was to be denied even this doubtful pleasure for as the car was being push started for the first official run of the day, the key on the magneto drive shaft sheared and all subsequent efforts to repair on the spot proved fruitless.

More than somewhat discouraged, I was towed back home, determined that I would enter for no

more competition until the car was really finished the way I wanted it. The short wheelbase was excellent, I thought but it had the effect of accentuating the height of the car above the ground, which now seemed too great. The long and heavy rear springs too, now seemed far too big for the car's much reduced weight.

And so at the first opportunity the 12/50 was stripped again to the bare frame and the work of lowering the chassis and designing a new rear suspension was put in hand, the services of Bill Clarke being again enlisted to transform ideas into reality.

Emulating the example of the early E.R.A.s, new short stiff rear springs were made up and mounted high up on the arch of the chassis over the position of the rear axle. They were carried at their front by specially made flanged pins bolted to the chassis frame and at the rear in sliding trunnions also specially made for the purpose. The rear axle was bolted to the underside of the spring and the whole arrangement brought it 4" closer to the chassis frame but still left it with about two inches of up and down movement which was thought to be sufficient for the type of road surface that the car was expected to encounter. The rear section of the chassis frame behind the position of the sliding trunnions, which no longer served any useful purpose, was eliminated.

At the front it was intended to lower the chassis by merely slinging the springs under the front axle instead of above it as originally designed, but as this brought the axle into contact with the inverted V-shaped cross member, it was also necessary to bring the axle $3\frac{1}{2}$ " forward from its old position. This was achieved by shortening the front springs assymmetrically so that the distance from the spring centre bolt to the front eye was $3\frac{1}{2}$ " less than the distance to the rear eye and by moving the front spring shackles $3\frac{1}{2}$ " forward, as well as by lengthening the steering drag link the same amount. In addition to locating the front axle in the place required of it, this modification gave the front wheels an increased castor angle and produced a marked improvement in the steering self-centring action.

All the chassis work took far longer than it should have and the 12/50 was nothing more than a collection of spare parts for many months but it was completed at last and after the chassis frame was sand blasted and coated with a corrosion inhibitor, the work of final re-assembly was begun.

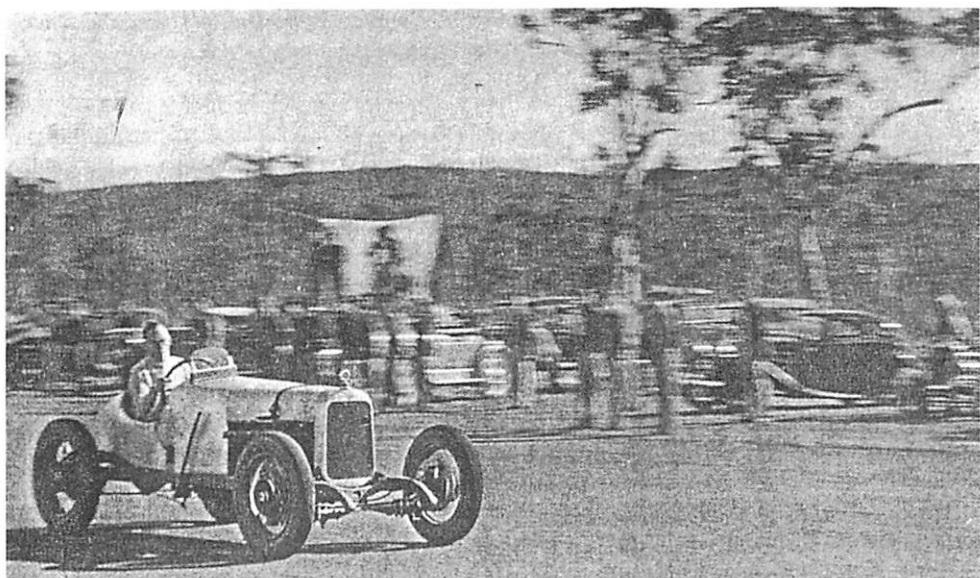
Fortunately for me, at this stage of proceedings, I was joined in the venture by Bill Edmunds who was currently suffering frustration at not being able to participate in any form of motor sport and the 12/50 programme became the channel into which his enthusiasm could be constructively directed. The results were amazing and within a very short time, the car had reached the stage where it could be driven. It was time for another test drive.

We fitted it with a bucket seat and on a fine Saturday afternoon towed it to Mt. Druitt airstrip, where, after paying Mr. Belf Jones 5/- for the privilege, we set out to thoroughly try our mount for any bugs which might have been built in with our ideas.

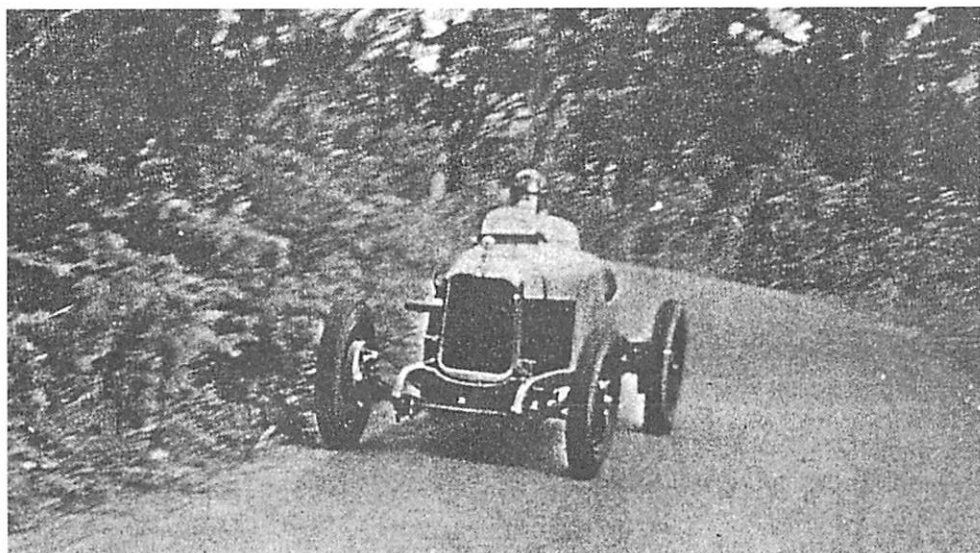
With the exception of a little front wheel tramp, (we were running without shock absorbers) all seemed to be well and at speed, the car was rock steady and the high geared steering enlivened by the abbreviated wheelbase was wonderfully responsive. We were delighted and took the car home to set about planning the bodywork which, we had decided, should be entirely in keeping with the character and age of the car – none of this modern tubular framed stuff for a 12/50!

And so a light but strong narrow two seater body was built up on a wooden frame, reinforced where necessary with steel brackets and covered in light gauge aluminium sheet. The pointed "semi ducks back" tail we obtained more or less ready made and had only to cut it down for it to fit the rear section of the bodywork perfectly.

This tail piece had a most interesting history, having been fabricated originally as the tail section of a very unorthodox twin-engined aircraft which was built at Mascot in the early thirties with the intention of competing in the 1934 Centenary Air Race (subsequently won by Messrs. Scott and Black in the original De Havilland "Comet"). An artist's impression of this machine appeared in the issue of the magazine "Flight" for 19th July 1934 and clearly shows the aircraft to be a "flying wing" type. The



Castlereagh, June 1952. The newly completed 12/50 racer flashes across the line. Now fitted with a bronze big port head of higher than standard compression, the car gained second fastest time to Jim Whithead's "Red Ruby".



Vintage Foley's Hill, 13th July 1952. Infamy redeemed. MacJob thunders up the hill once more to gain second fastest vintage time to Barry Garner's supercharged "chain gang" Frazer Nash, which pipped the 12/50 racer by only a fraction of a second.

fuselage was merely a raised "blister" in the centre of the wing and was faired back to the "duck's back" projection just behind the trailing edge. What eventually became of this strange craft is not known but this rear fuselage fairing lay in a hangar at the aerodrome for many years until it was finally "souvenired" by Bill Edmunds as a likely component for a racing car body!

To fit the 12/50 the fairing had to be drastically cut down and it was actually only the rearmost tip of it which eventually became the Alvis tail. For this function it was ideal, for not only did it suit the character of the car as though made to order, but it required no internal bracing apart from the squab frame behind the seat, so saving a good deal of complicated woodwork.

The bodywork was completed by the addition of a single aero screen and a rear vision mirror fairing. Instead of being painted, it was given a matt aluminium finish but the chassis frame, axles, etc. were finished in bright red Dulux. The whole effect, now at long last complete, was extremely satisfying and the first opportunity for our brain-child to make its debut in its new form was impatiently awaited.

This opportunity came before long in the shape of an Alvis Car Club meeting to be held on the Airstrip at Castlereagh during the winter of 1952. The old family Buick tourer was co-opted for the occasion and all tools, lubricants and supplies deemed essential to the proper maintenance of the racer for one day were methodically packed into a long running-board box made originally to carry camping equipment. The unregistered 12/50 racer, magnificent in our eyes, was fastened to a tow rope and off we set, my brother at the helm of the Buick, Bill Edmunds following in his family saloon, while I guided our precious machine.

After a two hour trip, uneventful but for the curious stares of passers-by, we turned off the main road and on to the track which led the remaining mile to the Airstrip. It was enough! Fuel pressure was pumped up, third gear selected, the magneto switch turned on and the clutch engaged. The engine gurgled for a moment, coughed and then burst into healthy life, the stub exhaust crisply crackling in the clear morning air and reverberating back from the thick bush on either side of the narrow road. My brother drew the Buick to a standstill and we undid the tow rope. The 12/50, now freed from all physical and legal restrictions seemed eager to show its paces but I resisted the temptation and drove it as quietly as possible up to the gate which was opened by the Editor, and then on the remaining few hundred yards to the pit area which had been prepared at the side of the Airstrip circuit.

We checked the car over, looking quickly at brake adjustment, tyres, radiator, and oil levels, and then set out for a few "running in" laps. We had fitted a new set of rings since the Mt. Druitt try-out and as there had been no previous opportunity to run them in, it was a case of a few laps being better than none at all. On the flat Airstrip surface, the car's very light weight enabled it to be driven in top gear at about 30 m.p.h. with almost no throttle opening. Apparently however, the large brass Solex carburettor wasn't accustomed to this sort of treatment for every now and then the engine would miss a beat or two but as soon as the throttle was opened a respectable amount, this malady would disappear entirely. There was no time to worry about it anyway so round and round the circuit we went at reduced speed, putting in as much lappery as time would permit while the Alvis periodically showed its distaste by running on three cylinders.

As might have been expected, this sort of behaviour gave rise to a certain amount of unfavourable comment among fellow competitors and spectators alike. After all, how could they know just how much will-power it took to stop me from putting my right foot well and truly down and silencing completely all this criticism? Patience was soon to be rewarded anyway, I thought, for the time was approaching for the standing start laps which were to be used as a basis for the day's handicapping.

The various cars, many of them 12/50s, some of them "non-Alvises" came to the line and were sent off in turn. Hot favourites for fastest time of the day were of course the two 4.3s of Jim Whithead and Norm Danvers. Could it be possible, I secretly hoped, that our handicappers were in for a surprise?

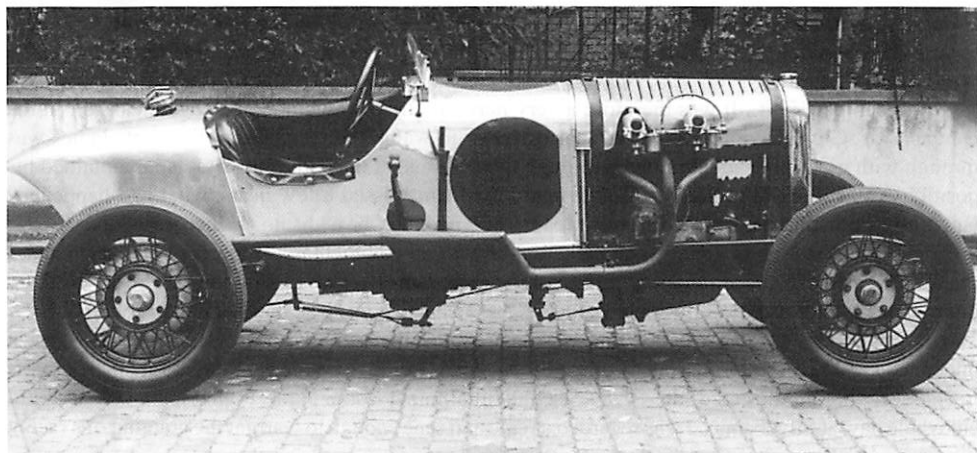
Mine was the last car to be timed. I left the line as quickly as I could without making too much fuss, took the first hairpin quietly with everyone watching and then gave the car its head. Away down the back straight at full power, now out of sight of the pits, next slackening for the second hairpin, too soon, power on again then off again, hard braking, into the second hairpin, down to second gear, steering with the throttle on the loose surface out of the hairpin, up through the gears again and full bore back towards the pits. The pits coming into sight ahead, the wonderful consciousness of the rushing wind, the howling exhausts, the long narrow vibrating bonnet and the exposed spinning wheels. The pit area is rushing up to meet us. Now the club photographer standing on a drum raises his camera and we are past the finishing line and slackening speed. Round the first hairpin again and we drive back and into the pits. Bill Edmunds looks jubilant. I switch off and pull off my goggles. "You've got second fastest time," he says.

It was true. The time lay between those of the two 4.3s and less than three seconds behind Jim Whithead's Red Ruby. Very reluctantly I left the car to lunch with my brother and his wife while a crowd of club members descended on the 12/50. I began to feel that all the effort had been worthwhile and looked forward to the racing which was to follow the luncheon recess.

But again what had begun as a day of promise was to end in disappointment. Towards the end of the handicap event when at least a place seemed assured, a key on the gearbox drive shaft sheared and once more the 12/50 and its driver was denied the satisfaction of finishing honourably.

Was there to be no end to these failures?

And so ends 'Mac' Job's entertaining account of his special. Brian Maile the new owner continues.



The MacJob Special after its rebuild by Alan Griffin.

Photo: Brian Maile

The car appears to have come to England via the U.S.A. where Wayne Brooks reports that he saw it for sale at Hershey in the late 1980's, when it was then painted red. It was owned for a short period by Jamie Dutton-Forsshaw and I believe that it was whilst in his ownership that the car was stripped of paint, the aluminium polished and road going gear was again fitted. Phil Own then acquired the car in 1989 and it was looked after by James Campbell who used it occasionally for hillclimbs. In fact, it is James driving it at Prescott in the picture in *The Vintage Alvis*, page 511.

Part of the negotiations for the purchase of the car was an agreement with James that if I acquired the car before the 1998 Donnington Alvis race, for which the car was already entered, I would allow



Brian Maile enjoys life in the MacJob Special at Loton Park Hillclimb in 1999.

Photo: Mike Meakin

James to compete in it. It was therefore a very nervous Brian who stood at Redgate Corner, in the company of Clive Taylor and Albert Sparrowhawk to watch the race. From the start, James was through with no trouble about midway through the field and at the end of the first lap maintained his position. When he did not come through again my heart missed a few beats, what had happened? Hopefully he hadn't bent it! A hasty retreat to the paddock brought no further news and he was obviously stuck out on the circuit somewhere, but with no commentator reports of any accidents, I felt a little easier. A few minutes at the end of the race, James appeared with the car intact. Nothing more than a burst brake drum, which was to be a re-occurring thing as I subsequently found out.

It was at this point I resolved that if the car was to be bent or broken, a risk that you must understand if you are entering speed competitions, it was going to be me who did it. I managed to get in one event before the end of the 1998 season, a hillclimb at Loton Park. Following a very wet, but enjoyable day, at Silverstone, I was regarded as safe and sane enough to warrant the granting of a racing licence and so I was all set for the coming season.

The hillclimb at Loton had taught me a few things, firstly that competing is much better than spectating and second, there are a lot of experienced people willing to give advice and assistance. I also found out that the car was not going as well as it should and the general consensus of opinion that there was a problem with the magneto. During the winter, I had the magneto rebuilt and thoroughly checked the car through, changing the narrow brake shoes in the rear brakes to the later, wider type as I thought that this is what had caused the burst drum at Donnington.

It was with great excitement and not a little trepidation that I launched myself into my first full season. First event was the Colerne Speed Trials, nice and easy a straight blat down in a runway. Although I beat my allocated handicap by four seconds, it was obvious that the car was still not running properly I consulted Robin Harcourt-Smith, one of those very helpful experienced people who also happens to be a very talented vintage fettler. Poor valve timing was now suspected and I duly

delivered the car to Robin's workshops for his attention. I collected the car the following week ready for my first race at Silverstone. I entered the high speed trial and a five lap handicap race. The car was transformed and I could now understand the reputation it had as a very successful racing car. I was given thirteen laps to do in the trial and managed to complete seventeen, a very useful track experience. The handicap race was reasonably successful too but it was clear that if the car was to be competitive, the gearing had to be changed as the high gearing fitted for Australian circuits was not suitable for the U.K.

The next event brought my first success, a second in class on handicap at Curborough Speed Trials. Things got better from there on and I ended the season with three first places in class on handicap. To my great surprise, I found that I had also won the Ruth and Jim Hulbert Memorial Trophy which is awarded to the best overall Alvis Driver by the Consortium of Alvis Racing Drivers – "CARDS".

There are a number of people that deserve a mention. Clive Taylor who supported me at many of the events and also compiles the results for CARDS. All the other Alvis competition drivers who have all been friendly and helpful, especially Frank Spencer for his technical tips on the 12/50 and Christine and Ian Horner who dispensed many cups of tea from their motor caravan. Mike Meakin who faithfully reports on events for The Bulletin and all those AOC members who have given their support throughout the season.

And so on to the 2000 season. Much work has been done on the car, rebuilt wheels, redesigned clutch and transmission, new brake drums and even the luxury of a starter motor which has much pleased my son, Robert who was previously chief "pusher".

If you've never been to a VSCC meeting, I would recommend it, you never know you may catch the bug!

BRIAN MAILE

I am grateful to Brian for writing up the history of this car but I apologise for the fact that I have only managed to get this story into print after he had sold the car — J.N.B.C.

ALVIS SUCCESS PROVES ALVIS LEADERSHIP

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Huntersville, NC

USA

E-mail: hlwatkin@bellsouth.net

Dear Julian,

Because of moving household from Pennsylvania to North Carolina, I have just finished reading Bulletin No. 467. As always the Bulletin is marvellous, both in content and in style. The club is fortunate to have such a capable editor.

When I began to read the article on the USA Tour, I was looking forward to hearing how the participants had viewed the tour. Unfortunately, my 'moving time' coincided with the tour, so I was unable to be there in person. As a long-time friend of Wayne Brooks, I had been hearing of the preparations for the tour, and the amazing number of participants, since the planning began. I knew that Wayne and Bill Borden had done all the preparatory work in this country—scouting out interesting roads, finding good places for overnights, and generally setting up the route to be travelled. I know how arduous this was because I spent four 11- to 12-hour days driving Wayne through New England—Wayne and Bill in particular were involved to a much greater degree. Since Wayne is fairly experienced in this type of endeavour, and so familiar with the whole area, especially New England, I assumed that the tour would be enjoyed by all.

As I read through Robin Bendall's article, I seemed to note a somewhat negative aura. If all that I had known of the tour was Mr. Bendall's writing, I think I might have assumed that the tour did not go particularly well, and that the participants might not have enjoyed their tour. To my eye, most of the article seemed to be about the minor problems encountered and some mild grouching about accommodation. I was lucky enough to hear quite a lot about the trip from Wayne, so I knew that over all, the trip had gone very well, and that those on the tour had enjoyed themselves. Something I did not read in the article was anything about the involvement of anyone other than Mr. Bendall. I know for a fact that Wayne Brooks, Bill Borden, Jim Sprague and automotive writer Rich Taylor spent much time finding roads, hotels and points of interest. In addition, they were the force behind the production of the route book (an invaluable aid, I'm sure). As your note at the article's end predicts more coverage of the tour, I will eagerly await the next Bulletin.

Yours sincerely,
Harry L. Watkin, Jr.

21101 W. St. Rt. 163
Genoa
OH 43430
USA

Dear Julian,

Thank you for your excellent work on the AOC Bulletin, without volunteers like yourself, the rest of us would just be sitting around not knowing what the rest of the Alvis world was doing!

I have just been searching on Ebay.com for Alvis as I regularly do, and found the remains of an Alvis for sale. I'm sure it is of very little interest to anyone in the club, having a Jaguar engine installed, the chassis cut and shortened, and body completely removed and discarded.

However, it may be of interest to Dave Culshaw and the Firebird registrar. It is described as a 1934 Firebird, Chassis number 12269. I am currently living in Ohio, and will be importing my late father's SG Silver Eagle this year, and restoring it again.

Yours sincerely
Ian Hardaker

The advertisement on Ebay for the Firebird is as follows (sent to me by Bob Farrell)

1934 ALVIS SPECIAL

THE SAD STORY OF 1934 ALVIS CHASSIS NUMBER 12269

WELL. Back in about 1973 or so, I bought a 1934 ALVIS Firebird sedan in very poor and dilapidated condition. On the way home, bouncing on the trailer, the body collapsed over the chassis, which is never a good sign on a car you've just purchased. When I got home, I tore off what was left of the body and hauled it off to the dump. I gave the solidly rusted up engine and gearbox to a friend who needed a mooring for his boat. I've done worse. Once, years before, I stripped a Bugatti type 44 sedan for parts and sold the chassis to a kid to make a dune buggy out of! My, how things change But I digress, where was I? Oh yes, the Alvis. In my back yard at the time, I had a rough and rusty but well running Jaguar XK-120 roadster and I decided then and there to build an Alvis/Jag special. 27 years later, many other cars and many restorations have come and gone but, unfortunately, the poor old Alvis hasn't progressed too far. The excellent chassis has been cut-and-shut (shortened) by about a foot.

The 120 Jag engine has been FULLY rebuilt and mated to an overdrive gearbox from a MK-II saloon. The rear springs have been rebuilt, lightened, and re-arched in anticipation of a lightweight body, and I have accumulated an enormous quantity of parts for the car including a beautiful set of big fenders from a genuine pre-war 4 litre blower Bentley, a vintage style fuel tank with alloy quick release cap, a gorgeous pair of big pre-war Lucas headlamps, a beautiful vintage dashboard with all gauges and switches from a 1947 Jaguar MK-IV that I once stripped, a nice pair of small vintage bucket seats, a spare radiator shell, and many many many other items (boxes of stuff) that will all sell with the car. Assuming, that is, that some other fool is willing to take it on. In the event that that is NOT the case, then I MIGHT be willing to sell some of the major components (the rebuilt XK-120 engine, for example)

A real clever harry could use this as the basis for a very genuine looking SS-100 Jag! take a look at the pics and ask me any questions you may have.

I will be most pleased to arrange safe and economical transport for this car to any point on the planet, (actual shipping at buyer's expense). The transfer of funds and documents will be handled like gentlemen. Thank you for your support.

What the hell is an Alvis anyway?

Oh dear! — J.N.B.C.

6 Shafto Mews
London SW1X 0JT
E-mail: david.larkin@joneslanglasalle.com

Dear Julian

Its odd but interesting just how many members of our Club are Chartered Surveyors or involved in the property industry. Look around the Council and there is you, Charles Machonochie and me who are surveyors, just for starters. Then of course our President is an architect and the former Vice Chairman was involved in property lending. I seem to meet one member after another up and down the country who is in our industry. Whether or not this applies to our overseas members I am not sure.

One of our members, a property developer and investor was particularly frustrated in not being successful in buying the Alvis factory, the sale of which was reported in the last issue.

What can it be that drives this close relationship between Alvis vehicles and real estate and just how many 'property' members are there out there – and is it unique or do other car clubs have a special affinity with a particular profession? Whilst this is perhaps not an entirely relevant subject for the pages of the Bulletin I would find it most interesting to develop this theme and if anyone cares to write or email me at the address on page 1, I am happy to co-ordinate some further research.

For those that play with cars to escape from the stresses and strains of being in this industry I will totally respect their desire for anonymity!

Yours sincerely
David Larkin

An interesting idea to link various professions with Alvis Ownership. I shall be interested in the response to this — J.N.B.C.

14 Dock Road
Wordsley
Stourbridge
West Midlands DY8 5SW

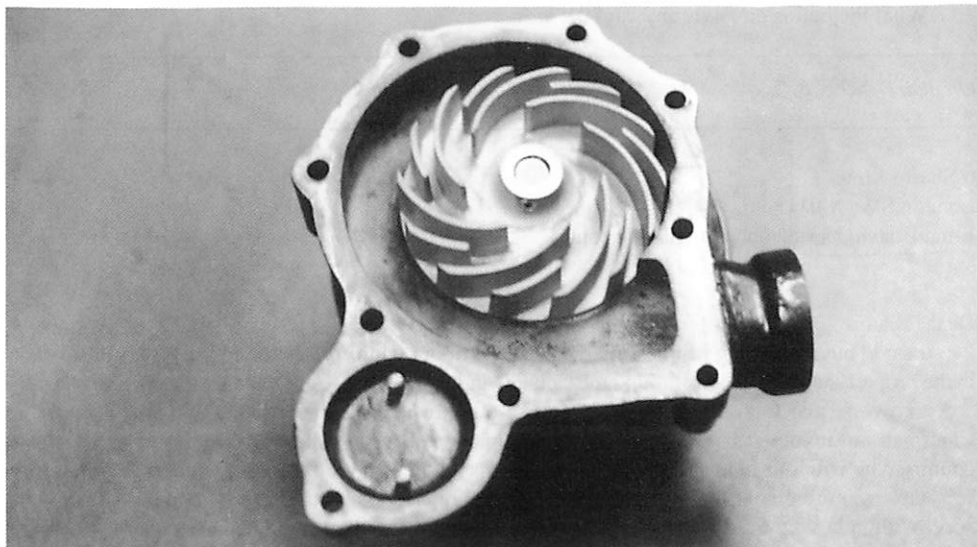
Dear Julian

Further to the correspondence on 3 litre water pumps in Bulletin 467 I also have had similar thoughts on impellers.

Enclosed is a photograph of my work on a more efficient design, it is based on a type used by BMW some years ago and manufactured from phosphor bronze.

I still use original diameter crankshaft and water pump pulleys.

Amongst the problems are the tortuous path the water has to take with right angle bends, various diameter constrictions, the long-term build up of corrosion and sediment in the cylinder head, which is almost impossible to remove with any certainty.



Malcolm Cox's modified water pump.

Photo: Malcolm Cox

When the 3 litre was introduced, a 60 degree C thermostat was recommended. The lowest temperature I have been able to obtain is 72 degrees C, thus limiting the temperature difference to boiling point to 28 degrees C. Also the opening in the old bellows type appeared to be larger than the modern waxstat type.

Running without a thermostat can lead to increased bore wear, longer time to warm up leading to higher petrol consumption and an inefficient heater.

Another modification has been to fit an expansion tank fitted with a 4 psi pressure cap under the right side front wing so that any water expelled from the radiator will return back to the radiator with changes in temperature instead of on to the tarmac.

One other point worth noting. If a power washer is used to clean the car, care must be taken to avoid pointing it at the radiator because the fins are very thin and bend over easily making air passage through the radiator difficult.

In recent years I have done a lot of experimental work on my TC21/100 including full flow lubrication using a standard TC21/100 cylinder block, fully counterbalanced crankshaft (nearly all Alvis cars had counterbalanced crankshafts until 3 litre series in 1951) and most recently, fitting an overdrive unit to the standard type gearbox.

Whilst I accept purists will decry the move away from originality all modifications have been made so that the car can be returned to original. All original parts i.e. crankshaft, water pump, oil pump, sump, gearbox, propshaft have been put aside to be used in the future if necessary. If there is sufficient interest in these other modifications I may be persuaded to put pen to paper. The modifications were done to enhance reliability but added benefits have been refinement, performance and economy.

Yours sincerely
Malcolm Cox

An article on your interesting modifications would be extremely welcome — J.N.B.C

Weerribben 36
1112 KM Diemen
The Netherlands
E-mail: coen.van.der.weiden@ncr.com

Dear Julian,

It has been a while ago since our last contact but I did enjoy the latest issues of the Bulletin.

During one of my trips to the USA one of my colleagues invited me for dinner and asked me if it was OK by me if he brought a friend. This friend, so he told me, is a "walking encyclopedia on classic cars". And he very much liked to talk to a classic car hobbist from Europe. I said this was fine with me.

Here's a piece of the conversation with the friend of my colleague, "Mr. Knowsall".

'So give me the first letter of the classic car you're driving, because I'm pretty sure I can guess what car it is' "Well", I said, "the first letter is also the first letter of the alphabet." 'Ah,' he replied immediately, 'I think it is an Austin Healey.' Then I stood up (I'm almost 2 meters tall) and asked him: 'How do you picture me in a Healey? With my head between my knees?' 'Hmm', he said, 'you're right..... then it must be an Aston Martin.' He looked at me full of expectation. 'No', I told him, 'but she is bigger than an Aston and more nimble than a Bentley.' I saw him getting desperate. 'Would you please give me the second letter of that famous English car of yours?' and I saw he didn't like to ask this question. 'Well, the second letter is an 'L', I told him. 'Ah, how could I have been so stupid, you drive an Allard, of course!' I shook my head and said 'No' 'Is it perhaps an Alta?' 'No', I said, 'she is not one of Geoffrey Taylor cars. Desperately he asked me: 'Then please tell me the name of your car!' 'Alvis', I said, 'an Alvis TE 21.' Flabbergasted and stupified he looked at me and murmured: 'Alvis, Alvis, yes, that does ring a bell.....'

Best Regards,
Coen van der Weiden.

Spanhoe Lodge
Laxton
Northamptonshire
NN17.3AT
E-mail: jennie.spanhoe@virgin.net

Dear Julian

Having been in the ice cream business in the sixties and owning a couple of TA 14s, it would come as no surprise to find that I'm interested in the 3 known examples of ice cream vans built on Alvis chassis. Could I, through the pages of the Bulletin, ask any fellow members with information about these vans to contact me. I have recently had published a book on the 'Mister Softee' story, and a future project would be a pictorial history of ice cream vans. I would obviously like to include any Alvis examples.

Yours sincerely
Steve Tillyer

TA14 Ice cream vans are wonderfully bizarre. See pictures on next page. Can anyone help Steve with his quest?—J.N.B.C



Above and below: Two examples of ice cream vans on TA14 Chassis. Apparently three chassis were so bodied. Does anyone know anything about the third? Now here's an interesting project for someone with a bodyless chassis.



Rookwood House
Rothbury Road
Longframlington
Morpeth
Northumberland NE65 5HR

Dear Julian

I read with interest the article by Ben Lenthall on the rebirth of his Speed 25 SC DHC. I particularly enjoyed seeing the photographs of the rear end of the car, an assembly which I well recognise having carried out a similar job on BGE 988, a Charlesworth DHC, which he previously owned. It too was mechanically restored by Hightone in Oxford for Ben.

This car recently completed, without major incident, the Alvis USA 2000 tour of New England, and my wife and I fully appreciate the difficulties of water on the inside of the windscreen as well as on the outside. This was compounded by the windscreen wiper on her side packing up during a particularly heavy rain storm making navigation tricky! The application of Rainex, offered by a fellow traveller, provided a miraculous solution.

Fuel vaporisation during hot days (not here in North East England!) caused some erratic driving and I have subsequently learnt from Tony Dennett that Ben has a super effective fan on his car. Could Ben share details of this?

Surrounded by snow here I envy Ben his temperature, his olives and his wine!

Yours sincerely
Garth Jeffery

3, Station Road,
Arnside,
Cumbria. LA5 0HG

Dear Julian,

Further to the correspondence in Bulletin 466 about people with the name Alvis. During December 2000 I started a new contract assignment with a company in Linlithgow, West Lothian (that's darkest Scotland to us sassenachs). Imagine my surprise, on the second or third morning when parking in the works car park, to see parked in the opposite rank a newish Mondeo Ghia with the registration ALV 15R. I was transported back to the early seventies, when the "East Lancashire Alvis Guru" and head of the Fletcher dynasty, Fred Fletcher, owned a very tasty TD21 with the mark ALV 15. Some rapid mental arithmetic (well, not that rapid, it was very early) told me that this mark on the Mondeo was not the result of some happy coincidence in Swansea. No, this car must belong to an Alvis owner.

When at my desk, I scribbled a note "Do you own an Alvis? If so, call me (quoting my number) and we can talk proper cars". I placed this in a plastic sleeve and stuffed it under the Mondeo's screen wiper.

Around 3.00pm I received a call from the owner of ALV 15R. The conversation went something like this.

She, "Did you put a note under my screen wiper?"

Me, "Yes, do you own an Alvis?"

She, "Yes, but it isn't a car".

Me, incredulously, "Then is it a Tank? Is it a Troop Carrier? Is it an Amphibious vehicle? Tell me what it is!"

She, "it's none of those things, it's my husband, his name is Alvis Kerr".

I then got the full story. The name was passed down from his father. When his grandmother was pregnant with his father, her cousin (are you with me so far?), who thought herself somewhat superior, gave birth to a son whom she christened Morris. Bear in mind that in the Scottish accent the name "Kerr" sounds a little like "car". Now Mrs. Kerr, seeing an opportunity to trump her stand-offish cousin said "My son won't be named after a common motor car, he will be named after a proper motor car. He will be named Alvis Kerr". Thus was born a Scottish Alvistocrat who happily is still with us!

When summer eventually blesses Caledonia with some decent weather, I plan to bring my Alvis to Linlithgow and photograph the three Alvises together; two human and one almost so. If the photo's turn out O.K. I'll share them with you.

Yours sincerely

David Palfreyman

A marvellous story and I look forward to being able to publish the photograph in due course — J.N.B.C

Wayne Brooks
P. O. Box 46
140 Race Street Bainbridge,
PA 17502
U.S.A
E-mail: waynealvis@aol.com

Dear Julian,

Enclosed are a couple period photos, circa May 1967, of 1937 4.3 Litre SA Mayfair Saloon DLT 822.

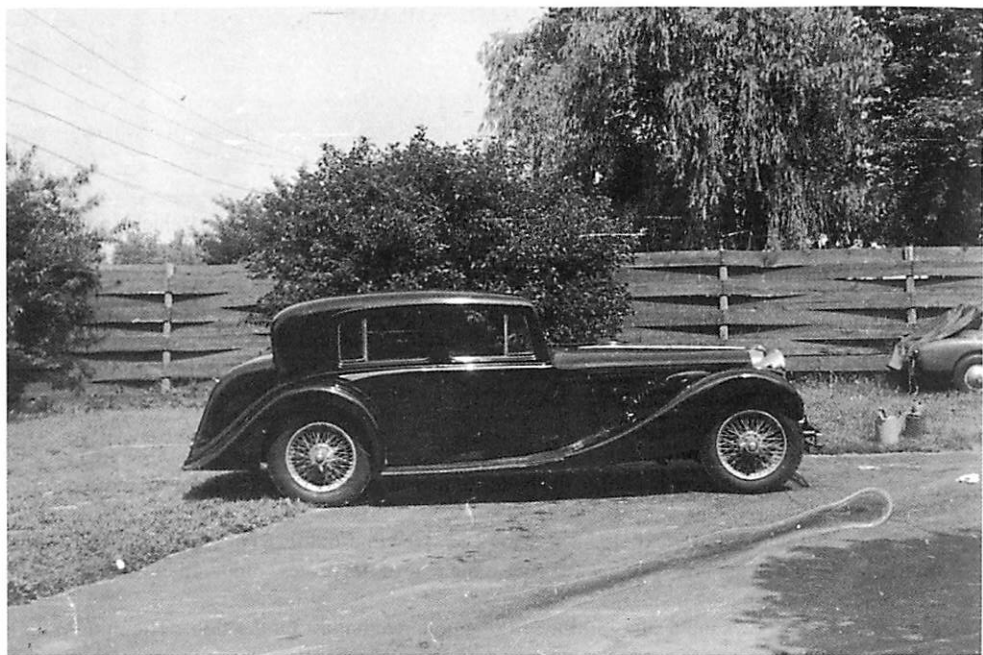
I obtained the photos from William Potter, son of the Earl E. D. Potter (2822 US) who imported over 200 English cars, including at least 11 Alvis, 5 of which were 4.3's. All the Alvis cars that passed through Mr. Potter's hands are known except DLT 822. Bill Potter was able to supply several good photos of the car and a complete history up to his father's ownership. The car was described by an independent appraiser on a Car Grading Sheet, dated 3 April 1967, "virtually as new", maroon with cream hide, 50,439 miles.

Unfortunately, Bill has so far been unable to shed any light on the present whereabouts of DLT 822. I lost track of the 4.3 when it was with it's last known owner, D. S. Fannon 4549 US of Chicago in 1975.

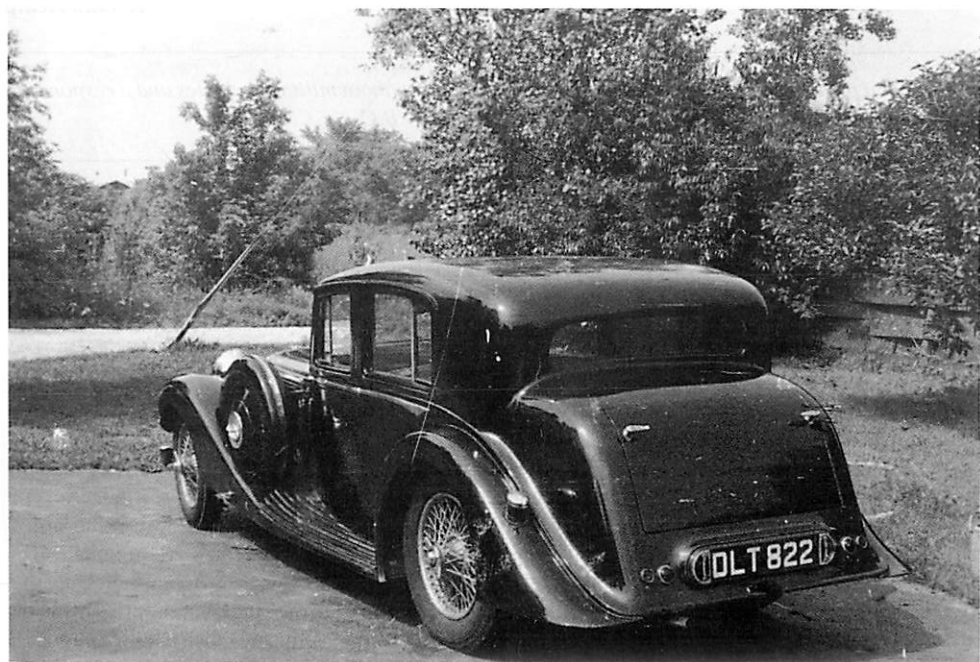
Where is it now?

Yours for longer bonnets,
Wayne Brooks

See next page for photographs of DLT 822 — J.N.B.C



*Above and below 4.3 Litre Mayfair Saloon, DLT 822. A tremendously elegant car. Where is it now?
Photos: via Wayne Brooks*



Lapierestr. 4
D 89335 Ichenhausen
Germany
E-mail: RRemp 71690@aol.com

Dear Julian,

In the last Bulletin, No 467 I've found some nice pictures about Alvis Military Vehicles production. I've some remarks about them:

Photograph 1 shows Stalwart Mk.2 of the first Series with screwed in windshields. The chalk marks the Vehicle Ident No. STALIII31. But the photo shows not only the Stalwart production line. At the right side in front of the windows you can see clearly a Saladin chassis.

Photograph 2 shows the Saladin chassis AC624 under construction. But the transmission in front is a Stalwart one. You see it at the power take off (propulsion) and the hydraulic pump (winch and crane) on top of the gearbox.

Photograph 3 is a Saladin/Saracen Engine B80 with 5.7 Liters. Only this one has the big two gear generator to give enough power to charge the batteries at low engine revs. It's used for radio equipped AFVs.

Photograph 4 shows the STALII 125,126 and 127 at the line end. 125 (first left) got just the side/rear panels and the wrench box. The back sheets at the rear of the driver compartments are not fitted at this moment. You can look inside.

Photograph 5 shows the tested Stolly carrying concrete ballast on the floor. The middle floor panels are not fitted - to see faster any penetration of water.

Some stories about my Alvis Military Vehicles are on the way to you.

All the best
Roland Remp

Now what a pleasure to receive some authoritative comment about military vehicles and a response to the Archive pictures. I look forward to your articles — J.N.B.C

2235 Magnolia Drive
North Miami
Florida 33181
USA
E-mail: Johno8@aol.com

Dear Julian

Yesterday, I drove HP 9877 about 70 miles from Miami to Lake Worth, FL to participate in the 9th Annual British Car Show. It's a long haul up and down I-95 at 45 mph, but was worth it. Several much more modern cars passed me both ways, travelling rather faster. This year's show was the largest ever, with 237 cars. There were 14 Rolls/Bentleys and a full pride of Jaguars. Triumphs, MGs, Austins and Austin Healeys, Minis, Daimlers, Hillmans, Lotus, TVR, Morris, Morgan, etc. Only one Alvis, though, which was not only the oldest car there but also to my pleasant surprise won the sponsors' Best of Show. I came away with a delightful engraved glass display dish and two engraved

champagne flutes.

No matter what I try, and I have followed all advice, I cannot get that nasty squeal out of my front right brake. After all the champfering, cleaning and sanding, the squeal goes away for about 4-6 good braking efforts, only to return as before. I may have to resort to relining the shoes. Any ideas or suggestions?

Best regards,
John Layzell

20211 Beatty Ridge Road
Los Gatos
California 95033
USA
E-mail: john_harriman@hotmail.com

Dear Julian

Wayne Brooks suggested I send you a picture of my 1934 Alvis Speed 20 SB license OC 5676. It was formerly owned by Tom Rowan (a previous member) and fully restored by him after forty years of use.

I hope you will forgive the poor taste of this "Colonist" in forcing "Black Beauty" (as my kids call her) to lead a Fourth of July, Independence Day parade.

All the best
John Harriman

See next page for photograph — J.N.B.C

180 Beckett Road
Wheatley
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN2 4BD
England

Dear Mr Collins

Please find some recently taken photograph of Alvis engines for sale at the South Yorkshire Aircraft Museum. The engines what we have for sale are a Leonides and a Leonides Major. They are £100 and £200 respectively.

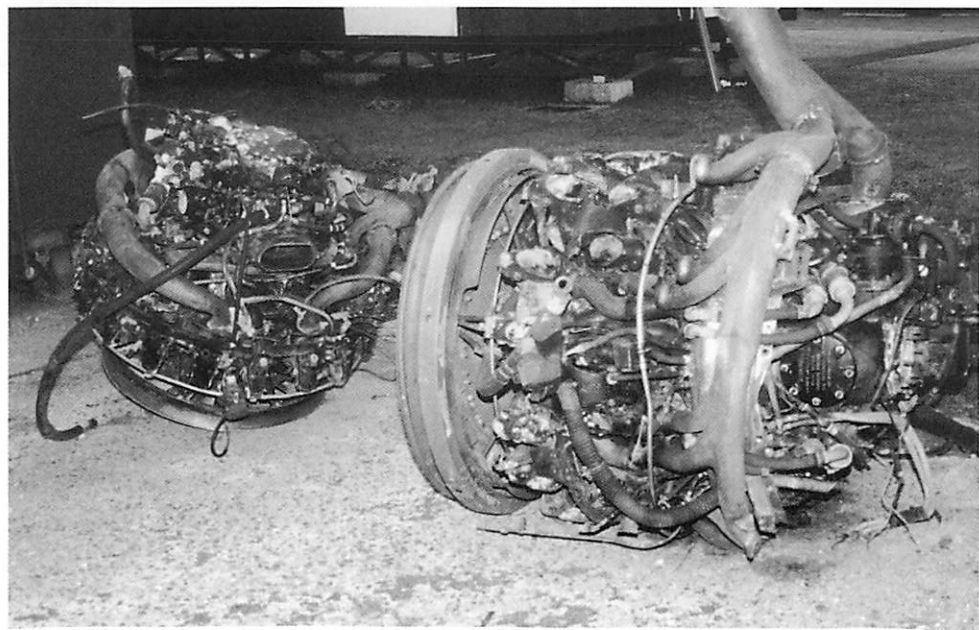
All the best
Dave Wood

See next pages for picture of the Alvis aero engines for sale. Bargains for someone! — J.N.B.C



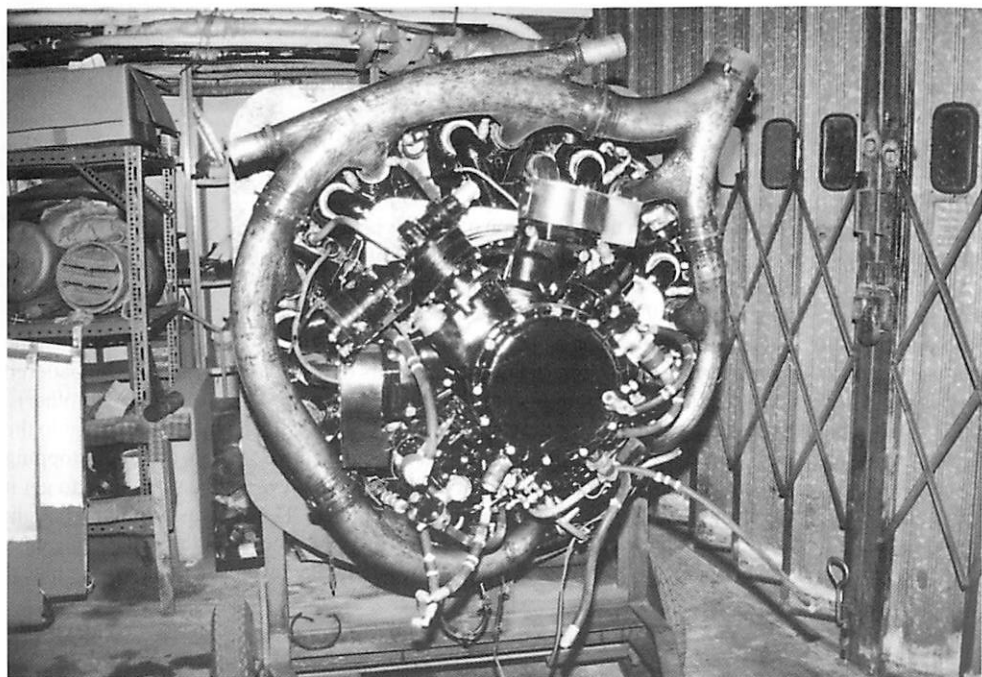
John Harriman and family.

Photo: John Hariman



Leonides and Leonides Major engines for sale from the South Yorkshire Aircraft Museum.

Photo: Dave Wood



A 9 cylinder Leonides which has been restored for the South Yorkshire Aircraft Museum.

photo: Dave Wood

'Sentosa'
 Ronneby Close
 Oatlands Chase
 Weybridge KT13 9SB

Dear Julian

I have just returned from a cruise, when we were hit by a sixty foot wave, to find that the Brooklands Museum has partially re-opened following the flood.

The Grand Prix display in the Robin Jackson shed starts with displays relating to the British Grand Prix at Brooklands in 1926 and 1927 for which Alvis built cars but which were not ready for the races though they ran in the later 200 Miles Races.

I am pleased to say that the panel dealing with the company's entries for these races, and the later successful use of the eight cylinder front wheel drive cars for record breaking and their class win in the 1930 Tourist Trophy race, are now on record for all time. The financial support for the panel was provided by the Club and Earley Engineering.

Yours sincerely
Ken Day

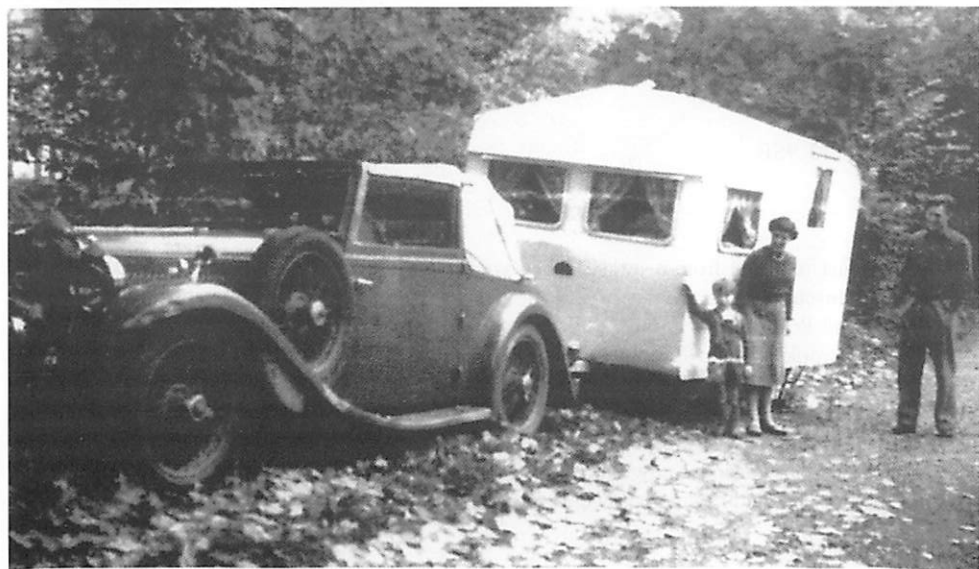
The Old Duke of York Inn
Chalford Hill
Gloucestershire GL6 8EQ
E-mail: n.paterson@ic.ac.uk

Dear Julian,

You kindly printed an article on the renovation of my Alvis Firebird in the Sept/Oct 1999 issue of the Bulletin. I sent a copy of the article to the previous owner of the car, Miss Patricia Johnstone, who lived on a fairly remote farm in Devon. I had a letter back from her nephew, Nikki, saying that his Aunt had sadly passed away in June 1997. However, he had fond memories of the car and enclosed the photograph (below) of the car taken whilst on holiday in Cornwall in the mid 1950's. It shows that the car was serving as a good towing car despite being over 20 years old and starting to look a bit battered in places. The family group are Nikki with his parents (the father being Miss Johnstone's brother).

In his letter he notes that he only drove the car once, when he was 18, and he took his Aunt to the County show in Exeter. Speed was not a problem, it still accelerated above 55 mph, although stopping was a problem! The local garage had to use both foot pedal and hand lever at the same time to get it through the MOT test, using the old pendulum type brake test meter. The car was originally bought by his father and sold to Miss Johnstone when he left the farm in 1960. She never drove anything else. She was lent a Landrover once, but would not drive it as the handbrake lever was in the wrong place!

Kind regards,
Nigel Paterson



The Firebird on caravan towing duty in the nineteen fifties.

Photo: Nigel Paterson

SPECIALS



TWENTY YEARS RACING DUU 900



At Oulton Park VSCC Meeting 1981

Photo : Studio 3

Where did it all begin? Well I suppose the first influence was Peter Collins who shared a study with me at boarding school and went from a desk in the upper fourth to the driving seat of a works Ferrari in seven years. I, on the other hand, only managed desk to Cooper-JAP Twin for sprints and hill-climb, in ten years. After a few frights and a couple of F.T.Ds I sold the car and wishing to stay in touch with the racing scene bought myself a 16mm film camera, set up Roscoe Films and to my great surprise found myself making the British Racing and Sports Car Club annual film for the next five years.

They were great days, track passes and paddock passes flowed like confetti and what had started as a hobby nearly overtook my day job as an advertising man.

But what has all this got to do with my two decades racing the 4.3 Alvis? Well, after the BRSCC films. I made the annual film for the Vintage Sports Car Club for fourteen years up to 1975 when, at the great age of 44, I realised that if I didn't get back on to the track soon, then I would end up on the Brighton Run.

The choice of car was easy as Bruce Spollen was selling the 4.3 special which Ian Woolstenholmes had built and campaigned in the 60's. A trip to the Midlands, and what now seems a smallish amount of money changed hands and DUU 900 was mine. Fortunately Ian still had quite a few spares, so a trip in the faithful Maxi was undertaken to Peterborough, the spares loaded, but such was the weight that the front wheels of the Maxi were only just in contact with the road. We had to transfer a cylinder block to the passenger seat to 'trim ship' and on the journey home the steering was delightfully light but directional stability could have been better.

It would be nice to report that after a winter spent polishing the car, I lined up on the start at the April VSCC Silverstone and began my racing career—but it was not to be. Booked the B&B, got the passes, drove down to Northampton on the Friday evening complete with box of tools, helmet and flameproofs. Next morning, out to car, load up, turn starter. Dull clunk—engine solid. (You will realise as this story unfolds, that I am not very strong on the technical innards of an engine, but have considerable practice in describing the death rattles of a straight six)

So it was home by train and bus and a trailer job next day to recover DUU. Fortunately the kind man who stripped down the engine found an interesting but not fatal condition. It appeared that when I switched on and turned the engine over, one of the liners had been carried down by the piston and was resting across the web of the crankshaft. Had I persevered with the starter or tried a tow start, something very horrid would have happened. All that was required was a tube of Loctite and some very gentle pressing back up. Sounds pretty basic but it never moved again.



Being presented with the Pace Petroleum Trophy in 1983.

Photo : Via David Roscoe

Will he never get to the racing bit, I hear you ask. Yes, but it took most of the first season to iron out the problems and even at the first race at Silverstone the learning process got steeper. Lap 3, surrounded by ace Alvis racers such as Peter Woodley and John Brydon I steam into Woodcote at high speed and a piston picks up, the engine siezes solid, I dip the clutch but by then the car is revolving in its own tyre smoke with Bentleys and Alvises winging past in the gloom. The smoke clears and I have an uninterrupted view of the rest of the pack bearing down on me. It was a hell of a place to park! But everyone missed me and I was returned to the paddock on the end of a tow rope. When things cooled down a bit I found that the engine had freed itself and I could drive home gently. Locking up on the M1 could have been more dodgy than at Woodcote.



At speed in the Isle of Man Manx Vintage/Classic Races 1991.

Photo : via David Roscoe

Now for a short technical bit. The 4.3 six cylinder is similar to the four cylinder but with two more cylinders at the front end, but the water pump feeds into what was the front of the four cylinder but on the six is between cylinders two and three—and there is only a sort of deflector plate in the block to divert some cooling water from the pump inlet to cool cylinders one and two. Fine for road use but for the extra heat of racing not so good. Fortunately there is a simple answer. There is a plate at the front of the engine to hold the fan mounting, so all you do is to run a pipe to there from the pump and the coolant goes all the way from front to back of the block—end of problem. (end of technical bit too).

By the second season in 1978 DUU was going rather well and the driver was getting quicker too, so that we attracted the attention of the AOC competition secretary, David Rouse, who was casting about looking for a team to enter the 750 Motor Club Six-Hour Relay at the end of the season at Donington Park. On the day, the club turned out a strong team. John Brydon Speed 20, Humphrey Collis also Speed 20, Chris Bird 12/70, Paul Holdsworth Speed 25 and yours truly in the 4.3.

The Bulletin described all the drama of the race at the time, but to summarise a great day for the marque, we claimed second place in our class and DUU had to put in a major effort of one hour and twenty minutes non-stop as Paul Holdsworth had spun on someone else's oil and bent his Speed 25. I was awaiting a pit signal to come in but the pit team thought that as I was climbing up the leader board, then I might as well carry on. Then panic, as David Rouse calculated that I must be out of fuel, so next lap there is David waving a two gallon can at me as I dash past the pits at about 85 mph. One more lap and I would have gone from hero to zero! At the end of the day we were looking for an excuse to open the champagne (a vital piece of equipment in any pit) when it was announced that I had been voted "Driver of the day", so out came the bubbly. One other point of interest on the race, the timekeepers had set up a radar trap at the entrance and exit of Redgate corner, the fast right hander at the end of the pit straight and they were more than a little surprised to find that my 4.3 went through at exactly the same speed as a Porsche 911T.

I must avoid a catalogue of races. I reckon that I competed in four or five race meetings a year plus the same number of sprints and hill-climbs, so over twenty years the 4.3 must have run in over 150 events. She had two engine rebuilds in that time, first by Peter Woodley in the early 80's and later on by John Hadwick in Devon after I moved down there to retire from work. Although the car was never changed from the original specification and raced on road tyres and cable brakes, it was pretty fast and only gave best to the later group of 4.3's of Albert Sparrowhawk, Roy Spiers and Barry Cannell when they arrived with hydraulic brakes, racing tyres and an all-up weight around 20cwt when DUU was over 26cwt. I always kept the car in road trim and the compression ratio was never above 8.2 to 1, so she would do 5mph to 115mph in top on the road. Super flexibility.

But, back to the racing 1980 saw us back at Donington for the Six-Hour Relay and another great race crowned with a second Driver of the Day Award. DUU was getting quite well known around the circuits. There were, however, moments. I remember after one pretty hard fought race at Silverstone, driving back into the pits and turning in to park up only to find that I could not apply any left lock. Very mysterious, but after considerable searching for the reason, we found that the starter dog had come off and lodged inside the front chassis rail where it stopped the steering rod from moving to the left. As Brian Chant pointed out, it was a damn good thing that Silverstone Club Circuit is all right-handers as I couldn't have turned left if I had wanted to!

At last after several hard racing seasons, problems surfaced at the Six-Hour Relay, now transposed to Silverstone. All the usual A.O.C. team were competing directed as ever by David Rouse and the 4.3 seemed to be going well until clutch-slip manifested itself. The rest of the team circulated whilst various 'experts' suggested solutions, the favoured answer being to leave the cover off the clutch housing so that any oil would escape into the cockpit rather than get into the clutch. Shortly after this plan had been laid I was called from the paddock to stand by for the next outing on the circuit. Idly toying with the fire extinguisher in the cockpit, I noticed that the wire seal was broken and the firing knob was pressed against the rear bulkhead. I pointed this out to our somewhat stressed team manager as being the opposite of a fire risk, but that it could have a fairly dramatic effect if it were to go off in the middle of Woodcote at speed! David was much taken with the idea that as the clutch cover had been removed, thus ensuring that I would be covered with a thin film of oil from my ankles to my waist, it would prove amusing should the extinguisher go off and coat the top half of me in a white powder. He offered the view that I should then look like a badly iced fruit cake and that my rather fetching red crash helmet would complete the effect, acting as a cherry on top!

After all this banter, I was sent out for more lappery during which the clutch behaved better, but all was brought to an end when after a few laps there was a noise not unlike that which could be obtained by knocking over a suit of armour in the middle of an ice rink, later diagnosed as a dropped valve. Thus ended the race and the season.



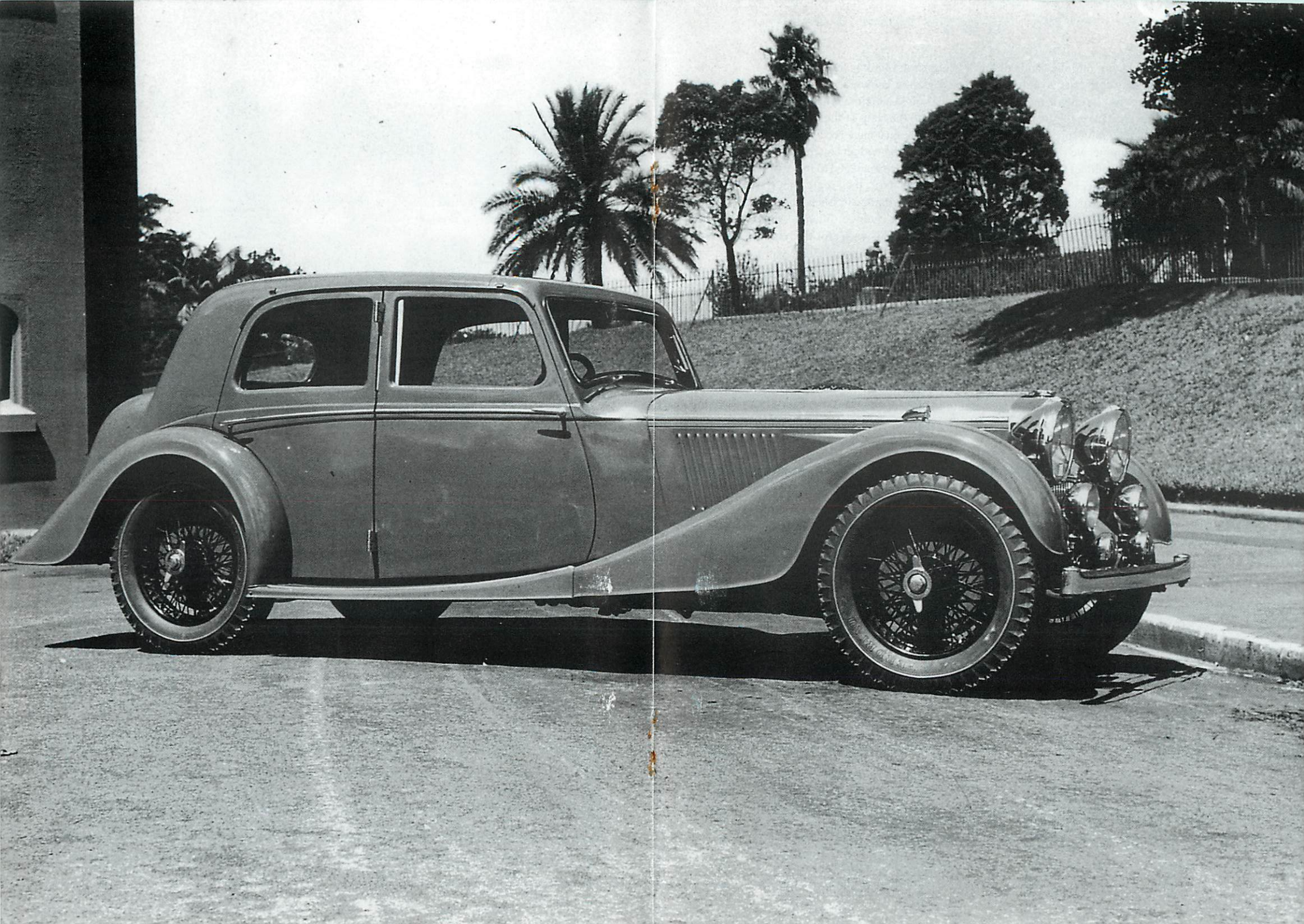
Alvis racers at the 1991 Isle of Man Races. Left to right : 1st in Class Albert Sparrowhawk; 2nd in Class David Roscoe; 3rd in Class Brian Chant.

Photo : David Roscoe



Distinguished guest driver. Denis Jenkinson at the wheel at the VSCC Weston-Super-Mare Sprint.

Photo : David Roscoe



So the 4.3 must be put into the hands of the "experts" for a look inside the engine.

Now I have already confessed to only minimal engineering knowledge, but it is essential to feign some expertise, otherwise the engine menders will regard you as a major contribution to their pension, but the battle is uneven. There will be phone calls relating to the state of the engine, problems which always seem to be a tightening spiral of insoluble drama. You must have received such calls yourself. "Hello, its about your engine, we've had the head off and one of the widget cotters has broken loose and jammed down the side of number four cylinder clinge lever. We've managed to free that but the splange rocker is fouling the underpiece". "Ah", you say "is it serious?" "No", they reply, "the parts are almost identical to the Australian Fordson tractor of 1949 and we think a garage in Aberdeen still has some un-machined blanks in stock". Relieved by this news, you become over-confident. "Ah well, then you should be able to get her on the road again shortly?" "We could, if it wasn't for the rear festering cover which is fouling the bronze thrust pladget and has nearly worn it through. Did you notice a faint subsonic whining noise just before the engine stopped?". You feel that it is insufficiently technical to describe the noise you heard as being more like a troupe of inebriated Rochdale clog dancers trying to kick their way into a galvanised water tank. But as I say, I am not very technical!

As work become more pressing in the late 80's, DUU led a quieter life. The major engine re-build in the 90's introduced a short block, BMW pistons and a Phoenix crank and by dint of careful assembly by John Hadwick, the power at the flywheel went up from 140bhp to 179bhp with another 500revs in the power band. But, with all this extra power came more heat and lots of louvres were needed all over the bonnet to let more air flow through the (original) radiator.

With all this lovely new-found power we went to the Isle of Man and together with Brian Chant in Brutus and Albert Sparrowhawk in his 4.3. We claimed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the class. Fabulous racing round the houses and a great weekend with Clive Taylor as our team manager and official photographer.

The Alvis Owner Club and in particular Clive's very select "Alvis Racing Drivers Group", provides great comradeship and fun, in particular the annual racing drivers supper on the evening before the April VSCC Silverstone, nowadays hosted by Mac Hulbert and his wife and attracting all the usual suspects from Frank Spencer to Barrie Cannell, all of us fresh out of hibernation and ready for another season on the track behind the wheel of an Alvis.

But now that part of my life is over—consigned to some photo-albums, a programme or two and some lap charts. DUU is now in the care of Brian Maile and I could not have wished for a more enthusiastic new owner. The only thing is that he is rather quick and may put all my lap times in the shade, but then I never said I was all that quick!

DAVID ROSCOE

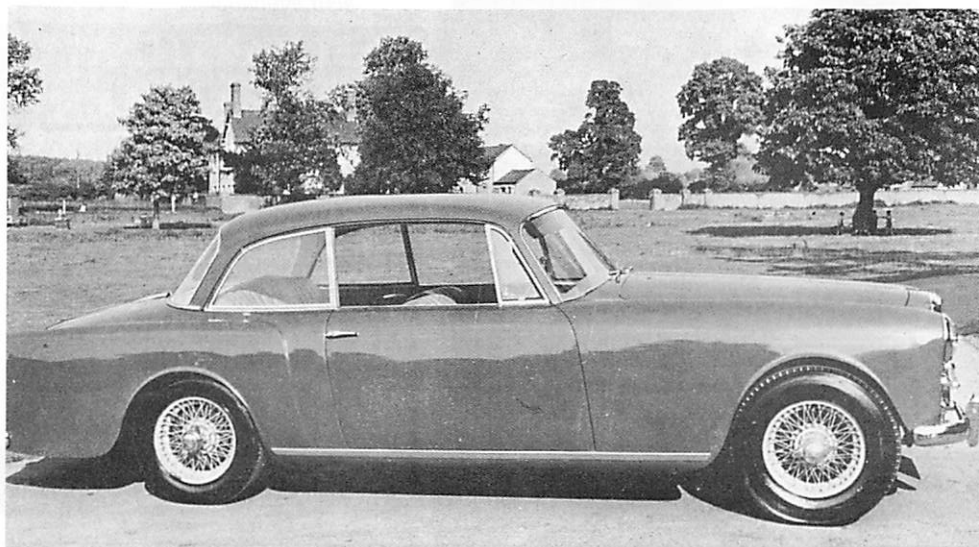


AN UNBROKEN TRADITION OF ENGINEERING QUALITY

ALVIS THREE-LITRE SALOON

Price £2827

EXTENDED ROAD TEST



When the first Alvis car appeared in 1920 it was hailed as being ten years ahead of its time. The machine, known as the 10/30 h.p. model, had many interesting features including a pressure lubrication system and a robust four speed gearbox. Soon after this first model was announced Alvis cars began to make a name in competition events and, of course, this trend continued for many years. By 1930, that is to say, within ten years, Alvis established an enviable reputation based upon fine engineering and clever design. Those were highly competitive years, but after Smith Clarke joined the company in 1931 even further advances were made while other firms were suffering severe setbacks. Alvis produced the famous Speed Twenty model, and then perfected the first four-speed gearbox with synchromesh on all forward ratios. Unfortunately, when Coventry was heavily bombed in 1940 the Alvis car factory was completely destroyed, but this did not prevent the production of a new model in 1946.

Alvis, much occupied in other directions—producing aero engines and the unique "best selling" Saracen armoured car—have not produced a fantastic number of motor cars since the end of the war. The current Three-Litre model, however, has been patiently developed and can now be considered as a very special motor car. At the total price of £2827 including tax the Alvis may seem expensive, but we feel certain that many enthusiastic drivers will regard the car as being worth every penny of the price asked.

The six cylinder overhead valve engine installed in the current Alvis has bore and stroke dimensions of 84 by 90 mm. Total capacity is 2993 cc, but although the unit is tuned to give high torque over a wide range rather than absolute maximum power, it develops a respectable 115 b.h.p. at 4,000 r.p.m.

on a compression ratio of 8.5 to 1. The overhead valves are pushrod operated. Twin horizontal S.U. carburettors are fitted and the ignition system is by coil and distributor, the distributor incorporating both centrifugal and vacuum automatic advance/retard mechanisms. The crankshaft is dynamically balanced and is carried in seven Vandervell thin shell bearings in a chrome-iron cylinder block. We may say that the man who designed the camshaft was successful indeed, for the Alvis engine will pull smoothly from less than 1,000 r.p.m. in top gear right up to 5,000 r.p.m. The unit is delightfully smooth at all times, yet it is always willing to work and will turn over like a dynamo at high speeds. Throttle response is immediate, and starting is easy, hot or cold. In addition to the two large S.U. units already mentioned a small electrically operated starting carburetter is fitted. This instrument is brought into use by flicking a switch on the dash, and even in very cold weather a quick start can be obtained.

The four speed gearbox features good synchromesh and a short central selector lever. We found all gears, including reverse, easy to engage. The selector lever can be moved quickly and smoothly, the change between 3rd and top being particularly pleasant. A quick change from 3rd to 2nd is also possible. All four ratios are well chosen, and although the Alvis weighs almost 32 cwt. (with fuel) a fairly high 1st gear—which will give a maximum of almost 40 m.p.h.—provides good initial acceleration. Second gear can be held to almost 60 m.p.h. if need be, and 3rd to more than 80 m.p.h. With 6.00/6.40 by 15 tyres and a final drive ratio of 3.77 to 1 the car runs at 20.3 m.p.h. per 1,000 r.p.m. in top, meaning that an effortless 81 m.p.h. can be sustained at 4,000 r.p.m. We collected the road test car in London and, setting off to drive back to Scotland, headed at once for M1. On this road the thoroughbred characteristics of the Alvis quickly showed to best advantage. We found that the car would run at a steady 80 m.p.h. on a fairly light throttle. On full bore 100 m.p.h. could be attained very quickly, and the engine proved amazingly smooth even at this speed. The car was quiet at all times. At 80 m.p.h. performance seemed quite effortless, but to keep wind noise to a minimum we found it best to run with the ventilation panels fitted on the front doors fully closed. This proved no hardship, for the car is provided with two other ventilation systems. Fresh air can be admitted to the interior via the heater unit, or by opening the small but highly effective cold air inlets mounted beneath the scuttle.

The suspension on the Alvis is orthodox, but gives better than normal results. The front wheels are independently suspended on transverse wishbones and large diameter coil springs. Telescopic dampers are fitted, and the wishbones are carried on rubber bearings. At the rear, long semi-elliptic leaf springs are featured. They are fully enclosed in gaiters which can be pumped full of grease. On smooth roads the Alvis seems to ride firmly. It does not "float" over undulations yet on rough surfaces the suspension appears to take on entirely different characteristics, becoming soft and flexible. When driven hard the car has a positive "vintage" feel. The steering is light but responsive, and is not completely "dead". On winding roads the car can be driven hard without great effort. There is little body roll even on slow corners. On icy surfaces we found the car remarkably stable. Wheelspin caused by over-enthusiastic use of the throttle does not quickly provoke tail-wag, but when the car does begin to slide it can be very easily controlled "on the throttle."

On the previously mentioned London-Glasgow trip the Alvis was found to be quite surprisingly economical. Although the machine was cruised over almost the entire length of M1 at speeds in excess of 80 m.p.h. with experimental bursts to 100 m.p.h. and more, and driven fairly hard on other roads whenever conditions allowed, average fuel consumption worked out at a fraction better than 22½ m.p.g. for the complete journey. This is better than can be expected from most luxuriously equipped 3 litre cars, and in this case it would seem that the combination of high gearing and power unit efficiency pays excellent dividends. On runs made in Scotland, including much town work and the gathering of performance figures, an overall 19 m.p.g. was obtained over 370 miles. And on one hurried drive the car covered exactly 110 miles on five gallons "from reserve to reserve." Total capacity of the fuel tank is 14.3 gallons, including a one-gallon reserve supply which can be tapped by operating a switch on the

instrument panel.

The all-metal Alvis body is built by Park Ward and, as one might expect, is superbly finished. Internal trim is luxurious but conservative. All seats are covered with leather of the finest quality.

With fine leather upholstery, high quality carpets and luxurious woodwork the Alvis Three-litre offers the discerning motorist many traditional features. Note the neat central gear lever and carefully matched instruments.



Heavy fitted carpets are provided, and there is also a felt underlay. The front seats are fully adjustable over a wide range, while back-rest rake can be altered with a spanner to suit individual requirements. The length of the steering column can also be adjusted. The driving seat proved exceptionally comfortable on long journeys. Instruments include matched speedometer and revolution counter units, a clock, oil pressure gauge, thermometer, fuel contents indicator and an ammeter. The heater fitted as standard draws fresh air from the front of the car. The temperature control allows fine adjustments to be made, and a booster fan is provided to speed windscreen de-misting. Minor controls and switches are well laid out. To avoid confusion the windscreen washer, starting carburetter and ignition-starter controls are mounted on right hand side of the steering column. The lights, including two individually switched fog lamps, are controlled by push-pull type switches but the two-speed windscreen wiper is actuated by

means of a "turn" type knob. The panel light rheostat is mounted well out of the way, beneath the dash, so that it cannot be mistaken. A cigar lighter is mounted convenient to the driver's right hand, and easy to reach ash trays are built into both front doors. The Trico windscreen washers were of a type that we do not normally encounter. They did not require pumping, and could be left spraying merrily away for several seconds.

The Alvis will carry four adults in luxurious comfort. The luggage locker is fully carpeted and will accommodate several suitcases, golf clubs and general bric-a-brac. The spare wheel is carried in a tray beneath the luggage compartment, and there is a full kit of tools including a tyre pump. A screw type jack is provided. It fits in easily located jacking points. The test car was fitted with wire wheels with knock-off type hubs and Dunlop Road Speed tyres. Buyers who prefer tubeless tyres may specify steel disc wheels.

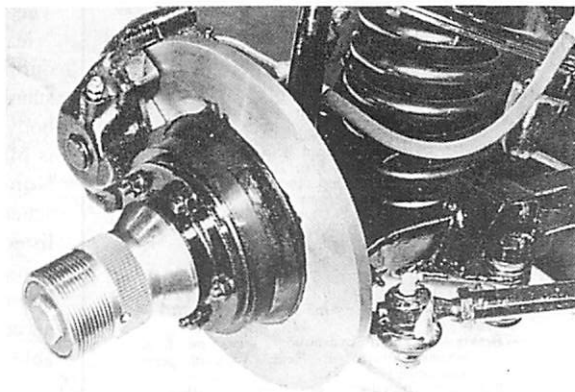
Under the bonnet, the six cylinder Alvis power unit is easily accessible. The carburetters, distributor and fuel pump etc. can readily be inspected and worked on. The plugs are shrouded beneath an extension of the valve rocker cover and are less easily reached. The standard of finish in the engine compartment is high, and we found it pleasant to note much interesting detail work. The throttle linkage, for instance, does credit to the Alvis engineering department. No sloppy cables here! The

throttles are opened by ball-jointed rods and correctly aligned bell-crank levers. The stove enamelled valve rocker cover is held down with quickly removable wing-nuts.

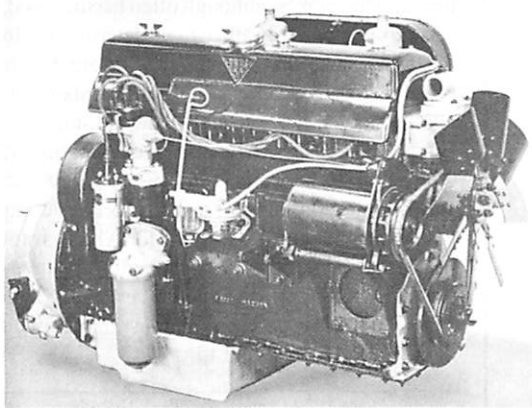
By modern standards the maximum speed of the Alvis is not exceptionally high, but this does not mean a great deal, for the car will attain higher point to point averages than some "faster" machines. The Alvis Three-Litre will accelerate from a standstill to 90 m.p.h. in something like 38 seconds. And in top gear alone the car will run from 20 to 80 m.p.h. in about 35 seconds. When acceleration is needed on the open road a quick change to 3rd will enable the car to run from 50 to 70 m.p.h. in about 8½ seconds and by holding 3rd to about 80 m.p.h. the car can be accelerated from 50 to 90 m.p.h. in something less than 29 seconds. But even when pushed to the limit, the Alvis engine does not fuss unduly. In fact, it is a surprisingly silent unit. It works hard without protest, revving crisply and smoothly up to 5,500 r.p.m. in the indirect gears, yet also willing to slog along at 1,000 r.p.m. in top. In town the 7.74 to 1 2nd gear proved a useful ratio. We found ourselves dropping straight from top into 2nd on many occasions and, after accelerating, it seemed quite naturally to go back into top without bothering about 3rd. At other times, however, the car was driven for many miles in 3rd gear only. This ratio seemed exactly right on some of the twisting hill roads found in the Lake District and on the West Coast.

The brakes, often used very hard during the test period, were entirely fade-free. The disc and drum combination featured on the Alvis works very well. The 11½ inch Lockheed discs fitted at the front are matched with 11 inch drums at the rear. The system is vacuum servo assisted, but the designers have carefully avoided an over-light pedal. When braking lightly at speeds we noted some slight vibration from the front wheels, but this disappeared as further pressure was applied. Heavy braking from high speeds produced impressive results, and even when the front discs were very hot an "all-square" emergency stop could be made without difficulty. On wet roads the brakes could be applied harshly without disastrous effects, the rear wheels tend to lock only at very low speeds. The handbrake also proved unusually effective.

Although not fantastically expensive, the Alvis saloon has a great deal to offer.



On the front wheels the Alvis features 11-inch servo assisted Lockheed disc brakes. A large diameter coil spring and robustly constructed suspension wishbone can also be seen in the picture above.



The six cylinder 2,993 cc Alvis overhead valve engine develops 115 b.h.p. at 4,000 r.p.m. The unit gives high torque at low speeds but will also turn over at an effortless 5,000 r.p.m.

MECHANICAL SPECIFICATION

Engine

Cylinders—6.
Bore—84 mm.
Stroke—90 mm.
Cubic Capacity—2,993 cc.
Valves—Pushrod overhead.
Compression Ratio—8.5 to 1.
Max. Power—115 b.h.p. (net).
at —4,000 r.p.m.
Carburettors—Twin S.U. type H6.

Transmission

Top Gear (s/m)—3.77 to 1.
3rd (s/m)—1.93 to 1.
2nd (s/m)—7.74 to 1.
1st—11.04 to 1.
M.P.H. per 1,000 r.p.m. in top gear—20.3.

Chassis

Brakes—Lockheed hydraulic. Discs on front wheels. Drums at Rear. Vacuum servo assistance.

Brake disc/drum dia.—front discs: 11 inches.
rear drums: 11 inches.

Working Area—397 sq. ins.

Suspension: Front—Coil and wishbone independent, with anti-roll bar.
Rear—Live axle with leaf springs.

Dampers—Hydraulic telescopic (Armstrong).

Tyres—Dunlop 6.00/6.40 x 15, with tubes on wire type wheels. Tubeless tyres can be fitted on bolt-on steel disc wheels.

Steering

Steering Gear—Burman recirculating ball type.
Turning Circle—44 feet.
Turns of wheel, lock to lock—3½.

Dimensions

Wheelbase—9 feet 3½ inches.
Track: front—4 feet 6½ inches.
rear—4 feet 6½ inches.
Overall: length—15 feet 8½ inches.
width—5 feet 6 inches.
height—5 feet 0 inches.
Kerb Weight—31½ cwt.

PERFORMANCE FIGURES

Weather—Cold and dry. Temp. approx. 44 deg. F.
Fuel—Premium Grade.

Speedometer Correction

Speedo Reading—30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Actual Speed—30 40 49 58 68 78 87 97

Maximum Speed

Gear: M.P.H. (normal and Maximum).
Top: 103.4 mean 105.8 best.
3rd: 45/80.
2nd: 30/55.
1st: 18/37.

Acceleration (Time in Seconds)

M.P.H.	Top	3rd	2nd	1st
10-30	9.9	6.8	4.9	—
20-40	9.1	6.5	5.0	—
30-50	10.4	7.0	—	—
40-60	10.7	7.8	—	—
50-70	11.6	8.5	—	—
60-80	13.1	12.0	—	—
70-90	19.4	—	—	—

From rest through the gears—

0-30	5.0
0-40	6.8
0-50	9.5
0-60	13.4
0-70	18.0
0-80	24.6
0-90	37.4

Fuel Consumption

Driven Hard—17/18 m.p.g.
Normal—22/24 m.p.g.
Fuel Tank Capacity—14.3 gallons, including 1 gallon reserve supply.

(The Alvis Three-Litre saloon used during this road test was kindly placed at our disposal by Alvis Limited, Holyhead Road, Coventry).

The Graber-designed body-work is unusually "clean." The general lines are simple yet—without masses of chrome plate—the Alvis is outstandingly attractive. Eight standard single tone body colours are listed and, of course, the buyer is offered a choice of carpets and upholstery. Non-standard body colours, or two-tone schemes, are available at extra cost. Other items listed as extras include Borg Warner automatic transmission, Laycock de Normanville overdrive and a Smith's Radiomobile unit with winding aerial. A drophead coupe model is also available at the total price of £3,110 14 2d.

In summing up we may say that this machine, in saloon or in drophead form, combines traditional engineering and modern, high quality coachwork. The engine, gearbox, steering, suspension system and brakes have been developed by engineers who worry about quality rather than quantity. The Alvis looks good when parked at the kerb and when lifted high overhead on a hydraulic ramp for closer inspection—beauty, as they say, is more than skin deep! The Three-Litre is not a car that can be fully appreciated on a short drive, but after a hundred miles or so the thoroughbred characteristics of the machine become patently obvious. We made several long journeys in the road test car before collecting performance figures, but no adjustments were required. The engine maintained its tune and the brakes, although often harshly used, seemed to improve rather than deteriorate. In the two weeks that the car was in our hands widely varying weather conditions were experienced—ice, snow, fog, heavy rain and sunshine. But at all times the Alvis behaved beautifully, giving high and essentially safe performance with surprising economy. A more impressive car would be difficult to find. The Alvis is not perfect, but it is certainly outstandingly attractive at the price asked. The Government, who claim £837-7-6 on each car must make much more profit than Alvis Ltd!

An interesting period road test reprinted from Top Gear—Scotland's Motoring Magazine with due acknowledgements—J.N.B.C

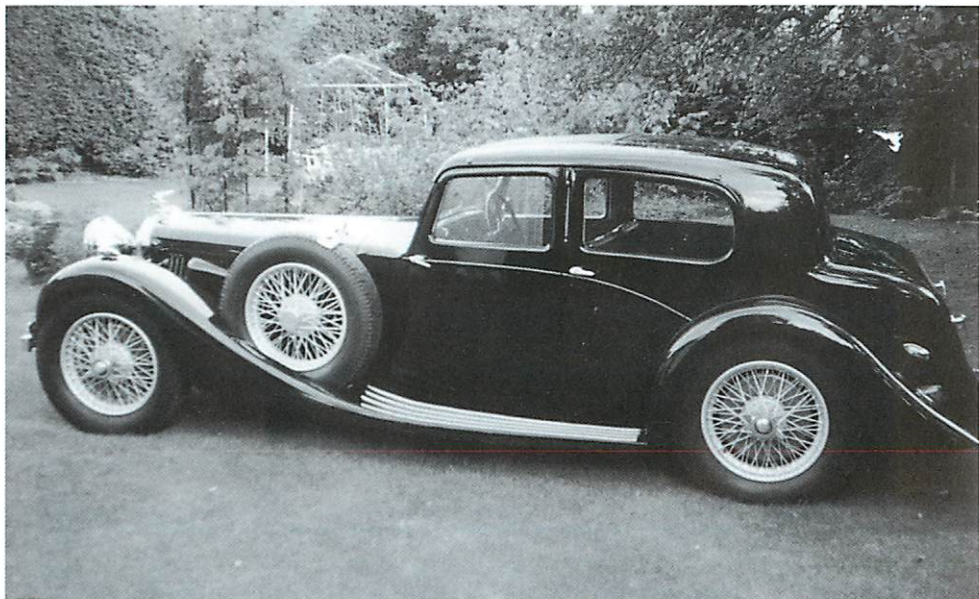
POSED, PROBED AND SOLVED

— The Registrar's Column —



"WITH STRINGS ATTACHED"

— Part 1 —



"Turned Out Nice Again". The SD Speed 20 Chassis 12780, Registration CNB 277 once owned by George Formby and now owned by Bernard Nield.

Photo: Bernard Nield

It must be well over a decade ago when I first heard the name of the entertainer George Formby, in connection with Alvis. It was about then that a newspaper clipping sent to me made mention of Formby's mother having an Alvis tourer in the early twenties. It was an avenue that I was unable to explore because hardly any of the Works Guarantee Cards of this period survive, which otherwise, after long scrutiny might have netted us the name of the lady concerned, and thence the vehicle. I did



George Formby.

Photo: George Formby Society

however establish and maintain occasional contact with the George Formby Society, which was aware of a huge number of cars and indeed motorcycles which were to pass through his hands as his success and stature grew. Amongst these were believed to be some Alvises of a later type. In the fullness of time two of these would be identified, both by complete chance.

I have already referred to Works Guarantee Cards which continue to be a mine of information and a rewarding area of study. It was the occasional practice with some of these, especially when a car changed hands within its Guarantee period, for a clerk to "type-out" the first owner's name and address with a line of asterisks or hyphens. These are thus infernally difficult to read and therefore passed over. However, it was a chance scrutiny of one of these – with a glass, that the name of George Hoy-Booth was revealed – and we know who that was.

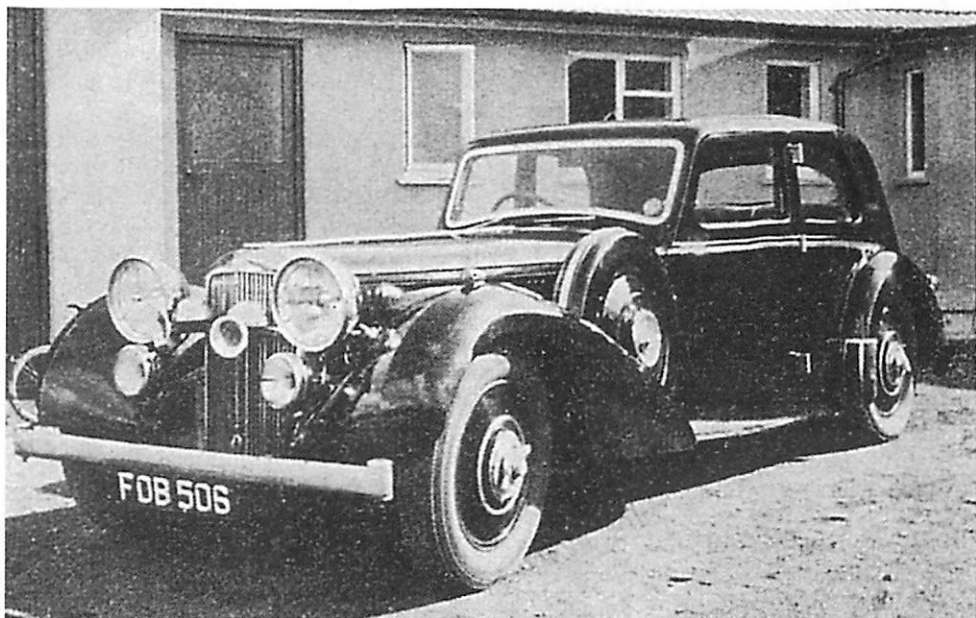
The card concerned was that for Chassis 12780 – the sixth SD Speed 20 chassis, bodied as a Lancefield saloon. A check revealed this car to be still listed to a member. It was to make Bernard Nield's day when I rang him with this key information which had been obliterated for sixty years.

Identification of Formby's other Speed 20 came about by equally fortuitous circumstances. Members may recall that in an earlier "P.P.S.", entitled "2001 – A Space Odyssey", about the unusual Firebird drophead coupé in Vancouver, I made mention that I had persuaded the Bolton Evening News to run a feature about the car. As a result of this, a reader who had worked for Parkers, the Alvis agent, sent in a photograph of an Alvis drophead coupé, asking if this could be the same car. It wasn't, but revealed an SC Speed Twenty registration BND 80 which had not previously been known to us. Back-tracking this into the Manchester deliveries of the day again revealed the obliterated typing of the name George Hoy-Booth – this time with Chassis 12068. The photograph of the man with this car is not of



"Leaning on a Speed 20". Speed 20 SC Chassis 12068, Registration BND 80 also once owned by George Formby.

Photo: Bolton Evening News



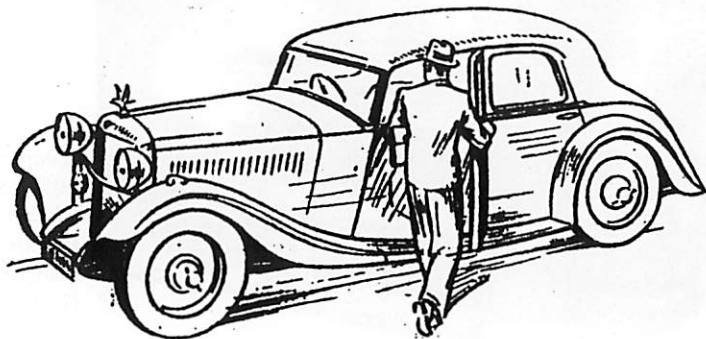
Formby's Speed 25 Saloon 14653, Registration FOB 506.

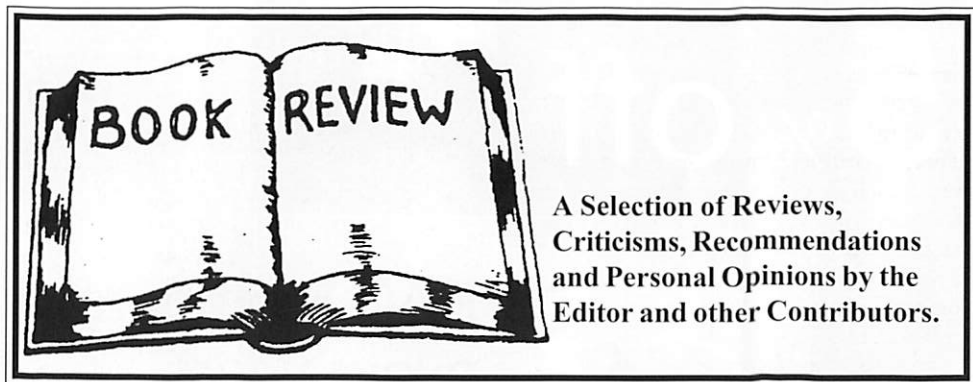
course Formby, but a subsequent owner.

Formby has also of course been associated with Speed 25 saloon 14653, FOB 506, which was in the hands of Nick Simpson for a while. The Guarantee card here is unhelpful, but Formby is equally likely to have bought this shop-soiled or second hand.

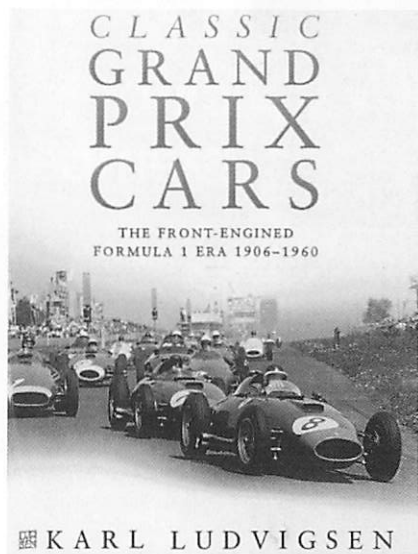
I have often wondered if there could have been an obscure family connection with the Wigan Alvis agency of H. H. Timberlake Ltd. The "H. H." stood for Herbert Hoy, and Hoy was a family name of the entertainer. I am also reminded that one of Formby's popular numbers was entitled "In a little Wigan Garden", which is arguably where this month's column has originated.

DAVE CULSHAW





Classic Grand Prix Cars—The Front-Engined Formula 1 Era 1906–1960 by Karl Ludvigsen. 206 pp. Price £19.99. Published by Sutton Publishing.



In the introduction to this excellent book, Karl Ludvigsen describes how his interest in motor racing history was fired in the mid 1950's when his mother gave him the two volumes of Laurence Pomeroy's magnum opus, *The Grand Prix Car*. Ten years later when I had left school and gone to college one of the first things that I did with my new cheque book and local authority grant, was to buy these books for myself, a purchase that I have never regretted and which also set me on to a lifetime interest in motor racing of the past.

Classic Grand Prix Cars is a splendid introduction to the history of the racing car from its beginnings to 1960, when rear-engined cars took over completely. The author's great technical knowledge is obvious and although I possess a large number of books in my library on this subject, I learned something new. Interspersed with the review of various periods of motor racing are interesting asides dealing with such esoteric subjects as desmodromic valve gear. There are also many interesting footnotes.

An excellently produced book with good photographs, knowledgeably and well written. One could not ask for more. Recommended.

J.N.B.C.

The Magic Of A Name: The Rolls-Royce Story—The First 40 Years by Peter Pugh. 340pp. Price £30.00. Published by Icon Books.

This is the first volume of a two-volume history of the Rolls-Royce Company and a splendid book it is too. Although many books have been written about the products of the company, motor cars and aero engines, as usual most of the authors of these books fail to write about the company itself.

Although there is plenty about cars and engines in this book, it is the company and its personalities that this book is about.

Peter Pugh has written an extremely readable history of this extraordinarily important British company and in so doing he has revealed all sorts of interesting information such as the fact that Claude Johnson did not want to be involved with the manufacture of aero engines. In the First World War, the company apparently had to be ordered to manufacture them.

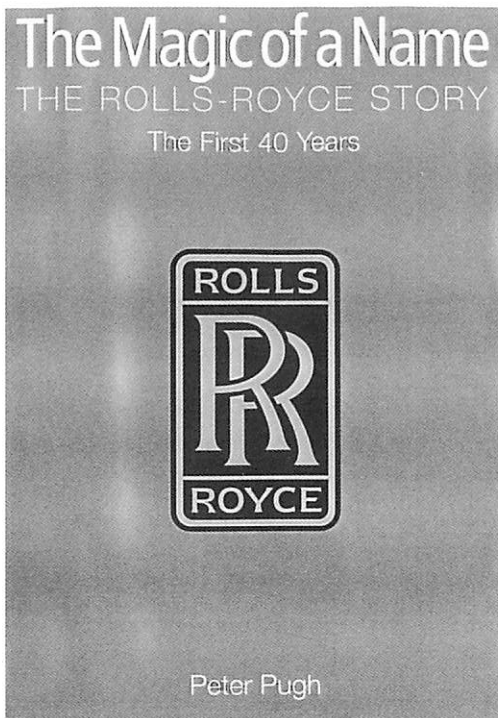
There is a great deal of interesting information about the founding of the company and the personalities involved and the business background to this. Many very notable engineers worked for the company and they are given full credit in this book. However the author does not pull any punches and reveals discords and problems where these existed.

By the nineteen thirties, after the success of the R engine in the Schneider Trophy Seaplane races, the company started a resurgence of aero engine design and manufacture, including the design of the PV12 a private venture engine which was the prototype of the Merlin. By the time that Ernest Hives took over as Managing Director, he was aware that the Rolls-Royce car was by now by no means "The Best Car In The World" and Hives admitted that almost all American cars were far in advance of Rolls-Royce design. There is an honesty about this book which is refreshing.

The last part of the book concentrates on the period of the Second World war and of course largely concerns the story of the Merlin engine and to a lesser extent the Griffon. The final part of the book is extremely fascinating dealing as it does with the Rolls-Royce involvement with Frank Whittle on jet engine development, and this is where the first volume ends.

This is really an excellent book, well written and well researched. The pictures are excellent, there is an extensive bibliography and an index. I look forward to being able to buy the second volume when it is published later this year.

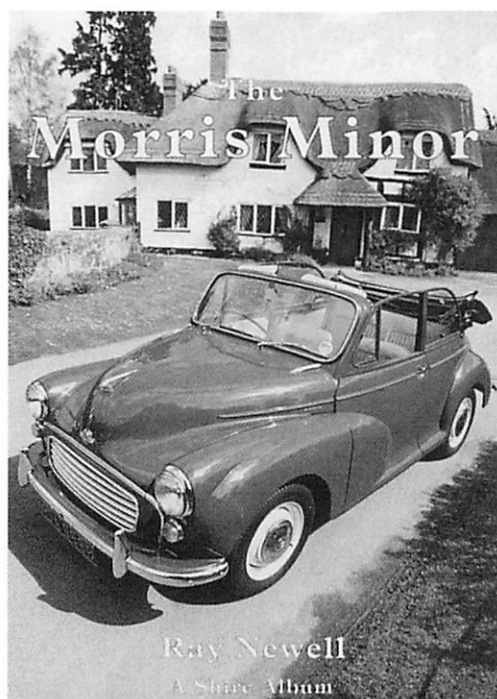
J.N.B.C.



The Morris Minor by Ray Newell. 32pp. Price £2.95. Published by Shire Publications Card Covers.

The Morris Minor has a special place in the hearts of many people. I learned to drive on one in 1963 when I was still at boarding school and we had one of one type or another in our family for years, so I am very fond of them. The Morris Minor was perhaps the first modern British car and was the brain-child of one-time Alvis designer, Alec Issigonis.

Design commenced during the Second World War and a prototype, called the Mosquito, was built.

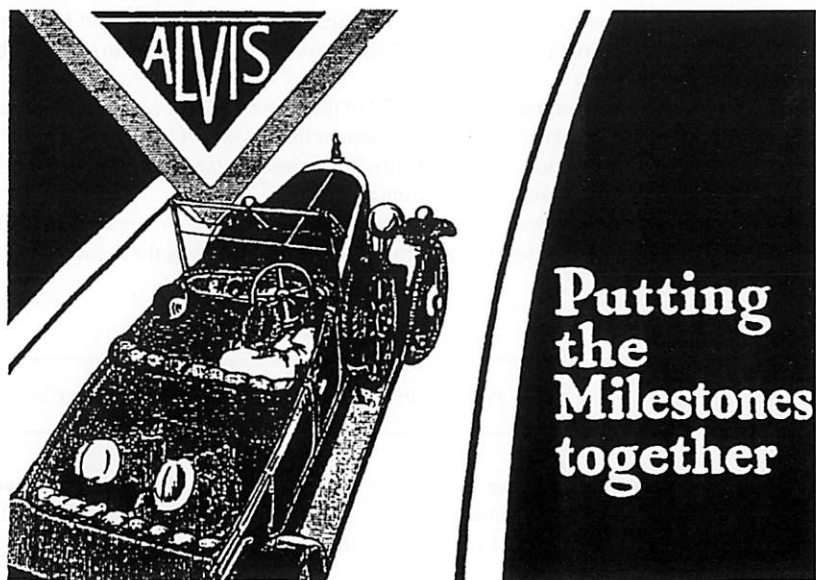


This progressed until it was what we would recognise as a Morris Minor today. Alec Issigonis was an engineer who saw the styling of a car as part of its design as well as a function of the engineer, and the distinctive lines were his own, as was also the case with the Mini, he designed ten years or so later.

The author has produced a splendid little book which in its 32 pages manages to capture the history of the design of the car and its production life which incredibly only ended in 1970. The Minor was used for rallies as well as sober road use and of course was the basis for a whole series of commercial vehicles, perhaps most famously GPO vans. In the sixties it was always a red GPO van that delivered spares to me from Alvis in those little linen bags. It seems only like yesterday.

A delightful little book.

J.N.B.C.



BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Michael J. Burgess

The following is the text of a chapter of a book "Behind The Wheel" by Michael J. Burgess which is being distributed by "Past Times".

It was sent to me by a friend who is a Morris historian and he was understandably upset by the numerous errors which he found in the chapter on Morris. He thought the Alvis Chapter equally erroneous. I was amazed as I read this extract to see just how many serious errors have been made. Members may like to amuse themselves by seeing how many they can find — J.N.B.C

Alvis

Manufactured: 1920 to 1967

The Name: No one seems to know exactly where the Alvis name came from, but the most widely held opinion is that it is a mixture of two words: 'al' for aluminium and *vis*, which is Latin for power or strength.

The Badge: The badge is a simple 'Alvis' legend set in a red triangle. However, during the 1930s Alvis became famous for their hare mascots. Featuring an alert-looking hare, they originated in the marketing phrase "The hare ahead of the hounds", and soon became a regular feature on Alvis cars.

History: Alvis started life as TG John Ltd, whose first car, the 10/30, was unremarkable and hinted little at what was to come. By the time car production was called to a halt in 1967, Alvis had become famous in the fields of car, military and aero engineering.

The 10/30 was named in the English tradition of the time. The first number was the car's nominal RAC horsepower rating for tax purposes, and the second number was the actual bhp produced by the vehicle's engine.

In time the 10/30 was refined into what was to become one of the greats of the 1920s, the 12/50 tourer. A smooth, refined touring car with a surprising turn of speed, it was developed into the 12/60 for the 1931 season and by the standards of the day offered remarkably comfortable and rapid transport.

Between 1928 and 1930 Alvis experimented with a supercharged 1-litre eight-cylinder competition car that was the world's first front-wheel-drive car to feature fully independent suspension. A range of road cars was launched based on this vehicle. Technically ahead of their time, they were too expensive to sell well and the range was quietly discontinued in 1930, allowing Alvis to concentrate on the better selling touring cars.

A six-cylinder engine was developed for 1927 and fitted to a 12/50 chassis to create the 14/75, the sort of car Alvis would become famous for. In direct competition with the likes of Bentley, the soon renamed Silver Eagle was given a new 2-litre engine for 1933 to create a faster model called the Crested Eagle. All these cars were supplied with suitably styled bonnet mascots that would never make it through today's safety regulations, but which made the cars an imposing sight on the road.

The small sports-car market was not neglected as the smaller 1.5-litre Firefly was launched in 1932, joined by the Firebird in 1933 to fight for the sales of companies like MG.

TG John met Charles Follett by chance, and Follett's agreement to take a third of Alvis production led to the development of the beautiful Speed models of the late 1930s. Leading the range was the Speed Twenty, which was available in a number of body styles, with any of which the car could manage 90mph. A Speed Twenty-Five quickly followed with a 3-litre engine and a top speed of 95mph. Last of the group was the new Speed Twenty-Five, fitted with an enlarged 4.3 litre engine to produce the first Alvis to offer a top speed of 100mph.

All of the Speed range offered fast, luxurious touring for the wealthy gentleman of the time. Their body styles were all fashionably up to date, and many enthusiasts would argue that they have never been bettered. Certainly they represented the peak of the Alvis name.

During the Second World War Alvis turned to military production, and with the return of peace it was deemed unwise to relaunch the mighty 4.3-litre into the depressed market. Instead the company chose to restyle and relaunch its small 12/70 line, which had been seen briefly before war broke out as the TA14. Although once again a well-mannered and available in a wide range of body styles, it could not be described as fast. The sports-car enthusiasts were catered for by the TB14 a controversially styled open two-seater that probably suits today's taste better than that of its own era.

1950 saw the arrival of the new six-cylinder engine in the TA21. Faster than the other post-war cars, it was still a far cry from the stylish cars that had run through the 1930s. The TB14 was also fitted with the new engine to create the TB21, a faster but still unloved sports car fighting a losing battle in the Jaguar XK price range.

In 1953 the last of the Alvises styled in-house was launched in the form of the TC21/100, better remembered as the Grey Lady. A 100mph saloon, it was recognizable from the earlier TA21 range by the presence of a pair of rather strangely styled bonnet air scoops and its centre-lock wheels. It would last until 1955, by when new designs were in the pipeline.

The Swiss car stylist Graber had exhibited a grand touring car on an Alvis chassis around the motor shows of 1952 to much acclaim. It featured a tastefully updated radiator grille and rounded lines much more in keeping with the times than the flat sides of the Grey Lady. A new six-cylinder engine was fitted and the whole car launched as the TD21 in 1956.

As time passed, the car gained better brakes, still more power and a number of small styling tweaks. Convertibles became available, and the bodywork was constructed by a number of external coachbuilders to keep pace with the demand.

The glory days of the fast open tourer had returned for Alvis, if only for a short time. The TF21 of 1964 featured the ultimate development of the Graber cars with a new four-headlight treatment of the nose styling and an even more luxurious interior. By now the engine featured no fewer than three carburetors, and the car could reach 120mph.

Rover took a keen interest in Alvis as they were making cars that came very close to the market they were targeting with their P5 3-litre range, and in 1965 they bought the rival company. Car production ceased in 1967, and the great Alvis touring-car range came to an end. The name lived on, however – indeed, some would say on vehicle more suited to today's city streets, for Alvis now concentrates on building armoured vehicles.

Before Rover took over, Alvis had been working on its next generation of cars. Alec Issigonis, who would go on to design the famous Mini, had designed a V8-engined vehicle that made use of many of the technical developments he would eventually use in his famous minicar.

It just goes to show that just because something appears in print, this does not make it true! — J.N.B.C

MEMORIES OF AN ALVIS IN SINGAPORE



Dick Crabtree's smart 3-Litre in Singapore.

Photo: Dick Crabtree

When I finished my RAF flying training in December 1959, I volunteered to be posted to Shackleton anti-submarine warfare aircraft. In those days there were thirteen Squadrons of Shackletons based at Kinloss near Inverness, St. Mawgan near Newquay, Ballykelly in Northern Ireland, Gibraltar, Malta, Cypress, Aden and Singapore, (there are now only three squadrons of Nimrods at one base, Kinloss). As a new-comer, I was told there was no point in asking for one of the overseas bases and so I asked for Ballykelly. When my posting notice came through, I was to go to Singapore (the Service was always like that). Singapore is a very different place now to what it was then. Now it is a sterile, expensive, glass and chrome city which could be almost anywhere. In 1961 it was dirty, smelly, full of life, full of colour, full of character and paradise to a 21 year old bachelor.

There are three different racial groups in Singapore; the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians. At that time all the women wore their national costumes, the Malays in sarong kabyas, the Chinese in cheong sams and the Indians in saris. All were brilliantly coloured and beautifully made. There were parts of the city which were 'out-of-bounds' to all British servicemen and so, of course, I have no idea what went on there, or at least not that I am going to admit in print! You bargained for everything. It took me three months before I bought the camera I wanted at the price I was prepared to pay. Everything was cheap and so even on my salary of £95 per month I lived like a king.

RAF Changi, where I was stationed was a huge base, it is now the International Airport, and of course there was no transport. In addition, as officers, we were forbidden to use public transport. A car was essential. Driving in Singapore was different. Everyone went as fast as possible all of the time. There were no speed limits which anyone obeyed, no MOT, nor was there a driving test. Very few of the cars could be considered roadworthy and people, hens, ducks, cows and pigs could be found on the road at any time, particularly at night; the pigs used to sleep on the road after dark because the black top was warm. We were instructed that if we had an accident we were to keep going because we might be lynched if we stopped; it was all very spirited and great fun. It was a general principle of some of the religious groups always to signal in the opposite direction to that in which they intended to go. This was to confuse the evil spirits which might be following them. It also confused all of the other drivers! There was only one safe place to be and that was at the front of the pack. The pack largely comprising of 'pick-up' taxis. The 'pick-up' taxi worked on the principle that they would continue to pick-up passengers along the road until the car was as full as possible (usually greatly overloaded) and then drive like the devil dropping people off at their respective destinations and only stopping to pick up more fares.

The first car I bought was a Mk I Ford Consul drophead. It was a nice car, in good condition, which I kept for about 6 - 8 months. The only thing which went wrong with it was a clutch which had to be changed. I sold it to a Flight Lieutenant who had a liking for brown liquid in pint quantities. Shortly after he bought the car he went to the Officers Club in it where the car park was on a steep



Another view of the car overlooking Singapore port.

Photo: Dick Crabtree

bank. Having been in the mess bar before, he had some difficulty sorting out which foot was doing what and, as a result, he overshot the curb and the car finished up in the club swimming pool. It was never quite the same again. He tried to blame me because he said the brakes were faulty when I sold him the car.

The Ford was fine but it did not have enough 'poke' to stay at the front of the pack and thus it had to go. I sold the car to buy the only Alvis in Malaya. It was a Three Litre black saloon which had been exported to Singapore when new. I bought it from the second owner and it was in lovely condition having only done about 50,000 miles. It killed the 'pick-up' taxi.

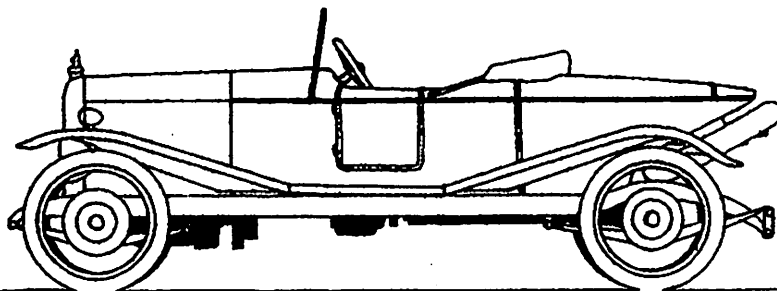
Car maintenance was carried out by small local garages whose only training was 'on-the-job' (no manuals, and in any case they probably could not read or if they could it would only be in Chinese) and whose workshop was usually the roadside or at best a driveway. Everything from tyre changes to engine building and spraying was done in the gutter and they would tackle anything. Most vehicles were wrecks, largely through total lack of maintenance but also because the very high humidity and regular torrential rain cause chronic corrosion. A friend of mine had a Bond mini-car in which the entire floor pan was rotten. It went up on four oil drums in a Chinese mechanic's drive and a new pan was fabricated and put in. They could do anything. When the emergency fuel change over switch failed on the Alvis, my man, name of Eng Seng, rewound the solenoid rather than send for a new one from U.K.

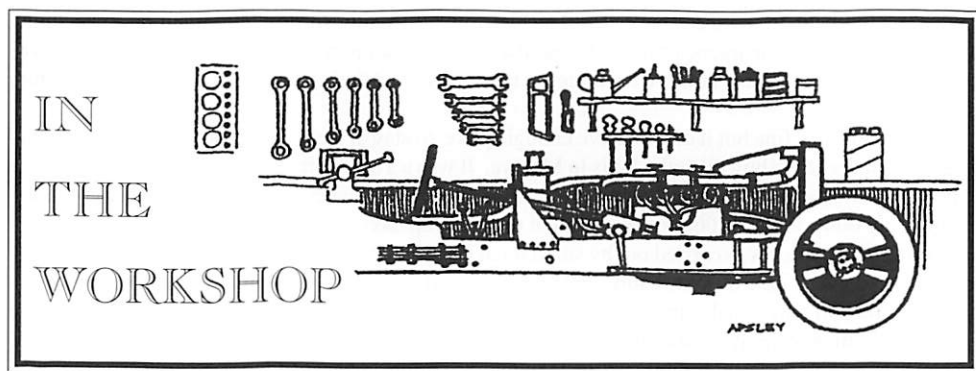
When I first went to Singapore it was possible to bring back cars to U.K. on RN ships and that was my intention with the Alvis. In preparation, I had the engine overhauled, rings were Austin 90 I think, and the car completely resprayed and re-trimmed. The engine work was done by Eng Seng, but for the spray and interior work the car went to the inmates of the infamous Changi jail. The car was stripped to bare metal, all corrosion repaired and then it was sprayed midnight blue. The interior, which had been brown leather, became pale blue leather with dark blue piping, light grey roof lining and navy carpets; all the woodwork was re-polished. Finally there was a set of white duck seat covers to protect the seats. It looked the proverbial million dollars.

When it was my time to return to U.K., we were in the middle of the Borneo war and I could not bring the car back so I sold it to a close friend, Alan Higgs, who continued to run the car out there. By the time of his return, he managed to get it on a Britannia aircraft but it was incorrectly loaded and was badly damaged on a very rough flight home. He put it in a barn, always intending to repair it but never got round to it, and eventually the car was broken up. A sad end to a car which had served me well in a very exciting part of the world.

DICK CRABTREE

My thanks to Dick for this account which was obviously of great interest to me. – J.N.B.C.





LIGHTING REGULATIONS FOR ALVIS CARS

(And other cars manufactured before 1966)

Extracted from: "The Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989" - SI 1796 (1989) - ISBN 0-11-097796-3.

INTRODUCTION

Many "Construction and use" regulations do not apply to our cars, but others do. I did not realise until recently that rear reflectors were obligatory and this made me wonder what really were the rules. With some difficulty I got a copy of the lighting regulations and have made a summary of the ones that apply to the lights on our cars. I have checked the summary several times and feel it gives a clear account of the requirements. It clearly cannot replace the actual regulations, which you should refer to if you have any doubts. Direct quotes are in *italics*.

NOTE - All the following refers only to cars made before 1966. The rules for later cars, particularly those made after 1986, are more onerous. The extracts refer only to requirements for the lights themselves. The rules for using them are in the Highway Code.

LIGHTS REQUIRED ON ANY CAR:

1. SIDE LAMPS (*"Front position lamps"*)

Any car, however old, must be fitted with a *matched pair* of white lights "*aligned to the front*" and "*visible to the front from a reasonable distance*". They can be any size or wattage, and must be mounted not more than 510 mm from the side of the car, and not more than 2300 mm above the ground.

2. REAR LAMPS (*"Rear position lamps"*)

Any car, however old, must be fitted with two red lights "*aligned to the rear*" and "*visible to the rear from a reasonable distance*". They can be any size or wattage and must be mounted "*at or near the rear*", not more than 800 mm from the side of the car and not more than 2100 mm from the ground. They must not be mounted on the boot lid or other movable part of the car.

3. REAR REFLECTORS

Any car, however old, must be fitted with two red reflectors, "*plainly visible from the rear*", mounted not more than 610mm from the side of the car and not more than 1525 mm above the ground. They may be any size and must not be mounted on the boot lid.

4. REAR NUMBER PLATE LAMPS

Any car, however old, must have one or more white lamps "*capable of adequately illuminating the rear registration plate*".

LAMPS REQUIRED ON CARS FIRST USED AFTER 1931

5. DIPPED-BEAM HEADLIGHTS

Any car first used after 1 Jan 1931 must be fitted with a *matched pair* of white or yellow dipped-beam headlights, of any size, but with at least 30 watt bulbs and switched together. On cars first used after 1 Jan 1952 they must be mounted less than 1200 mm above the ground, and on cars first used after 1 Jan 1956 they must be more than 500 mm above the ground. The alignment of the lights must be capable of adjustment when the car is stopped. If combined with the main-beam lamp they must be set so that the main beam is horizontal or slightly below. If not combined it must be set "*so as not to cause undue dazzle or discomfort to other persons using the road*".

6. MAIN-BEAM HEAD LIGHTS

Any vehicle first used after 1 Jan 1931 must be fitted with a pair of white or yellow headlights aligned to the front, of any size, but with at least 30 watt bulbs and switched together. The alignment of the lights must be capable of adjustment when the car is stopped. They must be arranged so that they can either be deflected by the driver to become a dipped beam or extinguished and replaced by a dipped beam. The only other requirement is that "*the outer edges of the illuminated areas must in no case be closer to the side of the vehicle than the outer edges of the illuminated areas of the obligatory dipped-beam headlights*". This is clearly met by the normal headlight which combines dipped and main beam and by the "stacked" lamps on TE's and TF's, but P100's with separate passing lamps may not strictly comply.

LAMPS REQUIRED ON CARS FIRST USED AFTER 1936

7. STOP LAMPS

Cars first used after 1 Jan 1936 must have at least one red stop lamp of any size, wattage or intensity, "*visible to the rear*". They may be mounted at any height. If two are fitted they must be a matched pair, mounted centrally at least 400 mm apart. A single lamp must be central or on the off side. They must be operated "*by the application of the service braking system*".

8. DIRECTION INDICATORS

Cars first used after 1 Jan 1936 must have direction indicators, defined as: "*lamps to indicate ...that the driver intends to change direction ...*". "Trafficators" satisfy this rule, but presumably must include a working lamp (and see below). The light on a trafficator must be amber and can be any wattage *such that the light is plainly visible to the front and rear from a reasonable distance*. "Flashers" must be between 15 and 36 watts, colour amber, except that on cars first used before 1 Sept 1965 they may be white at the front and red at the rear. The

lights can be any size and must be plainly visible from a reasonable distance. The only rule on positioning is that they must be at least 350 mm above the ground and must not be mounted on the boot lid. They must flash at between 60 and 120 times a minute. One final rule— *every indicator shall when in operation perform efficiently regardless of the speed of the vehicle*. My experience of trafficators is that the wind pressure makes them stick at above 50 mph. So!!

OPTIONAL LAMPS

9. REVERSING LAMPS

A car may be fitted with not more than two white reversing lamps of any size, aligned to the rear and fitted with bulbs not more than 24 W each. A car built after 1954 must have a “*tell-tale*” light to “*show when the device has been switched on*” unless the lamps can only be lit by selection of reverse gear.

10. FRONT FOG LAMPS

A car may be fitted with any number of white or yellow front fog lights of any size or wattage, mounted less than 1200 mm above the ground. If used in fog in place of the dipped-beam headlights, they must be less than 400 mm from the side of the vehicle. They must be capable of adjustment when the car is stopped, and must be aimed to the front so that the upper edge of the beam is “*three percent below the horizontal*”.

11. REAR FOG LAMPS

A car may be fitted with any number of rear red fog lights of any size or wattage. They must be separated at least 100 mm from a stop lamp and must not be operated by the braking system.

12. OPTIONAL DIPPED HEADLAMPS

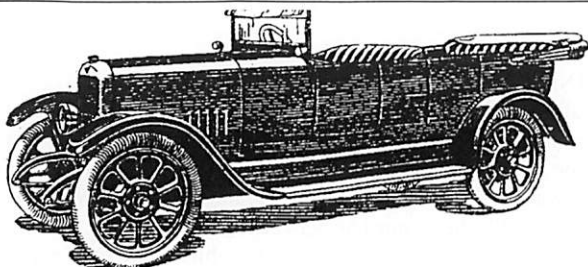
A car may be fitted with any number of optional white or yellow dipped-beam headlights of any wattage provided they follow the rules on height and setting listed in para 5 for obligatory dipped beam headlights.

13. OPTIONAL MAIN-BEAM HEADLIGHTS

A car may be fitted with any number of optional white or yellow main-beam headlights, provided they satisfy the rules on setting and dipping listed in para 6 for obligatory main-beam headlights

JIMTATCHELL

My thanks to Jim for drawing up details of these regulations for us — J.N.B.C.



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



The early days – high hopes! The Speed 20 when bought in 1968, fitted with a Bedford lorry engine.

Photo: Peter Sanders

"Don't worry – it'll be on the road in three months," I told my wife, as she looked aghast as the large black open motor car rolled into our drive. A gross exaggeration, admittedly, but I did not realise at the time that I was fooling myself as well.

The year was 1968 and I really had bitten off more than I could chew. At the time I was raising a young family, restoring a Victorian house, rebuilding a Morris Eight which lay around in pieces, did not have a garage and was throwing myself enthusiastically into a new job. But the sight of the Speed 20 even as it lay in near dereliction in a barn was too much to resist, no matter that it was fitted with a Bedford lorry engine and the rear half was a crude special.

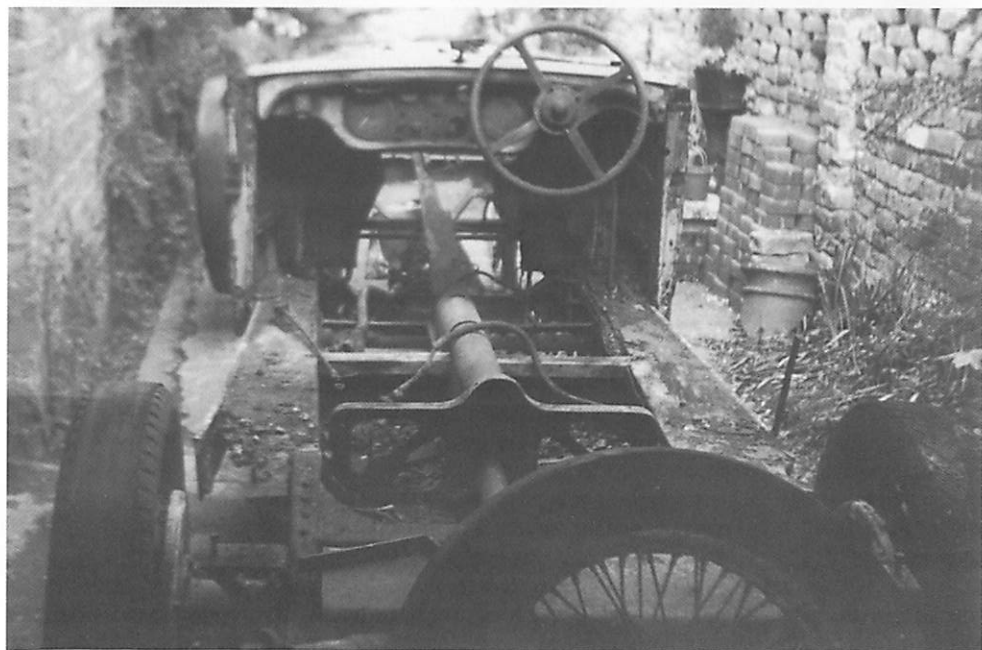
When I first saw the car I was disappointed to be told that it had been sold. I forgot about it, but after nearly a month my phone rang and the owner told me that the prospective purchaser's cheque had bounced and the car was mine if I wanted it.

With the help of some friends we managed to start the engine and it was driven half way back to my place, some ten miles before it conked out and had to be taken in tow. By chance the original engine was also found in the barn, minus carbs and gearbox and was thrown in on the deal, at no extra cost.



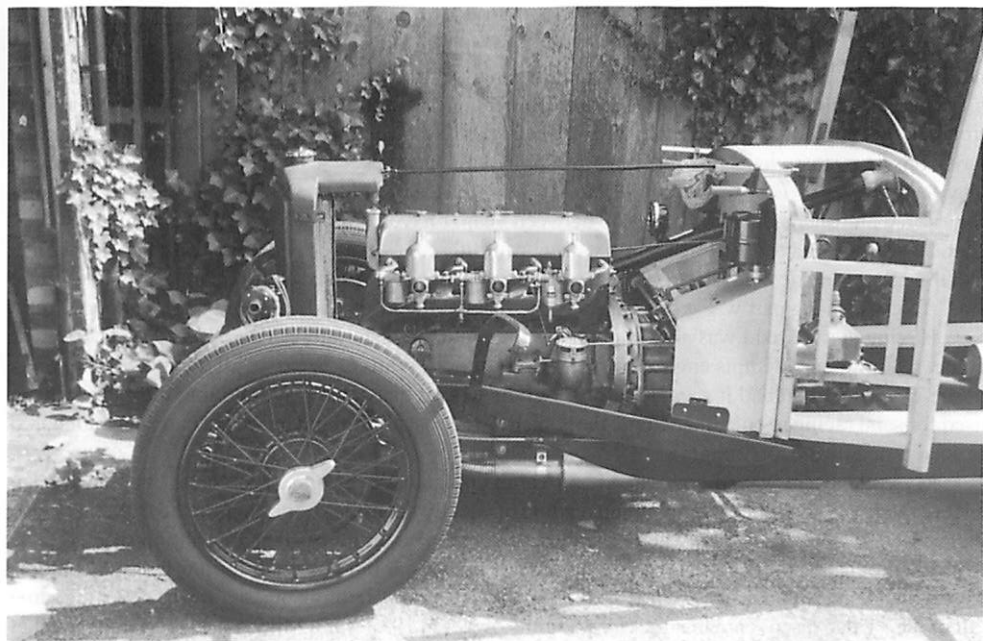
Looking rather derelict after the removal of the engine.

Photo: Peter Sanders



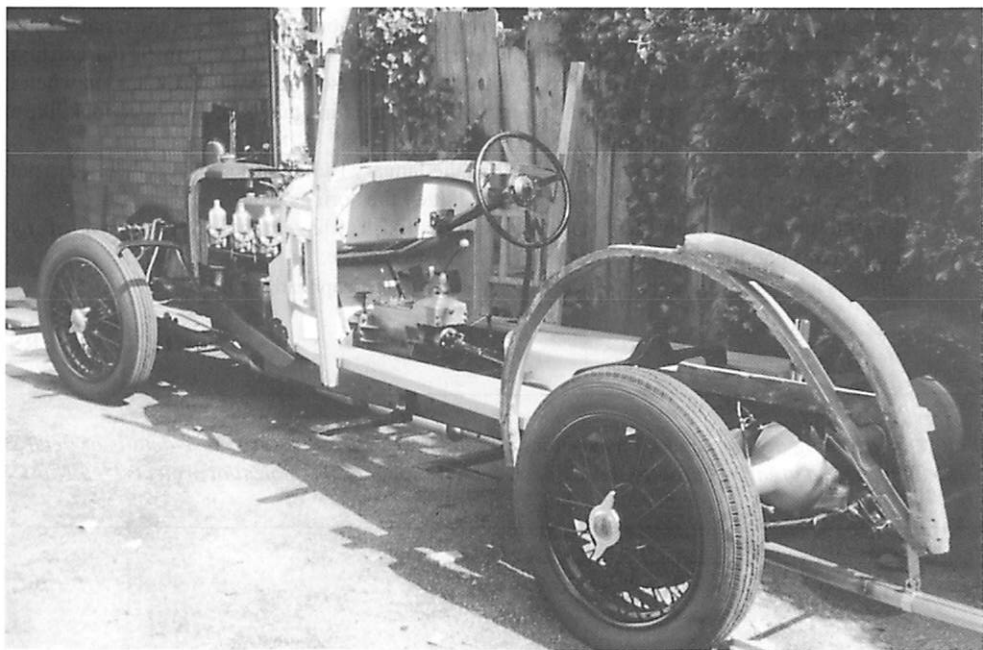
Looking sadder still after body removal.

Photo: Peter Sanders



Restored chassis and engine and the beginnings of the bodywork.

Photo: Peter Sanders



Still a long way to go but perhaps not now "impossible".

Photo: Peter Sanders

I was not worried too much about the body. Having previously rebuilt a 1932 Morris Minor I knew that the Alvis was bound to be rotten and I was thinking of building a nicer looking special – but not right away. Meantime the car was smothered in oil to prevent rust and sheeted over. I had always been interested in an Alvis having read the exploits of an owner who had taken a vintage one on a trouble-free tour to the Arctic Circle ... also the fact that Alvis claimed they would supply any part for any Alvis no matter what age. But I only ever remember having seen two Speed 20s of about the same year as mine – and very impressive they were too. Fast Forward to 1995. The Alvis is still lying unrestored and sheeted over. But in the between years I have completely rebuilt the original engine, found a gearbox and restored it together with a beautiful set of carburettors. I have also had new wings and mudguards made. I have also re-framed the scuttle. I was surprised at how clapped out the engine was. Every moving part was worn out, only the magneto worked and appeared to be in good order.

Having just retired I was able to put more time into the restoration. There were more horrors to come. Despite my attempts engine oil is not the best preservative. Wear on all the mechanical parts of the chassis was so bad it seemed to bear out the legend that I had been told that the car had been used for sand racing at one time. Some parts such as the cast aluminium bulkhead had been butchered to accommodate the lorry engine.

My enthusiasm waxed and waned as I came up against ever more problems, but I have been encouraged at seeing other examples and reading of equally daunting restorations in the Bulletin. I also met a previous owner's widow who remembered the car in better times. Her description seemed to be that of a drophead coupé. She told me: "It was a beautiful car but too small for our family and dogs. My husband met a man in a pub who offered to convert it into a shooting brake – it was never the same after that." I also discovered that the car's original owner in 1932 was a Miss B. J.M. Streather and that she drove it in the 1933 RAC Rally. Unfortunately I have been unable to locate any photographs but after much searching I was able to obtain some old leftover scraps of body frame of a Vanden Plas drophead which would have been re-built. If only I had known.

The recent photographs show the framework is only clamped on temporarily at the moment and I expect to carry out some more surgery to get a precise fit. Making the frame to fit the existing panelling is not easy, but it is all I have got to go on as most of the scuttle frame disintegrated when I removed it from the bulkhead. It is encouraging to work on something that is beginning to look like a motor car and not a collection of bits and pieces.

I am working to the design featured on page 78 of the January Bulletin – looks as if I'll have to put a couple of hundredweight of potatoes in the boot to flatten the springs a bit.

Restoration progresses with three steps forward, two back. I have now learnt the error of my ways. I should have bought a complete running car in the first place.

Finally – is any body out there – especially a Vanden Plas drophead coupé?

PETER SANDERS

A most entertaining account and I am sure that all readers will wish to have more details of Peter's restoration. It is a great incentive to those of us who have long term restoration projects — J.N.B.C



ARCHIVE

— A Selection of Pictures
from the Past —



Aerial view of Rosedene Garage, York Road, Whinmoor, Leeds, the establishment of the late Norman Routledge (Member No.28) Constructor of many specials and Bullnose Morris exponent.

The Alvis far right is the one featured in "The Last Lap" (Bulletin No 457) and is 12/70 Chassis No 15646. DNG 281.

Also discernable is the tail end of Norman's Duncan TA14, 20549, HVF 2.

There are two other Fourteens outside and a further one just inside the garage doors — Dave Culshaw.

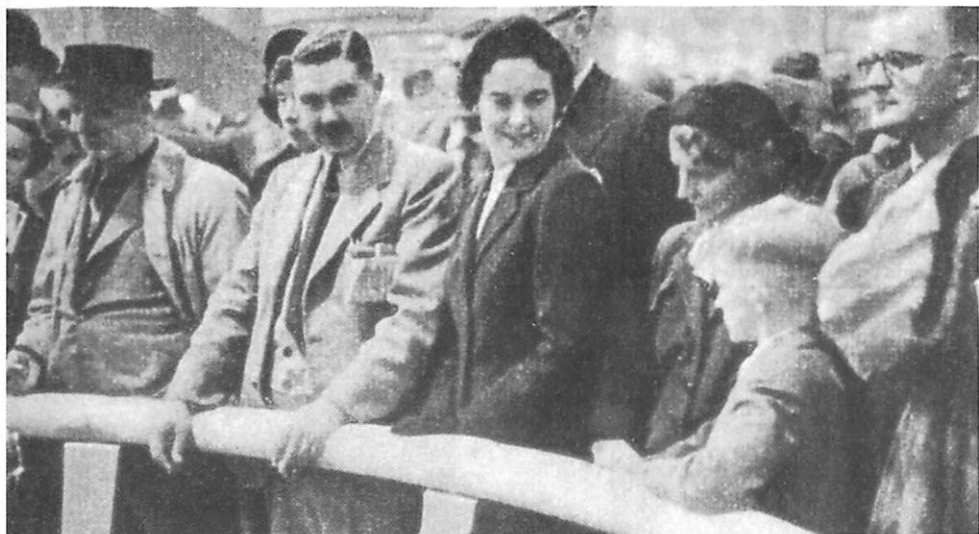
Photo: Richard Routledge



Long ago and far away. Doug Bryce and cattle dog stand by their Alvis on the banks of the flooded Bluebush Creek, on Colston Station, near Winton in central Queensland. The year is 1936; despite obvious modifications, the Alvis is basically a 1923 12/50. Picture from the John Oxley Library, Brisbane, by courtesy of Frank Corbett. Frank is following up the trail of the car, and hopes at very least to recover the dog's name — David Manson



An SC Speed 20 photographed in 1948 which belonged to a Mr Cragg. The photograph came from his son M.Cragg via Barry Lown. The car is Chassis 11976, AKB 583. It is now owned by Daniel Fischelin in Switzerland.— Dave Culshaw



This picture appeared in the Autocar, October 26th 1951 with the caption, "There's a fence round it, so he can't try what it feels like to be a driver. A pity, because it's the new Austin Seven.... just about the right size."

The young man is none other than South West Section Member Alan Firth, then aged nine — Dave Culshaw.



The first patrol car of the Dundee Police. This is 1931 SE Silver Eagle Cross & Ellis tourer, Chassis 8832 — Charles Mackonochie

Photo: Copyright Chief Constable, Tayside Police

MY KIND OF CAR



Doug Daniels' TF21. "Amy" admires the new paint job in 1994.

Photo: Doug Daniels

It is with some degree of incredulity, that I realise that I have now been a member of the Alvis Owner club for a quarter of a century. During this time I have owned two TE 21's and one TF 21. Each of these vehicles has provided me with a nice blend of pleasure and pain, most of the pain being confined to the wallet, but on the whole, the pleasure has been the greater experience.

I have never been a great fan of *modern* cars and although it cannot be denied that fuel injection and electronic ignition add greatly to reliability and performance – if for some reason it won't start in the morning, I'd like to think I could fix it myself without the recourse to an oscilloscope or a computer. Give me a set of SU's and a distributor any day.

It also seems to me that the degree of mechanical complexity is inversely proportional to the character of a given vehicle. I once owned a Porsche for about two years and although it commanded respect (we have ways of commanding respect), I could never *love* it! I suppose to be fair, a car which can do 60 in second gear is not a suitable vehicle to negotiate the Holloway Road in the rush hour. I breathed a sigh of relief on the day it left for its new home, not least because the money I saved on insurance could finance a total re-spray on the Alvis.

I have always been drawn to anachronistic vehicles. When I began driving in the early 1960's I chose a 1932 Citroen Rosalie (2 seater tourer with dicky seat) as my regular transport. I really *loved* that car, you always remember your first love, and the affair continued for 15 years. But in the end cable brakes a crash gearbox, 23 hundredweight and narrow section tyres proved just too demanding in

the ever increasing commuter traffic. It finally went to a Citroen enthusiast who promised a total restoration. It was difficult not to blub as it was trailed away. During the same period I also had brief dalliances with a 1938 2.5 litre S.S. Jaguar, and two Riley's, a 1934 Kestrel and a 1938 Blue Streak Adelphi, which I persuaded my fiancé to buy! It cost £8.10s. and had a broken half shaft – no problem, we got one from Stanley Burville for £10. That was a lovely car but on bumpy roads the front passenger door opened. Potentially fatal as it was hinged at the back. So we fitted it with a safety chain. Julia, (my fiancé, now my long suffering wife) cried when it finally had to depart due to a defunct gearbox and no available spares.

In 1967 I tried an XK 150 Jaguar – a beautiful but demanding mistress, more of a dominatrix in fact, with an insatiable thirst for cocktails of 5 star and Duckhams. She kept me poor for two and a half years and I felt considerable relief when she finally departed to deplete some other poor twerp's bank balance. Then there was a succession of MG's, A, B and Midget. Great cars all, especially the A. I used that for over four years, lovely in the summer with the hood down, but bloody chilly in the winter.

As I drove to work each day, I would pass a house, in the drive of which stood an Alvis 12/50 beetleback, which I believe belonged to a certain Mr. Salt. I liked the look of it, and this started me thinking about Alvis. I remembered being offered a TA 14 for £25 back in 1960 but I declined as it appeared to be firing on only 3 cylinders and I went to view an early Firebird but it was far too decrepit. At an early visit to the Motor Show, back in the 1960's, I had been greatly impressed by the Alvis TD 21. I began to search the columns of motoring magazines and Exchange and Mart. It wasn't too long before I found one. It was a series two automatic which had been recently re-sprayed in flame red but the interior was blue! Not quite the correct colour scheme I observed to the somewhat doubtful character who was offering it for sale. I passed this one up. About a month later I purchased my first Alvis, a TE 21 automatic, from a vertically challenged enthusiast who had the driver's seat jacked up on two lengths of 4 x 2! I drove it home with my head jammed up against the roof, carefully avoiding bumps in the road. Although mechanically quite reasonable, the bodywork had seen better days. It looked quite presentable but a slight shunt with a Fort Cortina in a garage, dislodged a huge area of filler on the rear wing, whereupon the owner of the Ford enquired if the whole car was built of Isopon!



First Love
1932 Citroen Rosalie Tourer
Photographed in 1963

This was during the torrid Summer of 1976 and my lasting impression of that car was the foot scalding temperatures in the footwell caused by the gallons of hot transmission oil sloshing around in the automatic gearbox just inches from one's toes and the frequent stops to let things cool down, often involuntary due to fuel vapourisation. However, it was nice and cosy in the winter.

I then did the sensible thing, I joined the AOC and acquired my next TE from a respected member. It was a 5 speed manual and a pleasure to drive but without power steering a considerable effort to park. I enjoyed this Alvis for four years until one day whilst shopping close to my home I saw a run down TF 21 parked in the road.

It was some months later that I saw it advertised for sale in a local paper. I knew it must be the same car, there just couldn't be two TF's in the same area. I went to see it and was shocked. It had deteriorated much more in the intervening months. The carpets were a soggy mush, fungus was growing on the rear parcel shelf, the paintwork was matt and the rear wings were holed. I suppose I felt sorry for it, so I bought it. Getting it home proved to be exciting. The starter motor had burnt out so after fitting a new battery I had to start it on the handle. It was at this stage that I discovered that it did have very good compression but did not have much of an exhaust system. What little remained instantly disintegrated in a shower of rust as the engine finally burst into life. Driving it home revealed the shortcomings of the braking system, much of which appeared to be seized, and it was soon apparent that the dynamo wasn't charging either as the lights were getting progressively dimmer. The universal joints clonked ominously and the whole vehicle shuddered as the automatic gearbox attempted to swap cogs. It was fortunate that it was only a short journey home!

I now owned two Alvises, a TE and a TF. Reluctantly I decided to part with the TE in order to finance a restoration of the TF. That was in 1983 and I am still working on it! That makes 18 years, it could be one of the longest running restorations ever. It will never be perfect, but if it were it would probably be less interesting. Since I began driving, over 40 years ago, I have been privileged to own many interesting vehicles and apart from my first love, the Alvis comes closest to my perceived ideal and as I have now owned Alvises for twenty-five years. I think I could fairly be described as a true enthusiast of the marque.

Now that I have retired, I no longer have to commute to work so the Alvis is in semi-retirement too. Most of our local journey's are made in the wife's Mini – you can always find somewhere to park that! It is hard to justify owning and running a 3 Litre these days but after a quarter of a century, I can't imagine life without an Alvis now. I just might make arrangements to be buried in it!

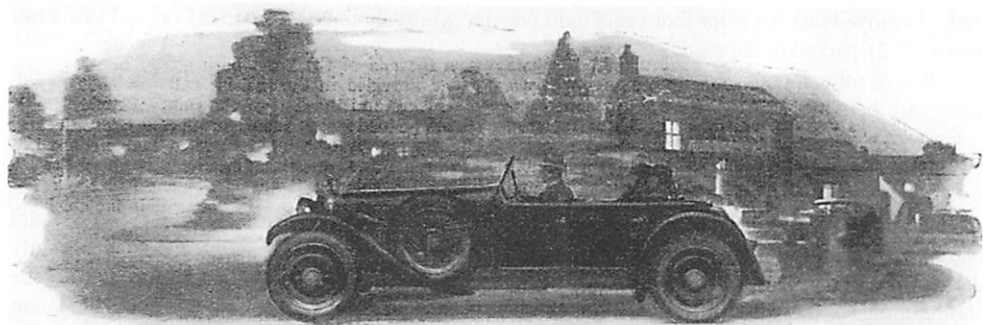
DOUG DANIELS

**You can afford an
ALVIS**

**—in fact, if quality appeals, you
cannot afford any other car !**

ONE YEAR'S PROGRESS

— Comparing the 1931 Alvis Saloon and the 1932 Alvis Speed Twenty —



While it is easy to compare a car of ten years ago with its 1932 relative and to perceive the vast improvement made in a decade, it is not so easy to sum up the progress of one single year. I have, however, just had an exceptionally good opportunity of comparing any impressions of a 1931 model and its 1932 relative, both cars having been used under identical conditions — arduous ones, too — and over the same route.

In order to make these experiences useful to those who are particularly interested in two fine Alvis productions, it is first of all necessary to outline the conditions under which these cars were driven and judged. Each of them was used for a night run from Birkenhead to London, in order to bring a representative of The Motor Cycle, with the report and photographs of one of the motor cycle T. T. races in the Isle of Man, to Fleet Street with all possible dispatch. The courier was met at Birkenhead as soon as he could disembark at Liverpool and cross the river, and the run was commenced at 8.30 pm, with Fleet Street — roughly 200 miles away — to be reached not later than 2 am.

Obviously, therefore, an average round about 40 m.p.h. had to be maintained over this distance of 200 miles, and, while the question of average speeds is always hotly debated, the fact remains that it requires a very good car to average 40 m.p.h. over a long distance with complete reliability and with ease.

As it is not my desire to start a wordy warfare on the subject of average speeds, I would draw special attention to those few words in italics. A small-powered car with a maximum speed of 50 m.p.h. can undoubtedly average 40 m.p.h., provided that road and traffic conditions permit. A faster car, however, will make a better average over the same run, or will allow the same average to be made more easily. A faster car is also likely to be more reliable, as it will be less highly stressed. It is important to note also that there was no intention of trying to set up any sort of unofficial record on this run. The approximate time at which the courier could be picked up was known, and, provided that he was in London at 2 am, all was well. Accordingly, a provisional time-table with a schedule of just over 40 m.p.h. was all that was necessary, but the arrival in London to time had to be as certain as human forethought could make it.

For that reason considerable thought was given to the route to be taken, and it was decided last year not to follow the Holyhead road on meeting it south of Newport, as when this was done on previous occasions delay was experienced owing to the heavy lorry traffic to be found on the London-Coventry road at night. Accordingly, from Newport the road south was followed to Wolverhampton,

then the new arterial road to the outskirts of Birmingham, when a cut across the suburbs of that city was taken on to the Stratford road, and thence through Banbury, Bicester, Aylesbury, Berkhamsted and the Watford by-pass. This slightly longer but more deserted route was, therefore, followed this year as well, for it is in good condition as to surface, and there are many straight stretches which make a high average all the easier.

Last year the car used was really an experimental Alvis Twenty, and it cruised comfortably at between 55 and 60 m.p.h., it had good acceleration at about 70 m.p.h., and then rather slower acceleration to a maximum of about 80 m.p.h. This car handled nicely, and, for a saloon, was steady on corners, with no rolling, while its brakes were smooth and progressive, and the steering was light and easy.

For this year's run I was fortunate in having at my disposal one of the latest Alvis Speed Twenties, an open four-seater, and, as a road test in *The Autocar* of May 13th showed, it had a maximum of just over 89 m.p.h. over the timed half-mile, with a very useful 70 m.p.h. available on third gear. Naturally, on this car there was no effort in averaging 40 m.p.h. Where a year ago we cruised at 55 to 60 m.p.h., this year we could cruise round about 70 m.p.h.; in other words, the cruising speed of the Speed Twenty is about 10 to 15 m.p.h. higher.

Such speeds are, moreover, reached very quickly, and can be checked as quickly with the powerful brakes, for the road test figures gave a braking distance of 25 ft. from 30 m.p.h. to rest.

Obviously, therefore, the performance of the Speed Twenty is considerably higher than that of the ordinary Alvis Twenty saloon, as, of course, one would expect it to be. But as regards the ease of control there is also an improvement, which one who had only driven the ordinary Twenty would not deem possible. Nicely as the Twenty handles, the Speed Twenty is better still, for it is a car to delight the heart of a super-enthusiast. It seems to possess a perfectly uncanny steadiness on the road, and to give the feeling always of being one rigid unit under perfect control. This is doubtless due to the robust construction of the chassis and the rigidity of the double-dropped, low hung frame, together with the excellence of the suspension system, with the shock absorbers doing just the right amount of work, and the correctness of the weight distribution, for all these factors play an important part.

Then the steering, just as light and free as on the previous car, but somehow even more decisive and precise. The brakes undoubtedly are more powerful than those of a year ago, although just as smooth in action, acting evenly on all four wheels and without any pull on the steering.

It appears as if I am describing two distinct cars, and, of course, I am, the only points of likeness being that they both bear the Alvis name and both are Twenties. The interesting point is, however, that in the Speed Twenty there is concentrated a year's experience gained from the ordinary Twenty. A year's experience of such intricate problems as engine balance, gas distribution, and so forth, a year's experience in improving road-holding, suspension, steering, and brakes, a year's experience, in fact, in refining a performance which was already good.

Between the average speeds put up by the two cars there was only 2 or 3 m.p.h. difference, for, as both cars always had plenty in hand, one would not expect much difference, but it is very much easier to average 40 m.p.h. for 200 miles on the Speed Twenty than on the normal Twenty. On the latter it is not difficult, but on the former, it is as if one set off for an evening's run and just arrived, without more ado.

In all these small improvements here and there throughout the chassis there lie the lessons of twelve months. One who did not know might think that the Speed Twenty was just a "hotted-up" edition of the normal Twenty on a double-dropped frame, but such an assumption would be entirely wrong. In such a case, how would the smooth running of the normal engine be retained? How would the greater brake efficiency be arrived at? No, for the explanation of the differences one would have to seek much deeper into detail, and one might find different dimensions of important parts and units, different material specifications, different processes of manufacture, and different clearances, and, unfortunately, refinement costs money. Speed and refinement are, indeed, a costly combination, as

every first-class really fast chassis has proved.

A. G. DOUGLAS CLEAVE B. Sc.

*This article first appeared in The Autocar on the 8th July 1932 and is reprinted with due thanks.—
J.N.B.C.*

TWO FAT GARDENERS



Gordon Taylor and Guy Cooper with TE21 Chassis 27064

As a non-resident of Britain and a non television watcher, it is not surprising that I knew nothing about this programme or the considerable publicity that the Alvis Marque was receiving because of it. Dave Culshaw, Robin Bendall and David Larkin have all sent me details for which I am grateful.

It appears that various cars were considered before the TE21 was chosen, but it seems that the gardening duo did not like it very much and in fact only drove about sixty miles during the course of the programme. Perhaps they should stick to gardening!

J.N.B.C

IT'S NOT A RELIANT IT'S AN ALVIS

BY ROBIN

There's an ugly rumour going round that I prefer three wheel cars and have modified my Speed 20 accordingly. It's not true although it is true to say it went quite well on three wheels, for a short period of time. This new Lost Hubcap Trophy is there to remind me. I must defend myself.

I was travelling along a quiet country road between the Canadian border and Burlington following two 12/50's (which in itself was fortunate really as it meant I hardly got out of third gear) when I went round this left hand bend. Remember I was in the USA, so I was on the "wrong" side of the road, I saw this wheel overtake me. It looked familiar. You do not see many 20 inch spoked wheels overtaking you especially without a car attached. Quick as a flash, I realised it was my front wheel.

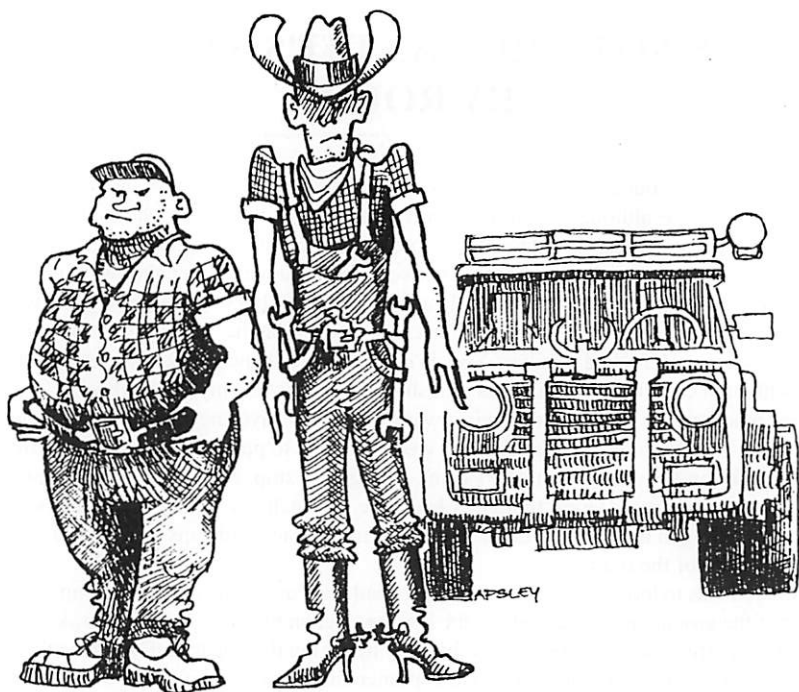
My first reaction was to look and see if it was attached to anything such as a stub axle. What a relief—it wasn't. Although the car was running well I decided to pull over and stop. Fortunately the road was a black top (asphalt to us) and I came to a gentle stop. My wife hardly knew what had happened. (She might say different though) I had time to watch my wheel gently cross the road, it missed a car travelling in the opposite direction and hit a Cadillac amidsthips that was parked in a lay-by on the other side of the road.

The first job was to look and see what damage I had done under my car. The sump was still three inches clear of the ground as the car had run the last few feet on the outer fin of the brake drum. There was only slight scuffing, so if you feel you want to try it, it's not that big a deal. What a relief. I needed to find the spinner (what do you do if you lose a spinner and cannot find it? There a prize for the best answer) It was just lying in the road 10 feet behind the car so I went to pick that up while my wife was defending herself against a very irate motorist who demanded to know why we were so irresponsible in launching a wheel at on coming traffic, especially at this time of the day. Did she know that my wheel only just missed his car? Now Julia is a gentle soul (she has to be married to me) but by this stage shock had taken over. She asked him if he thought we had done it on purpose, I am sure he did, but he saw he was losing the argument and violence was not far under the surface so he left muttering to himself.

The traffic was still passing at speed as it was 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It was time to face the Cadillac owner, who I had noticed was on the phone at the time of the accident and had not even put his phone down let alone got out of the car. I weaved through the traffic to go and face the music. I tapped on the window, he wound it down and gestured me to wait till he had finished his conversation, and I think he was a bit annoyed at being interrupted. Pleasantries over, I said, 'my wheel hit your car'; he said he knew, he'd felt the thud. He got out and walked round the car to take a look. A nice young man in a camel hair overcoat. We looked at the damage. 'Doesn't seem too bad' he said, then after a pause, 'What do you think?' Well me being honest, I agreed of course, even though the panel was V shaped now. There was a lull in the conversation and not wanting to be to pushy I politely asked if he had seen where my wheel had gone. He said he had. It had gone down a 15 ft bank. He immediately offered to go and retrieve it.

Julia was already rooting about for it in the undergrowth (well trained don't you think) but he picked it up, clambered up the bank and across the road to the car, wheel in hand. There are benefits in looking old sometimes.

By this time, not only had the two 12/50 drivers come back having been flagged down at a stop sign by another motorist (notice the Americanisms) and told their friend had a 'puncture', but the local Sheriff turned up as well. He was not interested in our problem only that we did not block the road as



'TWO ROUGH-LOOKING GUYS IN A VERY OLD, DIRTY PICKUP ~

an ambulance was on it's way to a hospital nearby with a heart for transplant. Fortunately we were parked very prettily by the side of the road so it was not a problem for him and he turned his attention to our trip and the cars. So we were back to the Cadillac driver. "What do you think", he said again. It was clear he needed to get back on the phone as he kept looking at it anxiously. This was no time for great gestures, I thought, so best to look helpless/clueless (not difficult for me) "I know a local garage", he said. "I will phone them to come and look". It was very local they arrived in less than five minutes. Two rough looking guys in a very old dirty pick up. That's not a good sign I thought. Now it gets difficult and expensive. They looked at the car, had a quick chat to the owner, who promptly got into his car and on to the phone again. They came over, made a few 'jokes' about cars with their steering wheel on the wrong side (I did not have the heart to tell them most good American cars had the same idea in the 20's or explain where the accelerator was) "Well", the spokesman said, "you were lucky hitting him," he's a nut and going through a very difficult divorce." "So what do you think," I said with concern. "Well he owes us his garage bill. Pay us that, its \$200, and we will call it quits," he said. I know what a Cadillac sedan de ville door costs, someone ran into mine when it was a week old and it's far more than \$200 even unpainted and this car was a Special Edition Fleetwood, (I only hit top of the range models) the biggest they make. What a relief. It had paid not to be too keen to settle for an insurance claim. "Follow us down to our garage", they said, "it's at the next left turn.

Can't miss it. With that they were off. I tried to say something comforting and apologetic to the Cadillac owner but he just smiled, waived and continued talking into his phone. By this time my trusty 12/50 owners had put my wheel back, changed the spinners over so I had a good spinner on a bad hub

and visa versa. The Sheriff stopped the traffic and we were off. It had taken all of 30 minutes start to finish. We met the ambulance five miles down the road. Being honest, of course we did go to the garage, one 12/50 in front and one behind me, watching my wheels intently. We pulled into a very scruffy garage. Several large black dogs eying me I remember. I paid my dues and was even given a free large bottle of Loctite with the suggestion I pour it liberally on the threads of my hub and put the spinner back. Of course I did not, but it came in very handy to fix my starter motor so ably photographed by 'anon' in the January Bulletin.

So my moment of being a three wheeler owner-driver was over. It never came off again until I took it off in the comfort of my own garage. The threads had rounded on both hub and spinner. Obviously it had worked loose on the 'rather uneven roads' of Canada. I know it was tight before I set off on that day's outing because I have video proof of it. I have a brand new hub and spinner on my front nearside wheel now so with any luck my three wheel days are over. I am a bit old for that sort of thing really.

"ROBIN"

TRUE LIES

The following are advertisements from a real-life newspaper (so I've been told) which appeared four days in a row – the last three hopelessly trying to correct the first day's mistake.

MONDAY: For sale: R. D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Phone 948-0707 after 7 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him cheap.

TUESDAY: Notice: We regret having erred in R. D. Jones' advertisement yesterday. It should have read "One sewing machine for sale cheap. Phone 948-0707 and ask for Mrs. Kelly, who lives with him after 7 p.m."

WEDNESDAY: Notice: R. D. Jones has informed us that he has received several annoying telephone calls because of the error we made in the classified advertisement yesterday. The advertisement stands correct as follows: "For sale – R. D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 948-0707 after 7 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who loves with him."

THURSDAY: Notice: I, R. D. Jones, have no sewing machine for sale. I smashed it. Don't call 948-0707 as I have had the phone disconnected. I have not been carrying on with Mrs. Kelly. Until yesterday she was my housekeeper but she quit!

Provided by Nick Simpson. – J.N.B.C.



SECTION NOTES

- Alvis Activities
From Around The
World –

SOUTH WEST SECTION

DARTMOOR MEETING "BREATH OF FRESH AIR"



Two Bridges Hotel, Dartmoor, 14th January 2001. Fresh air addicts with Alvises.

Despite weeks of wet weather and predictions of snow and ice, ten brave members and their spouses from far and wide, all of questionable sanity, booked into the Two Bridges Hotel located on the centre of Dartmoor, for the weekend of 13/14 January 2001.

The objectives of the weekend were varied and included testing oneself to the limits of endurance in walking, eating, drinking, talking, shopping and sight seeing and these were all achieved. Highlights included superb meals on Friday and Saturday night in the hotel's beautiful oak panelled dining room, walks of approximately five miles on the Saturday and Sunday morning, led by the Waltons, trips to Dartmoor Prison (and back) and shopping excursions to Exeter, Totnes and Tavistock.

One member with a morbid interest in Grimpen Mire (Hound of the Baskervilles) found it or something very similar when straying from the perma frost path, he disappeared up to his thigh in the black stuff.

Despite the predictions of rain or snow for the time of the year, the weather proved wonderful, bright sunlight emphasising the wild beauty of the moor, which no doubt encouraged other local members to swell the party for Sunday lunch to eighteen.

Real hero's who arrived in proper cars were Ron and Jane Walton TA14, Sandy and Ted Sayer TD21 DHC and the intrepid Geoff and Thelma Wilson. With the hood down on their Firefly Special on the Sunday. An excellent way to remember the 50th Anniversary.

A wonderful weekend, in good company, in training for the Exmoor walking weekend planned for April.

"BLACKLEG"

THERE IS NO OTHER CAR IN THE WORLD QUITE LIKE AN ALVIS

BECAUSE ALVIS cars represent the incorporation of the best engineering development that progress has revealed, and the retention of those features which experiment has failed to improve.

BECAUSE what is called new to-day, such as independent front wheel steering and springing, rubber suspension, etc., was developed and put into production ten years ago, and is, therefore, no experimental feature on these cars.

BECAUSE experts agree that its all-silent, all-synchromesh gearbox is the best in the world.

THE NEW SILVER CREST, with its alternative engines of 16.95 and 20 H.P., offers all these outstanding qualities with such a brilliant performance that it is difficult to believe that such power can be developed so smoothly, silently, and economically. From £565 ex Works.

This Model is fully described in a brochure which will gladly be supplied on request.

"SILVER ALVIS CREST"