

THE BULLETIN

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Front Cover: Albert Sparrowhawk's 4.3 Special Number Four photographed at Brooklands a couple of years or so ago. See article in this issue.

Photo: J.N.B.C

Centre Spread: A delightfully informal picture of two great Alvis heroes, David Michie and F.C. Brown photographed outside the Service Department in 1967 by Marc Pain, who was on a trip from Australia. The car is TE21 27100 despatched in April 1964. The number plate is probably a personal plate as the first owner was John Fenwick. The car is now owned by L.L. Schapira of Los Angeles.

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.



- A Round up of Alvis Matters -

By the time that you receive this issue of The Bulletin, the Golden Jubilee celebrations will be only a memory but a pleasant one I am sure. The next issue will be largely devoted to the happenings over the Jubilee Weekend and I hope that that issue will be a fitting record of this most important event in the Club's history. Depending on the amount of material that I receive, some more regular features may have to be held for the following issue.

In the pages of this issue you will find a review of Ron Walton's recently published book of memoirs, *Young Ron—An Alvis Experience*. This is another important landmark in Alvis literature. Then you will see a letter from Nick Walker in the correspondence columns concerning his shortly to be published book on the Alvis Speed models. This much needed volume will be well worth waiting for. And then the other day I had a letter from Donald Cowbourne which told me that his next book on British Trials Drivers will be published soon. I understand that there is also a book about the Stalwart which has been published but I have seen nothing of it yet. How appropriate that these splendid volumes are all being published in our Jubilee Year. I can remember when there was not a single book about the Alvis marque in print. Over the years some extremely good books have been published and now we seem to be well provided for. It is to be hoped that other Alvis—related publications will appear in due course.

I must mention again that great progress is being made on the Club's Jubilee Book which has been written by John Wheeley and will be published before the end of the year. This is turning out to be something of a tome and as with the other volumes mentioned, the Jubilee Book will be an essential acquisition for the enthusiast's library and seriously, it will be a collector's item in the future. Further reports will be made as the project progresses.

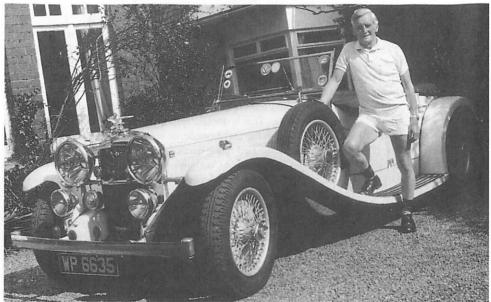
I have noticed a considerable reduction in the volume of material reaching me for publication in The Bulletin, at least as far as reports of events are concerned. I suppose that one of the main reasons for this is the tragic foot and mouth outbreak, and it would be wrong to moan about the loss of a few events in comparison with this great national disaster. But even so, I do need material to fill the pages of The Bulletin. I am always only too pleased to publish contributions about almost anything to do with the Alvis marque or the Club. I try to produce a balanced Bulletin but this balance does depend on contributions. Apart from reports of events, I am always interested in historical pieces, restorations, technical articles, archive pictures and of course pieces which are amusing. We must not take ourselves or our activities too seriously!

This issue contains some particularly good articles and I hope that everyone enjoys them. I particularly like the Centre Spread photograph featuring David Michie and F.C.Brown. We seldom see photographs of those important men who made the Alvis Company what it was. If anyone has any photographs of a similar nature I would like to see them.

J.N.B.C.

OBITUARY

DR C. E (TED) HALLIDAY



The late Ted Halliday in characteristic pose with his Speed 20.

A member of the Club for forty years, Ted Halliday was born in Farnborough, Hampshire and developed an early interest and appreciation of quality mechanical products from his father who was an aircraft design engineer.

Boarding school at Pocklington, in East Yorks developed Ted to becoming head boy in his final year. Medical school in Bristol became the next stage in a long career — he qualified in 1947. Having been automatically deferred, National Service resumed after he qualified, when Ted joined the Royal Navy as a Surgeon Lieutenant.

Joyce and Ted were married in 1949 and after a period as a G.P. Locum he entered the field of orthorpaedic medicine.

In 1957 at Purley, he joined the artificial limb service, moving to Newcastle for a period of time before transfer to Exeter, where he continued until retirement age loomed. Undaunted, with such specialist skills he was in demand and continued with clinics at Bristol, Truro, Norwick and Swansea.

A member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, his garden ponds housed many varieties of ducks including breeding pairs, which gave many visitors a peaceful moment or two.

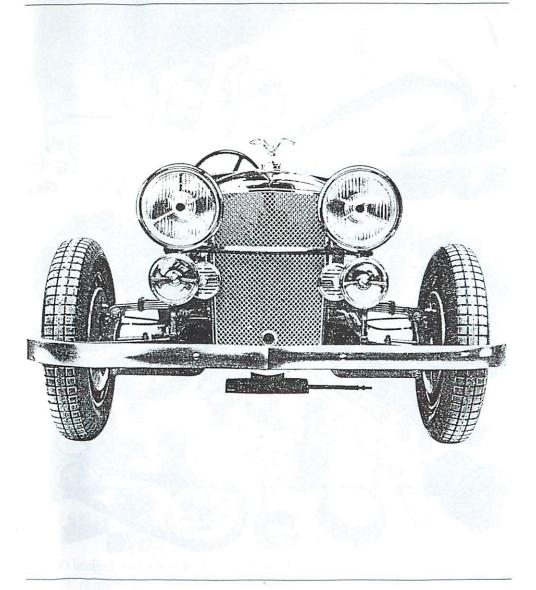
Some of his other interests included working steam models and in the last few years since final retirement, he built a magnificent garden railway in two gauges capable of carrying items from one end of the garden by the house to the farthest end shed, probably 150 meters away.

Ted was a South Western Section Committee Member for very many years, and also served as Chairman.

Supported at many motoring events both locally and internationally by his wife Joyce, and last year with son Christopher on the U.S.A Tour, he will be sadly missed by many like-minded colleagues.

To Joyce and his three sons we offer our sincere condolences.

Alan Firth



ALTON FOR ALVIS

 Guy Griffiths reminisces about his life in the motor trade in the early postwar period –

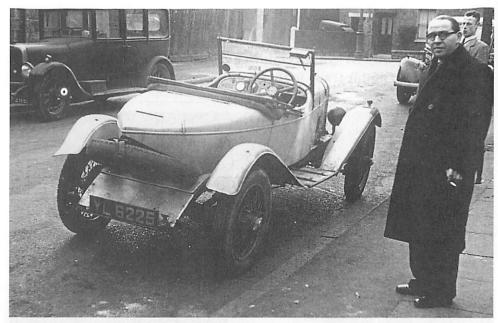


Brook Mews North, W.2. 1934 Silver Eagle Cross and Ellis Six Light Saloon, Chassis 12187 last known in 1954.

Photo: Guy Griffiths

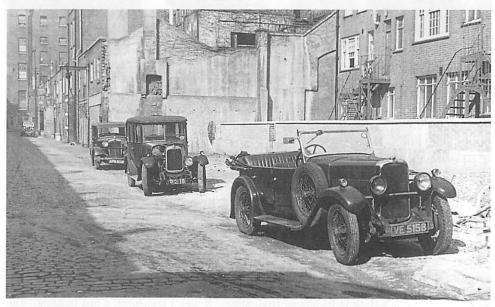
Towards the end of the Second World War, Ken Greenwood, who had been my head salesman prewar, got on to me to talk about starting up in business again. I was then still in the Research Department of Napiers. Before I was free to leave, he had a very good offer from another man. As I had very little capital, I advised him to take the chance. He did, and started B and G Motors (Baines and Greenwood) in Camden Town. A few months later I left Napiers and set up in business myself with another ex Napier man, Peter Bentley, as partner. This was in spite of my saying I would never have another partner after my prewar motor racing experience!

My capital was a 1932 Riley Monaco, which I sold. Bentley had about the same amount. From a shed in Richmond, with a leaking corrugated iron roof and an earth floor, we started Alton Garage. It was in Alton Road, a *cul-de-sac* between Sheen Road and the Southern Railway. We opened an account with Martin's Bank in Richmond High Street. It was, I remember, a fine building. The manager's office was a circular, marble floored affair with a glass dome in the ceiling. The manager, Kennith Ralston, was a charming man. He had been badly wounded in the First War and had a silver plate in his head. There were no visible signs of the injury, but it had left him with writer's cramp when



Stanley Setty amazed we could sell such cars. Crica 1948. 1925 12/50 TF Chassis 3720. This car appeared in the film "Another Shore".

Photo: Guy Griffiths



YP2116 1926 12/50 TE Chassis 4434, now a Beetleback with Alvis Register Member J.Thornly. VE5158 1931 12/50 TJ Chassis 8837 now with Alvis Register Member F.J. Alton.

Photo: Guy Griffiths

he held a pen, making writing arduous. We explained our situation and limited means. We said we wanted to trade in a solvent state, but would sometimes need short overdrafts while waiting for cheques to clear, or to cope with a bounced one. He said 'If you always keep me informed, I will try to help in any sensible situation, but I must be told'. He was as good as his word, a real mainstay. He helped us to grow quickly.

At the start it was as it had been prewar—the same cars, only much older, but with a new generation of customers. There was quite a lot of money about, thanks to demob pay, but the old sports car could not go on much longer and I knew specialisation was the only way to survive. At that time people had only one car and it had to get them to work and take out their girl or even a young family. Just as it had been in the late prewar period, reliability and some comfort were priorities.

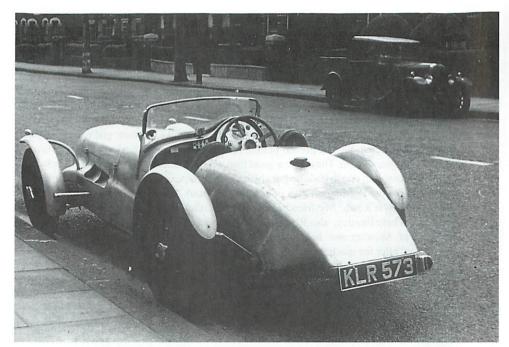
I chose Alvis to specialise in. They were a good firm who had made models of a sporting character from 1922 to 1940, enabling one to trade up but always have cheaper cars to sell. And so it turned out. We soon went back to the Paddington area in London, Upbrook Mews and Brook Mews North, on opposite sides of Craven Road. My friend Jimmy Raynes, the pre-war Riley Gillow team driver, came as salesman to help Bentley, also Roland Caswell the actor, as he was free most of the day, and 'Pop' Laker, late of Spindler and Laker. In the early days one of our great strengths was Bernie Rogers, who looked after the mechanical side of the business.

I first met Bernie in the cold and wet paddock at Shelsley on 22nd September, 1946. I took a photograph of a con rod and piston tied to the radiator cap of a three-litre Invicta with a crude open body. I asked the driver if it was a mascot or something more sinister. He said he had towed Geoffrey Taylor's Alta to the hillclimb and was mechaniching for him. Half way there, he had run a big end, so he had taken out the rod and continued on five cylinders. Head and sump off in the cold and wet, reassemble and get going again—quite a man! Prewar, he had worked at Alta's. During the war he had been in charge of a tank recovery unit in the Western Desert. Now Taylor could only offer him odd jobs and there was not much else.

We needed a mechanic at the growing Alton Garage, so not long afterwards I looked him up at a lock—up garage by Twickenham Bridge. There were no cars there and he and his girl were sitting on boxes with nothing to do. The situation was ludicrous. I went back and talked to Bentley. Bernie started that afternoon. When he joined us we got a lathe and drilling machine, welding equipment and other machinery and took on other work apart from Alvis repairs and rebuilds. One of the first jobs was converting Geoffrey Kramer's Pacey Hassan Brooklands car from a single seater to a roadgoing two-seater. A little work had already been done before we took over. A fellow trader had a burnt out 2.3 Zagato Alfa Romeo. This we bought. We put the body frame on the Bentley, had it panelled and then did the brakes, electrics and other refinements. We were also involved with the self change gear box of Denis Poore's 3.8 Alfa, as my prewar mechanic was working for him when he could afford it; Denis never spent a lot of money on maintenance. We also helped Basil Chevell with his sports racer Speed 20 Alvis and started building an Alvis Special ourselves. This had a light tubular frame with independent suspension all round using Citroen torsion bars. We did overhauls and rebuilds, as many cars had had little or no work done on them during the war years and new cars were very hard to get. All this went on at our old premises in Richmond, but the main business was selling cars in London.

By the 1950s, things were changing rapidly. The cars we sold were now showing their age. Many had coachbuilt bodies, and most saloons had bad door pillar trouble, leaking screens and general dilapidation that was too expensive to put right, bearing in mind the value of the car.

For quite a time we had been selling a few front wheel drive Citroens. My friend from prewar days, George Abecassis, and his partner, John Heath, were running HWM Motors at Walton on Thames. They were Citroen agents. Very soon, many people realised what outstanding cars they were, and they became quite a cult. We were soon buying a lot of HWM's second hand cars, ones taken in part exchange or offered to them. From 1946 I had been photographing motor racing and sporting



Basil Chevell's 4.3 Special. My "Smoker" 12/50 truck in the background. "Smoker" was a trade term for a car you use personally.

Photo: Guy Griffiths



ALR 784 Speed 20 SB Chassis 10897. This became the late Peter Black's "Django", KY3600 SA Speed 20. AGU 241 SA Speed 20 Chassis 10158. Photo: Guy Griffiths

events as the old prewar clubs got going again. For some time I had been using a fine Speed 20 Charlesworth saloon to get to these events. One day I took a Citroen from stock. I found that the journey from Thames Ditton to Silverstone took no longer, the car was much more comfortable, and had more room for the family and all the equipment I needed to carry. After this discovery, I put the Alvis in stock and kept the Citroen. Over the months I upgraded the performance with parts George brought back from France. Charles Deutsch and Rene Bonnet were running Citroen-based specials at Le Mans and had developed a big range of special parts, including four speed gearboxes, heads and inlet systems and light alloy wheels which alone transformed the car.

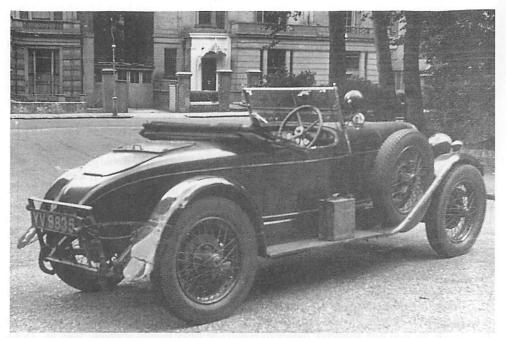
In the late '40s and early '50s, the old Warren Street trade was still operating and we had a very good contact there in Stanley Setty. He used to sit in the cafe on the corner of Fitzroy Square, using it as an office. If a car he thought would interest us came into the square, he would go and have a look, check it over, and phone us from the cafe with a price and accurate description. If we said 'yes' he would go back, buy it for cash, collect the documents and drive it over to us. We would give him a cheque, including his commission, usually about a fiver. A straighter, nicer man it would be impossible to find. Then one day, for the money in his pocket, he was murdered by a man called Hume. He dismembered poor Stanley's body and threw it over Hackney Marshes from an aeroplane he had hired.

Our premises, like those of Jack Bartlett five minutes away, had a social as well as a business life. In some ways one was the reason for the other. Many of our friends and or customers called regularly, had a look at the stock, talked about their motoring plans and either bought a car outright or arranged a part exchange with their present car. Among them were Peter Scott, the wildfowl artist, Edward Seago, the landscape painter, and many others in the law or the arts. One of our most regular visitors, Peter Ashmore, the theatre director, died only recently. Another regular caller and Speed 20 owner was John Haigh, the acid bath murderer, though mercifully he never bought anything from us. Denis Hamilton, Diana Dors' husband, was a caller. He used to have long talks with Bentley; it seemed he thought Bentley had a lot of money and he wanted him to join him in some property deal involving a block of flats. Bentley had no idea why he had picked on him. Denis was a familiar sight, driving a large open American car. One afternoon when I arrived, Diana was sitting patiently outside while Denis was drinking tea inside with Ben. When Denis died, the blocks of flats got quite a mention in the papers, if memory serves me right. We were involved with Diana when she made the film A Kid for Two Farthings, with Peter Ashmore's small son as the co-star. Peter always said she was one of the easiest and most talented actresses he had worked with, and that he would have liked to work with her on the stage.

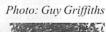
From the very start of Alton Garage we had financed our own hire purchase facilities. Soon we set up a separate company, Motor Facilities to run this operation. We accumulated more and more funds and were soon able to take on other traders' financing. Helped by this, we built up a big insurance agency, all with The London and Lancaster. Soon we were one of their best customers, and a pleasant commission cheque came in regularly. We developed these other interests because I knew the days of selling prewar cars were nearly over and I was not interested in selling new cars, or the old ones when they became collectors' items. Our normal stock was about 25 cars. We had a band of loyal customers who called and changed their cars regularly, because it was usually cheaper than extensive mechanical or body work. All this showed that our type of trade could not go on much longer.

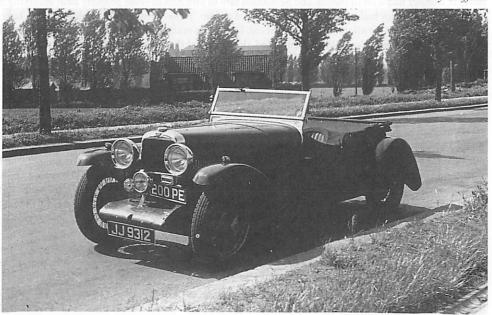
In about 1950/1 Alvis asked us if we would be interested in some sort of arrangement to take over and run their London service station. As it was obviously not profitable, we had no hesitation in declining.

After a time it was obvious that Bernie Rogers was being wasted. He was much too talented to be doing routine repair work; fewer cars warranted expensive overhauls. Jimmy Raynes, who had some private means, wanted to be more involved in racing – something, after my past experiences, I was determined to resist. They had both served us well, so we offered them the lease of the Alton Road



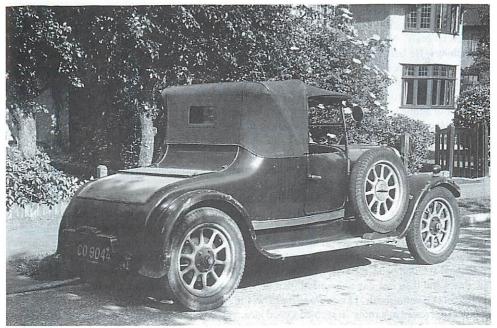
1928 12/50 SD Chassis 6721 now with Alvis Register Member M.P. Setter.





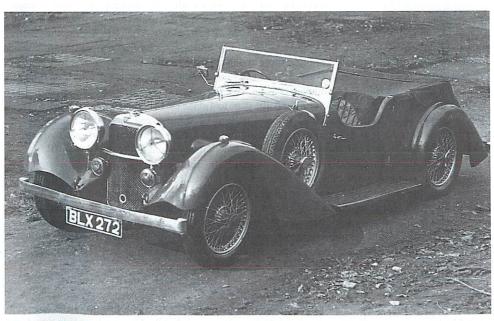
1933 Firefly Chassis 10256 Cross & Ellis Toorer. Last known in 1961.

Photo: Guy Griffiths



1925 12/50 TE Chassis 3844

Photo: Guy Griffiths



Speed 20 SC Vanden Plas Tourer, Chassis 11960. This is the car raced by Charles Follett.

Photo: Guy Griffiths

premises and all the equipment free. They formed Rayburn Cars, and started taking on special building and competition work, as well as selling the odd car and doing some work for us on a commercial basis. Not long afterwards, Jimmy suddenly died, still a young man. Bernie went on to bigger things. He built a number of cars and 500 racers and founded Peerless cars, manufacturing a fixed head coupe with a resin fibre body and mainly Triumph TR parts. Eventually this failed and not long afterwards Bernie also died. A sad loss.

In the early '50s Jack Bartlett also found that sales of prewar cars, mostly Alfas, were falling rapidly. For a time he concentrated on BMWs, but they soon declined as well. Like us, he knew that the trade he understood and loved was coming to an end. 'Gentleman' Jack was a very social man and much of his business had been done in the clubs and bars of the West End. That life was changing, too, so when he finally closed down he went to live in the south of France. I think the same sort of customer relationship existed in the Rolls–Royce market; certainly Jack Barclay was a welcome guest at many Mayfair dinner parties.

Soon after it was launched, *Road and Track*, the American enthusiasts' magazine, made me their official photographer. I helped them with their European coverage, even though I never went abroad myself. The garage was my main business; the photography was done at week-ends and mornings, as the motor trade did not really get going till midday or even later. One of the racing cars we sold was the Attenborough Special, a single seater Frazer Nash with a two-litre Aston Martin engine. It had been raced at Goodwood by W E Bingley. We sold it to one of our regulars, Tony Hogg. He ran it a few times and then one day announced that he was going to America to try to find a job. He was intelligent and enthusiastic. I knew *Road and Track* in America were looking for staff, so I asked if he would be interested in writing. It seemed a good idea, so I gave him an introduction and told them about him. They took him on and very soon he became Editor. During his time with them, he did much to bring the magazine to the position it now holds.

Strange things have always happened in the sports car trade. It was surprising how someone with no trade connections could have a dramatic effect on business. Before and just after the war, the only good publications to advertise in were *The Autocar and The Motor*. Then Bill Boddy, the greatest motoring Editor of all time, by his single handed efforts, helped later by Jenks, made *Motor Sport* the paper every enthusiast had to read. As more and more were reading it, where better to advertise? The fact that the paper was monthly was in some ways an advantage; it hung about for a long time and gave one a chance for a little prestige advertising. We ran a series of modest advertisements telling people about individual Alvis models, not specific cars, and at the end asking them to contact us if they were interested in an Alvis. The success of this took us by surprise and showed that small, subtle advertisements can have as much impact as glaring full page ones. The later sports car market was dependent on *Motor Sport* in its great days. What a debt many owed to the modest 'W B'.

Alvises had few mechanical problems. With 12/50s, timing gears were the weak point. We replaced these with fibre ones, otherwise there was just fair wear and tear to deal with. With the six-cylinder cars, the main problem was core plugs in the block rusting away and filling the sump with water. This meant an engine strip down, after which we replaced them with suitably modified copper coins of the realm—illegal, but effective! Many radiators needed re-coring and the *lignum vitae* suspension bearings had to be replaced. We usually replaced the multiple valve springs with normal ones. We never gave guarantees—our customers knew we would be fair if they had trouble. Their goodwill often brought new customers through their recommendation.

In 1951/2 I bought a business at the top of Vauxhall Bridge Road. This was freehold, which our premises in Paddington were not. I have always held that a small business needs its own freehold. It was a clothing outfit. For a time I ran both businesses, but then I moved the hire purchase operation there. I had a vague idea of turning the shop into a car showroom, but the hire purchase side was doing so well that we could soon have lived off it quite comfortably. Then, fairly suddenly, my partner

decided to go to Canada. There was no option but to close the garage, something we would have done before long anyway, but we had to split the HP firm. This meant not taking on any new accounts, and dividing the money as it came in. So that's how it ended: the garage had been doomed for some time, but the hire purchase operation could have been a winner.

This article first appeared in the January 2001 issue of The Automobile and is reproduced by the kind permission of the editor. Thanks also to Guy Griffiths who supplied copies of his photographs. A fascinating story of the motor trade and Alvis trading in particular, at about the time that Club was founded. All car identification by Dave Culshaw — J.N.B.C.

COMPARISONS

The editor has asked for comparisons between Alvises and other cars of the same period and category. As I love late 1930s cars, I have collected a representative selection of them, based upon my point of view. I still own three of them, although the Bentley has recently been sold.

The attached comparison shows my opinions. If one compares values — not actual but prices of the time — I can say that "The Cheaper is the Better." I base this on the fact that the best of my cars are the Alvis and the Hotchkiss. The Alvis is the nicer car and the Hotchkiss is the best performer.

Based on driving pleasure, and I do drive a lot, 5-8,000 miles a year, the order of the cars would be as follows:

1st Alvis and Hotchkiss

2nd Lagonda

3rd Bentley

4th Talbot Lago

5th Delahaye (due to its gearbox)

The Alvis has the best gearbox, next is the Lagonda. The Delahaye has the worst (but this does not apply to the models with the Cotal gearbox)

The Bentley and the Delahaye have the best brakes.

The V12 engine of the Lagonda is as smooth as a turbine, but all of the cars have good engines and it is difficult to differentiate between them.

Roadholding is fine on all the cars although the shortest chassis, i.e. that of the Hotchkiss, i.e. better on twisty roads.

The steering of the Alvis and Hotchkiss are the best.

The clutches on all the cars are good but for the Talbot Lago (the Wilson gearbox!)

So the cheaper is the better. The Alvis chassis was £775 and the Hotchkiss less than £600. The others were £1000+.

See Comparison Table on next page—J.N.B.C

	Alvis	Bentley	Delahaye	Hotchkiss	Lagonda	Talbot Lago
Year	38/39	37	36	36	38/39	38
Model	4.3L DHC	4 ¹ / ₄ Saloon	135 Coupe	68G GS DHC	V12 DHC	T23 DHC
Body	Charlesworth Steel/ALU	Vanden Plas	"Coupe Des Alpes" Labourdette Steel	Park Ward	Lagonda Steel/ALU	Talbot/ Chausson Steel
Chassis	1245 kg	1160 kg	1250 kg	935 kg		1000 kg
Wheelbase	3.15 m	3.25 m	2.85 m	280 m	3.15 m	3.20 m
Engine	4,400 cc	4,250 cc	3,500 cc	3,500 cc	4,500 cc	4,000 cc
Cylinders	S 6	S 6	S 6	S 6	V 12	S 6
Dist	ОНУ	ОНУ	ОНV	ОНV	ОНС	ОНV
Carburettors	3 SU	2 SU	3 Solex	2 Solex	2 SU	2 Zenith
Bearings	7	-	7	7	7	7
НР	135/3600	125	130/3850	125/4000	160/5000	105/4000
Gearbox	4 fully sync	4 (2 sync)	4 (sync)	4 (2 sync)	4 fully Sync	Wilson
Brakes	Mech + Servo	Mech + Servo	Mech (Rods)	Mech (Cables)	Hydraulic	Mech (Cables)
Suspension	Front IFS/ Rear Ellipt	Rigid/ Ellipt	IFS/ Ellipt	Rigid/ Ellipt	IFS/ Ellipt	IFS/ Ellipt
Top Speed	100 mph+	90 mph	100 mph	110 mph	100 mph+	90 mph/ 145 km/h
Chassis Price	£775 DHC £1065	£1150 Saloon £1500	£595	<£500	£1200 DHC 1575	£675

JEAN GORJAT

It is particularly interesting to have a comparison of these fine motor cars of the thirties by someone who has actual first-hand knowledge of them. I am most grateful to Jean for his observations—J.N.B.C.

EXTRACTS FROM A NON-EVENT'S DIARY

In the immediate post war years one's aspirations were modest in the extreme. A light-weight push bike built up from other people's rejects on a budget of "thirty bob". There and back to Brighton in a day from home in Chelsea on a 16 tooth fixed sprocket; being a wimp couldn't manage a 14. The first job in 1952 on £150.00 per annum meant the "Lafferty" (Reynolds 531 no less) framed bike was sold for a fiver and a tatty 1934 BSA 250 OHV hand change took its place by adding another £10.00. Although my only means of transport this rapidly became a "TT racer" with the addition of clip—on bars, a dual seat from Pride and Clarke, Brixton, alloy mud guards, a racing magneto, deletion of primary chain—case, addition of bike-lamps and my own design of footchange conversion of the non-positive stop variety.

Numerous mishaps later, most of them painful with battle scars to match, plus several appearances in various London Magistrates Courts, this device spontaneously combusted outside the NAAFI a year or two later during National Service training at Wetherby in Yorkshire. An entirely logical place for a Naval training establishment.

Other motorbikes followed, usually EX–WD for £25.00/£30.00 a piece and eventually in 1956 came a new Zundapp 200 c.c. two-stroke from Claude Rye, Fulham, for £109.00 which accompanied me to Australia and the Far East. My then girlfriend, to become my wife seven years later, objected to riding pillion particularly on winter ice in London, so I traded it in on a 1954 Standard 8 which became less horrible with the addition of twin SU's, a raised compression ratio and a big bore exhaust. Having developed this tincan from a 30 b.h.p. to around 60 b.h.p. (maybe), I eventually sold it to a tea planter on leave from Ceylon and got married on the proceeds. A wonderous array of company cars, mainly of the Vauxhall, Austin and Ford persuasion, followed through the 60's and 70's all of which were entirely unnoteworthy and mostly puke-making. Certainly I never dreamt in the 50's and 60s that I would race.

Introduction to Alvis

A fellow National Serviceman, one Bill Pyke of Hampstead, who I first met in the Royal Navy and kept in touch with subsequently, was a sporty car enthusiast.

I shared his 1933 MG L type Magna when for reasons I have never fathomed, we were briefly seconded to Fleet Air Arm, Station, Ford in Sussex, (a lot nearer the sea than the West Riding of Yorkshire). HMS Peregrine's "peri–track" had its uses. Being brake-less this awfully dilapidated car eventually came to grief against the Duke of Norfolk's Castle wall at Arundel. Later Bill acquired a tatty Firefly saloon and a very nice 12/60. The latter was nicked in Hampstead and the former was eventually driven up to Pump Farm at Assington and sold to Clink for spares for £5.00, or was it £10.00? At Pump Farm I saw some real Alvises including Clink's supercharged 4.3 single seater and the Goodwin Special. On my second visit to Clink's I came away with the "Moggerhanger Monster" a 1937 Speed 25 Special which went like a dose of salts through the narrow, twisty Suffolk lanes, in Clink's hands. £220.00 was paid including the £20.00 premium for optional brakes. Martins Bank, Ludgate Circus, was very understanding and the then Assistant Manager, Mr. Hayes–Allen, enjoyed his blat up Fleet Street on the Saturday morning following my deal with Clink. Sadly Mr. Hayes–Allen had to give up banking and find a new career. A good chap!

The "Moggerhanger Monster" ELY 730

ELY 730 was a good buy and gave me much pleasure, a lot of heartache and cost me a lot of "dosh"



The Moggerhanger Monster in full touring trim.

Photo: Paul Holdsworth

over the years. In the manner of the period this was a true Conduit Special with a chassis shortened by 13", a couple of old army lorry seats and a Brooklands Screen. But for its day it was quick and it handled, and with its side exhausts it was decidedly rorty. I had it from 1964 to 1982. During that period it was rebuilt several times for reasons various.

When I relocated from Highgate to Ewell in Surrey I discovered the local Alvis Owner Club Monthly Meeting venue, the Punch Bowl at Dorking and Crystal Palace, the then home of National Alvis Day. Both were great fun. At the Punch Bowl I first met Rod Jolley who was to become one of my oldest (he's younger than me) and best friends. Also Ken Day, Jock Stephen, Norman Whitton and Arthur Hardy and many other great Alvis enthusiasts. The emphasis then was on having reasonably responsible if somewhat illegal sprints along the Dorking Bypass and making questionable claims about one's own and one's Alvis' capabilities, plus of course, consuming the occasional glass of ale. How times have changed.

Jock Stephen, possibly the most successful and consistent Alvis racing driver of that period in his distinctive black 4.3 engined SA Speed 20, then a serving officer in the "Met", was one of the Alvis

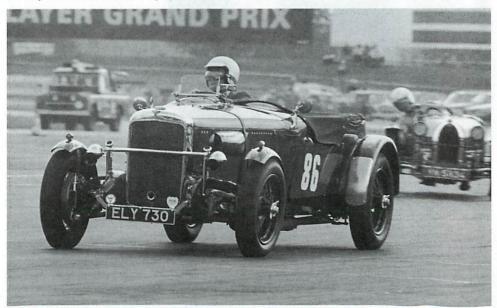
Day prime movers at Crystal Palace. He organised the driving tests on a part of the racing circuit. Some were of the "reversing between buckets" variety but most were somewhat faster and more to Jock's and the competitors' liking. I proved to be about as competent in driving tests as I proved subsequently as a racing driver.

Jock had much influence on my love affair with Alvis. The "Moggerhanger" fulfilled many roles; I entered it in sprints, hill climbs, road/circuit races, six-hour relays, rallies and Continental events. At some point it acquired a 4.3 litre engine; I recall that more grunt was needed when its lightweight "body" was replaced by a combined Jolley/Holdsworth designed coachbuilt, two door, four seater body complete with substantial ash frame and full weather equipment.

This was one of Rod's earliest complete bodies and was not entirely to his liking but I was happy with it and so were the National Alvis Day judges in 1970 when it received a Class Concours D'Elegance award, much to Rod's surprise and Clink's amazement (or was it disgust)? To celebrate this accolade I took it, and my wife Dorothy on the 1970 Alvis Tour of Britain during which I saw a lot of the back of Jock Stephen's Speed 20 as it hurtled past me on full-ish bore. I must have that car I vowed but Jock just laughed and said it would be buried with him. No b --- y Sassanach would have his pride and joy!

In August 1982 I put the ELY 730 into the hands of a well-known and supposedly not-to-bent dealer*, on a commission basis. To cut a long story short he sold my car, pocketed the substantial amount of money realised and promptly went into liquidation. I shall never forget or forgive that man. To compensate perhaps, I have quite a selection of VSCC tankards and ashtrays to mark my minor achievements over eighteen years of "Moggerhanger" ownership.

The new owner of this car bought it as a Vanden Plas Short Chassis 4.3 presumably described as such by the dealer. Insult to injury.



The Moggerhanger Monster at a July VSCC Silverstone Meeting.

Photo: Fred Scatley

^{*} I have not printed the name of the dealer for obvious reasons, but I am sure that Paul will tell you if you want to know! — J.N.B.C.

The Giron-Alvis

This was to be the fastest Alvis ever, so thought Rod Jolley and I, one not very warm afternoon in the grandstand at the VSCC July 1978 Silverstone meeting. It seemed a good idea at the time and our creative flair was undoubtedly influenced by lunch-time spent in the Paddock Bar. We set out the parameters, design and performance objectives in appropriate detail on the back of my Rothmans' fag packet, being my preferred brand of weed at the time. We had some of the makings, for the projectile that is; an old SA Speed 20 chassis frame rotting away in my garden which stood me at £7.10od, the ex "Moggerhanger Monster" Speed 25 engine, a Wade (cabin blower) supercharger, sundry axles and differentials, some 19" wheels, and a suitable steering box.

We needed an Armstrong pre-selector gear-box and lots more. We obtained verbal VSCC ap-



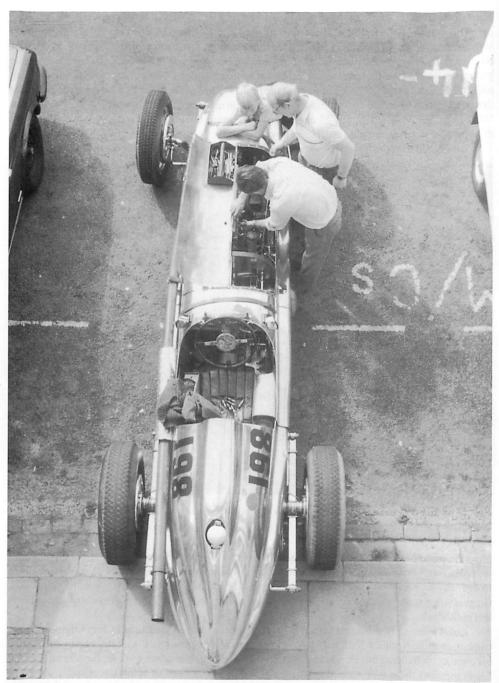
Paul Holdsworth driving the immaculate Giron Alvis at Prescott in 1984.

Photo: via Paul Holdsworth

proval in principle for our single seater racer from Peter Hull very soon after our initial brainstorm.

Work and expenditure began in earnest soon afterwards and assistance and parts were obtained from many sources including Diana Russell, Ernest Shenton, Eric Oakman, Cosworth Engineering, Gordon Allen (crankshafts), SU Fuel Systems, and of course, Louis Giron plus many other suppliers and individuals.

Louis Giron, a Belgian and legend in his own time, and one time Bugatti Chief Engineer, was a consultant at the Beaulieu National Motor Museum and lived close by. Rod Jolley had by then set up his own coach-building business at Lymington and was doing restoration work for Beaulieu. Rod and Louis met and there was a meeting of minds. Louis was a fund of information and a source of inspiration to us both. He'd been there, seen it, done it ... and retained his enthusiasm for oddball racing projects of the Vintage and PVT era. He was getting on in years and his health was deteriorating but his



The Giron Alvis at the Brighton Speed Trials in 1984 showing off the wonderful lines and highly polished metalwork.

Photo: Gordon Allen

ardour was undiminished. Gordon Allen was an inspiration and continued to help us in many ways even after he retired and sold his very successful business in Slough.

We progressed albeit slowly and with much backtracking. I can't be certain, but I think our first test runs at Goodwood were sometime in Mid-1980; that's when I bought our first bulk quantity of methanol based 80-10-10 racing fuel, which I told my wife was weedkiller.

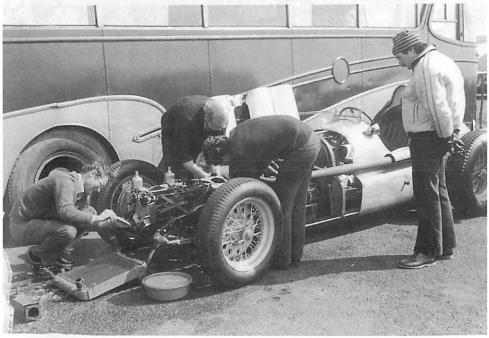
Louis Giron, who by then was really quite ill and fading fast, attended the Goodwood Unveiling and shed a tear when we removed the masking tape from the enamelled Red and Yellow triangular bonnet badge with its "Giron Alvis" legend. Suddenly all the heart-aches, frustration, failures and expense seemed worthwhile.

The car was phenomenal; its acceleration and pure grunt far exceeded our expectations and it was all quite breathtaking. I had never experienced opposite lock in a straight line in all gears before. Quite the fastest machine I had ever attempted to drive and quite the worst and most scary handling. 25+ psi on the blower pressure gauge explained all! Rod and I did plenty of laps, and even then he drove it so much better than I. An indication of things to come.

Louis died a week or two later which took the gilt off the gingerbread for Rod and me. He was such a great pal and source of inspiration.

What happened during the next five years would fill a book. Virtually everything, both moving and fixed, broke. Chassis, preselector gear-box, diff, block and cylinder head, camshaft, front axle, wheels and radiator. Think of anything; it broke. If it didn't fatigue, I could be relied upon to bend it on or off the circuit. Rod and I became part of the paddock circus; I lost count of how many paddock rebuilds we did at Silverstone, Donington, Oulton Park to name but a few.

I omitted to mention earlier the wonderful polished aluminium single seater body which Rod designed and made in its entirety. On a full length SA Speed 20 chassis and classic 30's Grand Prix lines



A paddock re-build underway.

Photo: via Paul Holdsworth

it was beautiful and dramatic. Pity about all the dents we added subsequently.

Undoubtedly it was extremely fast and with Rod driving it out accelerated ERA's and Maserati 250 F's from a standing start. I recall Rod at Donington starting from the back of the grid and being in the lead going into Red Gate. A tractor was required to pull him and the Giron out of the sandpit. I think during our many but all too short appearances we were a crowd pleaser; we added some fun to what in the 80's was becoming all too serious.

Through the 80's a totally unplanned and unscheduled programme of development, improvement and mending was followed. Most things were changed, shortened and/or reinforced.

Rod's engineering skills had progressed in leaps and bounds. He was no longer "just a coachbuilder". Our other main technical advisor, Gordon Allen died suddenly still only in his 50's. This was sad and we still talk with gratitude about this very special and talented engineer. So Rod learned a great deal about engines, transmissions, suspension and steering geometry very quickly. This he put into practice with me as his part-time runner and critic.

Cutting a long story short we ended up with the "definitive" specification with a shorter chassis, correct geometry and suspension including camber angles etc., much improved damping and brakes, a Silver Crest Gearbox, significantly less "blow", but still a lot by most people's reckoning. We have a few not too closely guarded secrets but nothing too dramatic.

Before being temporarily laid up a couple of years ago while Rod concentrated upon mopping the Historic Grand Prix Racing scene in his Ex-Jack Brabham Cooper Climax 2.5 litre, the Giron Alvis came good and in Rod's inspired and spectacular style got astounding results in VSCC and other events against the very best here and abroad.

It is scheduled to appear again in anger during the 2001 season in Rod's hands.

For health reasons, at the least that's my excuse, I have not been able to race properly since 1988



Jock Stephen at speed in his 4.3 Speed 20 at Oulton Park.

Photo: via Paul Holdsworth



Jock Stephen close on the heels of Harold Barr in his 4.3 Special in wet conditions at Silverstone.

Photo: Guy Griffiths

but have had the occasional demonstration run in the fastest of all Alvises. I am conscious on these occasions that my total concentration is needed to just cling on to the steering wheel for dear life. If one is inclined towards constipation I recommend taking Becketts on full bore in third or top with the throttle jammed fully open. It serves to concentrate the mind and the bowels.

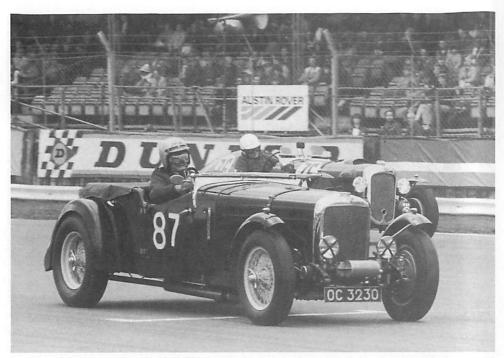
Yes I believe we did achieve our initial objective; to create the fastest Alvis although it took a lot longer than planned. Much has changed since the preliminary "Rothman's drawing" but people still recognise it from the way it was in its 1980 Mark I guise. There aren't many of the original "old boys" left and we hear less from aged gents claiming they remember the Giron Alvis at Brooklands in 1930 something. They won't be corrected; they remain adamant. Well if it makes them happy so be it.

Jock Stephen's SA Speed 20/4.3 OC 3230

I am reluctant to refer to this as a "Special" although accuracy dictates that it is despite its original length chassis and Cross and Ellis four-door, four-seater tourer body. Yes, I eventually separated Jock from his unique motor car and despite his Scottish blood it wasn't money that talked. Just as well because I've never had much.

Jock remembered my considerable interest in OC 3230 going back to the early 60's and my many reminders. When he retired from the "force" he returned to the country of his birth and settled at Auchtertool in Fife. He worked for some years for the Ministry of Transport and his racing appearances declined. Having retired finally it was not long before his wife became seriously ill, and for some years he nursed her without making a great drama of it which is very much in character. I eventually took possession of his car in April '83 and drove it back from Auchtertool to Northampton which was by then my home. I also inherited a spare racing specification 4.3 engine and numerous spares, plus a fat file of history and some photos of Jock and his car in racing mode.

About the car; chassis No: 10610 was one of the last batch of twenty-five SA Speed 20's built by Alvis in 1933. The original engine was No: 11060 (2511 c.c.) which Jock replaced with a 1937 4.3 unit



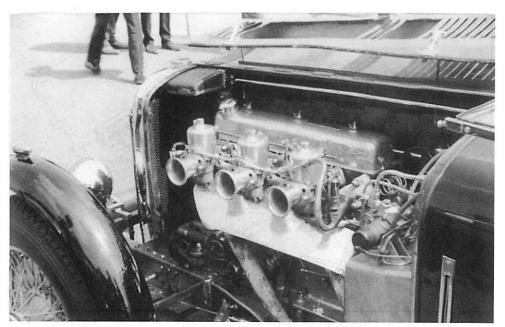
The Jock Stephen Speed 20/4.3 now in the hands of Paul Holdsworth at April Silverstone in 1986.

Photo: Harold Baker



And finally the same car in its current form.

Photo: via Paul Holdsworth



The engine of Jock's car.

Photo: J.N.B.C.

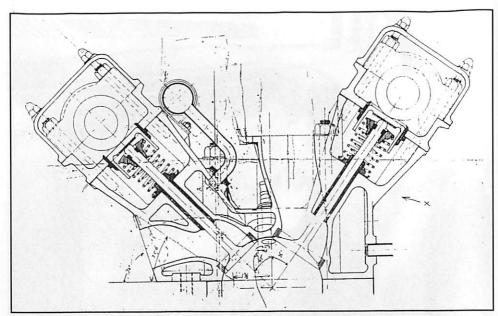
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He spent many years developing and improving the car's performance whilst retaining the original Cross and Ellis body but substituting cycle wings up front. Basically it looked "standard" but the give-away was the massive oil cooler cum filter mounted transversely between the front dumb irons and known as "Jock's beer barrel". Jock was known to have the odd glass or two to accompany his cigarettes. Not a lot has changed in that direction despite his advancing years.

He wanted a non cut-and-shut racing car which looked as near as practicable to a standard Alvis SA Speed 20 which he could drive on the road and not trailer to circuits and hill climbs. He planned to beat the highly competitive Bentley's of the period and he certainly succeeded in his aim. He has always maintained that had he ordered a new car to this specification in the late 30's from Alvis in theory at least it could have been supplied by the Works – but at what price one wonders.

During the 60's and 70's Jock achieved much success on many circuits during VSCC events. Earlier he had raced an SC or SD Speed 20 with independent front suspension but was convinced the SA with its beam axle would handle better and so he proved. Jock was a self-taught engineer and the quality of his workmanship and innovative ability were incredible. Just about every modification that one comes across now on racing specification 4.3 engines, Jock pioneered. He made nearly everything himself in his Archway, North London workshop. Even con rods and rockers are polished as are the vast majority, of aluminium castings. Shell bearings, high compression pistons, gas flowed head, lightened flywheel, full flow oil filtration system, additional cylinder head cooling, oil cooler, cam reprofiling, special valves, balanced crankshaft – think of it and he has done it. He designed a double overhead camshaft cylinder-head arrangement but this never happened as the VSCC would not O.K. it which is hardly surprising. I still have the original drawings.

The net result was that OC 3230 was an extremely fast and reliable car which Jock drove with great verve and skill and much success as evidenced by his well filled trophy cabinet.



Jock Stephen's twin overhead camshaft head design for the 4.3 Special. A simply staggering concept.

Being a Scot with a lively sense of humour he found a way of rubbing his arch rivals, the "Bentley Boys", noses in it. Apparently, one of their lines in bull was to discuss loudly the merits of the various Bentley "models" – blue label, red label etc. Jock had a special Alvis radiator badge with blue (for Scotland) instead of Alvis red enamel. Another distinguishing feature of OC 3230 which I still retain but now in a different location.

When I acquired this car I was already fully committed to racing the Giron Alvis plus a MK 6 Cooper 500 so I couldn't do much competitively in the Speed 20/4.3, which was a pity. However, I did have a lot of fun in it and a couple of friends also used it for sprints. During the time that I had the "Moggerhanger Monster" I recall that I would see Jock at the start of a race and then again later on when he lapped me. So what's new.

In 1988 Rod Jolley did a refurbishing job on the car retaining as much as possible of the original panels etc. The ash frame was in remarkably good condition as were many of the panels but some had to be replaced. New front and rear wings were fabricated and fitted and some detail changes which I requested were effected. The present appearance of the car is not significantly different from the way it was during its racing days but now it is a fast PVT sports car rather than an out-an-out racer, "Jock's Beer Barrel" is not fitted but I have it should the need arise. Engine performance is very similar and it still goes well when I can afford to pour in the dreaded "four star" essence. It has occasional outings on the track in France and whenever possible it is driven to and from the circuit. There are not many, if any, non-supercharged, standard length/body Alvis cars that I know of which could out perform it.

This remains my favourite car - the ultimate Alvis for me and it is still known as "Jock's car".

PAUL HOLDSWORTH

THIRTY SIX YEARS OF A TE21

The Alvis affliction started at the age of eleven, when one of my father's customers owned a TD21 (Reg: 3051 VX). I thought it was rather special and wanted to drive one when I was old enough. In March 1965 my father bought a new TE21 dhe and my happiness was complete. When the car was new there were a few paint blemishes which were damage rather than poor manufacture. Alvis sent an inspector to our house and the car was collected, taken to Coventry and returned in perfect condition one week later. No messing about! Interestingly it was returned by one Roland Simmonds. It was four years and a driving test before I was let loose. It was drummed into me from the start that it was a heavy car and that anticipation was necessary to be smooth and safe. I was never discouraged from driving fast if conditions allowed. It is of note that lowering the hood reduces the top speed by some ten mph and riding in the back is decidedly draughty. Fourteen years later, when it had still only covered 16,000 miles, my father asked me if I would like the car, as he was no longer able to drive it. The only condition was that I looked after it properly. It took slightly less than two seconds to make the decision!

This makes me among the lucky few who have experience of their car from day one. I remember that in the sixties it seemed to offend flat capped gentlemen in Rover 2000TC's who could not make out why it outperformed them. In those days it was quicker than most and we frequently made very fast journey times. The lack of radar guns and the like meant that a good lookout was usually sufficient to avoid speeding tickets. In any case the volumes of traffic were minimal compared with today. On one trip from Scotland back to Essex we drove down the A1 at 100mph for mile after mile, covering the 410 miles in eight hours including a leisurely lunch.

In 1997 I was fortunate to acquire a low mileage and very original TE21 saloon. Driving differences between the two cars were minimal although the drophead feels very flexible with the hood down and the saloon is remarkably rigid.

In January 1999, Brian Chrimes persuaded me to enter the saloon in a three car test conducted by Classic Car. The opposition was a 2600 Alfa Sprint and a Mercedes 250 coupe. It was felt that a subtle cheat was in order and so a happy day was spent in Kenilworth replacing some suspension bushes and fitting one of their handling kits. This consists of a thicker front anti roll bar and an additional bar for the rear. It is an excellent modification, which turns the handling into virtual go-kart ability without messing up the ride. Given the lateral limitations of the front seats, roundabouts can be tackled with previously unheard of gusto. On the test everyone was surprised how well the car performed except me! Even with a standard car the comments about handling like "a wayward shopping trolley" in Classic and Sportscar recently, are just confirmation of how misguided some journalists can be. Certainly it was not left behind on the twisty bits and is definitely my kind of shopping trolley. I was reminded of the Ford transmission engineer who did not believe that the ZF could possibly have a better change than their first offering in the Sierra. He told me that it had no right to be so good.

Final thoughts:

- 1. They do not overheat if the cooling system/block are clear and the air ducting etc, in front of the radiator are correctly fitted.
- Tetraboost plus Super Unleaded seems to make an excellent fuel. Real lead plus octane boost means no pinking on standard timing settings.

- It is necessary to maintain correct tyre pressures for taut handling and both cars are on Michelin XVS tyres.
- 4. Power steering is a tremendous advantage.
- 5. With a good quality car, age is not a disadvantage. You get individuality, quality, some typical quirks and a lot of pleasure with a Three Litre. To quote the wife of a great friend: "You've been out in that car again. You've got silly grins on your faces!"

NEVILLE BYFORD

A splendid tale and yet another two-generation Alvis family — J.N.BC.

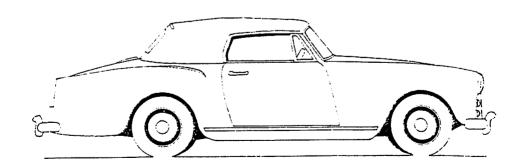
SPOT THE ERROR

Hugh Appleby's letter in issue 468 produced only two responses. These are:

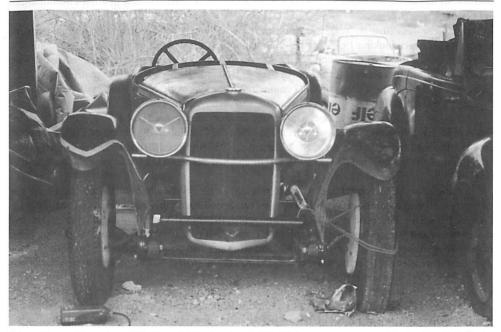
How about the error being that the crankshaft damper/pulley should be put on before dropping the engine into the chassis? Not that I have ever tried to do the job!—Brian Neale

You don't fit Three Litre engines without first fitting the front crank pulley otherwise you have to lift the engine out again! Also the engine mount brackets are upside down!—Nick Simpson

I leave Hugh to adjudicate the winner! —J.N.B.C.



THE DISCOVERY AND RESTORATION OF YY 2583, A 1932 SA SPEED 20



The rather sad remains of the Speed 20 when located in Wales.

Photo: Carel de Bruin

For some years now Julian has been chasing me to put pen to paper and to report on the restoration of YY 2583, chassis No. SA 9888. Since being part of the two man Singapore division of the AOC and seeing the tremendous amount of good work that Julian is doing for the club I felt that I could no longer abstain, so here goes. I must however admit that the story follows the lines of earlier reports in *Triangel*, the newsletter of the Dutch Alvis Owner Club.

Although the whereabouts of this car may have been known to insiders in the AOC for quite a numbers of years, for me the Alvis adventure started with me becoming aware of the marque in ,1988 and a long search for the right model culminating in the "discovery" and subsequent purchase of what was left of YY 2583 in Wales in 1992.

My interest in elderly cars must have started early, demonstrated by family pictures showing the young enthusiast, aged four, standing on the wing of his grandfather's Citroen Traction Avant shortly before it was handed over to my father. This car appeared huge to me and I remember well playing with train sets on the flat floor of the rear compartment (no tunnel for propshaft required) during long summer holiday trips to the seaside. After the Traction Avant there followed a whole cavalcade of ever newer and bigger but less character building cars. So, it was no great surprise that my first own car was a Citroen Traction Avant, bought for a handful of Francs in northern France in 1970. Being students in Leiden, our priorities were firmly set on beer but we still managed to put enough aside for a kerbside restoration when a big end gave up. After that the car showed reliable performance and

proved it's legendary road holding by being fastest around any 90 degree corner between Leiden and Delft, where I spent half a year doing some technical stuff before completing my studies in Leiden. Shortly thereafter the car was treated to a facelift (new paint and interior, whilst all the time maintaining that typical odour that I remembered so well from earlier days) to serve at our marriage and during our honeymoon. The car did well and the marriage still sticks (after several other projects!). We finally sold the car in 1984 when we moved to the UK for a few years of hard labour in Shell's headquarters in London.

Being car-less (that is "real"-car-less) in the UK quickly led to frustration and subsequent acquisition of a nice looking 1937 MG TA. To cut a long story short, what followed was a complete refurbishment of the MG, body, engine, the works, including putting everything together halfway through the restoration process for the move back to Holland. It was a nice car, beautifully restored, drove well and the allegedly weak MPJG engine ran like clockwork, but it was small, not very well engineered and generally lacked refinement, space and performance.

So I was ready for something else, with more character, more power, real quality, a bit more space and at least six cylinders. The choice was made when the December 1988 copy of *The Automobile* dropped into the letter box. It featured Nick Simpson's 1933 SA Speed 20 and I was immediately sold. I didn't know the marque, but this car had everything I had been looking for; only problem: where to find one?

I joined the AOC, bought and read the relevant Alvis books, checked the ads in all the car magazines, phoned around and finally had my first real Speed 20 test driving experience in Michael L's Cross & Ellis SA on his private circuit (well known for the annual VSCC Loton hill climb). Having visited house and grounds and after learning the family history since the Dark Ages we set out in the Alvis. What an experience! Big wheels (road and steering), real power, brutish exhaust note. Things went almost wrong on the circuit, when he handed the controls to me. Not being used to the accelerator in the middle and brake on the right I almost ran into one of the deer that freely roam the hillside circuit when I tried to negotiate one of the steeper bends and jumbed on the gas where I expected to find the brakes. Luckily the Speed 20 reacted well to all this mistreatment and major damage to car and deer was just avoided. A truly memorable afternoon. Pity that our ideas on pricing were too far apart to strike a deal.

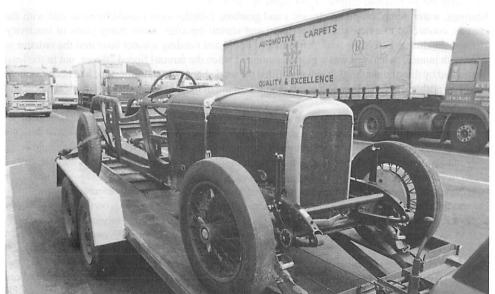
Later on I met Eddie Q, who had a beautiful SD Charlesworth saloon, but no SA's and I visited SV Restorations in Sleaford where I met the (in?) famous Richard H. A charming host who had stacked Alvises in little sheds all over the county. He offered me "the burned out" car, allegedly of very limited mileage. All bodywork aft of the scuttle had apparently been burned to a cinder after an electrical fire that had reached the tank but now the car was on it's way to be rebodied as a tourer. We went to inspect the burned wreck at body builders Boes in Nottingham and they certainly appeared to be doing a good job on the frame and aluminum paneling. Helmet type front wings were to complete the rebuild but not ready yet. I was shown another body—less chassis without its "numbers matching" engine and instruments, but was assured that everything was there. It could be provided with similar bodywork as seen at Boes earlier that day. He also mentioned a "very rare saloon body", but since I was looking for a tourer no time was spent to investigate. That was a big mistake as I now tend to believe that the second chassis I saw that day was YY's whose Vanden Plas straight back saloon body No. 1813 had apparently been removed recently. I later learned that the car, still carrying its saloon body had been offered for sale at international Alvis day in Knebworth in 1980 by Eric Jones, but that is another story.

Having expressed interest in the second chassis I had to leave but in subsequent weeks came very close to a deal involving part exchange of the MG. Things started to go wrong when after repeated requests for photographs of the helmet wings on the first chassis (at Boes) I no longer received any replies. Shortly thereafter it became clear that Mr. H. had disappeared from sight (to surface in Australia I later heard) and there ended the trail.

Constant of the state of the st

Carel de Bruin (no grey hairs yet!) in a treasure trove of Speed 20 bits.

Photo: Carel de Bruin



Off to the body builder

Photo: Carel de Bruin

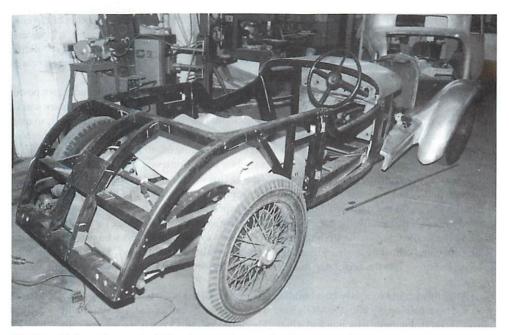
In search of information I contacted AOC officials and received a very clear warning not to do business with Mr. H. After a few more unsuccessful events I arrived at Nick Simpson's establishment in Abergavenny where the sorry remains of YY were lingering in a shed. Bearing the remains of its once proud wings but without its saloon body it was now carrying a brand new ash frame for a Vanden Plas tourer. In the attic were boxes full of parts, containing instruments, lamps, radiator bits and all kinds of small stuff like huge door or boot hinges from the saloon body. Engine and gearbox were in pieces in the workshop and even the remnants of the front seats were there. To me this looked really good, but my poor wife was convinced that I had gone bonkers even considering acquisition of this pile of junk. What put her really off was the fact that one of YY front wheels was supported by bright orange suspenders made from polypropylene rope. What looked great to me looked decidedly dodgy to her. Anyway, a deal was struck and so we became the proud owners of YY 2583.

Now we needed a few decisions on how to tackle the rather gigantic restoration job in front of us. Since I am more the take apart, clean and put together type who is keen to get his hands dirty but lacks specific engineering and metal working let alone panel beating skills, it was clear that a few major jobs had to be subcontracted. Nick was going to take care of the engine/gearbox and we decided to use the same Boes in Nottingham to panel the body, straighten the bonnet, the only original body part that was left, and make the wings, using Nick's VdP 2 seater sports as a pattern.

All this took time and we decided to pay Boes a visit to check on progress. The firm was in bad shape having lots of work but not many paying customers (as the boom of the late 80's/early 90's had come to an end and lots of speculating "enthusiasts" lost money and interest). As a result there were many projects lying abandoned around their workshop, but amidst all that the work on YY was progressing and I was quite happy with the quality of work, particularly on the complicated helmet type front wings. That things were getting a bit chaotic can be deduced from the fact that the left front wing has two more louvres along the chassis than the right one which I only found out by accident many years later. I don't know how long Boes survived after finishing the job but I wouldn't be surprised if YY was the last job they completed. Pity that such good people couldn't make it. Soon thereafter the overhauled engine (you name it, Nick, Mervyn and Andy did it, new pistons, all bearings, water pump, oil pump etc. etc.) and gearbox (similar story) could be re-united with the chassis, connected to a new stainless exhaust and started-up after many many years of inactivity. Notwithstanding drip feeding with petrol from a bottle and needing a water hose into the radiator to cope with numerous leaks, it was a glorious moment when the famous Speed 20 roar, not in the least obstructed by the straight through exhaust, filled the workshop. A major milestone had been reached! A new windshield was made and a new dashboard cut out of the most solid piece of tropical hardwood I have ever seen.

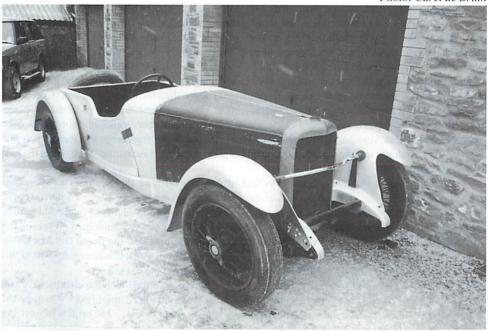
By now it was autumn 1993 and we needed to bring YY home to Holland for the next stage of the restoration. Luckily I found Dutch Alvis Owner Club member Willem vd M. ready to assist with his trailer. After quite an epic journey through early winter snow storms in Belgium and Kent and some very muddy autojumbles, YY was loaded on the trailer, filled with boxes full of bits and pieces and taken to Rotterdam.

Next spring, when temperatures in my garage rose above freezing point, the new body was taken off and the chassis attacked. It had received some attention from the previous owner but regrettably not in a very professional way. New king pins fitted without properly drilling lubrication channels etc, etc. As on the engine, many bodged earlier repairs needed to be put right. The worst disappointment was the brand-new brake cables that came with the car, very well made, but with the front end adjusters fitted to the rear cables and vice versa. Needless to say that after completing this job I was ready to take a degree in blasphemy (I stole this phrase from a recent article in *The Automobile* and can truly identify with the writer). This was also the time when mid restoration blues set in. Progress is slow, the end not near, things don't fit, are difficult to find, budgets get overrun and you really wonder



The beautifully made rear body framing and the complex front wings shaping up.

Photo: Carel de Bruin



The basic coachwork now complete.

Photo: Carel de Bruin

why you ever started the whole thing. However, having gone that far one has no option but to continue and then all of a sudden things start to change. Having attended to chassis, axles, springs and shocks and after cleaning and installing the tank, making up new fuel lines, re-coring and rebuilding the radiator (another serious drain on the ever suffering bank account) and putting in temporary wiring, the machine was suddenly ready for it's first test drive.

Firing up the engine with all systems holding their fluids and the first movement under own power represented another milestone and the restoration blues disappeared in a noisy cloud of exhaust smoke as suddenly as it had set in. Of course I was anxious to find out whether it all really worked, so after putting a soapbox on the bare chassis I set out for my first drive in YY on that quiet Sunday morning along the typical Dutch canal (we call this a singel) that ran in front of our house. All went well on the first pass, engine running smoothly and crash box shifting gear effortlessly, temperatures and pressures as they should be. Even the funny pedals proved easy. This was too good to be true and indeed things became seriously unstuck on the return trip when oncoming traffic loomed in the distance. I jumped on the brake and found the right pedal but nothing happened as the force required to make them work pushed my soapbox towards the back axle and since my arms are not that long I was having trouble keeping the whole thing on the straight and narrow (one way road, and guess who was driving in the wrong direction!). Luckily the friendly neighbour rapidly realised that this was a duel that he was going to loose and drove into the singel thus avoiding a major incident. He has promised to be more careful next time.

After this I could seriously start building up the car. All the body bits were sent to a good friend who had been helping out with the MG's paint work a few years earlier and who did another excellent job on YY's all aluminum paneling and wings. The old bonnet was treated to a solvent/caustic bath for proper cleaning/degreasing and after that traces of the VdP body number 1813 painted on the inside could be clearly distinguished. Custom made to fit this particular body. So we know now with certainty that there is at least one piece of the original body left. Meanwhile at home, priority shifted to electricity. I wanted a correct wiring loom using the right materials and to my utter surprise learned from Autosparks in Nottingham that they had one in store, ready made for an SA Speed 20 and ves. they were sure it was OK and yes they could post it immediately. When it arrived it was wrong of course, with far too many wires for the simple Speed 20 so back it went with my own detailed drawings of how it should be based on old pictures and naughty (under bonnet) photo's of other cars. This proved too much to handle, so a trip to Autosparks was called for to sort it all out. Combining it with a UK visit to pick up the restored instruments at Vintage Restorations, who found a replacement for the long missing dashboard clock and at least the instrument panel bits for the Hobson Telegage, the visit to Autosparks was great fun. We sorted out the wiring design and seeing their prewar braiding machines in action, producing those complex looms was fascinating. Well worth the long trip.

On another trip I was lucky enough to find two very good roadwheels, meant as spares but immediately needed when I found out that of the five wheels on the car two were of a narrower rim variety. One was beyond repair, the other one is in good shape and available to interested parties. After cleaning, re–spoking and painting, new 4.75–5.00 x 20 Firestones were mounted. It was on this trip to the St Albans Alvis jumble that I first met Mike Pratt and his imposing friend Big Mick, who donated a VdP rear number plate bracket to the good cause. This difficult to source item was highly appreciated as not surprisingly none had come in the bits bin from the old saloon.

With new wiring in place and the body painted it could be re–united with the chassis. YY was starting to look like a real car again, certainly after the re–chromium plated brightwork was attached. Attention now focused on the interior. The front seats were reasonably easy. The original's were in a terrible state and only just served as patterns for the new ones before disintegrating completely. Luckily the Leverol runners had survived and could be re–used. Upon careful dismantling of the rotten

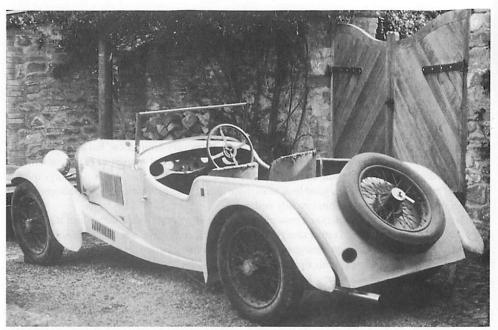
leather stuffing and mulching wood, we found the VdP body number 1813 chalked on the wooden backs and pressed into the under side of the seat frame, again providing some provenance. Copying the woodwork was relatively easy and the original hinges could be re–used as well. Tackling the rear compartment posed quite a different challenge. The rear body tub was alarmingly empty and I had no clue and no examples in Holland of how this should look. This is where UK and US based SA Speed 20 owners really came to the rescue. Ian Frith went to great lengths in providing photographs of his own and other cars which were essential help in getting it right. And digging through Nick's archives I found out that YY's closest family member carrying VdP tourer body number 1812 was still in existence and lived in California cared for by Everett Smith. Everett produced a marvellous set of drawings and photographs of the back seat arrangements on his very original car, but also of the hood, the hood frame, side screens and tonneau. In those days we also visited Alan Stote (a previous owner of YY) and drew patterns of the side screens from his YY 2581 (another close relative) on large rolls of wallpaper and were able to have a good look at all those little details that normally escape attention but are crucial during a restoration from virtually nothing.

Armed with all this information a new propshaft tunnel was fabricated from sheet metal. The carpentry in the rear end proved rather straightforward and my compromise between ease of construction and total adherence to original design provided some additional space for tools under the seat next to the batteries. That left me with the most difficult job of all, construction of the hood frame. Although the frame is relatively simple and only needs a piece of wood, a few strips of steel, some D-profiles and a hand full of rivets, accuracy in finding the correct dimensions is crucial if you want the hood to be firm and to look right. Again Everett's and Ian's drawings and photographs proved invaluable. It still took a large number of wooden and at least one steel, mock—ups and try—outs before I was satisfied. This is also where one finds out that on a hand built body no measurement is really the same on both sides of the car. And a few millimetres (I am metrical) out means that your frame loses all stability and that your hood will look like a wet towel likely to blow off at speeds over 10 mph.

By now we were getting somewhere. All that was left were a few odd bits and pieces, like renewing the radiator stone guard, restoring the headlights and some upholstery, carpets, hood, bag and tonneau. Nick covered the first two items and a local upholsterer did a very good job on the interior and weather equipment. Classic Conolly was used for the seats and door panels and double duck for the hood and side screens.

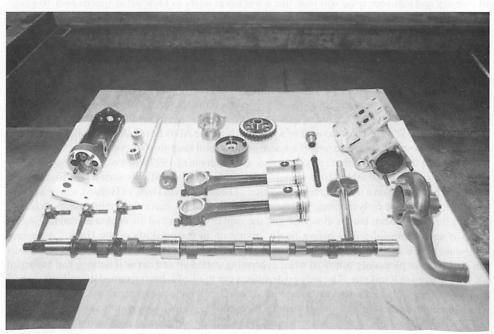
It was early 1997 when all the work was finished. In February the car was shown at the Antwerp Classic car show in Belgium to display the upholsterer's skills. In order to do so he had to be ready in time and unashamedly advanced me in his customer queue, so I could hardly refuse.

Passing MOT in Holland was a bit of a problem with the Alvis headlights, so in the end I had to resort to a temporary change to a pair of moderns which I still keep for that eventuality. After that we were ready for the road. Our first real outing was in the autumn of 1997 when we set course for Wales to show the end result of all the hard work to Nick Simpson who had only seen a half finished and unpainted body leave on a trailer three years earlier. The short trip to Hook of Holland where we were scheduled to board the early morning high speed ferry to Ramsgate, was rather embarrassing. It is only 25 km's from Rotterdam but the closer we got, the slower we went and the engine started making all kinds of unprofessional noises before finally giving up in the outskirts of the Hook. A passing homeward bound Brit took pity on us and unceremoniously towed us aboard. I thought the electrics had died and was pleasantly surprised when everything started up and ran as if nothing had happened when we arrived in Ramsgate. The only explanation I can think of is having turned the mixture control knob (not a very sophisticated device on the Speed 20 and me a rather inexperienced Alvis driver) in the wrong direction on that early morning! We then proceeded to Wales in one go through continuous rain and arrived late, cold and hungry. My wife, Ineke, has still not completely forgiven me, but at least we had proven that YY is again up to what she was designed for: serious motoring and not too many



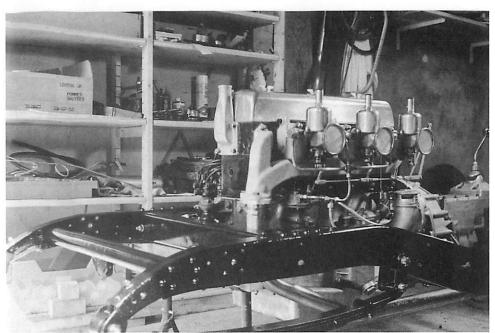
Now the Speed 20 starts to look like a car again.

Photo: Carel de Bruin



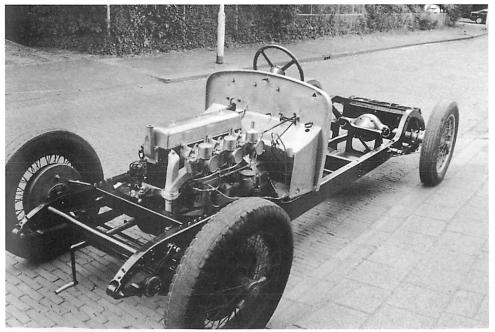
Shiny new and restored engine parts.

Photo: Carel de Bruin



Chassis restored and engine installed.

Photo: Carel de Bruin



A super view of the rolling chassis with engine and bulkhead in position.

Photo: Carel de Bruin



The product of this long and intensive restoration. An absolutely splendid SA Speed 20.



What it is all about. Grand Touring in an Alvis and Ineke looks pretty happy too.

Photo: Carel de Bruin

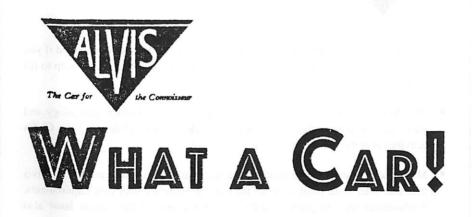
creature comforts.

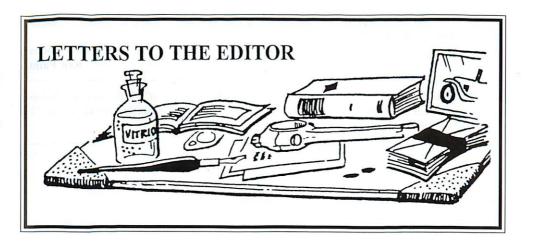
Over the last few years I have had much fun with YY. In 1998 we attended the 75 years Alvis anniversary at Brooklands and totally unexpectedly were awarded the Herbert Trophy for best Speed 20, a great honour indeed. Afterwards we spent a week in the Cotswolds and had to buy a complete set of Toggi's, rugs, pullovers and associated knitware to keep Ineke's temperature above freezing (in June!). She also was not impressed with YY's somewhat erratic steering. Since then she has become and until this day remains, rather sceptical, about long distance travel in YY. At the end of 1998 we moved to Beijing, where Charles Mackonochie and Carol were welcome visitors and we had a memorable on top of the Great Wall lunch near Huanghuacheng, an area completely unspoiled by tourism and visited the Ming emperor's Tombs at Shisanling.

We had left YY in Nick's care who attended to the steering and fitted new rear springs to improve YY's stance and put an end to some horrible clonking noises. In '99 we had to come back from China to defend (and lose) the Herbert trophy but subsequently had a very pleasant round trip to Scotland. Given my wife's skeptisim about Alvis travelling I was joined by son Michiel for 1,500 trouble free miles under varying conditions, atrocious weather going up to Scotland (where a choice of 60 single malts in the local rest house quickly restored our circulation) and warm sunshine on the way back. I haven't seen YY since and am suffering from severe withdrawal symptoms. Last year, just before the London —Peking rally arrived in Beijing, we moved to Singapore and missed the arrival of the Alvis team, but the latest plan is to attend the Alvis Provence meet in September for some serious driving mixed with the occasional opportunity for degustation of the local produce. And the good news is that Ineke will be joining in the fun, but that may have more to do with the deal she hopes to do on a farm house in the Drome than with the prospects of driving around in YY! In closing this report let me once again thank all those paid and unpaid Alvis enthusiasts without whose help YY 2583 would never have been returned to it's present splendour.

CAREL JAN de BRUIN

A super account by Carel of the restoration of this car. Inspiration to us all. I must also add that as a mono–language Englishman, I am absolutely bowled over by Carel's mastery of the language. A great ambassador for the Alvis Marque and the Club.





Church Farm Cottage The Street Ricking Hall Suffolk 1P22 1EQ

Email: kenpainter@expertise333.freeserve.co.uk

Dear Julian.

May I, as a non Alvis owner or member, add my piece to the question of the use of *Tetra Boost?* Many experts, who have clearly not seen either the product or the accompanying literature, are very properly worried about the dangers of using Tetra Ethyl Lead and comment that t.e.1. needs to be used in such small doses that it would be impossible to measure accurately. I actually use the stuff, so I can respond to some of their concerns.

First, it comes already diluted, so that one is not measuring with a hypodermic and slight over or under-dosing will simply result in minor changes to the octane level or actual level of t.e.l. in the tank.

100ml of *Tetra Boost* mixed with 25 litres of 95 octane unleaded makes 3 star 95 octane leaded; mixed with 13 litres of 95 octane unleaded, it makes 4 star 97 octane. 100 ml mixed with 13 litres of Super unleaded 97 octane makes 4 star 99 Octane and mixed with 6.5 litres it makes 5 star 100 octane. The leaded petrol currently available in the UK is actually 100 octane and not all early engines relish such a rich diet.

As for safety precautions, the manufacturers recommend that you wear proper, fuel resistant, gloves (I wear nitrile gardening gloves, which are fine) and that you wear eye protection as well—a simple pair of goggles from almost any motoring accessory shop will do the trick. They do go on to give first aid precautions if one should spill, splash, or inhale the stuff, but they are very similar to those you find on many other products, such as paint remover. I follow their safety precautions, but find that the cans are easy to handle and one would have to be quite careless to mishandle them.

Yes, it is dangerous stuff, but so is modern unleaded petrol. Simple and sensible precautions are all it takes to use *Tetra Boost* safely. It is also cheaper than leaded fuel and works out at about 14 pence per 100 ml, furthermore, it means that you can refuel your car at any petrol station and know that valve

seat recession will not be a problem. None of the approved additives can give that assurance; they reduce, but do not eliminate it.

Yours sincerely Ken Painter

Ken Painter modestly neglects to say that he owns and races a very rare 4CS Maserati which he found in pieces in Singapore in the sixties and is currently the editor of the Lagonda Club Magazine, "The Lagonda" — J.N.B.C.

5 1 Upper Cranbrook Road Westbury Park Bristol BS6 7UR

Dear Julian,

I thought that readers of The Bulletin might be interested in the following extracts from "The Phoenix Generation" by the late Henry Williamson. The book was published in 1965, but covers the decade before WWII. The opening chapters are set in May 1929. The quotes are made with the kind permission of the author's agents A M Heath & Co Ltd.

"The guests were still arriving, to judge by the crowd waiting on the pavement outside the Oxford Street shop. The two young men, sitting in a black sports car with fabric body, drawn up by the kerb across the street, watched for a while. The upper part of the building was illuminated.

"Bogus," said Piers, "Look at that 'Ornate Ionic' pillar. I wonder they didn't put Mickey Mouse on there as well."

But Phillip was thinking of the safety of his new possession, his Silver Eagle, a six-cylinder three-carburettor sports car.

"Perhaps it would be safer to park down a side-street, in case someone pinches it."

Piers thought that his friend had paid far too much for that second—hand car. It was less than a year old, but the exhaust smoked blue, the engine used a gallon of oil every hundred miles (!). Obviously the previous owner had caned it. Phillip had employed the Motor Association to vet it before buying. The engineer's report had been equivocal: "Provided the excessive smoking can be abated it is in good order."

"Have you insured it against theft?"

"Oh, yes!"

Piers thought that the sooner it was stolen the better...

Phillip went to London to make a complaint about the engine of his car. The Portland Street salesman was suavely repetitive.

"The Motor Association engineer's report made it clear, surely, sir, that the oil flow needed only a little adjustment. The regulating screw on the oil-pipe to the overhead valve tappets needed a turn or two, I thought I heard him say."

"I fancy that is what you suggested"

"Really, sir? But I'd not seen the car before, it only came in that morning. Have you tried adjusting the oil screw, sir?"

"Oh, yes. There's no compression in one of the cylinders. You can hear the air hissing past the

piston when you turn the handle."

"A broken ring, perhaps, sir. If you'd like us to take off the cylinder head for you, and can spare a couple of hours, I'll get a mechanic to draw the piston".

Phillip went back that afternoon. The front cylinder was badly scored, "The gudgeon pin apparently came adrift, sir. It looks like a rebore."

"How much will a rebore cost?"

"We might do it for ten pounds (!?!!). She'll require new pistons, of course. Shall we say fifteen pounds for the job?" (!!!??!!).

"I suppose it wouldn't be fair to ask you to pay for the entire job, since I bought the bus as it was. Caveat emptor, you know."

"That's very sporting of you, sir. I'll tell you what, we'll throw in the pistons. How about a tenner for the job sir? By the look of the toe mark on the floorboard by the accelerator pedal, the last owner caned your engine somewhat."

When the work was done he drove home at thirty miles an hour. The dipstick showed clean oil, and none used. He must take Lucy for a drive, at once.

I look forward to reading future correspondence on:-

- (a) The technical details of the oil-flow regulating screw on a 1929 Silver Eagle;
- (b) Whether Silver Eagles had 3 carburettors as early as May 1929;
- (c) The history of the Motor Association and the nature of their reports on second–hand cars for prospective purchasers;
- (d) The identity of the Portland Street motor dealers. Were Charles Follett and Co in service at that time?
- (e) The cost in real terms of a rebore of a Silver Eagle now compared with £15 in 1929, etc, etc.

With best wishes, Yours sincerely,

Tim Hills

Fascinating indeed. I welcome response from Silver Eagle experts — J.N.B.C.

"Campden Close"

Campden Hill Ilmington

Shipston-on-Stour

Warwickshire CV36 4JF

Email: nicholas-walker@email.msn.com

Dear Julian

You asked me for more information about my forthcoming book on the Speed Model Alvis.

Its full title is "The Speed Model Alvis in Detail-including the 3½ Litre and 4.3". The publisher intends it to be the first in a series where landmark models are described and analysed in more detail than has been the case before. They are not intended to be either restorers' guides nor workshop manuals, but are aimed at the reader who is more than superficially interested in the model—be he or she an existing owner or a prospective one.

After some background on the Alvis company and its earlier products, the book describes the way in which the SA Speed Twenty emerged out of the Silver Eagle. It then moves on to cover not only the technical features of that and ensuing models but also the reasons for their development, the commercial background to their launch, their sales success or otherwise, and so on. In digging into this history I have come across a number of previously unpublished facts which have surprised me and which may equally surprise even the most knowledgeable of our members.

As you might guess I have had considerable help from a number of AOC members, and particularly from Nick Simpson who, it turned out, had been planning a not dissimilar book for many years. Nick generously turned over to me all his drafts and technical data, and also gave me the run of his photo archive

As we discussed, I am hoping to get an advance copy to you in time for you to review it in the September/October Bulletin. We plan to have the book on sale around that time—there will be a special launch offer for AOC members which will be advertised in that same Bulletin (ie early October).

Best wishes Yours sincerely Nick Walker

The advent of this book will be a great milestone in Alvis literature, and how appropriate that it should be published in the Club's fiftieth year — J.N.B.C.

82 The Strand Newport Victoria 3015 Australia Email: linkpumps@bigpond.com

Dear Julian.

What a stunning motor car on the cover of the March/April edition of the AOC Bulletin. The bodies of these cars do not exactly unbolt like a Triumph "Herald", and the work put in to restore this car is enormous and Nick Simpson is to be congratulated on the result.

I am about to attempt the relatively minor restoration, (in comparison) of my recently purchased TD21 drop head. It is suffering from the well-publicised rot in the mudguard and inner mudguard area. It appears to be a double mudguard in some places and rusts internally.

I was wondering if members who have already gone down this route could give me some ideas on how to tackle the problem and at the same time improve on the design. I see some modern cars in Australia are using inner mudguard material which cannot corrode as it is non metallic.

Has anyone gone back to a single mudguard so that it can easily be cleaned and stop the corrosion from starting?

I would appreciate hearing direct from anyone about restoration of the Graber designed bodies and TD21 cars.

Yours sincerely John Link 56 Skyline Drive Keene New Hampshire 03431 USA Email: robtlmerrill@hotmail.com

Dear Julian,

I enjoyed Ernest Shenton's letter about DHP 551 (1938 Speed 25 Saloon) and DRF 62 (1936 Crested Eagle 4-light saloon) – but for the added history on DRF 62 (Chassis 13193, Original Engine 13639, TF 19.82, 2762 cc, Car # 18024, Charlesworth Body # 13896)!

I had not realized that the engine transplant from DHP 551 to DRF 62 was made in 1954.

I came into contact with Gerald Oldacre (AOC # 1971M) in 1966 when he had the car for sale for £100. It was a beauty, but I was broke and the car went to a Mr. R. Stanway. I next heard of the car in 1974 when Olaf Lund was (again) restoring the car and expected to sell it. And in 1983 I heard from Chris Prince that the coachwork and chassis had been separated and he had some parts from the coachwork were for sale.

It sure was a beautiful auto, and it was a shame to see it disappear. I wonder where the chassis (13193) with the Speed 25 1938 RAC Rally Car engine (15057) is now?

Best regards Bob Merrill

25 Gangefields Biddulph Stoke-On-Trent Staffs ST8 73A

Email: AWildin@talk21.com

Dear Julian

In response to Ben Lenthall's letter in Bulletin no 468 page 143, what a headline to consider. £160,000 a record price paid for an Alvis.

At first glance this could be excellent news for owners of 4.3 Vdp short wheel base tourers. However let us not get away from reality. For those who are not aware of this model and let us assume that there are some out there who do not know anything about the 4.3 Vdp swb tourer history, it is now in Ben's words", a minefield".

The total number of these cars built was just 12 and yet the 4.3 Register may show 20 plus. Wayne Brooks has documented the 4.3 Vdp swb tourer and for any prospective new owner, nay even an existing owner, Wayne is someone who must be contacted to establish the authenticity of any 4.3 Alvis.

Within the web site www.alwiluk.com there is a page dedicated to the 4.3 models and on this page you can view photographs 10 of the 12 genuine 4.3 Vdp swb tourers. In addition there are also photographs of some of the 4.3 Vdp replicas.

If anyone has a photograph of those two missing cars please advise me so that I may complete the photographic details.

Where though does a non-Alvis Owner Club member go for his information? It is more than a

ALVIS

SERV



minefield and any prospective purchaser must tread with trepidation.

Yours for ever Alvis with curvaceous curves.

Alan Wildin

Abbotside 1 Campsall Drive Sheffield S10 5FZ

Dear Julian

My son has just discovered the enclosed photograph taken in 1967 when we owned both cars for about a week! 629 HYL (now back on its original registration of AS3100), car no. 26100, is currently undergoing a chassis up restoration. I have lost touch with FJB88, car no. 23338. I last heard of her in 1986 when she was owned by member Mrs Helen Lloyd in Chester.

The photo flatters both cars. Although the TD21 was only eight years old the previous owner had left it outside with a leaking hood, doing no good at all to the rear seat, woodwork, etc. The TA14 leaked like a sieve through the sunshine roof.

All best wishes **Donald Smith**



Donald Smith and son's TD21 and TA14. They both look splendid in the photograph.

Photo: Donald Smith

20 Ghyllwood Drive, Cottingley, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 1NF

Dear Julian,

My third book—"British Trial Drivers their Cars & Awards 1919-1928" is now at my printer/publisher's and I am hoping that you will be sent a copy sometime in the next couple of months, for review.

In the meantime, I am enclosing a copy of a photograph which I have managed to obtain and have sought for a long time. This photograph is A E Dobell's Alvis entry in the 1934 Monte Carlo Rally. As you will see, in my Rally book, he only just made it—placed 113 out of 114 classified finishers but he did succeed in reaching Monte Carlo, from Palermo in Sicily. I am continually looking for registration numbers which I never managed to include in my rally book and I was, therefore, especially pleased to obtain this photograph. It occurrs to me that any AOC members who have a copy of my book might also like to see the photograph and pencil in the appropriate number in their copy of the book, against Dobell's name.

I must confess, however, that I am a little puzzled about the registration number. I had always imagined that numbers without a prefix of letters were Guernsey registrations until I discovered that Monaco registrations, apart from the royal registration, are also simply numbers! I wonder, therefore, just where this Alvis was registered?

Best wishes, Yours sincerely, Donald Cowbourne

Another important book by an AOC member. I look forward to seeing it. The photograph of Mr Dobell's Speed 20 appears on the next page—J.N.B.C.

P.O.Box 46 140 Race Street Bainbridge PA 17502 USA

Email: wayneAlvis@aol.com

Dear Julian.

TA21 24661, a lhd Dhc, in considerably modified condition, is being offered on e-bay by a chap in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. The car is burgundy and silver with maroon vinyl upholstery, black vinyl hood, white wall tyres, Rolls-Royce grille (!), chrome full wheel covers, spotlamp, Pontiac V8 engine, automatic transmission, power brakes, air conditioning, cassette player, liquor flask in a pocket in the driver's door, cocktail glasses in the passenger door, etc, etc. Some instruments have been changed and a turn signal control has been added to the steering column. There's no accounting for some people's taste. Other than the Rolls-Royce grille the body appears to be as original. The owner has asked for the bidding to start at \$18,500. Seems a bit optimistic.

The man who performed the engine transplant still has engine 24661 along with the gearbox and rear axle assembly which he is willing to sell. The owner of the car has the Alvis grille. So, the car,



A.E. Dobell at the finish of the 1934 Monte Carlo Rally.

Photo: Donald Cowbourne

which is now something of a mongrel, could be returned to it's original configuration, but it would cost an arm and a leg.

I read with interest Ben Lenthall's letter regarding 4.3 Litre EWA 69, advertised for the equivalent of £160,000. A bit over the top. This chassis, 13183, was indeed originally clothed with a Charlesworth saloon body. One of my correspondents, who was interested in the car, contacted me for details. He forwarded to me the vendor's response to his inquiry, in which the vendor stated in part "Yes, it's an original body"!! Dearie me. If he isn't being deceptive, he's thrashing around in a pool of complete ignorance. The 4.3 Litre Register is indeed, as Ben states, a minefield of non-original cars. Caveat emptor certainly applies. The prudent purchaser might be advised to obtain the numbers and check with someone who has access to Works records, prior to taking the plunge.

I've never seen an Alvis all-synchromesh gear box such as the one in the photo provided by Doug Pound. However, I do have copies of the Car Records for most of the 4.3 Litre cars, which include gear box numbers. The numbers range from 828 in chassis 13641 to 2339 in chassis 14870. Gear box number 2338 is shown on the Car Record for Yves Honegger's 4.3 Litre 14840, ELB 1. Perhaps the gear box in the photo is from a batch which has a separate sequence of numbers. Peter Black once told me of a used all synchro gear box he installed in a car which made the speedometer go backwards! He wondered if it was from an armoured car or tank.

I read the reprint from The Autocar about the Speed 20 tourer that ran on Producer Gas. The name Tommy H. Brahmer, owner of the Speed 20, sounded familiar. He was an early member of the Alvis Owner Club. In the AOC Year Books of 1953–1954 and 1954–1955. Mr. Brahmer listed a 1937 4.3 Litre, Swedish registration B 25957 and he advertised for 4.3 parts in Bulletin 17 of December 1954. There was a letter from Brahmer, with a photo of 3½ Litre 13105, in two tone livery, in Motor Sport (date unknown). In Bulletin 236 of July 1973, Tom Brehmer, then resident in Prez vers–Siviriez, Switzerland, is mentioned as a former Speed 20 and 4.3 owner.

3½ Litre 13105 is a rather rakish Bertelli bodied 2-door saloon. Apparently it was prepared by the Works as a show chassis for the Paris salon. It was purchased by Swedish racing driver "Haken" Widengren who had the Works fit a 4.3 engine. The Bertelli body is said to have been designed by Widengren.

I wonder if the identity of Mr. Brahmer's Speed 20 is known?

Yours for longer bonnets, Wayne Brooks

As usual a very interesting letter from Wayne, covering many subjects. I too wonder what happened to the Producer Gas Speed 20 — J.N.B.C

Email: powen@bluewin.ch

Dear Julian,

The Bulletin has never been better, but can I introduce a heretical VSCC note—why do we not move to a larger format as per the VSCC Bulletin, so that I can bind the issues more attractively?

Yours sincerely

Phil Owen

Now, there is a thought! It would be rather splendid to have a larger Bulletin format and perhaps go back to the size it was in the 1960s. Apart from the problem of cost, would there be enough material to fill the larger pages?—J.N.B.C

P.O.Box 276CMU Chiang Mai 50202 Thailand

Email: mdoland@loxinfo.co.th

Dear Mr. Collins,

I cannot now remember when we were last in touch if I told you that I was writing a memoir. But in fact you may have seen in the VSCC 'Bulletin' my plea for relevant photographs, having suffered the loss of an extensive picture archive covering the period 1946–1964. It was in the early part of that time that we came to know Rivers and Penny; I speak of them with affection in my book (which will soon be sufficiently complete to offer for publication.) As you know, in this day and age a personal life is of no interest without a copious quantity of illustrations, and even after six years I am still hunting.

At the end of the War we ran a 12/50 "big port" 'beetleback' Alvis registered OX6854. We bought it from a Mr. Taylor, later of Taylor and Crawley, and sold it to the late Charles Meisl, who could not help when I wrote to him a few years ago.

I have found several 'shots' of the car in a later career when it was raced at Silverstone and other places, but it was stripped—down and painted a dirty cream. What I seek is a photo of the car when we had it and Rivers took an interest in it. It was dark green and instead of having headlamps it had little foglights. I am almost certain Rivers took photographs of it.

I also would like to have a picture of his 12/60 'beetleback', a car we saw often when he called at our Watford garages. It was black and had a GO registration. If a photo exists of Rivers with the car I should be most interested.

I would like to mention that I am a respecter of copyright; all assistance given will be—in many cases already has been—acknowledged in the book; and photograph captions always acknowledge the photographer or family concerned; and whenever known I also say what camera was used! (I am a keen photographer myself.)

All postage and other relevant expenses will be met quickly. One other request is that nothing more important than photocopies be sent here. I will furnish my UK address to minimise the risk of postal losses.

Sincerely yours

	Michael Doland
If anyone can help, please contact me—J.N.B.C	
The following extremely interesting letter was passed on to me by Nick Simpson—J	.N.B.C

Dear Nick,

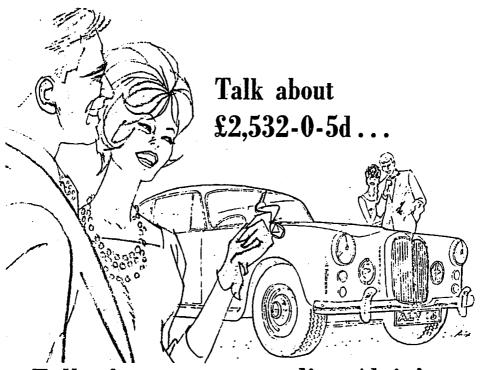
Just been reading your article on tramping. Very interesting. Particularly the idea of gyro action of the front wheels being involved. This converts rotation about a vertical axis to torque about a horizontal axis. There could be a neat mechanism whereby the disturbance travels from right to left as a horizontal tug and returns from the other wheel as a vertical tug.

Travel one way via the steering system and the other way via the spring (or loosely rivetted

chassis). And of course a different disturbance can simultaneously go the opposite way round the loop. This would fit with its appearance above certain speed thresholds—where the gyro action is enough to keep it oscillating, explains why IFS is less susceptible, fits in with the idea of systems with different resonant frequencies (periodicities) being matched to one another. The other interesting thing is that such motion would be anti-symmetric—ie as one wheel is going right the other is going left. Maybe the front anti-rollbar on a modern car (which discourages antisymmetric modes) is partially there to stop wheeltramp. Likewise the viscous steering damper. No doubt I shall have ample opportunity to experiment in due course! That crack on my (Speed Twenty) chassis promises well doesn't it! In the "tramped for years" class.

Looking forward to some fun discussions when we next meet.

John Gregg



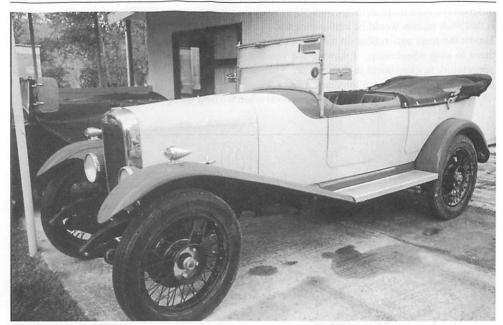
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NEWS FROM THE ANTIPODES



A recent letter from Clive Taylor, now settled in New Zealand, enclosed a couple of interesting photographs. Above is Patricia Bren's 12/50 that she restored herself.

Photo: Clive Taylor



Also from Clive is this picture from an Australian auction catalogue. The caption is "Alvis 3½ Litre supercharged tourer." I have no further details.

Photo: via Clive Taylor

ALVIS-HEALEY

It has been many years since an article has been published in The Bulletin on Alvis-Healeys and having owned and driven one for just over two years, I thought it might be of some interest to record my impressions of this unusual motor car.

The Donald Healey Motor Co. collaborated with the American Nash Company to produce a sports car for the American market in late 1950. The car was quite successful but was not available in the United Kingdom although it was included in Healey's catalogue. Interest was shown by the British public and it was decided to produce an "Anglicised" version using an Alvis 3 Litre engine (TA 21) and Alvis gearbox. The aluminium body was produced by Panelcraft, omitting the bonnet bulge of the American car and also reducing the size of the grille. The result was very pleasing although the grille can at best be described as adding character.

The Alvis engine was slightly modified to produce an extra 12 b.h.p. or so and the chassis is a modified Healey Silverstone, having coil springs front and rear, the former with Healey's beautifully made trailing links. Other parts were sourced from various manufacturers, the door hinges for example, appearing to be Land Rover and the steering wheel with horn ring and indicator switch being Austin Atlantic. Instruments are Smith's with white on a black background and brakes are Girling drums.

Thus an 100 m.p.h. sports car was available to the British public but unfortunately at a price considerably more than for the Jaguar XK series and indeed the Alvis TB 21. Sales of the Alvis—Healey (then known as the G Type Healey) were unsurprisingly poor and only about 25 were made during 1952 before being superseded by the Austin-Healey at the end of the year.

The number of surviving Alvis-Healeys is thought to be about twelve, although I have only heard of eight, two of which are in Holland. To the best of my knowledge only the cars owned by Roland Simmons and myself are on the road and used, although it is rumoured that there is a third residing in the north of England which may or soon will be roadworthy.

I purchased my car at auction in August 1996, it being a compromise between my wife, Linda wanting an Austin-Healey and my loyalty to Alvis. We did not attend the pre-auction viewing but both fell for the car when we saw it on the auction day.

Following a successful bid, we were presented with the car keys and bills (with photographic records) of a complete body off, nut and bolt restoration carried out in 1990/1991. This came as a very pleasant surprise and I am most grateful to the previous owner for commissioning such a thorough and good quality restoration.

It subsequently transpired that MXF 124 was once owned by Jim Oakman when the coachwork was black (now metallic blue) and that he used the car for Healey and Alvis Owner Club sprints and driving tests and for which purpose he fitted a TF camshaft. The bills in my possession include one for a TD cylinder head, the cost of which indicates that some modifications were carried out. The compression tends to confirm that this was raised. These improvements to the engine would suggest a power output somewhere between a TE and TF engine of about 135 - 140 b.h.p.

The G Type Healey was originally advertised as a three-seater sports car and it is indeed possible to accommodate three people on the bench seat, but gear changing and steering become hazardous and in this mode, the car is only really suitable for short journeys.

However, the width of the body gives plenty of legroom and elbow room for two with additional space in the footwell for the motoring dog. The bench seat gives no lateral support but a centre armrest helps keep the passenger movement to manageable proportions. The ride is not as harsh as one would expect from a car of this type and age and the suspension absorbs road bumps remarkably well. The

car is very comfortable.

Instruments are easy to read with the dials in the centre of the polished wood dashboard, the only oddity being that the rev. counter and speedo needles travel in opposing arcs. Control switches are conveniently to hand but can be confusing at night and the starter is by button, a system with which motorists used to modern machinery are unfamiliar and which will eventually result in failure of the ignition key or switch as they desperately try to engage the starter.

The boot is spacious, absorbing sufficient cases and squashy bags for a holiday for two and the well fitting hood folds conveniently out of sight behind the seat back. Unfolding and fixing the hood is a different matter and it is a matter of luck rather than judgement as to whether it can be extracted from its resting place. The windows are of wind up type and with all weather equipment in place and secure, the cabin is snug and waterproof. There is a heater and demister but perhaps someone with a greater understanding of these matters can explain how cars of this age (with hood down) become almost unbearably hot in summer yet are so cold in the winter. Where does that heat go?

My initial drive of the car from the auction (Ascot) to home (St. Albans) was horrid. The steering was heavy, the fuel filler could not be found but turned up inside the boot, the brakes pulled and it overheated at any speed over 3,000 r.p.m. in top (60 m.p.h.). Still, it looked and sounded wonderful.

The brake problem was quickly resolved, the pistons in the Girling drum system had seized and once freed off and greased with appropriate lubricant have worked well. They are not a match for modern brakes but are quite adequate. The handbrake is of pistol type under the dash.

The excessively heavy steering is an inherent problem, Mr. Healey's design for the mechanism being "unusual". However, replacing Michelin XZX tyres with more appropriate rubber and very careful setting up of toe-in and castor angles has improved the steering. It is still heavy at low speeds but above 20 m.p.h., it lightens up and is completely free from kick back. It has a rather dead feel and the car is driven round bends in the slow in, fast out manner.

It is advisable to do all braking and gear changing in good time so that both hands can be used to steer round the bend on a carefully chosen and correct line as rapid deviations from the planned route are not readily achieved. Once mastered, cornering can be quick and drama free with little body roll. Gentle acceleration from the bend on a wet road is advisable as too much acceleration will result in wheel spin.

The handbook makes great play of light steering with in-built understeer. The former is untrue but the latter is certainly true, more probably due to the weight of the Alvis engine wanting to go straight on rather than any design feature of the steering system. Tyre pressures of 45 lb per square inch at the front and 25 lbs rear help considerably.

The engine is the best part, the TE-TF power output in a car weighing about 25 cwts ensuring excellent acceleration and plenty of torque. Acceleration times are difficult to assess but are superior to our Rover with a quoted 0 - 60 m.p.h. time of 10.8 seconds. I believe the Healey's to be under 10 seconds, but it will also accelerate cleanly in top gear from under 20 m.p.h. to over 100 m.p.h. (the top speed is supposed to be 110 m.p.h. at an engine speed in excess of 5,000 r.p.m.).

I have achieved a hood down top speed of 5,000 r.p.m. (100 m.p.h.) on a test track during a Norwich Union rally but it all gets a bit frenzied and a comfortable cruising speed for the car is nearer 80 m.p.h., but for passengers 70 m.p.h. is more appropriate at which speed conversation is still possible.

The various initial problems have been resolved, including overheating by the fitting of an expansion tank as well documented in The Bulletin over the years.

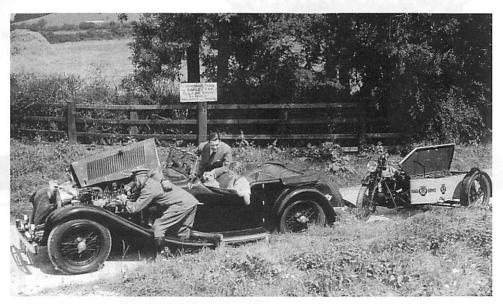
It would be foolhardy to pretend that this is an easy car to drive and it does require full concentration. However, the Healey can be driven quickly and smoothly with a feeling of satisfaction that comes with mastering a different driving experience. It is interesting that only those familiar with older cars or those who have raced cars seem able to drive it well straight away. The one exception to date

is Linda, who copes very well but is reluctant to drive "the beast". Her motto, I think, is "stop" while you are ahead.

PETER GALEA

I am grateful to Peter for sharing with us details of this unusual car with Alvis connections. — J.N.B.C.

BUT WHAT IS IT?



This delightful photograph appeared in the March 2001 issue of Practical Classics. The caption to the photograph was as follows:

"Looks like carburettor trouble again, this time on a splendid Alvis, somewhere near Kings Langley, Hertforshire, in 1936. The AA man will doubtless soon have Brylcreem Bertie and Dottie on their way again, and be back on his motorcycle. That's bang up-to-date, though its sidecar still follows the coffin theme."

It is hardly an Alvis with that sidevalve engine lost under the impressive bonnet. What is it? One of those 1930s ersatz sports cars? An SS perhaps? The cutting was sent to me by David Larkin—J.N.B.C.

INCK MOSSNIP AND MOTORING EMOTIONS

(Illustrated by Apsley)



"GRABBING A QUICK CUP OF TEA AND THEN OFF TOUND THE COURSE IN A T-SHIRT AND CAP"

"The trouble with the sport these days is that it's full of bleeding cardboard cut outs," announced Inck Mossnip, and I stared at him in amazement, firstly because we were in the Maclaren motor home (his 1963 VSCC pass again) and secondly because the person he was addressing was none other than a young and famous Grand Prix driver. "It's going to the dogs." he continued, "it's full of softies cocooned from the nitty gritty of the sport. You're not extracting the full emotional experience from it. Now in my day, we drivers were exposed to the full range, we were passionate about the sport, driving to the circuit on public roads, grabbing a quick cup of tea and then off round the course in a T-shirt and cap. None of this sissy stuff. Give me the smell of Castrol R and a circuit surrounded by brick walls, telegraph poles and trees, and I'd show you real motor racing. Mind you there were accidents. "Put a sticking plas-

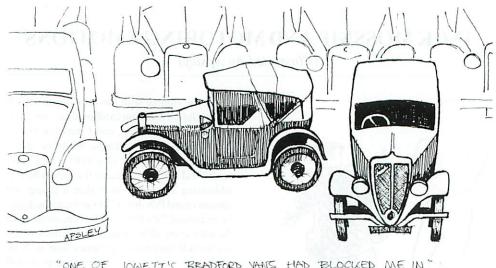
ter on it", I'd shout and roar off for another fifty laps tyres down to the canvas. These days you spend most of your time in here eating chocolate biscuits! "Inck," I said, "the young and very famous Grand Prix driver left five minutes ago, and we have been strongly urged to follow."

Once outside Inck carried on unabated. "These youngsters barely scratching the surface. I was reading an article the other day in *Thoroughly Bad and Plastic Cars*, in which this young whipper–snapper was waxing lyrical about a drive in a borrowed Bugatti. His greatest moment. Get a life I say, if you are to attain a state of motoring nirvana then driving someone else's car is not the way to do it. What you need to do is to own and drive a car you can't really afford. This immediately opens up a

cornucopia of emotional experiences far beyond one's wildest nightmares. For example, to the wealthy a slight but increasingly loud knock in the engine of his Silver Eagle is a source of curiousity, he discusses it with friends over the port at dinner then rings his mechanic and has it fixed. To the impecunious who has just taken out a second mortgage on the house in order to buy the car in the first place, this same knock can cause sleepless nights, hot sweats and highly complex financial sums written on the backs of envelopes. Probably my ultimate



"HIS GREATEST MOMENT



BRADFORD VANS HAD BLOCKED ME IN

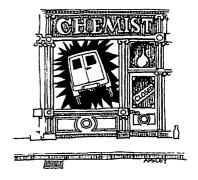
emotional experience however, involving the motor car, occurred one morning in a provincial northern town

To understand the story properly, you must realise that I was a penniless student and that the town's car park had been built on the side of a sheer cliff in the middle of the town. Modern vehicles i.e. those with brakes were parked facing down the slope, but as the owner of an Austin 7 I had always found it expedient to park across the slope. Now on this particular day, I returned to find that one of Jowett's Bradford vans had blocked me in. I waited for ages for the owner to return and then decided to try and move the van forward a little so that I could reverse out behind it. After a lot of pushing and shoving, I hadn't shifted it an inch, but then realised that the driver's side window was opened a little, sufficient probably to allow me to reach the handbrake. Standing on tip toe with my face pressed against the glass, I stretched my arm as far as it would go and bingo released the handbrake just sufficiently to move the van a foot or two. Sure enough it groaned, creaked and shook itself and then crept forward. Still holding tightly and pressed firmly to the door, I gave a little tug on the lever but to no effect. The van kept on going. Another tug saw us gathering speed and so I wrenched at it, at which the handbrake neatly bent itself across the driver's seat. "Walk away, walk away", said a little voice inside my head. "Stay, stay", said another really stupid one and then things really hotted up. We barely damaged the first car which lost a rear light and a door handle but already we were in line for the second with me still holding on to the handbrake and being dragged along at what would have been a fast jog if my feet had been touching the floor. The second impact was of bone shaking proportions and left me sitting on the ground, the handbrake still held firmly in my hand, while its earstwhile owner set off on its own at ever increasing speed. It soon became obvious that I had unleashed a mechanical version of Attilla the Hun on this unsuspecting car park and that it had destructive desires which totally belied its humble origins. "Hello, gravity said "let's rock and roll."

Down the car park slope it went like a demented ferret, zigging and zagging in search of fresh prey. The carnage being dreadful to behold, broken glass, doors, boot lids and the occasional bonnet lying strewn in its wake. "Now", said Inck in hushed tones, "you won't believe this, but before my very eyes, I witnessed a transmogrification of that van. Each collision brought with it a dramatic change in shape and before long it had taken on an aspect almost too frightful to behold. That this bent and twisted thing had a grudge against big and expensive machinery soon became apparent as it sought them

out, attacking them with a ferocity and malice which beggared belief. Small cheap cars scarcely merited its attention, one or two receiving what I would describe as accidental damage, but its real enemy was the limousine. You see said Inck, "this van's malice must have been fuelled from years of neglect. Over the sounds of the screeching and rending of metal, I could swear the strains of the Red Flag were being played on its horn, but I may have imagined it as by that time, I was a little hysterical. "Stop it, stop it," I shouted, waving the handbrake above my head but on it went until finally the battered wretched thing reached the bottom of the car park, cleared the wall and described a parabolic curve through the air after which it entered a chemist's shop via the window. The chemist was actually closed for half day but the arrival of the van changed all of that.

"A mundane ending really", said Inck, "I believe that given the option, it would have chosen a jewellers." It simply wasn't my day and would you believe it, when I got back to my car and looked at my new trousers, there was this bleeding great hole in the knees! Now that's real emotion for you!





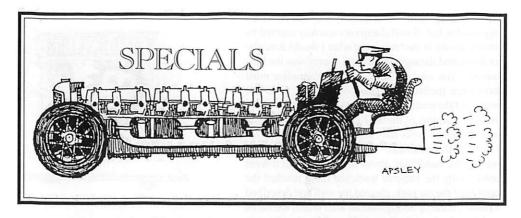
"ENTERED A CHETAIST'S SHOP "IA THE WINDOW"

"SPEEDY"

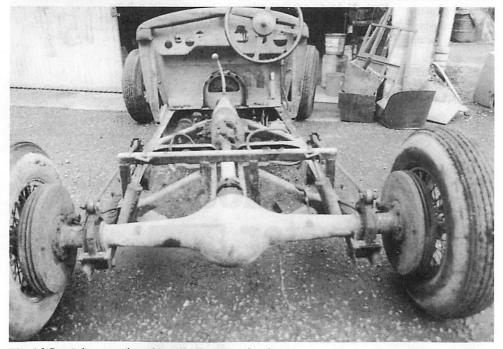
Farmhouse Butter Existing Avisbros 250 ge

BEST BEFORE

This interesting piece of Alvis ephemera comes from Dave Culshaw who kindly sent me a "degreased" example of the wrapper — J.N.B.C



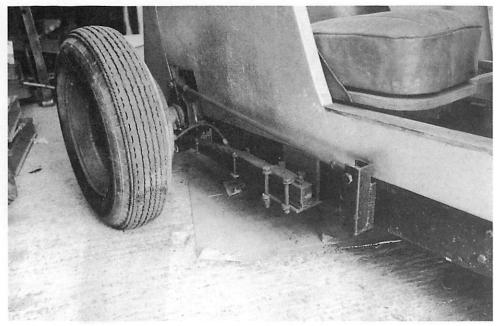
SPARROWHAWK ALVIS SPECIAL NUMBER FOUR



The 4.3 Special, as purchased by Albert Sparrowhawk.

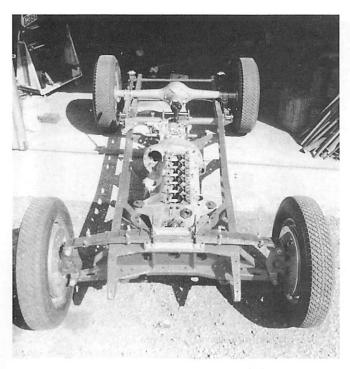
Photo: Albert Sparrowhawk

After selling HOL 56 the Ex Harold Barr 4:3 special in 1988, I looked around for another old 4:3 special to sort out. I bought HTD 780 from a chap in Nutfield, Surrey. This car had been a Charlesworth saloon, engine No. 14775, chassis No. 14312. About 1963 the car had been chopped. The rear springs had been changed to quarter elliptic and the chassis was very short. This had not worked. It just jumped about with no traction at all. Also the engine was in a bad way, mainly due to the distributor not advancing etc.



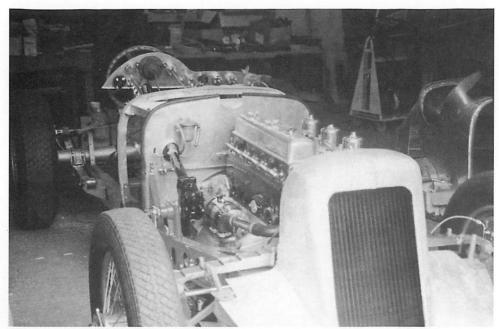
Another view of the original special's quarter elliptic rear suspension.

Photo: Albert Sparrowhawk



Rebuilt chassis with 4.3 Litre engine installed.

Photo: Albert Sparrowhawk



Bodywork under construction.

Photo: Albert Sparrowhawk



The result of all the hard work. Albert expertly drifts the special on a bend.

Photo: Albert Sparrowhawk

The car had been left for 26 years when I managed to buy it. The first thing to do was to sort out the engine. At this time Rod Jolley had some short blocks made so that modern pistons could be used but retaining the same bore and stroke. I bought one and put the engine together. After nine years it is still very good. The sump has not been off in this time only the head once.

Now to sort out the chassis. I removed all the radius arms and metal which had not worked and looked around for some rear springs and chassis.

In our barn was a 12/70 chassis so badly rusted it had folded in two. The front was quite sound being preserved by engine oil and grease. So I cut the rusted part away, turned the front of the 12/70 chassis upside down widening it to fit the 4:3 chassis. I used the front springs and rear tubular cross member and spring hangers off the 12/70. This made the wheelbase 8ft 2½ inches. I would have liked it about 8'8" but there was not enough chassis for this.

My son and I then decided to make our own body for it. I had gas cutting and welding equipment in the shed and bought a wheeling machine and press for cutting louvres. We had never worked with aluminium before but soon got the hang of it.

The body was created as I went along, no drawings or anything, just an idea in my head. It turned out very well not a crack anywhere after eight years of use.

As the chassis was so short, I had to find a gearbox to fit directly on to the bellhousing. At that time I could have bought a Silver Crest box for £1,500 which had laid in someone's shed for 20 years. I thought this too expensive at the time, so I bought a 4½ Derby Bentley box for £400.

I had cast a two inch aluminium distance piece so I could use the Bentley bellhousing. It all went together quite well. I did not know at the time but the Bentley box has a high third gear which has been good for racing but not for the hills.

When I first raced the car, I found the 12/70 springs were allowing the chassis to move about on the axle making it unpredictable in the corners. I realised something had to be done when driving on the road to East Horsely. I was driving rather quickly and encountering a sharp right hand bend, she tried to jump the hedge. It was quite exciting for a few seconds. So I fitted two extra leaves in the rear springs and extra spring clamps.

The car puts the power down very well and is very good in the wet. I think doing all the work and developing the car is very rewarding.

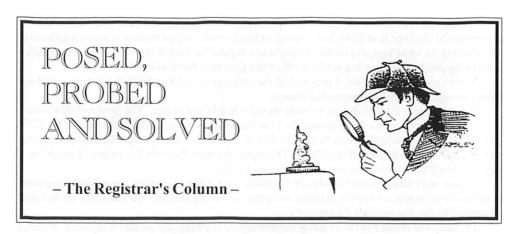
The car was built to the VSCC regulations at the time with respect to width of track, hydraulic brakes etc. It is a very quick car especially on the hills. It holds the record at Wiscombe Park for sports cars in 49:10 seconds, also the Brooklands sprint quarter mile record. Prescott in 45 seconds. Shelsley Walsh 38:90 seconds, only good enough for second places.

All this has been done with the original Alvis differential; no fancy power lock diffs or limited slip diffs.

I probably had a great deal of good luck building this car, but I think if you play the game and are kind to animals someone up there looks after you.

ALBERT SPARROWHAWK

Thank you Albert for an entertaining account of creating this car. Perhaps we can have a further article on your other 4.3 special?—J.N.B.C



"WITH STRINGS ATTACHED"

-Part 2-



Lonnie Donegan.

It is a sobering thought that by time this feature appears in print, enthusiasts for the 1950's phenonemon "skiffle", will have celebrated the 70th birthday of the subject of this month's feature,

2332 WA

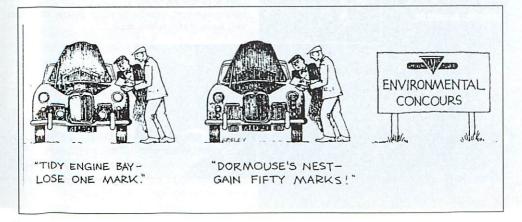
The number plate of Lonnie Donnegan's TD 21 26444.

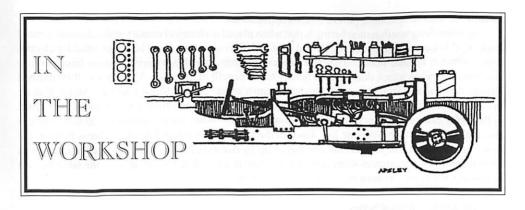
Lonnie Donegan. He is here on account of two Alvis connections, and one with George Formby subject of Part One of "With Strings Attached", because it is now largely forgotten that Lonnie actually recorded a revival of the Formby number, "Auntie Maggie's Remedy".

The skiffle sensation which swept Britain and elsewhere in the fifties, was an abiding influence not only on the youngsters of the time but on popular music and musicians right down to the present day. Donegan was a runaway success with a host of hit numbers, and it could be said that he was "Puttin on the Style" into practice himself, when he purchased a new Series 1 TD 21 Chassis 26444. It is not clear why this was bought through Central Motors in Sheffield, and delivered to the Donegan offices in London, but I make mention of it because it has never appeared, so far as I know in a Club Member's ownership, and I thus have provided a facsimile of its number plate, 2332 WA, in the hope of jogging someone's memory. Could it even be that the time-honoured question of "Does your chewing gum lose its favour on the bed-post overnight?" might be solved by the discovery that it had actually been used to seal a petrol leak?

In reading up on Donegan for this feature, I was to discover a further, more obscure Alvis connection. Apparently in 1984 Donegan starred, taking the title role, in a revival of the 1920's musical "Mr. Cinders". It may be recalled (see "*The Vintage Alvis*" for details) that originally a 12/50, or 12/60, would actually be driven on stage. Use of the latest model in this way generated much valuable publicity without actually upstaging the performers.

DAVE CULSHAW





STAINLESS STEEL FASTENERS

The following article was written by Ian Hopley, Status Office, Department of Engineering and Technology, Manchester Metropolitan University, John Dalton Building, Chester Street, Manchester M1 5GD. Thanks to Chris Watson who obtained it for me—J.N.B.C.

STATUS has been in existence for a dozen years and was originally started to serve the technical and legislative needs of the kit car industry. Over the years, membership has grown and kit cars now make up less than half of our total. Other sections of the industry include sports and racing cars, minibus and taxi converters, hearses, limousines, armoured vehicles and one historic vehicle enthusiasts club.

Should the need arise, we have excellent links with various government departments including the DVLA and routinely represent our members' interests to them. If any of your members have registration difficulties, please put them in touch with us. We also have a "yellow pages" of a few hundred suppliers relevant to the automotive industry – all of whom are willing to deal in small quantities. If replacement parts do ever become unobtainable and you need to consider re-manufacturing, do, please, give us a call. Finally, we maintain up to date copies of all technical U.K. automotive legislation including Single Vehicle Approval. If this is a relevant issue, please call us.

I have recently noticed an increase in the popularity of stainless steel nuts, bolts, self tapping screws and other fasteners among kit car constructors. I feel that a few thoughts on the subject interspaced with a few "pearls of wisdom" from my metallurgist colleagues in the Department may be of some use to the readership.

Firstly, there's stainless steel and there's stainless steel! It is available in various grades and each has its own advantages and disadvantages. The two most common types are grade 304 stainless and grade 316. 304 is also commonly called "A2" or EN 58 E or class 70 (18/8). 316 is often called "A4" and, doubtless a few other things besides! All of this makes finding out what you're buying somewhat complicated. However, the story does not end there! Both A2 and A4 are available in at least three different material conditions and the properties vary dramatically. Interestingly, there is no difference between the mechanical properties of the two grades. Secondly, while the corrosion resistance of stainless steels in general is not in question, please be assured that it is NOT immune from corrosion. This is where the difference between the two grades becomes more important. A4 is generally regarded as having better corrosion resistance (in most environments) than A2. This is because it contains slightly more nickel than A2 and also some molybdenum. It is also slightly more expensive and less

suitable for high temperature (above 300°C) applications.

Another thing worth remembering is that when placed in electrical contact with a dissimilar metal (mild steel is quite dissimilar enough!) and kept in damp conditions, there is the potential for electrolytic corrosion to take place. This is a process whereby whichever metal is most likely to lose electrons to oxygen attack does so sacrificially to the benefit of the other. There is a well established "league table" of metals in this respect and it is known as the "electrochemical series". Metals high up in the table (like Gold) are very good at hanging on to their spare electrons whereas metals low down in the table, like zinc, are very bad at it and corrode easily. When a metal from high up in the table is put in electrical contact with one low down in the table and an electrolyte like water is present, the lower one corrodes and protects the one higher up by donating its electrons. This technique is well known and is used to protect ships and oil rigs from attack. The further apart in the table the two metals are, the more vigorous the reaction is likely to be.

The Electrochemical Series:

- Platinum
- Gold
- Titanium
- Copper
- Brass
- Lead
- Stainless Steel
- Cast Iron
- Mild Steel
- Cadmium
- Aluminium
- Zinc
- Magnesium

This is where the good old bright zinc plated (or zinc passivated) carbon steel bolt is our friend. For as long as the zinc coating lasts, neither the bolt nor the chassis will corrode in the vicinity of the bolt. Once the zinc has gone, at least we have the comfort of knowing that chassis and bolt are made of the same stuff and one will not corrode at the expense of the other. There is some argument that says that the chassis will be powder coated and therefore not in electrical contact with the bolt. While this could well be true, I think most people would agree that in reality, it is unlikely to be so perfectly coated as for this to be the case. If one considers the case of a self-tapping screw into a chassis, the idea of electrical insulation between the dissimilar metals evaporates completely. It is worth remembering that because stainless steel is higher up the tree than mild steel, it will be the mild steel that suffers!

We should also consider the other material properties carefully. Stainless steels are generally not as strong as their carbon steel counterparts and can have inferior fatigue strength. Where a bolt is used in constant tension or shear, this shouldn't be a problem but where a load case involving repeated bending loads exists, great care should be taken in the selection of the bolt. The tables overleaf give various properties of bolts commonly used and may serve as a useful reference guide.

Before the tables mean anything, an explanatory note about the terminology is required.

Firstly, the column entitled "Grade" refers to the grade of the bolt. The first three, (8.8, 10.9 and 12.9) are all commonly available grades of "high tensile" carbon steel bolts. The grade is usually stamped on the bolt head and means something. The first digit (say "8") means that the approximate "Ultimate Tensile Strength" (the stress at which it breaks) is about 800 N/mm² (or about 80kg/mm² or about 50 tons per square inch). The second number represents the percentage of the first number at which the bolt starts to yield (permanently stretch). So, for example, an 8.8 bolt would snap when the

stress got to about 800 N/mm² and it would start to stretch when the stress got to about 80% of that – 640 N/mm" (or 40 tons per square inch).

Unfortunately, stainless fasteners don't have the same classification system. The categories I have chosen are A2, A4, A2SH and A4SH. A2 figures represent values for A2 stainless steel in its softest state and A2SH refer to properties for the same material in its strongest "strain-hardened" state. A4 figures follow the same convention. As one can see, there is a vast difference in each case and the only way to know what you are buying is either to test it (we can do this at minimal cost) or obtain some kind of guarantee (a certificate of conformity) from your supplier.

One final note. All the loads I have quoted in tonnes are theoretical loads applied in pure tension (like a cylinder head bolt). They take no account of the stress concentration at the root of the thread so a real life failure load could be considerably lower. Similarly, if there are any bending loads on the bolt (and most cars have something loaded in bending!) the carrying capacity of the bolt will be further substantially reduced.

The second table, showing maximum working loads also refers to bolts in pure tension. It is based on the bolt bearing a stress equivalent to 70% of its yield stress (the stress at which it starts to stretch). These are the kinds of loads that one might be regarded as foolhardy to exceed in service. Obviously, the application and any likely overloads encountered in service need to be considered very carefully if you use a bolt in shear or bending, please make further allowances for this!

Tensile Breaking Loads in Tonnes:

Grade	M 6	M8	M10	M12
8.8	1.6	3.0	4.7	6.9
10.9	2.1	3.9	6.1	8.9
12.9	2.5	4.5	7.2	10.5
A2	1.1	1.9	3.1	4.5
A4	1.1	1.9	3.1	4.5
A2 SH	1.8	3.2	5.1	7.4
A4 SH	1.8	3.2	5.1	7.4

Max. Working Loads in Tonnes (Tension):

Grade	M6	M8	M10	M12
8.8	0.9	1.7	2.6	3.8
10.9	1.3	2.4	3.7	5.4
12.9	1.5	2.8	4.5	6.5
A2	0.3	0.5	0.9	1.2
A4	0.3	0.5	0.9	1.2
A2 SH	1.0	1.8	2.9	4.2
A4 SH	1.0	1.8	2.9	4.2

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Many of us now use stainless steel nuts and bolts in many locations on Alvises. It is well worth heeding the advice given in this article—J.N.B.C.



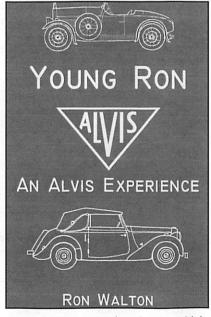
A Selection of Reviews, Criticisms, Recommendations and Personal Opinions by the Editor and other Contributors.

Young Ron—An Alvis Experience by Ron Walton, 99pp. Price £9.95. Published by the Author.

Alvis literature has been greatly enhanced by the publication of this little book of memoirs by AOC member Ron Walton.

Ron became an Alvis apprentice in 1944 and in this book he describes what it was like to be with the company at the time. Like all apprentices he was moved from department to department and Ron vividly describes some of the personalities that he came into contact with. In his early days at Alvis he acquired a 12/60 and was surprised that so few members of the company actually ran an Alvis!

Ron was in on the birth of the TA14 and the TA21 and it is fascinating to read the inside story of the design and manufacture and also to learn of some of the problems that the company encountered with these two models. Ron then moved on to the military vehicles side of the business being involved with the Saracen armoured car. Early problems with this vehicle meant that Alvis needed a liaison man with the military and Ron was chosen for the role, being sent to Malaya where the Saracen was an important tool in the anti–terrorist activities. This must have been an exotic posting for a young man.



Being involved with the Saracen meant many other overseas visits to army units using the vehicle and again it is fascinating to read of the problems encountered and how they were solved. In 1956 Ron left Alvis and moved to Cape Engineering, famous for manufacturing iron lungs designed by Captain Smith–Clarke. In retirement Ron returned to the Alvis marque and the last part of this book is about restoring his TA 14 and Three Litre.

This is a delightful book and fills a much needed void in Alvis history. The book is very well produced and illustrated and is priced modestly. It needs to be in every enthusiast's library.

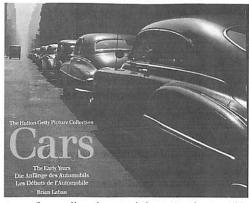
J.N.B.C.

Young Ron is available from Hugh Gibson, Landgate House, Blockley, Moreton-in-Marsh Gloucestershire GL56 9BX Cars The Early Years—The Hulton Getty Picture Collection by Brian Laban 352pp. Price £19.99. Published by Könemann.

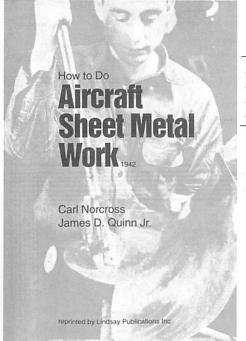
This is a marvellous book. Printed on decent quality paper are hundreds of photographs, of motor cars from the earliest days of the automo-

bile to the end of the nineteen fifties. It really is a most incredible selection.

The quality of reproduction is excellent and there is something in this book for everyone, although there is only one picture of an Alvis. There are some marvellous photographs of Veteran and Edwardian cars including pictures of early motor racing. There is a selection of pictures of motor vehicles in the First World War and the vintage period is well represented and again the pictures are superbly varied. There are photographs of motor racing, of expensive luxury cars and of candid street scenes.



This is a book for browsing and certainly not one for reading in one sitting. As always with period photographs, the background is almost as interesting the main subject matter and one can spend hours looking at the pictures absorbing all sorts of details. I understand that all the pictures can be ordered. The publisher produces similar books of aviation and ocean travel pictures. These are also excellent.



Incredibly good value for money. You will not be disappointed if you buy this book.

J.N.B.C.

How To Do Aircraft Sheet Metal Work by Carl Norcross and James D Quinn 285pp.Price £11.50. Published by McGraw–Hill in 1942. Reprint by Lindsay Publications. Card Covers.

Originally published in 1942 this is an extremely interesting reprint of a wartime text book on sheet metal work intended for those in the aircraft industry. Although mainly about the use of aluminium and its alloys, there is also much on dealing with steel sheet and the owner of an Alvis will find much of interest in this volume. There is comprehensive information on marking out and measuring metal sheet, which is invaluable.

Although written for people working in modern (well 1942) aircraft factories using powered and pneumatic tools, there is also much sound information on cutting and drilling sheet metal in this book. Particularly interesting is the section on rivetting. Whilst not a book about bodywork repair or panel beating and although it might not tell you how to re—skin a Graber, it is nevertheless a most fascinating book and well worth a place in the practical enthusiast's library, especially at its modest price.

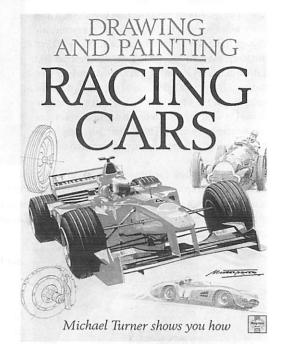
J.N.B.C.

Drawing And Painting Racing Cars by Michael Turner. 160pp. Price £19.99. Published by Haynes.

Michael Turner has been producing marvellous paintings of motor racing and racing cars for as long as I can remember and I did not have to hesitate very long when I saw this volume on the shelves of a local bookshop. It is delightful.

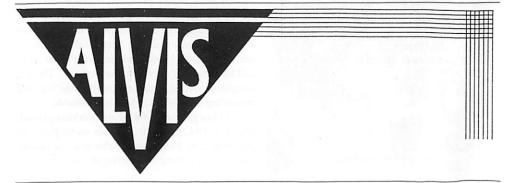
Starting with a chapter on materials and equipment, the author soon moves on to the two vital foundations of drawing cars; perspective and the ellipse. The introduction is all too short and then the rest of the book really consists of examples of Turner's work with notes on special features of each illustration. One can only marvel at his skills.

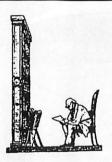
When one buys a book of this sort one is almost misled into thinking that one could produce similar drawings and paintings but alas what the author cannot do is to pass on his genius merely through the written word. This entertaining book is sub—titled "Michael Turner shows you how" but to be honest one is none the wiser after reading it. Not that this matters.



Whether you are artistic or not this is a wonderful book and you will treasure it. Greatly recommended.

J.N.B.C.





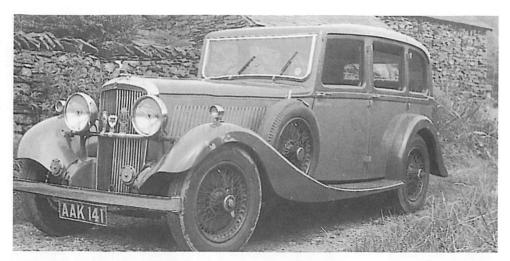
ARCHIVE

— A Selection of Pictures from the Past —



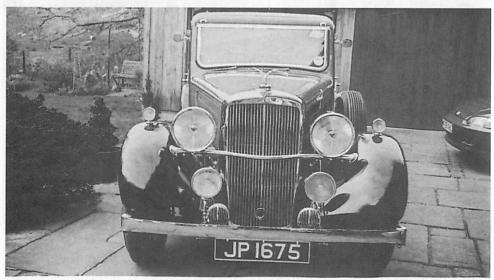
The Archive pictures for this issue all come from Bob Merrill, Crested Eagle Model Secretary. Photo taken on July 21st, 1966: The Glasgow to Largs (Scotland) Rally, a 47 mile run. No.50: CS 2972 is a 1935 Alvis Crested Eagle Charlesworth six—light saloon, Chassis 12913, Engine 13363. Owned then by John Sayers of Irvine, Scotland. He had replaced the engine with a Gardner 4 litre diesel. The car was broken for spares in the 1980's when the owner "couldn't find tires"! I wonder if the original engine ever found its way into another Alvis.....

Photo: Bob Merrill



AAK 141: a 1935 Alvis Crested Eagle Charlesworth six-light saloon. Chassis 12891, Engine 13343, TF 19.82, Car 17459. Photo taken in early 1967 when owned by John Fleming of Broughton-in-Furness, Lancs. He was the third owner. It was sold to a dealer and eventually ended up in North Carolina, USA where it is currently owned by a very secretive man who refuses to return phone calls.

Photo: Bob Merrill



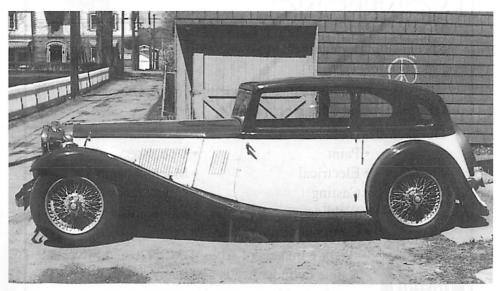
JP 1675 is a 1936 Alvis Crested Eagle Charlesworth six-light saloon: Chassis 13250, Engine 13728, TF 19.82, Car 18230, Coachwork 13942. It is owned by AOC Member W.M. Barker and has been in the Barker family for 54 years. Bill's dad bought it in 1947. Bill started the restoration in 1996 and completed it in February 2001. The fitted luggage on the rear is from a Lancia. The car has been meticulously restored and is just beautiful. Bill also reports that he has recently purchased a 1938 4.3 litre with coachwork by Abbey. He believes it is the only 4.3 bodied by Abbey.

Photo: Bob Merrill



AEC 421 is a 1950 Alvis TB14, Chassis 23569(?), with coachwork by A.P. Metalcraft, Coventry, body # 1086. Seen in Cornwall in December 1976. Wonder where it is now

Photo: Bob Merrill



AKR 249 is a 1934 Alvis Speed 20 Vanden Plas Airline Coupé, SB 19.82, #15878. Photographed in Bruce Earlin's yard in Pennsylvania on April 23, 1977. I still think it has great lines and wish I could have bought it from Bruce.

Photo: Bob Merrill

THE ALVIS SYNCHROMESH GEARBOX

by W. M. Dunn

The early Speed 20 cars had an Alvis patented gearbox, in which the constant mesh and third speed gears were all constantly meshed, and dog engagement was arranged by sliding the mainshaft back or forward, or into the central position when first or second gears were used.

There was some competition about this time amongst designers to improve gearboxes, and it so happened that in one issue of the technical press three patents were illustrated, all on gearboxes, and all three patentees had worked together in the Daimler Drawing Office. They were Georges Roesch of Talbots, C. M. Van Eugen of Morris, and W. M. Dunn of Alvis and our old Chief — the late Mr. T. Dawson of Daimler, chuckled to see three of his fellows each with a different idea to improve gearboxes.

However, the net results of all three were that skill was still required to effect a reasonably quiet change, and our thoughts then turned to doing something much more elaborate and refined which would result in crash proof gear changes. The result of this work was the synchromesh gearbox.

It was considered that the span between gears necessitated by synchromesh arrangement was so great, that intermediate bearings would have to be used to support the long mainshaft and layshaft. In order to make the gears self-aligning, double helical teeth were used on constants, thirds and seconds, but first speed was profile ground spur teeth.

As each of the constant mesh gears on the mainshaft had to be free on the mainshaft when not in drive, floating bushes were used in the prototype boxes. On test one of these bushes seized, and consequently locked the box solidly and pulled up the engine which was used for driving the rig. This brought home to us the horrible fear that if such a thing occurred on the road in a vehicle, it could lock the rear wheels, and there would be an uncontrollable skid, so we set about modifying this prototype gearbox, and put in needle roller bearings under the mainshaft gears.

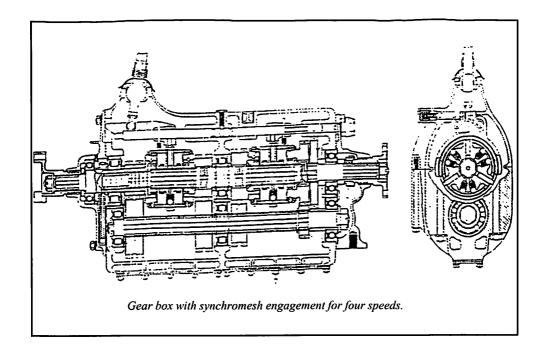
We had never believed that oil can be forced from the outside of a rotating gear to the centre with any certainty of continuous flow at high speed, so we drilled the mainshaft along its axis, and fitted a pump in the front face of the gearbox.

The axial oilway in the mainshaft fed oil holes drilled radially and feeding into the needle roller bearing. The oil feed worked, and we have never known a seizure since the original test bed pick-up.

The gearbox performance was really good, and it was quieter than anything we had built up to that time. The double helical gears, not being subjected to crash engagement, seemed to have their life increased by at least 100%, before the pitch lines showed errosion, and the changing, having synchromesh on all four speeds, was quite a boon to those people who were not quite able to synchronise gears with confidence by hearing. The synchronising was really intriguing, in that if you made a fool change and tried to go down from top to first, you could not enter because of the inertia lock holding you out of engagement until the engine speed had risen, or the car speed had fallen. It was possible to switch off your engine and stop it, then switch on and re-start by using the synchromesh cone and car speed.

The gearbox was used in armoured cars weighing some 6-7 tons. The only difference was an increase in the face width of the first speed gears, as these are used for prolonged periods in the cross-country work of armoured cars.

One of the sad moves that we made about this time was to leave this gearbox on one side for some time, and buy and fit the pre-selective type of gearbox at that time made by the E.N.V. Company. The Daimler Company had obtained a patent for the combination of the fluid flywheel and epicyclic



gearbox, which never seems to have been contested, most companies simply avoiding the use of a fluid flywheel in combination, others using instead the centrifugal plate type clutch.

However, our use of the pre-selective gearbox was unfortunate in that the gearbox offered to us was not of sufficient torque capacity to deal with the weight of the cars to which we fitted it. As there is no clutch the bands of the epicyclic gearbox are called on to take up smoothly and move the car away without jerking. If they did this they were soon slipping and unable to take the drive, and if they jerked in taking up gear, they were objectionable from the discomfort point of view.

Inching the car into a parking space was quite exasperating without a clutch, and frequently damaging to other vehicles.

However, after a season's experience of treating the brake bands with rosin to make them grip, or putting oleaic acid in the gearbox lubricant to make them slip, we then put on the market the synchromesh gearbox, which was acknowledgd in the Trade as an outstanding gearbox.

The patents on the synchromesh box were the names of Captain Smith-Clarke, W. M. Dunn and A. F. Varney — now Chief Engineer of the Aero Division. Although patenting is usually done merely to enjoy the use of a new design for some time, and not primarily for sale of licences, we had the amusing experience of other manufacturers coming along and saying that in their new constructions they had fouled our patents and could they have a gentleman's agreement, which we were quite free to give them. As some of these were much bigger manufacturers than ourselves, the nominal fee charged for the use of the patents produced a very acceptable acknowledgement in total amount tor some years.

I am ashamed to say that although this most interesting article was sent to me, I have completely forgotten who sent it, and where it comes from. — J.N.B.C.

CASH MACHINES

Please note that the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank is installing new 'Drive-Thru' cash point machines so customers will be able to withdraw cash without leaving their vehicles. To enable users to use this new facility the following procedures have been drawn up. Please read the procedure that applies to your own circumstances (i.e. Male or Female) and remember them for when you use the machine for the first time.

Male Procedure

- 1. Drive up to the cash machine.
- 2. Wind down your car window.
- 3. Insert card into machine and enter PIN.
- 4. Enter amount of cash required and withdraw.
- 5. Wind up window.
- 6. Drive away.

Female Procedure

- 1. Drive up to cash machine.
- 2. Reverse back the required amount to align car window to machine.
- 3. Re-start the stalled engine.
- Wind down the window.
- 5. Find handbag, remove all contents on to passenger seat to locate card.
- 6. Locate make-up bag and check make-up in rearview mirror.
- 7. Attempt to insert card into machine.
- 8. Open car door to allow easier access to machine due to excessive distance from car.
- 9. Insert card.
- 10. Re-insert card the correct way up.
- 11. Re-enter handbag to find diary with PIN number written on back page.
- 12. Enter PIN number.
- 13. Press cancel and re-enter correct PIN number.
- 14. Enter amount of cash required.
- 15. Re-check make-up in rearview mirror.
- 16. Retrieve cash and receipt.
- 17. Empty handbag again to locate purse and place cash inside.
- 18. Place receipt in back of cheque book.
- 19. Re-check make-up again.
- 20. Drive forward two metres.
- 21. Reverse back to cash machine.
- 22. Retrieve card.
- 23. Re-empty handbag, locate card holder and place card in slot provided.
- 24. Re-check make-up.
- 25. Re-start stalled engine and pull off.
- 26. Drive for three to four miles.

This is so incredibly politically incorrect that I hesitate to mention who sent it to me! – J.N.B.C.

The world's outstanding armoured car



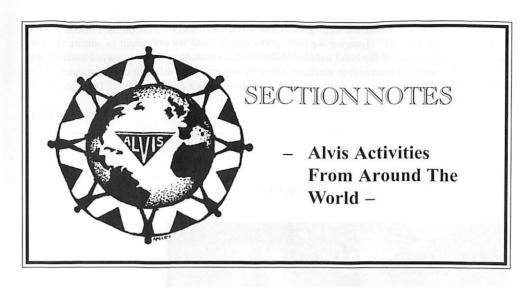
Saladin Armoured Car as supplied to Her Majesty's Territorial Army



ALVIS

CROSS COUNTRY WHEELED VEHICLES

ALVIS LIMITED . COVENTRY . ENGLAND



SOUTHWEST SECTION EXMOOR WEEKEND — 6 – 8 April 2001

When Geoffrey and Felicity Spencer offered to organise a worthy successor to last year's Dartmoor Weekend, they realised it would not be easy. But they did not expect to have to cope with a Foot and Mouth epidemic. How do you walk on Exmoor when all the footpaths are closed and you are being advised to stay at home? Bravely they rejected the easy option and decided to reorganise, using some of the other attractions of the West Country. Their efforts were rewarded when on 6 April fourteen Alvises and three "moderns" set out through rain, floods and traffic jams, for the twin Hotels at Porlock Weir which had been taken over for the weekend. Felicity and Geoffrey provided a wine and canapé reception before dinner, which allowed new friends to be introduced and old friendships to be renewed. Local members included Derek Bradbury and Jean, Ron and Jan Walton, also Patrick and Jan Simpson in their Speed 20. The contingent from SE Section included the Baker's, (in their magnificent Speed 25 limousine, the only other pre-war car), the Neale's, Smith's, Tee's, Walter's and Harcourt's, also Mike Jones, David Jobson-Scott, and yours truly, each with a partner. (I had two!). Roly and Jan Simmons came from Midland Section. We were also delighted to welcome Hugh and Nora Clarkson in their TL21. Hugh is of course Chairman of the Club's USA Section and shared many reminiscences of the USA trip with the BTA's ("Been to America", as christened by Geoffrey. Perhaps we did go on a bit!) The overnight rain had stopped when we made the short trip to Dunster on Saturday morning and we were soon amid the charms of one of the most attractive villages in the country. The view past the Yarn Market down the main street with the Castle rising at the end is a classic postcard view. The Castle itself was most interesting and was enlivened by costumed warriors with muskets which they fortunately did not fire until we had gone. The afternoon found us at Minehead Station, boarding a steam train of the West Somerset railway. It was a relaxing way to travel to the end of the line-and we didn't even have to get out, as the engine merely moved to the other end and hauled us back. Sunday morning involved some more serious driving-up Porlock Hill and on by a remarkably devious route to Lynmouth. We crowded on to the (almost) unique hydraulic cliff lift up to the twin village of Lynton, and walked down admiring the view and wondering exactly how the lift

worked. On our return we did the unforgivable (for an Alvis Owner)—went on the Porlock toll road instead of the proper hill. However we were going down—and we only went to admire the view. Another excellent meal at the hotel concluded the official event, though some stayed until Monday morning. Altogether a memorable weekend superbly organised in difficult circumstances. Many thanks to Geoffrey and Felicity, with their co-organisers Mike and Jan Baker. They are already planning next year's event. It will again be the weekend before Easter.

JIM TATCHELL

NORTHERN SECTION BIG-END SPRING WEEKEND, BUXTON, USA STYLE



Northern members having fun.

Forty four members enjoyed a three and a half day break at the Bucking Hall at Buxton. Runs to Renishaw Hall, Styal Hill, and Matlock, were well attended. During the day, the trip to the 'New' opera house to see the Hollies live rejuvenated most of us. Jackie nearly became a New Age groupie. Sunday night's fancy dress, prize giving, and film show by Robin was a very noisy affair with people getting most excited seeing their own car (moving) from outside.

Monday lunch, the final blast of culinery excellence enough to keep us fueled up for a week.

Those who missed this event, are sad Morris Minor devotees, lower down the food chain, and must try harder to keep up.

"FLAT CAP"

SCOTTISH SECTION PITLOCHRY FESTIVAL THEATRE – MAY 12^{TH} AND 13^{TH}



Sitting down to dinner at the Festival Theatre were, Norman Ganley and Evlyn, Bob and Jill Leiper, Graham and Shiela Bissett, Edgar and Betty Shields, Tommy and Janet Hall, Ronnie and Jenny Ramsey, John and Ann Mckay, Richard and Avril Pettman, David and Christine Gray, Inset is John McKay's superb TB14.

Photo: David Gray

On a glorious sunny day we met at the *Dandaroch Hotel* for lunch. New member Richard Legge arrived in his recently acquired TA21. Richard was a member of the Alvis Owner Club some 15 years ago and has recently rejoined the Scottish Section. Although he has owned his TA21 for a short time he has managed to cover a considerable number of miles.

Also in the car park was an immaculately restored TB14 belonging to John and Ann Mackay from Caithness. This was John and Ann's first outing in the car after a two year restoration. It certainly did look wonderful.

After lunch we strolled around Pitlochry, enjoying the tropical weather along with the usual coach loads of tourists who are the life-blood of this Highland town. Dinner was at the *Brown Trout Restaurant* in the Festival Theatre built on the south bank of the beautiful River Tay.

The play was "The Lady Killers", which you may remember as one of the great Ealing comedies starring Alex Guinness. It has been a few years since this section has attended Pitlochry Theatre, but I think the consensus of opinion was that it was thoroughly enjoyable.

Again Sunday morning was blessed by blue skies and sunshine and, after breakfast, while some of the company had to head home, the rest of us took a short but very picturesque drive through the Pass of Killiecrankie to indulge in a little retail therapy at the House of Bruar, known locally as "The Harrods of the North". It was a relaxing and enjoyable weekend.

DAVID GRAY

SCOTTISH SECTION
SUMMERLEE INDUSTRIAL CENTRE, COATBRIDGE
SUNDAY 15 APRIL 2001



Scottish Section members at Coatbridge.

Photo: Sandy Smith

Several of the usual suspects made their way to Coatbridge on a chilly but sunny spring day, not all in Alvises unfortunately but after all, it is a slower start to the season this far north!

As ever, the Scottish Section was delighted to welcome Richard and Avril Pettman from Penrith travelling not in their Silver Eagle but in a very neat Mini for a change. Alvis was represented by the TDs of Tommy Hall and Ronnie Ramsay and the TEs of the Martins and Graham Bissett who was chauffeuring for Mr Leiper whose TA14 was in dry dock. Sandy and Shona Smith had set off at dawn from Edinburgh, all of forty miles away, in their fairly newly acquired TJ 12/50 Cross and Ellis Wide 2–seater, the ex–Eddie Gamle car that has been seen on many, Scottish and UK outings. Chairman David Gray, was supported by his wife all day having damaged ligaments in his knee when recapturing his moving TD which he has discovered travels on its own when on a slope without the handbrake applied. The party was kept in order, as ever, by Edgar and Betty Shields.

The pre-lunch wander included a short trip on a post-war tram from Amsterdam (the tram was from Amsterdam, not the trip) and a look round some workers' cottages reconstructed in various time modes from early nineteenth century to the 1950s. How strange to see artefacts commonplace to us as children now museum pieces. A further highlight was a trip down a shallow mineshaft to see the conditions involved in mining iron ore. It was impossible to miss the harsh reality of life underground in cramped, confined spaces and it was with relief we regained the sunlight after only twenty minute shift, never mind one of twelve hours. It was an agreed preference to watch a display of radio-controlled model boats.

It was Family Day, so, the afternoon entertainment included fire—eaters, jugglers, clowns, and acrobats, a colourful contrast to the the vast grey, workshop which now houses the main part of the museum. It holds an unending collection of heavy industrial machinery, some still under power, and is a must for anyone interested in our industrial heritage.

SANDY SMITH



A speedy, and yet roomy car with all the accepted ALVIS features