

GOLDEN JUBILEE

OWNER

ALVIS

CLUB

# The Bulletin

No. 471 September/October 2001



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# THE BULLETIN

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No. 471

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2001

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www.alvisoc.org

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*Cover: The Jubilee Weekend celebrated both fifty years of the Club and fifty years of Herman Graber's connection with Alvis. Here is Ken Cameron's Graber Special Coupé photographed in the quadrangle of Keble College during the Jubilee Weekend.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*

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*Centre Spread: A Grey Lady on the Alvis stand at the Motor Show circa 1955.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C Collection*

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# ALVISCITY-

In December 1950 a note appeared in The Autocar, inserted by Richard Birks of Sheffield, announcing the possibility of a club for all Alvis cars. Sufficient interest was shown that an inaugural meeting took place early in 1951 at The Swan Hotel, Tenbury Wells (pictured on the cover of the May/June Bulletin) It was at this meeting that the Alvis Owner Club was born fifty years ago.

I am quite sure that at that meeting, the early members of the AOC had no thoughts of whether the Club would still be in existence in fifty years time. In the still austere post-war times of the early 1950s, their thoughts and efforts, were no doubt directed towards the everyday problems of keeping the fledgling club alive. Neither, I am sure, did those early members think for one minute that the production of the Alvis Car would cease or that there would be an explosion of interest in old cars.

Those of us who fifty years later are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Club, must look back and thank those founding fathers for their foresight. Things were not easy in those years and the Club came within an ace of being closed in 1953 due to lack of support. Luckily for us, Ken Day came forward and saved the Club for our future enjoyment.

There have been many changes over the years. When the Club started, most members cars were in everyday use and their sole means of transport. The cars had relatively low values and the new post war Alvises were beyond most member's pockets. Although some Alvises were very well looked after, many were kept on the road by amateur kerbside re-builds and repairs. Very different to the situation today.

When the Club was founded in 1951, the oldest Alvis the 10/30, was 31 years old. Today the youngest Alvis is older than this, and most post-war Alvises are now in the hands of enthusiasts, rather than the status symbols of company directors. Because of these time spans, the differences between pre and post-war cars have blurred and I think that many of the old rivalries are gone.

The weekend at Oxford and Blenheim was a fitting celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Club and the organisers are to be congratulated on putting on such a grand show. Full reports and numerous photographs are included in this issue.

We now look towards the next fifty years of the Club's existence. Many of us will probably not be there for the centenary, but as with the actions of members in 1951 who ensured that the club could last for fifty years, it is our actions today which will ensure that it lasts another fifty years. There will no doubt be all sorts of problems to solve in the coming years but we no doubt have the will to solve them.

I personally think that one of the most vital problems to solve is that of our ageing membership. The number of grey heads at the Jubilee Weekend was really rather noticeable. We must get a younger generation involved now if the Club is going to survive. Almost every specialist society to which I belong suffers from this same problem, so it is by no means unique to the AOC. To many of us there is nothing which is as much fun as messing about with old Alvises and yet for the younger generation, this is apparently not so. Why is this? What can we do about it?

It seems obvious that the Club Web Site is a vital accessory and probably nowadays the first contact that the younger generation will have with the Club. But what can we offer the younger enthusiast? Perhaps we should consider special memberships for under 25s; awards or trophies for restorations by younger members, or perhaps special categories for younger members at events.

Some years ago, the VSCC had a scheme where cars which owners knew they would never do anything with, were handed on to younger enthusiasts. Could we do the same?

I should be very interested to hear member's opinions on this subject.

J.N.B.C



*The Alvis couple who did not attend the Golden Jubilee Weekend.*

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## THE GOLDEN JUBILEE WEEKEND

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*Just some of the cars present for the weekend. Blenheim Palace in the background.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*

I joined the AOC in 1964 when I was eighteen and the Club was but thirteen years old. To me at the time, it already seemed long-established and at that age I could not possibly contemplate a situation where the Club would be fifty years old and I would be fifty-five. Over the years though, one gets used to getting older and to anniversaries and special dates. In 1970 came the Golden Jubilee of the Company and then in 1971 our own twentieth anniversary and as the years have passed other anniversaries have come and gone and been celebrated until we began to realize that the Club would soon celebrate its fiftieth birthday and so the Golden Jubilee of The Alvis Owner Club has been at the forefront of the thoughts of many of us for a long time, especially those of us who knew that we just had to be there.

My own preparations for attending the celebrations started at the beginning of the year when I made airline bookings to ensure that I was going to be there and also arranging that I could leave my company at what was a busy and critical time. I knew that I had to be there. Meanwhile four of my Alvis friends from Victoria, Australia, had decided to come for the event and I was able to offer accommodation at my house in Kent for the week before the Jubilee Weekend, another reason for having to be in England.

Arriving from the East a couple of weeks before the Jubilee Weekend I was pleasantly surprised to encounter magnificent weather of the sort that one only associates with childhood summers and I settled in to do some gardening and house sorting before my Australian guests arrived and hoped that the weather would continue for the Weekend. Richard and Pauline Tonkin and John and Annie Link of



the Victorian Alvis Club arrived from Gatwick airport having been in Provence the previous week. We had an excellent few days in Kent sightseeing and enjoying *The Garden of England* in perfect weather, before they all left for Cheltenham and the delights of Martin Boothman's 4.3 and 12/50 which he had nobly lent them for the weekend.

I had a slight panic when I realised that I did not have my tickets for the weekend, these having been sent to Singapore, not arriving before I left. A phone call to Ken Cameron put this right although I am sure that the last thing he needed at this late stage was to sort out my crisis. The tickets arrived and all that was left was to get myself to Blenheim. Malcolm Davy had organized a trip from Tunbridge Wells for South East members but as I was driving solo, I decided that I could not cope with tulips so I looked at the map and worked out my own fairly scenic route. The previous week had seen glorious weather but the weather forecast for the weekend was gloomy and it was a dull day when I set out mid morning on Friday from Kent. The journey to Blenheim from Kent was uneventful and I saw only one Alvis, a Speed 25 progressing regally up the A34.

On arrival at Blenheim in the middle of the afternoon, it was evident that excellent organisation was in place and various tents and marquees were in position and a fair number of Alvises already parked. I was not in an Alvis so was relegated to an area some distance away. As is well known, Oxford does not like the motor car so the arrangement was that all should park at Blenheim and travel into the city on coaches. Like everything else for the weekend, this was superbly arranged and soon a coach load of enthusiasts was being transported, in some luxury, to Keble College where we were to stay. On arrival I was soon shown my room and settled in with my modest luggage. It is quite a long time since I have stayed in institutional lodgings, but apart from the fact that the room was like an oven, it was quite adequate. Just inside the entrance of the college parked against an ivy-covered wall was Ken Cameron's superb Graber Special, a Three Litre and the Works 10/30. A very nice touch indeed.



*Members making their way round the Keble College quadrangle to the Hall for the Jubilee Dinner.*

*Photo: Malcolm Kindell*



*Three hundred Alvis enthusiasts sit down to dinner.*

*Photo: Mike Meakin*



*Colin Dexter, the guest speaker, keeps us amused.*

*Photo: Mike Meakin*

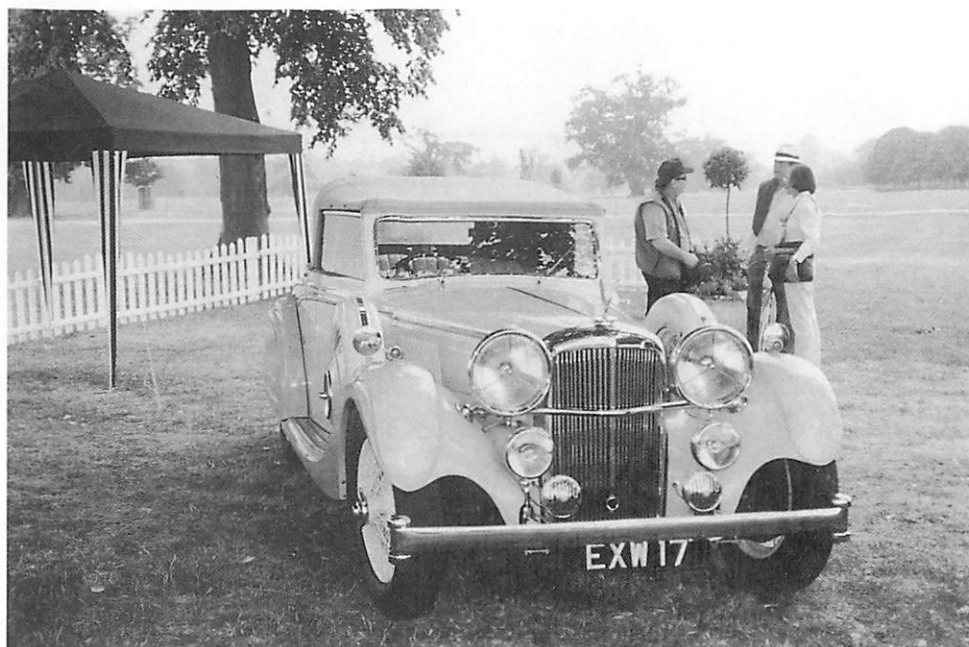


*Above and below: The Supacat and Pirhana on the Alvis Plc stand.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*

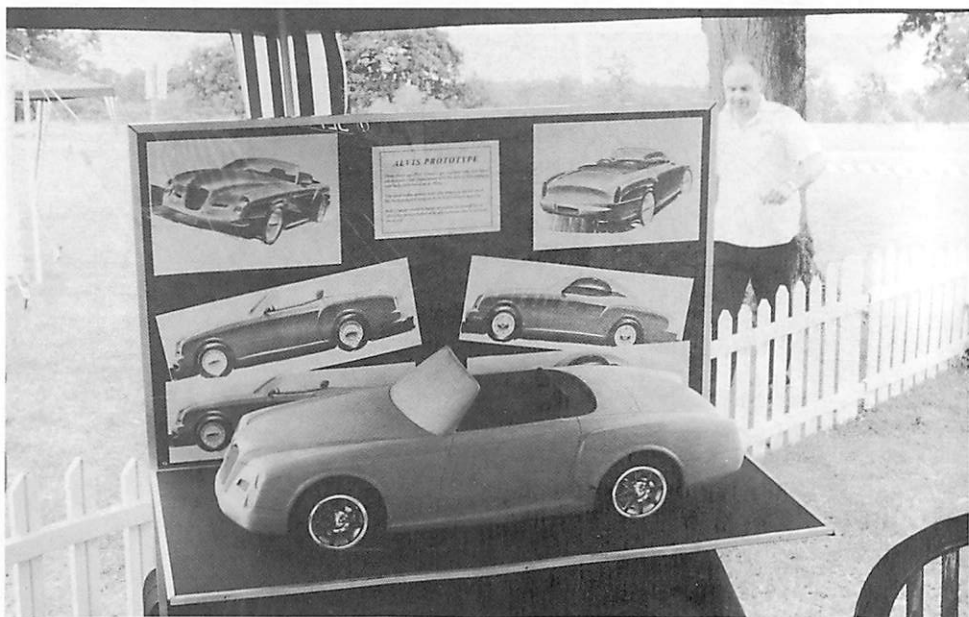






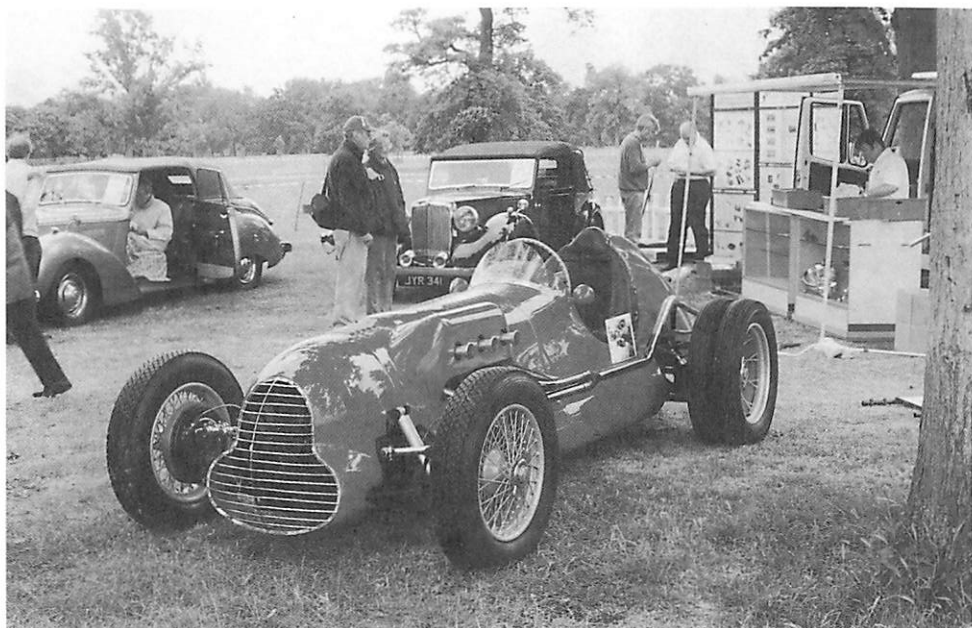
*The remarkable 1938 Speed 25 with Lancefield dhc body on the Red Triangle Stand.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*The interesting 3 Litre "concept" on the Red Triangle Stand.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C.*



*Alan Stote's wonderful Goodwin Special.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*The Military Vehicles Section, whilst not in force, put up a patriotic display.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Werner Graf's Graber Coupé*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Marcel Isler's Graber Coupé*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*





*Part of the fantastic Graber display.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



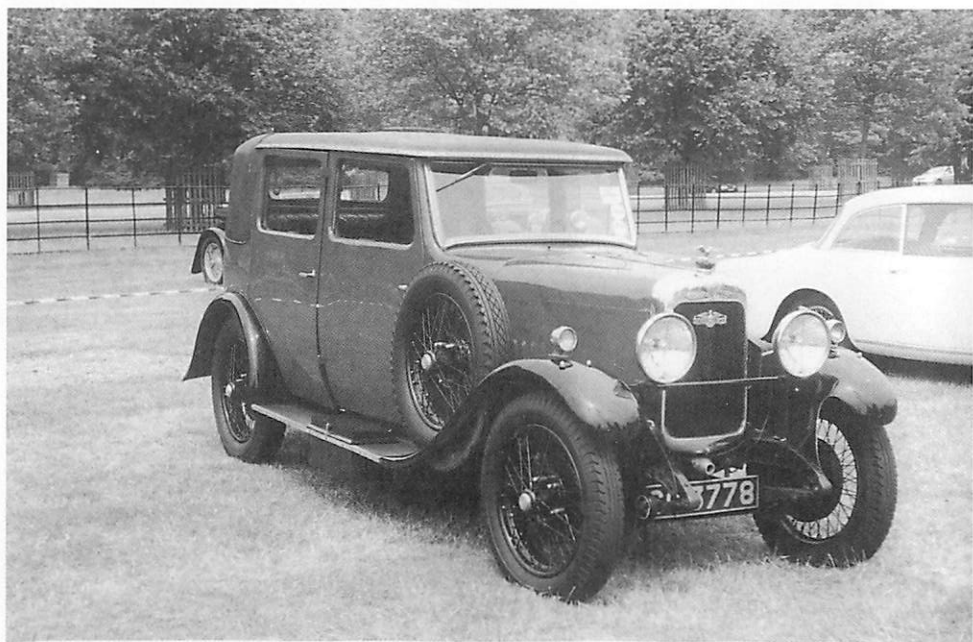
*Christian Merz's Graber dhc.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*More of the Graber display.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



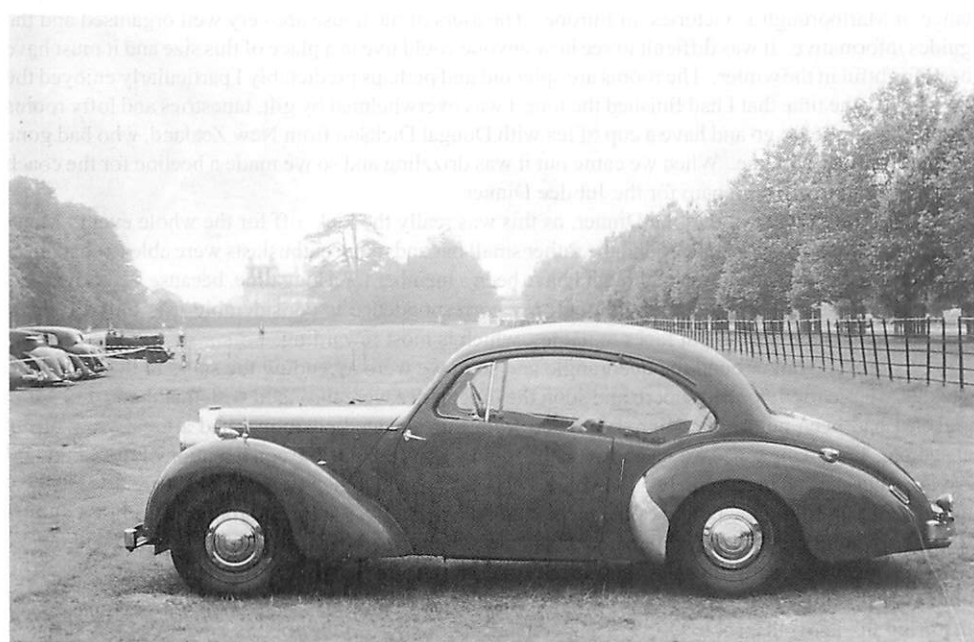
*Richard Pettman's Silver Eagle.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Mike Meakin's TE21*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Photographed on the Friday afternoon, this Duncan TA14 looks remarkably modern.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



There was not a great deal to do on the Friday evening so I went out for a walk in Oxford, a city that I do not know at all well. Traffic in the city was light due to the restrictions but I was delighted to see a couple of 12/50s and a Speed 20 that had braved the rules and were driving about. They looked absolutely in place. I enjoyed my walk round the town although as someone who has not lived in Britain for a quarter of a century, I was rather shocked to have two young people begging from me and seeing how many people apparently have to spend the night sleeping on the pavement. Rather surprising in one of Britain's premier academic centres.

Although Oxford has a long running battle with the motor car, it has never stopped the town accepting a large amount of largesse from William Morris, later Lord Nuffield. The best that has been done to commemorate Morris is a rather feeble display in a window in Longwell Street where Morris had his first garage. Braving the large crowds of tourists I wandered about and was delighted to find a bookshop closing down which provided some extreme bargains. Bearing these I returned to the college for a quiet evening.

Saturday dawned fair and as there was not much on and I was neither going on a sight-seeing tour nor a pub run, I again wandered the streets of Oxford this time gaining access to some other second hand bookshops and generally enjoying myself. A trip to the Natural History Museum, almost opposite Keble, was most memorable. Back at Keble, I photographed the cars parked in the quadrangle and then took the coach to Blenheim. By Saturday afternoon there was a goodly array of cars and I was able to wander about them taking the odd photograph. (Memo to the organisers. There is nothing quite so unphotogenic as red and white striped plastic tape draped around cars, and could cars be further apart?)

After chatting to various members, I decided to go and look at the Palace. It seems ridiculous but I had never been inside Blenheim before. Built for the conquering hero, the first Duke of Marlborough, it is magnificently, incredibly, over the top, and it is perhaps now very difficult to realise the importance of Marlborough's victories in Europe. The tours of the house are very well organised and the guides informative. It was difficult to see how anyone could live in a place of this size and it must have been frightful in the winter. The rooms are splendid and perhaps predictably I particularly enjoyed the library. By the time that I had finished the tour, I was overwhelmed by gilt, tapestries and lofty rooms and it was a relief to go and have a cup of tea with Dougal Dickson from New Zealand, who had gone round the house with me. When we came out it was drizzling and so we made a beeline for the coach to get back to town to prepare for the Jubilee Dinner.

I was looking forward to the Dinner, as this was really the kick-off for the whole event. Many of us met before dinner in and around the rather small bar and many enthusiasts were able to chat, meet and exchange news and views. Although I have been a member for a long time, because I live overseas very few members know me and although my correspondence is considerable it is only on these occasions that I am able to put faces to names, which is most rewarding.

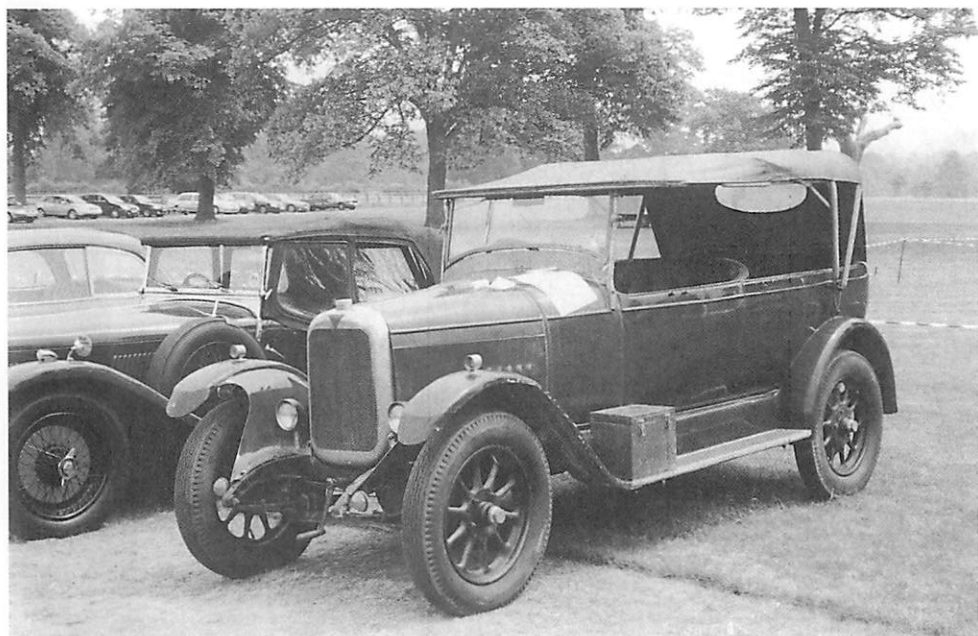
A pleasant walk around the quadrangle and soon we were ascending the stairs to the great hall. This very large room looked superb and soon the long tables were thronged with members. For some reason I had been put on the High Table and from this elevated position I had a great view of the ensemble. Following grace we sat and soon the room was buzzing to the conversation of three hundred Alvis enthusiasts all in extremely good voice. I was sitting next to Steve Horne and we seemed to have no difficulty in filling the period of the meal with Alvis chat. We were entertained by a brass quintet from the Waterloo Band, Royal Greenjackets, but sometimes they were losing the battle with us.

The meal was really first class and speedily served. The organisers had executed a great coup by obtaining Colin Dexter as the celebrity guest speaker. Colin Dexter is a writer of detective stories featuring his hero, Inspector Morse. I understand that many of these books have been made into a popular television series. Colin made a most amusing speech. In it he explained that in his original books he had made Inspector Morse's car a Lancia but the television series uses a Jaguar. He apologised

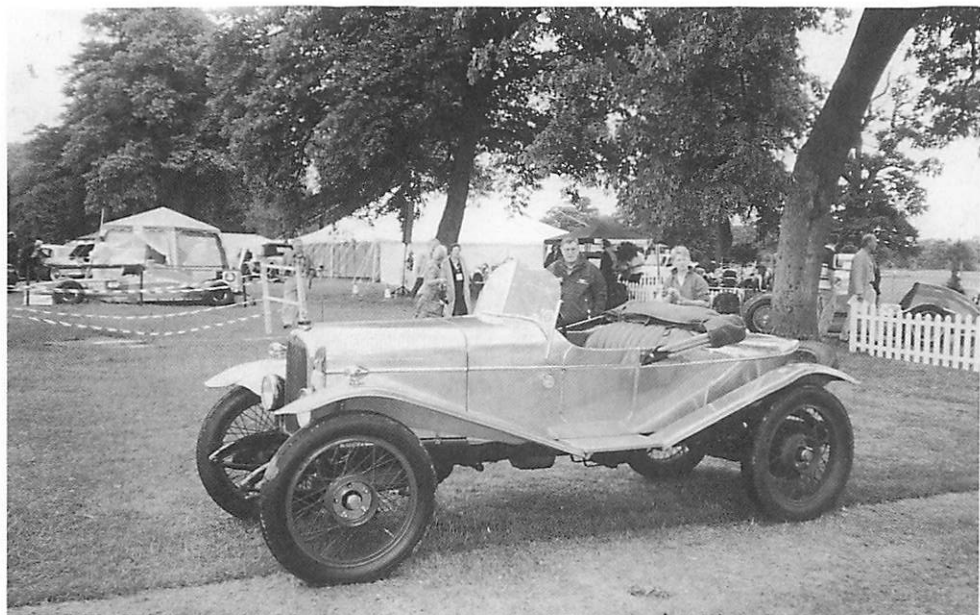


*Roger Cowell's Speed 25.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Peter Darch's 12/40 in unrestored condition. The oldest Alvis present.*



*The epitome of the Vintage Alvis. A polished aluminium ducks back 12/50.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*The Eureka Jazz Band provided superb period entertainment.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Chris Wiblin's FWD, the only one at Blenheim.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*A very smart Silver Eagle Tower.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*





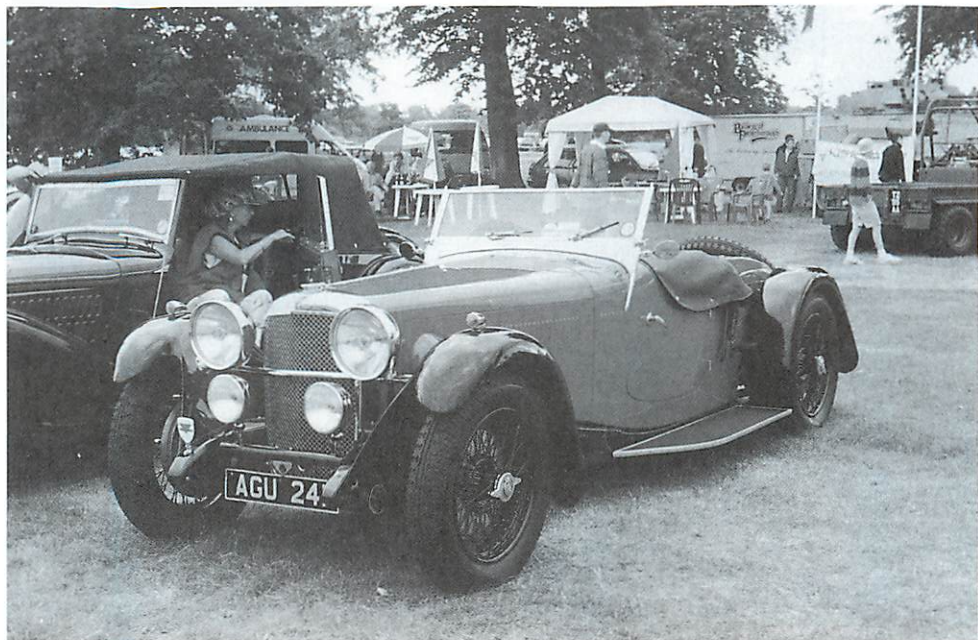
*TA21 with picnic.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



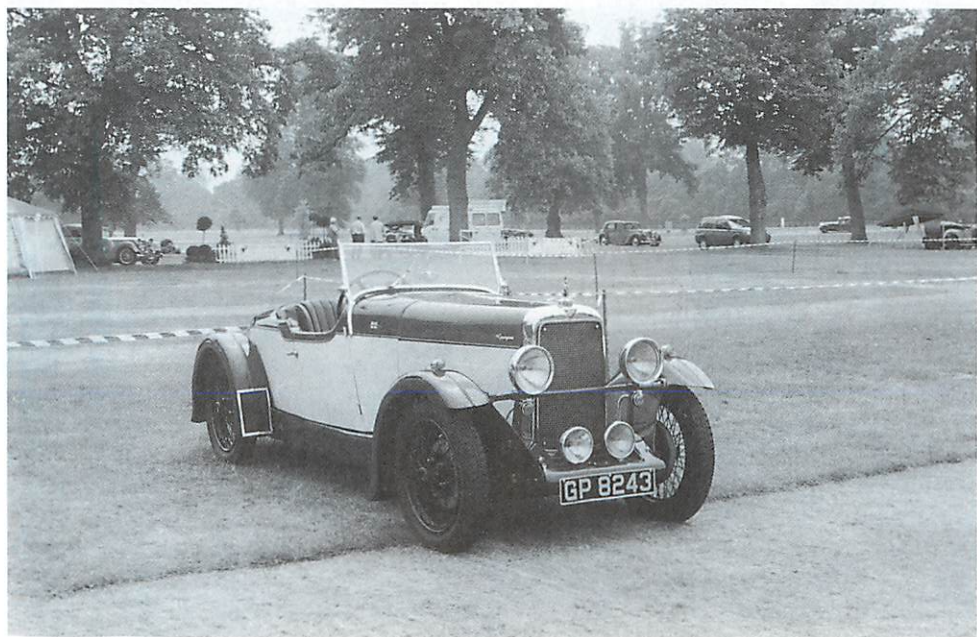
*Is it not amazing that our Chairman's car should have this appropriate registration number?*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Serge Van Havre's SA Speed 20.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Berrie Mulvany's 12/60 with Carbodies beetleback body.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Robin Everall's newly restored 12/70 Saloon.*

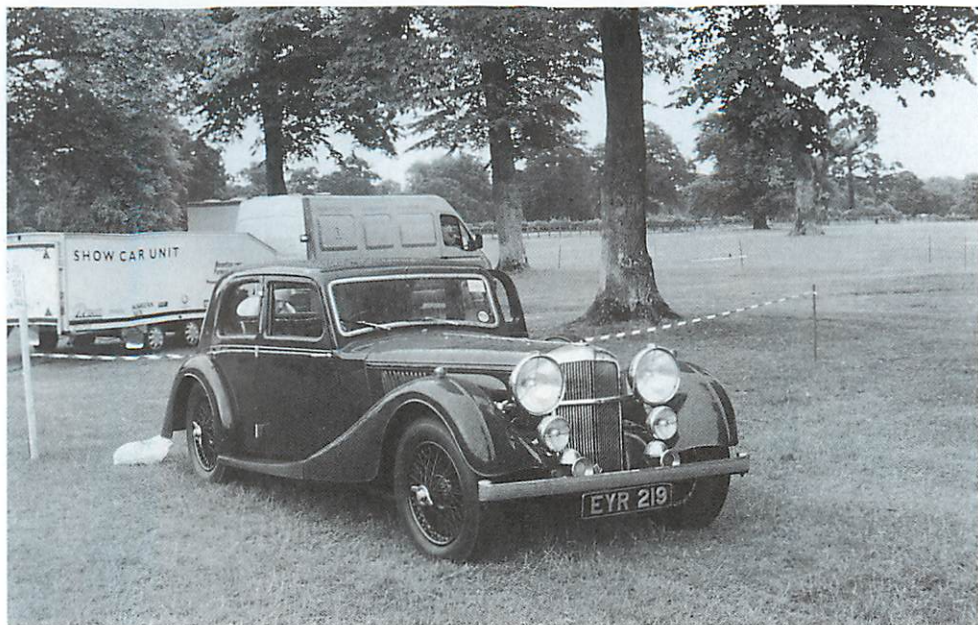
*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Jeremy Tucker's Vanden Plas 4.3 Litre.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*





*Ronald Banks' Speed 25 Charlesworth Saloon.*

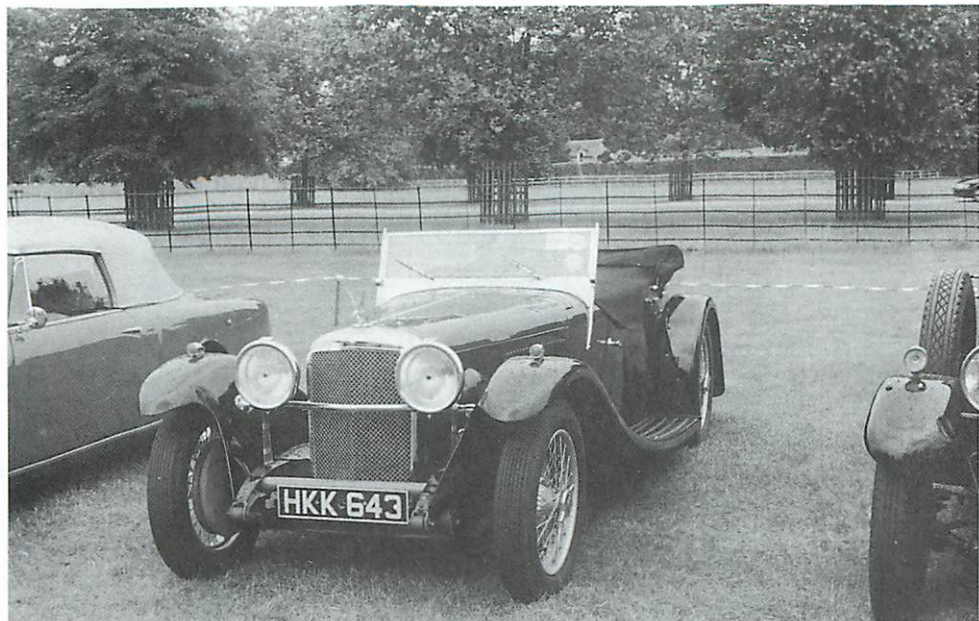
*Photo: J.N.B.C*



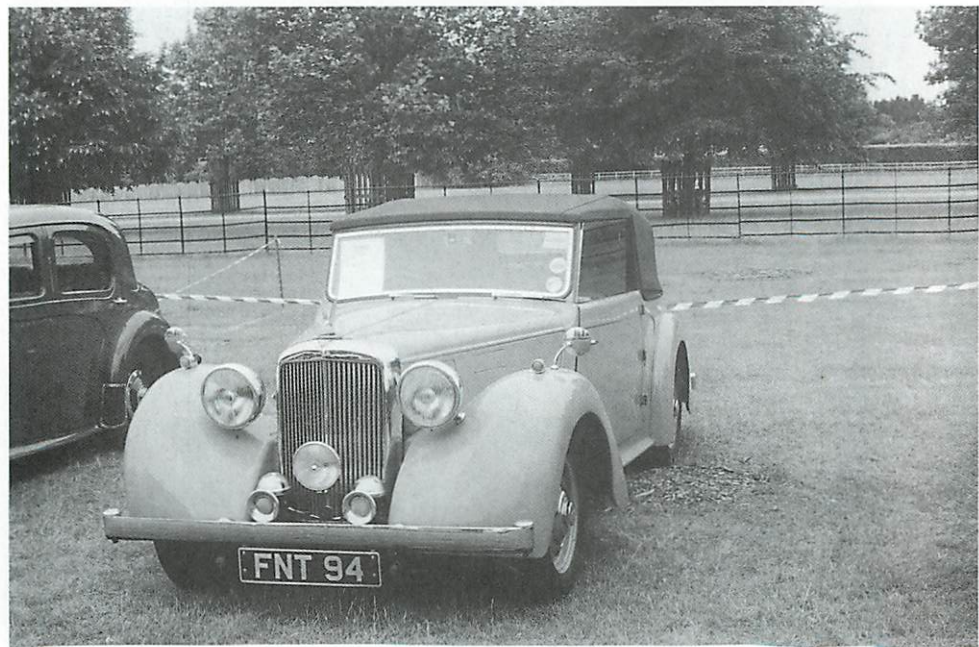
*Trevor Hirst's part-restored SB Speed 20 with replica Vanden Plas body.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*





*Tony Cropper's SA Speed 20 Vanden Plas replica tourer.*



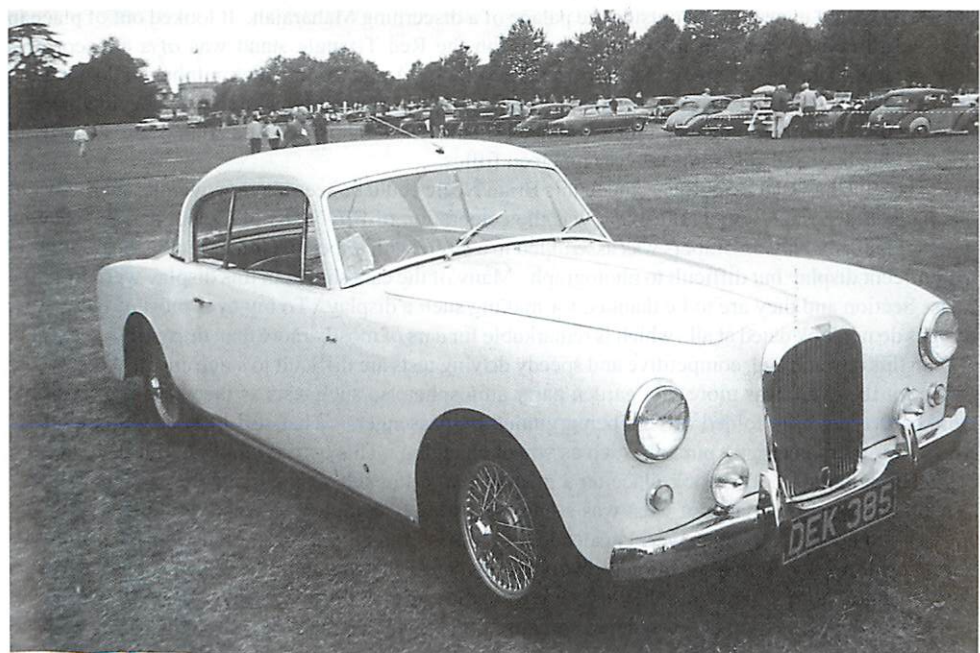
*Jack Taylor's Carbodies TA14 dhc.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Charles Pinto's TD21*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*1959 Graber Special with three-piece rear window.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*



for having no Alvis content in his stories!

Colin Dexter's speech was well received and after it, our Chairman, Derek Bradbury, rose to respond on behalf of the Club. Derek's speech was superb; restrained, and dignified like Alvis cars themselves. The dinner was now officially over but some enthusiasts returned to the bar whilst others no doubt like myself took to their beds. As we came out of the hall we were greeted with a steady drizzle. Not a good sign for the morrow.

After a not very early start members were queuing up for the coaches and soon we were driving through light drizzle to Blenheim. By the time that we got there the rain had stopped and whilst not bright, the weather was acceptable. A stream of Alvises were arriving and the huge display of cars was laid out on grass along the main driveway to the palace, which formed an impressive backdrop whilst rows of mature trees in the park added to the atmosphere. Alvises were still arriving at the ground and were efficiently marshalled into position. An excellent programme was available, although I personally do not like the landscape format.

It was very pleasing to see the display set up by Alvis plc with a couple of current military vehicles on display, a *Supacat* and a *Piranha*. The *Supacat* is a cross between a go-kart and a motorcycle and designed to be dropped from aircraft. I saw it being demonstrated a couple of times and it looked tremendous fun. The *Piranha*, a six-wheeled light armoured vehicle, looked a great deal more destructive. The Alvis stand was well equipped with glossy brochures for various military products, which made nice additions to the archives. Maybe the vehicles on show might not be the sort of thing that one might want to buy but nonetheless it was very pleasing to see the Company supporting the Jubilee. The Military Vehicles Section was a bit thin on the ground but a Stalwart, a Saladin and a Scorpion were there and earlier I saw at least two of these in action.

Red Triangle was also present in strength, their stand being graced by a restored Speed 25 chassis, which was most impressive, and a Lancefield bodied Speed 25 of extremely exotic appearance, the sort of car you would expect to see outside the palace of a discerning Maharajah. It looked out of place in the English countryside. An interesting display on the Red Triangle stand was of a concept of a development of the three Litre, into a more modern vehicle. An interesting idea, although I do not think that a modern Alvis is what everyone wants. Red Triangle is looking for someone to develop the idea with them so if you are interested please contact them. Also on display was Alan Stote's Goodwin Special which looked splendid and very nineteen fifties.

The Club had a large marquee and in this Brian Neale could be seen slaving over the shop. One of the main attractions of the whole event was the celebration of fifty years of Graber and Alvis and a most splendid display of Grabers was assembled in a circle with a special Graber tent in the middle. A magnificent display but difficult to photograph. Many of the cars shown in this display were from the Swiss Section and they are to be thanked for making such a display. To my eyes most of the Graber designs do not look dated at all, which is remarkable for cars of mostly more than thirty-five years ago.

In this day and age, competitive and speedy driving tests are difficult to stage and in any case the theme for the event was more of a garden party atmosphere so such tests as there were, were of the gymkhana type; blindfolded drivers being guided by passengers. That sort of stuff although there were other more energetic pursuits such as wheel changing. This activity took the form of an Inter Section Competition. This took place on a grassy area to the side of the main arena. This allowed spectators a very good view of what was going on. A lively commentary kept up the interest.

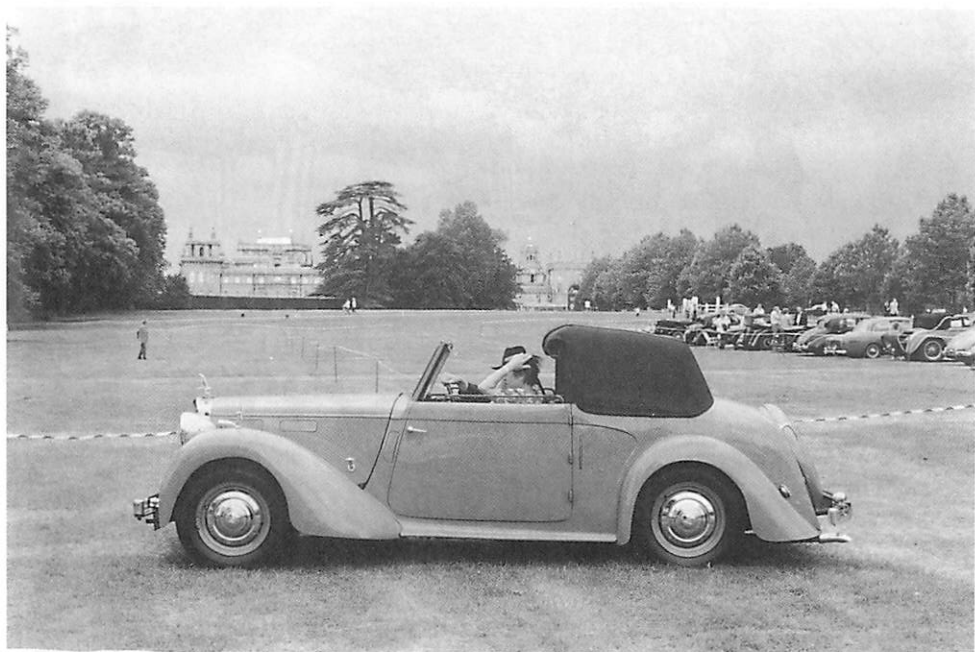
Throughout the day there were cavalcades of models from the various periods and these provided a wonderful representative selection of every Alvis made. Starting with the Vintage years and then Post Vintage Thoroughbred and the Post-War cars. Something to satisfy every Alvis enthusiast.

While this was going on I wandered amongst the cars and talked to various enthusiasts. There is no doubt that it was a very good display of Alvises. Perhaps not quite as many as we would have expected but that was probably due to the weather forecast. However this did not prevent members



*A Graber dhc showing off its lines.*

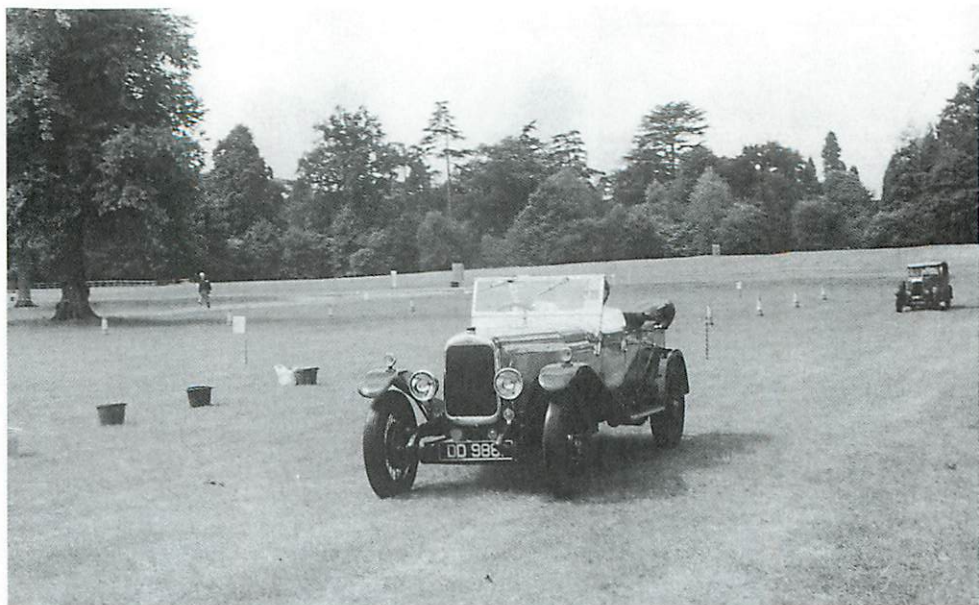
*Photo: Bill Fryer*



*Elegant TA14 dhc with Blenheim Palace in the background.*

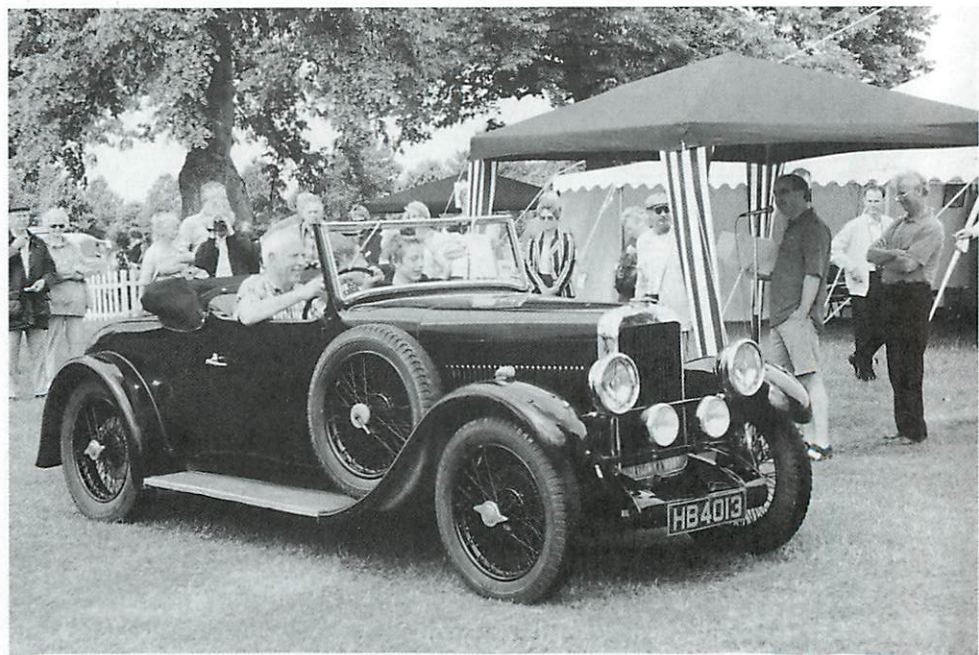
*Photo: J.N.B.C*





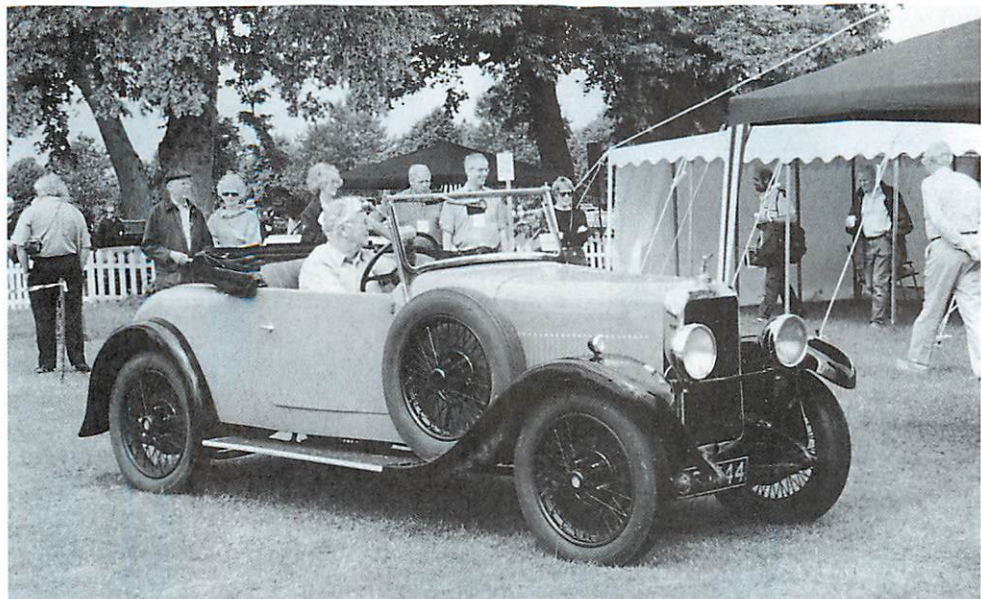
*Brian Adams' 1926 Cross and Ellis 12/50 Tourer.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*



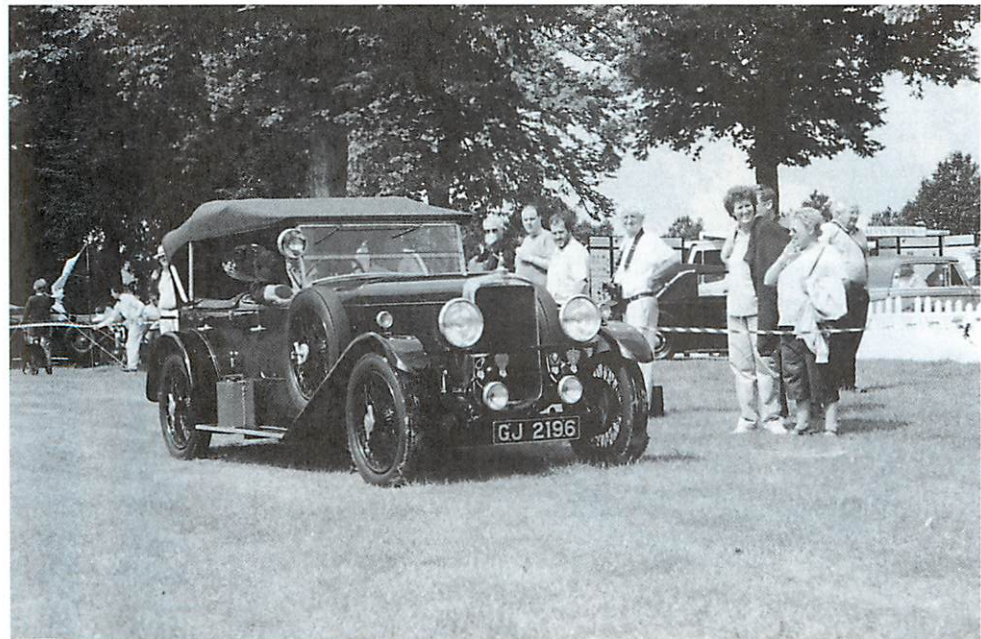
*Mac Hulbert in his 1931 Silver Eagle wide-bodied tourer.*

*Photo: Mike Meakin*



*Hugh Gibson in his 1931 Cross and Ellis 12/50 tourer.*

*Photo: Mike Meakin*



*Mike Bagworth's 1930 Silver Eagle tourer.*

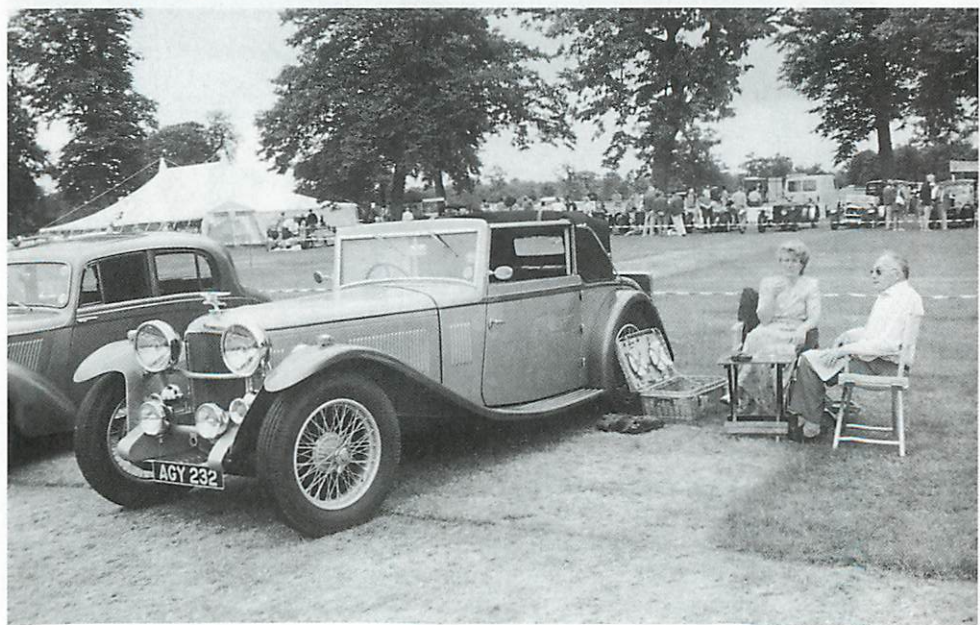
*Photo: Mike Meakin*





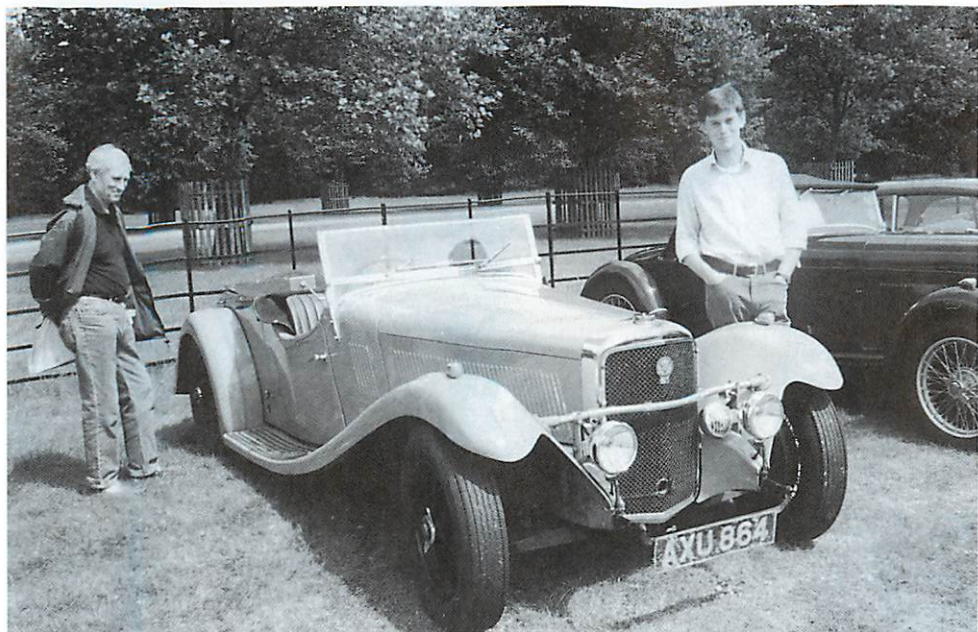
*Bob Gaskill with his 1959 TD21*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*



*Richard Booth lunches alongside his SA Speed 20 Vanden Plas dhc.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*



*Richard Wadman and his famous Speed 20.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*



*"Bagged" navigator taking part in the gymkhana.*

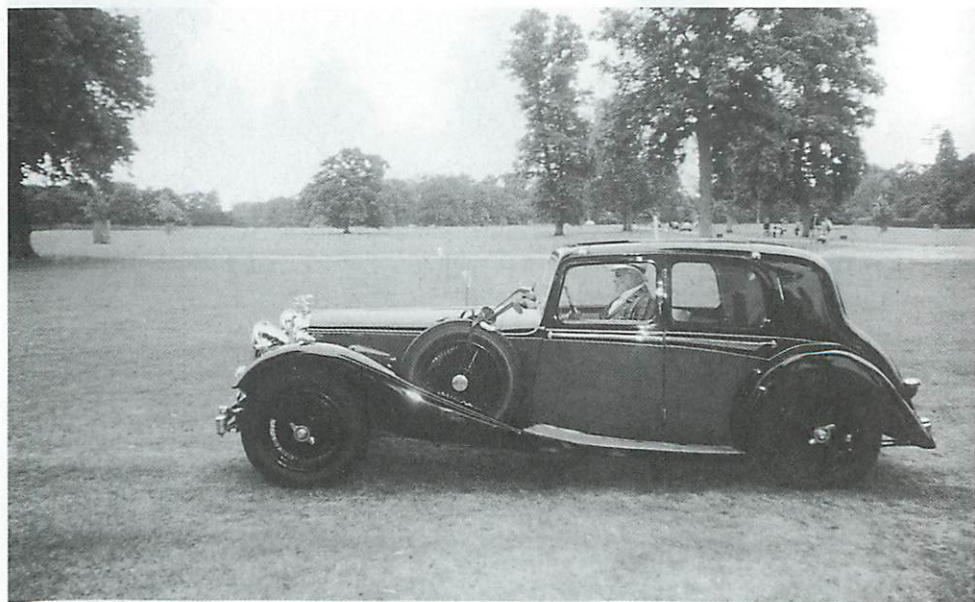
*Photo: J.N.B.C*





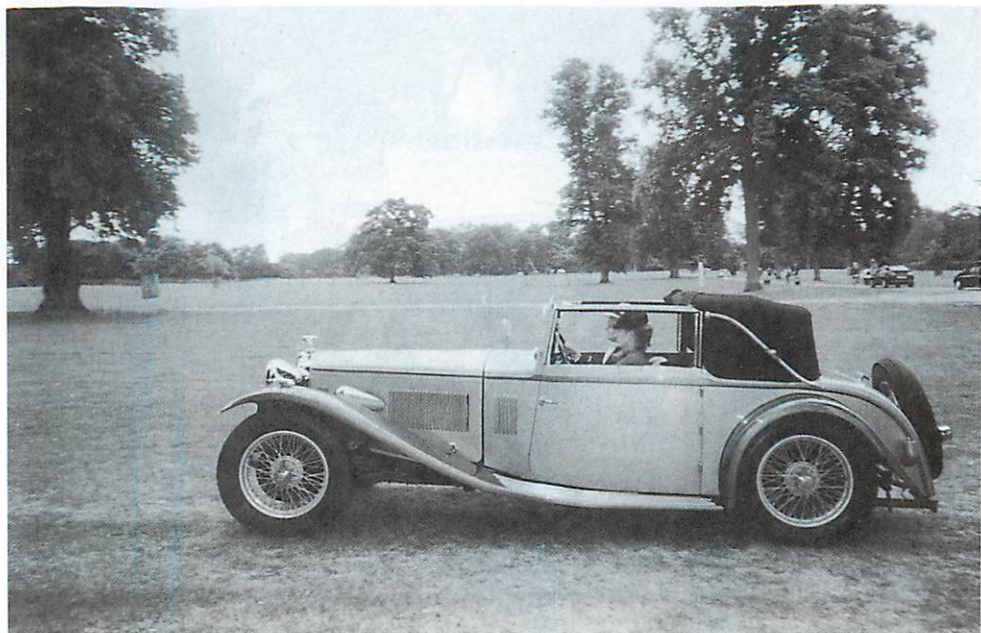
*Jan and Mike Baker and 4.3 Litre, provide period elegance.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*



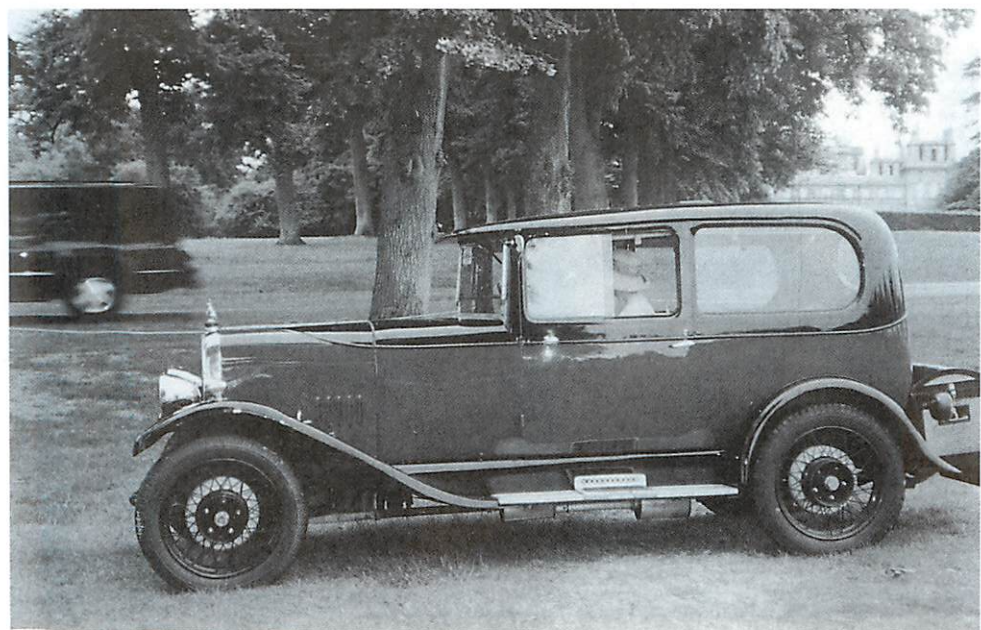
*Peter Relph shows off the elegance of a 1935 Speed 20 Charlesworth Saloon.*

*Photo: J..N.B.C*



*And Richard Booth shows off his 1933 Speed 20 Vanden Plas dhc.*

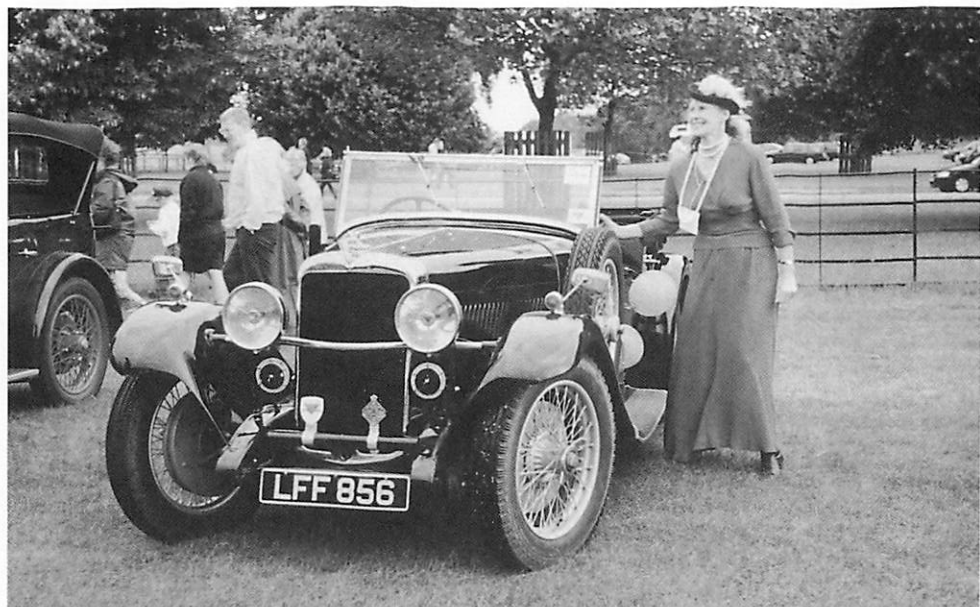
*Photo: J.N.B.C*



*Vintage touring ensemble.*

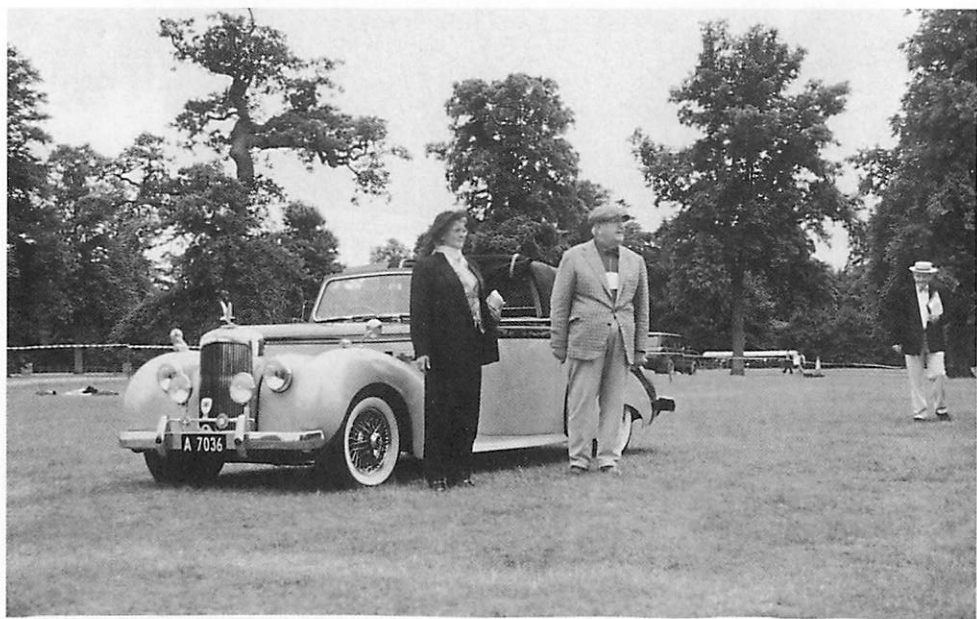
*Photo: J.N.B.C*





*Firebird and lady. Tremendous period elegance.*

*Photo: Mike Meakin*



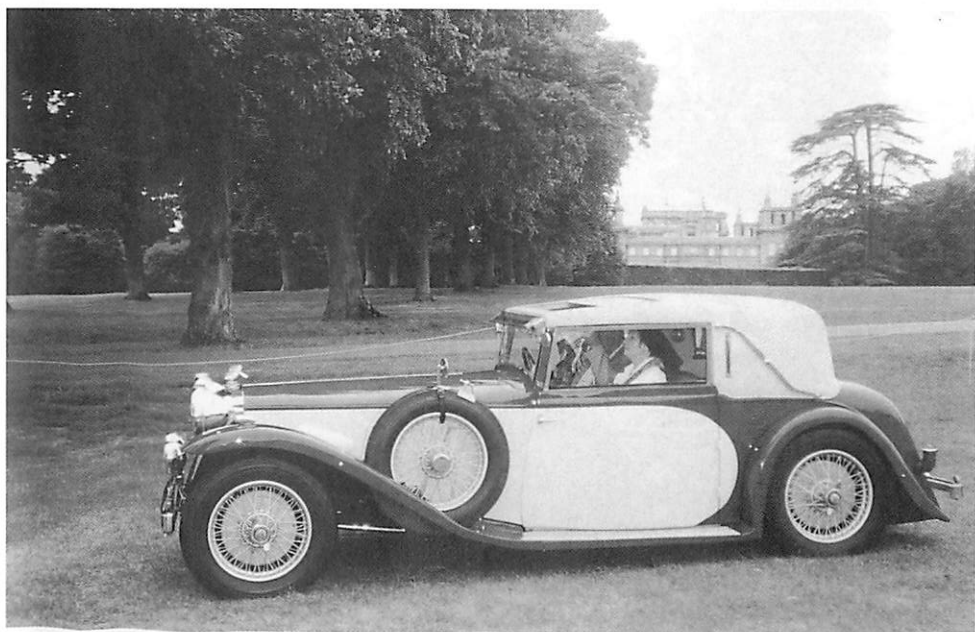
*Kurt Star and Anni Pekman from Denmark, show off period style with the TC21/100*

*Photo: Mike Meakin*



*A very stylish Rob Lloyd with his TD21.*

*Photo: Mike Meakin*



*Walter Bruns from Germany with his immaculate 1934 Speed 20 Charlesworth h.c.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*





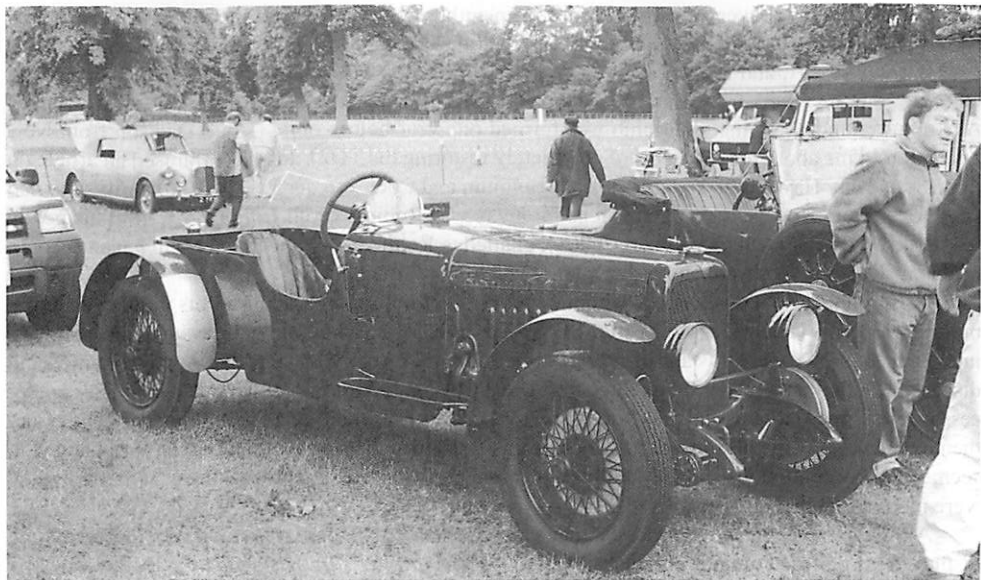
*David Ryder-Richardson's early model Speed 20.*

*Photo : J.N.B.C*



*Richard Day's Crested Eagle Limousine—the largest Alvis present.*

*Photo : J.N.B.C*



*Chris Podger's ex Michael May "Green Car"*

*Photo : J.N.B.C*



*Daniela and Werner Graf with the Special Cake presented to the Club.*

*Photo : Mike Meakin*

from arriving from all over the world. Apart from enthusiasts who came from all parts of the United Kingdom, there were members present from Australia, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, New Zealand, USA, and Singapore, and some of the distances involved were considerable. I kept bumping into members from all over the world. Richard Budd President of the Alvis Car Club of Australia reminded me that their club was formed one year before ours! Doug Dickson from New Zealand told me about the problems of completely restoring his TD21 and has promised an article on this. I met Tony Hayes who had driven from Belgium and Coen van der Weiden and family who had come over from Holland. From almost as far away was Robin Everall from Cornwall in his newly restored 12/70 saloon which was very smart. I chatted to Robin and I hope that we will get an account of this restoration in due course.

I also chatted to Trevor Hirst, whom I had not met before, as I admired his craftsmanship in building a new Vanden Plas body on a SB Speed 20 chassis, which he had rescued. It is always interesting to see a car at this stage of a restoration. I admired an early 12/40 in unrestored condition and discussed Bulletin matters with the Registrar, Dave Culshaw. I was pleased to meet again my predecessor John Price Williams and then briefly John Wheeley. The whole event was a blur of meetings and then one never saw the person again. Much of this activity to the sound of the Eureka Jazz band who seemed to play continuously all day adding a pleasant period note to the proceedings. Sometimes they were mounted in their 12/50.

Although there seemed to be less Vintage models than usual, there was still a very representative display from polished aluminium ducks back to various touring 12/50s a single FWD, that of Chris Wiblin and several Silver Eagles. There was the usual tremendous turnout of Post Vintage Thoroughbreds covering all models. Of the many Speed 20s, I admired Serge Van Havre's beautiful SA Vanden Plas Two Seater and David Ryder-Richardson's early flat radiator model and also the smart black tourer of Tony Cropper. A maroon Duncan TA14 was another car that seem to have undated coachwork. It must have been sensational in 1948. Rather than catalogue the cars that were on view I am resorting to the use of photographs and truly a picture is worth a thousand words.

Rather than the usual static Concours d'Elegance, we had on this occasion a splendid drive past of vehicles with drivers and passengers in period dress. Although a rather dull afternoon these proceedings brightened it up no end.

There were various presentations to the Club from the two Alvis Clubs in Australia, from the Dutch Section and a splendid cake from the Swiss section.

We were greatly honoured by the presence of Nick Prest, Chairman Alvis Plc. Anthea Prest presented the awards and several other senior Alvis Plc officials were also present, including Chris Rowe (MD Alvis Vehicles Ltd); Richard Wigley (Business Development Director); Allen Cook (Engineering Director) and Tony Pearson former Finance Director. Bob Skinner was present for three days and mounted the Alvis display. It is really tremendous that the company gives the Club this level of support.

The Club's Golden Jubilee is now over but what a splendid occasion it was. A great location, a fantastic display of Alvises and Alvis enthusiasts from all around the world. What could be better? The exact number of Alvises present is difficult to determine but there were over three hundred, a figure similar to those at Crystal Palace in the Sixties when most were everyday cars. The organisers are to be congratulated on this superb event and just for the record the organising committee consisted of Nick Walker, Ken Cameron, Martin Boothman, Alistair Graham-Bryce, John Fox, Audrey Gilbert, Dick Gilbert, Dennis Heath, John Hill, Graham Keighley, David Lowe, Martin Parrish, Tony Parkes, David Pryke, Graham Stevens, Jack Taylor and Genny Walker. Well done indeed.

J.N.B.C.

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## PRIZE WINNERS

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### Inter Section Competition

(for the Dennis Heath Golden Jubilee cup and a bottle of champagne)

#### *East Anglia Section*

### Concours d'Elegance

First Prize : *Graham Keighley and Sandy Grey*,  
1964 TE 21/Mulliner Park Ward drophead coupé

Second Prize: *Lutz and Christine Burchard* (Holland),  
1938 4.3 Offord drophead coupé

### Long Distance Award— the “Alvis nut”

(for the longest journey undertaken by an Alvis to be at Golden Jubilee Weekend)

*Sonny Ishell* from Melbourne, Florida, USA, driving his 1939 Speed 25 SC Cross and Ellis tourer.

### Inter Section Shield

(for the best aggregate performance in International Alvis Day 2000 and Section Days in 2000)

#### *South East Section*

### Championship Cup

(for the best individual performance in 2000)

*Jim Tatchell*, South East Section (third successive win).

### Ladies Plate

(for the best individual performance by a lady driver in 2000)

*Eileen Eve*, South East Section



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## SWISS GRABER FRIENDS VISIT BLenheim

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*On the way to Blenheim, a quick stop along the river Rhine.*

Already in 2000, it was very clear that a Swiss group of Alvis Graber enthusiasts would travel to Blenheim in July 2001. So, very early on July 5th, five Alvises converged just outside of Basel to jointly travel to Oxford. Sunny weather graced the first leg of the journey taking us on a scenic secondary road along the River Rhine to Strasbourg. By pure coincidence, at a French toll station we “ran into” Christian Merz and his family, also on their way to Blenheim. By late afternoon our hot and thirsty group arrived in Béthune after motoring through the rolling hills and vineyards of the Champagne.

On Friday, Hoverspeed SeaCat piloted us with speed and power over the Channel. Like fish to water, we got accustomed to driving on the “other” side of the road. Even the M20 and crazy M25 were mastered bravely! We arrived in Blenheim in good time to park the cars in the “Graber Circle” and we then set off by bus to Keble College. For us Swiss, what a special feeling and honour to overnight within the walls of such an illustrious house of learning!

May we introduce our convoy: Jörg and Erika Gerster came with their lovely Peacock Blue 1964 TE 21 Super. Pascal Châtenay brought his original Nile Green TD 21 drophead Special from 1959. Rolf Hügli and his friend, Emil Eugster, travelled in a rare 1963 TD 21 4-door Saloon (one of 4 built). Marcel Isler, a newcomer to Graber Friends, joined us with his recently acquired 1960 Dark Blue TD 21 Special. As mentioned Christian Merz took his 1962 TD 21 Graber Special drophead... and the authors of this article, (Werner and Daniela Graf) took our Forest Green TD 21 Special to the UK for the third time.

Getting back to the Jubilee.... we all were happy and very impressed with the excellent arrangements we encountered at Keble and Blenheim. The not-so-serious concours was a lot of fun as well as the driving tests, where our team proved to be masters at changing wire wheels in record time. Not to



*Werner and Daniela Graf with their 1961 TD21 Graber Coupé Special.*



*The Graber Circle. Marcel Isler's TD21 Coupé and Pascal Châtenay's TD21 drophead.*





*The Swiss at dinner. From left to right: Pascal Châtenay, Marcel Isler, Erika Gerster, Jörg Gerster, Daniela Graf, Emil Eugster and Rolf Hügh.*

be forgotten was a very interesting Alvis military vehicle display and the excellent Red Triangle stand and automobiles.

On Sunday morning at Blenheim we could not get enough of hearing the approaching Alvises with their typical engine roar and grumble—music to our ears!!!

We had a full and busy day admiring the magnificent display of the full model range of Alvis automobiles and mingling with the friendly Alvis owners from the UK and all over the world.

At the end of the afternoon, the Swiss Graber Friends presented a Swiss cake with commemorative icing to the organisers with great thanks for everyone's efforts. Subsequently, it was cut into little pieces and shared with the Alvis owners.

By the end of the afternoon, like everyone else, we sadly readied our cars for the onward journey. This trip to join the Alvis Jubilee will remain unforgettable for all of us.

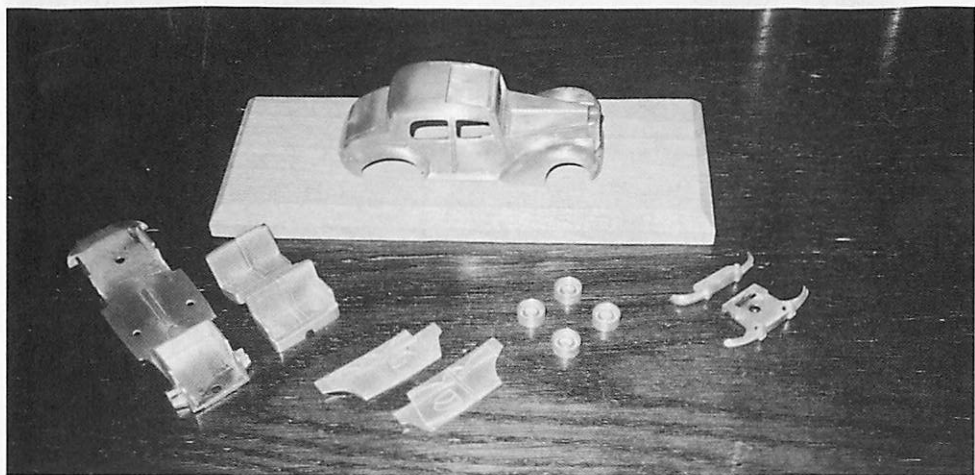
**DANIELA AND WERNER GRAF**

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ALVIS PERFORMANCE IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED



## NEW PRODUCTION RUN FOR THE TA21



*The whitemetal parts which go into the new TA21 model.*

*Photo : Mike Rogers*

Yes—The TA21 is about to be reproduced, only this time as a 1/43 scale model.

Mike Rogers of *J & M Classic Models* is at it again. After making a tremendous success of the TA14 he is due to commence production of the TA21. The first models will be saloons with the DHCs to follow next year.

Mike who acquired the rights from *Top Marques* to produce the Alvis models has set a high standard to faithfully copy the TA21 in every detail. Having established a name for himself in his own right he now disassociates himself from *Top Marques*. In my opinion justifiably so. I first made myself known to Mike at the Millennium International Alvis Day when he was considering a production run of the TA21. Much discussion took place about the finer details of the TA21 when compared to the TC21/100. I think Mike was silently taken aback and made an early decision to start from scratch. *The Mistress* (my car) was chosen as the one to replicate. A set of detailed photographs were despatched, showing the car from all angles including from above and inside.

Specially detailed photographs of the dashboard, seats and interior trim were also supplied.

The target was set for production to commence at Christmas 2000 but the demand for the TA14 was so strong, that the TA21 prototype has had to wait until summer 2001.

In the interim period a few more phone calls and correspondence took place between Mike and myself before Mike was happy to instruct the pattern maker.

The prototype is now complete. The model, all be it a basket case, was delivered for close examination and comparison to the real thing on 12 August 2001.

Observation of some really nit picky points were noted and a snagging list was prepared for the pattern maker. Having said that, the model is a true and exact replication. The finer details include the curvy bumpers used for the early production cars with the option to have the flat bladed bumpers for the later cars. Similarly the smaller back window is used as per the earlier cars, but Mike says he can



produce models with larger back windows again as per the later cars.

The interior trim is faithfully reproduced with the correct door panels and large panel seats (as opposed to strips as in the TC21/100). Wood trim around the windows as opposed to chromium plate, and outside hinges for the doors. Disc wheels are used, and all chromium plate trim is complete. If the prototype is an example of what is to come then we are in for a real treat. The TA21 will be one of the best proportioned and detailed models of all Alvis models made to date.

With the business concluded a test run was required in the real car, so off we set in *The Mistress*. Mike declared that it was the first time he had been driven in an Alvis and was noticeably thrilled. I don't know whether his silence was due to his excitement or nervousness with my driving. I do hope it was the former.

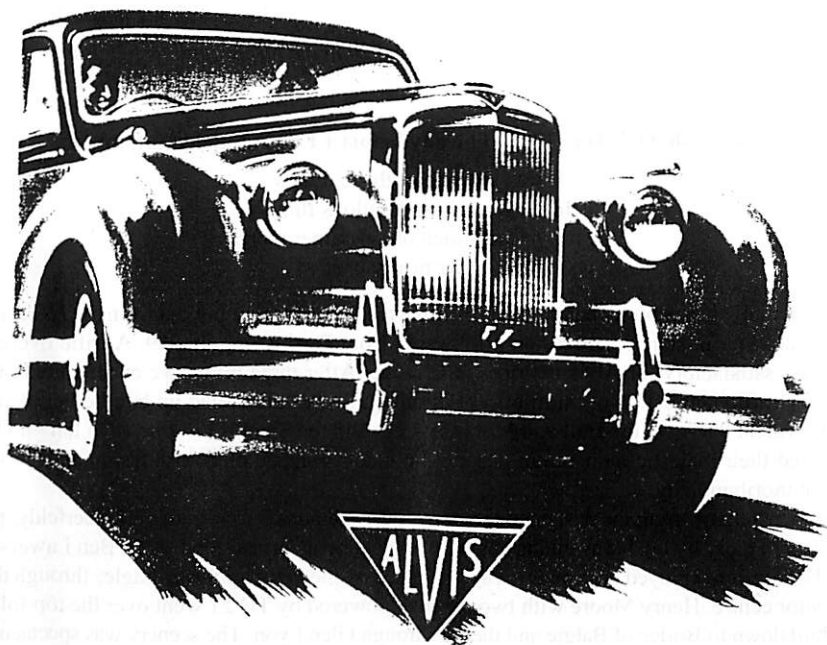
When the prototype model is finalised, silicone moulds will be made and production will commence. Mike is hoping the first models will be ready in good time for Christmas 2001. At present colours will be black, maroon, grey and maroon over silver grey. Other colours may follow if demand for alternative colours is sufficient.

All Alvis enthusiasts, model collectors and particularly TA21 owners should make an early reservation for this excellent model. Contact Mike Rogers at J & M Classics, 13 Junction Close, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 0NZ, telephone 01444 242762 and place your order straight away. The models will cost £120.00 and in my opinion are worth every penny.

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MALCOLM KINDELL

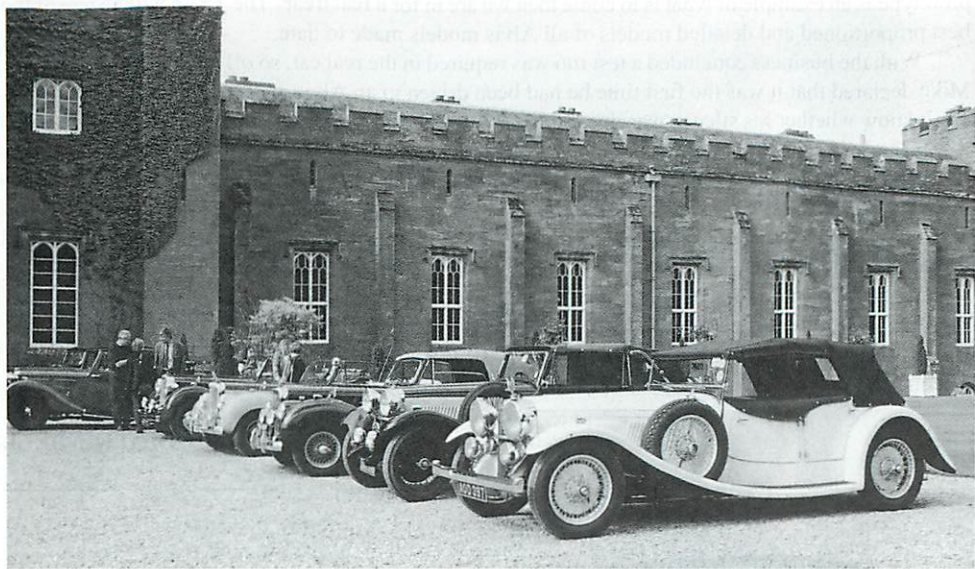
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## SCOTTISH ALVIS DAY

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*The line-up at Scone Palace, with David Gray's Speed 20 in the foreground.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*

### **Scottish Alvis Day 2001: The day before ( Edgar Shields version)**

It was just one of those things.  
Just one of those fabulous flings  
A trip to the moon on gossamer wings  
Or nearly

Well actually it was pretty damn good. Imagine ten Alvis cars setting out from the *Huntingtower Hotel* and heading in stately procession northwards from Perth along the A9. A trifle overcast but nevertheless satisfactory for Alvis motoring a la mode. After three miles, we encountered the most horrendous traffic jam before our turn off at Ballinluig. Some cars boiled up but the Pettman Silver Eagle, the Tatchell TA 14, the Hall and Moore TD 21s and the Shields Firebird ( No fan / no boiling ) maintained their majestic momentum despite the inconvenience of five miles modern motorway movement moribundicity.

An early turn off from the designated route saw the fabulous four heading for Aberfeldy, past the magnificent scenery by Loch Tay and up a single track almost vertical road to the Ben Lawers visitor centre. The Firebird enjoyed leading the way, followed by the Pettman Silver Eagle, through the mist to the visitor centre. Henry Moore with two parents, powered by TD 21 went over the top following the Firebird down to Bridge of Balgie and thence through Glen Lyon. The scenery was spectacular (eat your heart out America ) and something we shall never forget. Two returned via the *Crannog Centre* by Loch Tay, well worth a visit to see how our Celtic ancestors lived in medieval times.

The rest visited Aberfeldy with its mill and highland games. Most managed to view *Menzies*

Castle and eat in style at the *Menzies Centre*.

All in all a typical go as you please Scottish Section event, the day culminating with dinner at the *Huntingtower* when twenty four members enjoyed good food and excellent company in eager anticipation of Scottish Alvis Day at *Scone Palace*.

### Scottish Alvis Day 2001 ( Robin Gilbert version )

This was to be the first Club event since the Big Rebuild, a wallet-thumping two year professionally carried out marathon, and the first that the 12/70 had undergone since my chicken wire and fibreglass effort in 1969. It was therefore with more energy and diligence than usual that I cleaned and polished, since critical eyes would be surveying the new panels, paint and leather. Would they like the colour, a proper Alvis hue, but anachronistic? *Scone Palace* is a 130 mile trip, so we went down on Saturday afternoon, overnighing with relatives. Needless to say, after my cleaning efforts, it began to rain not long after Inverness and the hood was up for the whole trip. On arrival the parental modern was unceremoniously turfed out of its garage, and the Alvis leathered down.

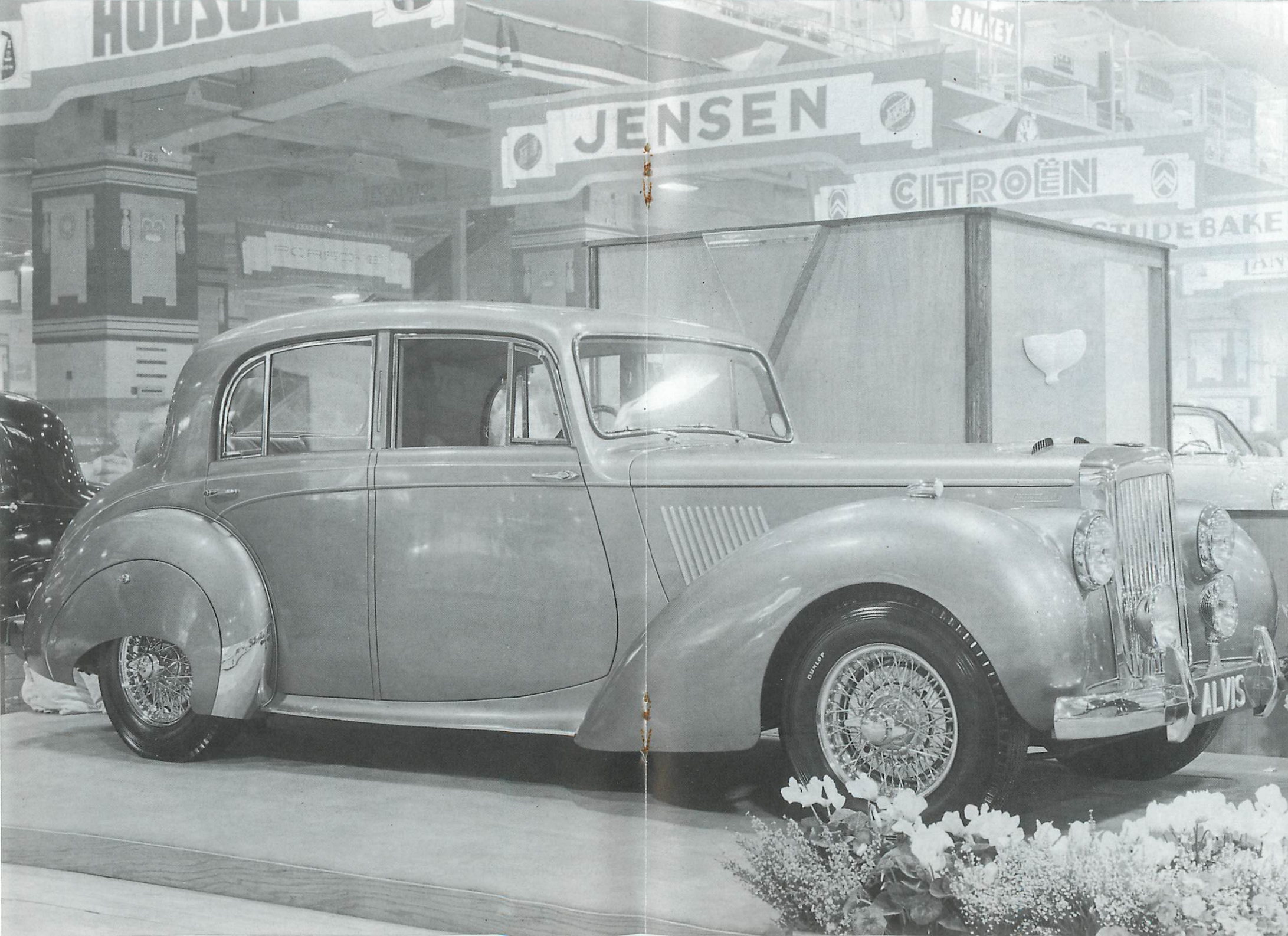
Sunday 12th August didn't dawn too promisingly, but it brightened up as we headed for Scone. By the time we stopped for fuel at Stirling the sun was out so down came the hood. Approaching Scone we came up behind the Bissett TE 21 and the Hall TD 21 dropheads, and anticipation of a Good Day heightened. As usual the cars assembled in front of the Palace entrance, in warmth and sunshine, to be greeted by old friends. Now the Alvises were rolling up thick and fast, the turn-out was obviously going to be good. In the end we had 21 cars, from 12/50 to TE 21, with a good spread of models, pre and post war. Section Chairman David Gray commented that only a few years ago it seemed like the TD 21 Owner Club, whereas now the variety of models was astonishing, and the standard of the cars seems to rise every year.



*The TD21 DHC of Mike Garraway and Chris Chilcott's 1926 12/50*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*







*Mr and Mrs George Rome's Richard Mead bodied TA14*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*



*Nick Chilcott in front of his brother's 12/50*

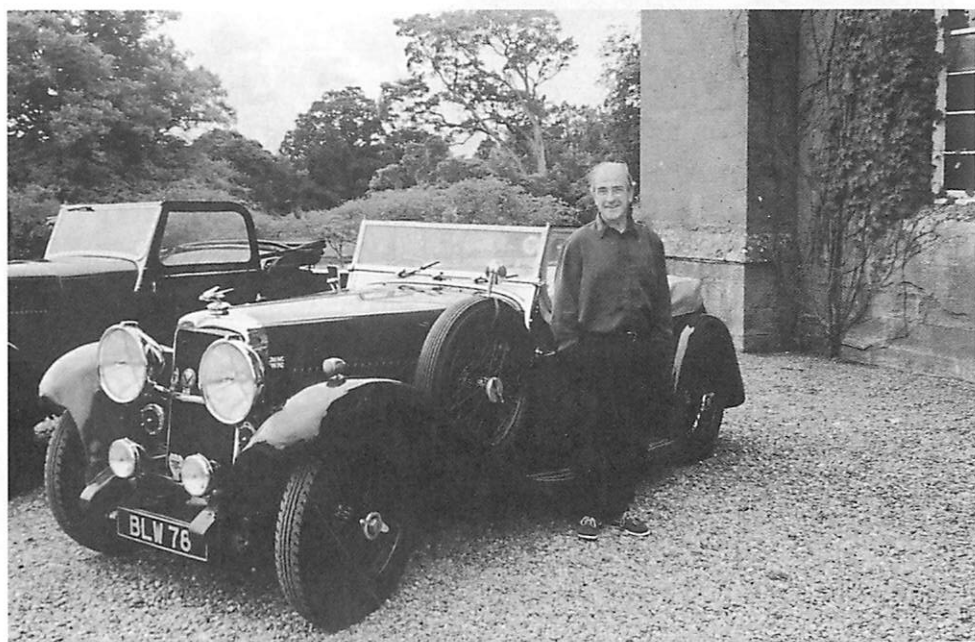
*Photo: Bill Fryer*





*Richard Pettmann's 1929 Silver Eagle with Carbodyes Atlantic saloon body.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*



*Robin Johnston with his Firebird Cross & Ellis Tourer.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*





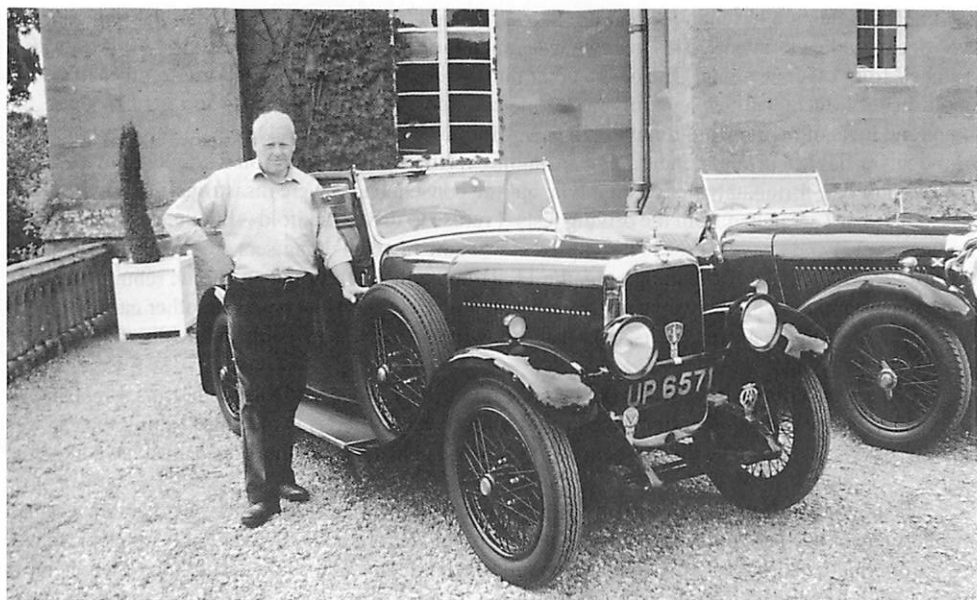
*Robin Gilbert with his newly restored 12/70 Mulliners DHC.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*



*Henry Moores' TD21—all the way from Hitchin—next to Edgar Shields' 1959 model.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*



*Sandy Smith with his 1930 Cross & Ellis 12/50 Tourer.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*



*David Gray, Scottish Chairman presents the Scottish Shield for best overall performance to Adam Smith. Secretary Edgar Shields looks on.*

*Photo: Bill Fryer*

Scottish Section has many "honorary Scots", friends from south of the border—hardy perennials who seem to like our events. This year we welcomed the Fryers, the Pettmans, Henry Moore and Jim Tatchell from other sections. One of the great things about Club events is talking to other members about history, technicalities and solving problems—most members are only too glad to share the highs and lows of owning and running old cars. I for one am avoiding valve seat inserts and the head of the Silver Eagle, currently undergoing an engine overhaul, will go back on without them. Yes, I've had one fall out, fortunately not on an Alvis, but the consequences were disastrous!

This year I scratched from the driving tests—I refuse to drive blindfold—but their popularity was as great as ever and I never cease to be amazed at what the fiendish organisers dream up. This year test wizard Peter Martin was officiating only, the TE 21 being in the throes of an engine rebuild since the piston rings broke up on the way back from Blenheim. Peter had just passed another car on the M6 when he looked in the mirror, to discover that following traffic was invisible in the blue smokescreen the Alvis was laying.

As the proceedings drew to a close the prize giving took place, and this scribe was astonished to receive a concours prize—his first ever in thirty-four years of Alvis ownership. I think the car was equally surprised. It must be the most expensive tankard in history, but the judges must have liked the colour.

The rain held off until we were on our way home but then it didn't matter. A great day was had by all. A day or two later the owner of the other surviving Mayfair bodied Silver Eagle rang up. He was over from Spain visiting relations only a few miles from Scone, and could easily have been there. A membership form will be on its way shortly!

#### The Results:

**Concours Vintage:** First, Nick Chilcott (12/50), Second, Richard Pettmann (Silver Eagle)

Post Vintage: First Robin Gilbert (12/70), Second, Edgar Shields (Firebird)

Post War: First, Michael Garraway TD21 dhc, Second Adam Smith TD 21 saloon,  
Jim Tatchell Duncan TA 14

#### Driving Tests:

Pre War: First, John Ratcliffe, Second Nick Chilcott

Post War: First, Adam Smith, Second Tommy Hall

**Scottish Section Trophy:** Adam Smith

**Long Haul Award:** Bill Fryer

**Jenny Ramsay Trophy:** Shona Smith

**Special Award:** Jim Tatchell (82 and still going strong)

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## THE FLYING HUB-CAP AWARD

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To celebrate the USA 2000 Tour and mark the Golden Jubilee of the Club, a competition for members was instituted with the aim of encouraging those on the Tour to provide a record of their personal experiences. A free format was encouraged—the written word, poetry, music, paintings drawings and sketches, CD/DVD, video or still photographs—with the intention of providing unique material for the archives.

DAVID LARKIN



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## ALVIS NORTHUMBERLAND WEEKEND

### — 18<sup>TH</sup>/19<sup>TH</sup>/20<sup>TH</sup> June 2001 —

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*Members cars outside the Pheasant Inn at Stannersburn, near Keilder.*

The second Stannersburn weekend was again centred around the *Pheasant Inn* with the overflow at the *Black Cock* in Falstone about three quarters of a mile away. Fortunately the *Pheasant* dining room is big enough for everyone to get together for the evening meals. Pat and I had travelled home from a short walking holiday in the Peak District on the Friday morning swapping the Astra for the 12/60 Tourer, and a change of clothes, we headed for Keilder Lake in reasonable but cold weather. We arrived about 4.30pm. Les and Marjorie Siddle (the organisers) 12/70 Tourer, Bob and Marie Clark in Les's Maroon Duncan TA14 were there to welcome us in. People and cars started to arrive thick and fast, Ted and Penny Garner TA21 Drop Head, Ian and Jean Kerr in a Daimler Dart because the Speed 25 had reported in sick, Richard and Jennie Buckley Speed 20 Tourer, John and Dorothy Wiggins 12/70 Saloon, Jim and Eileen Wisdom Silver Crest Saloon, Roland and Trish Rogerson Firefly Drop Head, David and Joan Lowe TD21 Saloon, Ian Murcott and Jackie Grieveson TD21 Saloon. They had started the day in sunny Majorca, flown into Newcastle picked up the car in Whitley Bay and motored up to Stannersburn, no doubt with a little help from the heater to help them acclimatise. The evening meal was up to the usual high standard and everyone was able to catch up with the latest news, a bit like a family gathering. Saturday was to be a busy day so an early breakfast was called for. We were also joined by Jeff Siddle one of Les and Marjorie's sons who along with his wife Julia and son Benjamin were in Les's yellow Duncan TA14 and Stan and Barbara Hicken TA14 Drop Head. The morning run



*The Sunday run along the North Tyre Valley. Marjorie Siddle (12/70) landing. Jeff Siddle (Duncan TA14) followed by Terry Popplewell (12/60)*

took us along the length of Keilder Water and over the Scottish border to Bonchester Bridge, Hawick, Galashiels and over a really nice "B" road into Etterick Bridge. The weather had started quite well in the morning but by now it had started to rain which is a great pity because the scenery in that area is particularly nice. The lunch stop was *The Cross Keys* in Etterick Bridge where mine host is also an old car buff. We were able to view his large workshop garage and examine his collection of a 1914 Metz well on the way to being restored, and a 1951 TD, MG which was beautifully restored and a 1938 Morris 8 Tourer which was in pieces added to this he had a 1928 large Renault van which is used around the area and advertises *The Cross Keys*. The choice of food was good and varied. In spite of a full English breakfast at *The Pheasant* everyone seemed ready to tuck in.

The next port of call was an old weaving mill, still using vintage machinery to turn out very specialised cloth for wealthy customers and others like the National Trust. After a very informative tour we moved on to *Selkirk Glass* for a demonstration in the manufacture of very colourful ornamental paperweights. The demo over, we browsed around the gift shop. The run back to Stannersburn was very wet indeed with Carter Bar totally covered in clouds and difficulty in seeing when we crossed the border back into England.

The evening meal and general mayhem caused by the beetle drive afterwards soon made everyone forget about the weather. During the lull between the main meal and the sweet a presentation was made to Les and Marjorie as a thank you for such a good, well organised weekend.

Following breakfast on the Sunday we were again joined by Stan and Barbara Hicken, this time in his recently acquired MG B due to problems with the TA14. The first stop was at *Leapliph Water-side Park* on Keilder Lake to watch some of the boating activities. Then on to Black Middens Bastle, an old fortified farm, over some very quiet country roads with a few gates to open and close, this was particularly important due to foot and mouth. The weather was much kinder to us and the scenic route was much more appreciated. On into Otterburn and a visit to the Mill, eventually arriving in the pretty village of Elsdon for a lunch stop. I noticed that most of the people having a full Sunday lunch were the North East contingency some of the others were due back at *The Pheasant* for an evening meal so

they could be excused.

This rounded off a superb weekend with the sun shining whether you were going straight home or continuing with a holiday.

TERRY POPPLEWELL

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## THE MECHANIC AND THE SURGEON

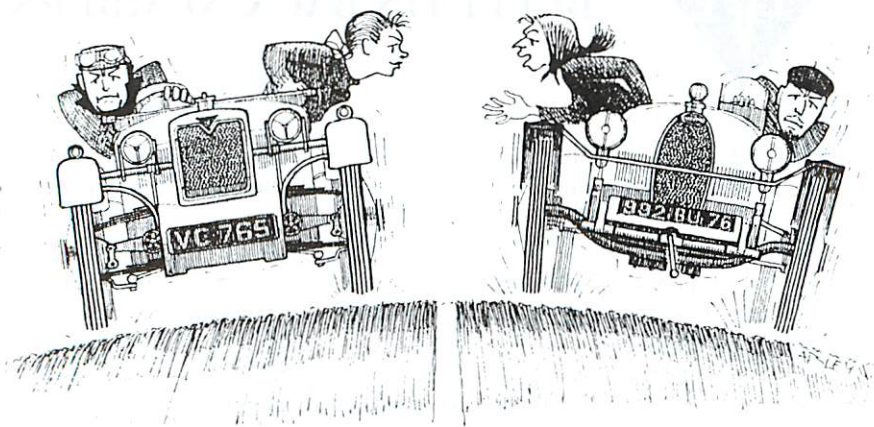
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A mechanic was removing a cylinder head from the motor of a Harley, when he spotted a world-famous heart surgeon in his shop. The heart surgeon was waiting for the service manager to come and take a look at his bike. The mechanic shouted across the garage, "Hey Doc can I ask you a question?" The famous surgeon, a bit surprised, walked over to the mechanic working on the motorcycle.

The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and asked, "So Doc, look at this engine. I also can open hearts, take valves out, fix'em, put in new parts and when I finish this will work just like a new one. So how come I get a pittance and you get the really big money, when you and I are doing basically the same work?"

The surgeon paused, smiled and leaned over, and whispered to the mechanic..... "Try doing it with the engine running!"

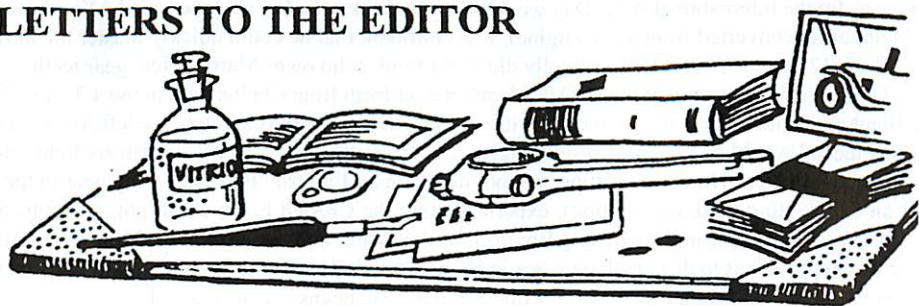
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"THEN MARINATE THE MEAT FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS..."



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Oylers Farmhouse  
Four Wents  
Hawkhurst  
Cranbrook  
Kent TN18 5AR

Dear Julian,

Having returned from a cracking good 350 plus miles of Speed 20 motoring up to and around Blenheim Palace and Oxford I would like to be one of the first to put it on record what a splendid "do" the organisers managed to put on and how much they are to be congratulated.

I think there must have been a good two hundred cars there and from the other members, non-Alvis mounted whom I saw there I would think that a good three hundred members attended which is a pretty good turn out for a club of our size.

Congratulations all round.

Yours sincerely  
**Jim Pearce**

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15 Rob Roy Road  
Smiths Gully  
Victoria, 3760  
Australia  
E-mail: rtonkin@eisa.net.au

Dear Julian,

We have now arrived back home from our U.K. visit and we have settled back into the normal routine of work and living through a damp and miserable Australian winter. We are, however, sustained by the memories of our wonderful visit to Britain and the pleasures of the AOC Golden Jubilee celebrations.

Our AOC weekend began with Martin and Kath Boothman welcoming Victorian Club Captain John Link, his wife Annie, New South Wales Club President Richard Budd, his wife Ann and ourselves

into their delightful home at Cheltenham for dinner, followed by nocturnal test drives around the back streets of Cheltenham in the Boothman 4.3 litre and 12/50. Martin had very generously loaned the cars to us for the International Alvis Day weekend. John Link, who has an American Le France tourer in Melbourne (converted from a fire engine), was confident that he could quickly master the intricacies of the 12/50 crash box. He eventually did, but I think John owes Martin a few gear teeth.

On the Friday morning of the IAD weekend, we set forth from Cheltenham in the 4.3 and 12/50, for Blenheim Palace, the centre of the festivities. I had joked with Martin before we left Australia that driving the 4.3 would be like our Crested Eagle (2.8 litre, with a heavy Charlesworth six light saloon body), only quicker. However, putting the foot down on an English "B" road, in top gear in the 4.3 was an exhilarating (and accelerating), experience that the Crested Eagle could not, unfortunately, match. We stopped for morning tea at Bourton-on-the-Water and the proprietor of the car museum there was happy for us to display the Alvises in his courtyard. The Saturday lunch run to The Fox pub was great fun and the sight of Coventry's finest gracing the lawns was wonderful.

The Saturday night formal dinner at Keble College at Oxford was spectacular, beginning with us renewing our acquaintance with the oldest Alvis, the 10/30, which the Company had on display in the courtyard, alongside a Graber, to mark the Golden Jubilee of Hermann's first Alvis 3 Litre. I said formal dinner, for that it was, and Victorian member David Head and I claimed the honour of the farthest-travelled dinner suits there.

What can one say about the Sunday at Blenheim? What a beautiful setting, the English summer weather stayed fine and some 270 Alvises were on display. Over here, if we get 50 to a National Rally, we are doing well! For us, the highlight of the day was Richard Budd and I presenting plaques to AOC Chairman, Arthur Fairburn, from the two Australian Alvis Clubs, marking the AOC's Golden Jubilee.

On the Monday after the IAD, we travelled to Abergavenny, in South Wales, to visit Nick Simpson's Earley Engineering workshops. These are located on a farm in the countryside, and Nick and his son, Alex, gave us a most interesting tour of Alvises in various stages of repair and restoration. I was then privileged to be driven by Nick in his personal Graber to lunch at his and Patricia's charming home. We were joined there by a nice collection of Belgian and Swiss Alvisists, so it was a real international occasion.

Thank you to all those who showed us such kindness and hospitality on our visit—Martin and Kath Boothman, the Simpsons, Charles Mackonochie, who greatly assisted with organising the trip, Arthur Fairburn and the AOC Committee and Julian Collins, for his friendship and hospitality. We had a great time, and I hope that those who are going on the AOC New Zealand Rally in 2003, and Members who are ever in Australia, will come to Victoria, so that we can return some of your hospitality.

Yours sincerely

**Richard Tonkin,**

President, Alvis Car Club of Victoria,  
Australia.

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The Cottage  
Hillview House New Street,  
Charfield Wotton-under-Edge GL12 8ES

Dear Mr Collins

I read Phil Owen's comments on the size of *The Bulletin* and your reaction to it. I would counsel caution at changing the size of the magazine.

During the late Eighties and early Nineties, I had the privilege of editing the Bristol Owners' Club magazine which had its size changed from A5 to A4 at its sixty-first edition. One of the problems I



encountered was the paucity of articles to fill a sixteen-page A4 magazine due to a membership who tended not to put pen to paper (good old British reserve?). Another was having to organise two sets of binders (I became BOC binder supremo before being editor).

The size of *The Bulletin* is fine as it is. We have a magazine that is a comfortable size to handle whilst reading, full of good and interesting articles and photographs. I do not wish to be read as a hoary old radical who opposes any change at all, but advocate no change to the size of the magazine. I think that numbering the page from one upwards for each year is a good idea for that effectively creates a volume for each year. Note that the other BOC, the Bugatti Owners' Club, has retained the same format for its magazine since it was first published..

I know of the work that needs to be done to publish a club magazine and how an editor must rely on the contributions of the club's members. I would exhort the AOC membership to remember that a club magazine does not publish itself and one really cannot expect an editor to write the entire thing himself. I do not think this is the case with the AOC as the content of *The Bulletin* readily shows.

Yours sincerely  
**Michael Crawford**

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*A magazine of the size of the VSCC Bulletin or the Sixties Bulletin, would allow bigger pictures and some other advantages of text layout, but it would also probably require even more material. It would of course be more expensive, thus requiring higher subscriptions. It would also probably require even more work to put it together. These are all probably good reasons for sticking with the present size, however tempting a change might be!—J.N.B.C*

---

18 Northumberland Road  
New Barnet  
Herts EN5 1ED

Dear Julian,

I found the article "Alton For Alvis" by Guy Griffiths very interesting to read and within it there is an obscure link with the murder of Stanley Setty on the 4th October 1949 and Alvis motor cars, in that the murder took place above a Greengrocer's shop at 620 Finchley Road, Golders Green, NW11, which was approximately three-quarters of a mile from the main Alvis showroom at No. 856 Finchley Road, NW11.

Incidentally, his body was scattered over the North Sea and not Hackney Marshes, which would not have been a sensible place to hide parts of a body, as they would probably have fallen into some of the local back gardens!

Yours sincerely  
**John Barnet**

---

Graber Lodge  
Field Lane  
Normanby by Spital  
Market Rasen, Lincs LN8 2HB  
Email: fox@graberhouse.freemove.co.uk

Dear Julian

I was somewhat surprised that you published Mr Watkin's letter in the *Bulletin* 469, page 221, with neither comment nor enlightenment of when some further USA articles might appear. Nearly 200



people took part and they were expecting to see a few articles in view of the David Larkin competition. I did not contribute one because it would have had a far more "negative aura" than Robin's. However, since Mr Watkin seemed to be soliciting praise for his good friend for his contribution to the trip I felt a need to put fingers on keyboard.

We have a long tradition in the AOC of many people putting in a lot of time, effort and personal expense for the reward of seeing fellow members enjoy our events and usually preferring anonymity. Most members have no idea of what is involved in just putting on a day's event. A three week tour in a foreign country was a mammoth task involving many people, not just Robin who took all the flak as well as the praise. He has still not been released from the sanatorium and is unlikely ever to be.

I thought Robin's article was actually rather good and put the trip in a relatively good light. Frankly, it did not go as well as it should have for a variety of reasons but we all knew most of them before we even left the UK. This was going to be a trip of a lifetime and we were not going to miss it whatever our misgivings about the organisation.

So was it a good trip? I was delighted by the way the Graber never gave me any concerns. We enjoyed most of the days' driving, although some were too long even in the comfort of the Graber, and of course the company of Alvis friends, old and new. We also enjoyed "breaking loose" and visiting friends in Connecticut. It was the longest, biggest and most expensive but it was not the best tour we have been on.

Wayne's road book was invaluable. Many of us would have liked to have seen the route before we arrived in the US so we could plot it on our maps, even though American maps are nothing like as good as our OS or Michelin maps (yes, we can find our own way around). He knows we appreciated his efforts. Lessons were learned but we look forward to the next time we can do it all again.

Yours sincerely

**John Fox**

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*The entries for David Larkins' competition were all mostly of great length and not really suitable for publication in The Bulletin. See note from David Larkin on Page 438—J.N.B.C.*

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66 Bluegate  
Godmanchester  
Huntingdon  
Cambridgeshire PE29 2EZ  
Email: [Hugh.Appleby@huntsdc.gov.uk](mailto:Hugh.Appleby@huntsdc.gov.uk)

Dear Julian,

I think Brian Neale and Nick Simpson are equal winners of my "Spot the Error Competition" and I will send them both the promised donations for their chosen charities.

The photograph was taken a number of years ago and I had completely forgotten the problem of the pulley. I now recall we lifted the engine and, leaving it on the hoist fitted the pulley before proceeding. It was then that I discovered that I had put the engine mounts the wrong way round which was the error to which I referred! The error (ignoring the pulley!) must have been the only one as the engine has run beautifully since we rebuilt it in 1994/95.

We have covered 8,400 miles in England and France since we put her on the road on 24th November 1995. I have a "ship's log" of every journey the car has made since that day, even the occasional trips to Sainsbury's and Tesco's. Oil consumption is minimal and we have had no overheating problems despite the absence of the air ducting plates. Probably a thorough cleaning of the block when the engine was dismantled and the fitting of a nice reconditioned radiator from Colin Newby has a lot to do with it. We also flush the cooling system out every year and fill up with new antifreeze. We went

to the Golden Jubilee meeting at Blenheim. I am sure other contributors to the Bulletin with superior literary powers than I have will give graphic descriptions of events. Suffice to say for me however is that nowhere before have I seen such a magnificent collection of Alvis cars, it was magic. The organisation was exemplary and I will remember the day at Blenheim for years to come.

Back to overheating. At Blenheim we parked with other TD, TE AND TFs. A TF arrived soon after us and as soon as the engine was switched off it was clear that she was boiling. The owner of the TD next to us opened his bonnet and showed us the expansion tank (ex Morris Marina I believe) he had installed which is the apparent remedy for the problem. Because of the reputation for overheating I will probably carry out a similar modification as a precautionary measure. Getting hold of a non-pressure cap for the radiator may be a problem for me and any advice would be appreciated.

*The Bulletin* continues to be a splendid publication.

Best wishes and kind regards,  
**Hugh Appleby**

---

"Gateford View"

Howson Way

Workshop S81 8TH

Email: MDGateford@aol.com

Dear Julian,

I was surprised when first owning an Alvis—a Grey Lady—how hard it sometimes is to remove the radiator cap. This is especially true when the engine is hot. I am sure many people have their own way of solving this problem from, in some cases rags to, I have heard, even trouser belts. I tried one of those tools sold for removing oil filter cartridges but that was not satisfactory and risked scratching the radiator cowl. I now have the perfect answer—a tool sold by *Machine Mart* called a *Boa Constrictor*! It has a large robust plastic handle which holds a strong composite rubber belt. The belt fits easily round the radiator cap and is held strongly by the plastic handle. The radiator cap can be removed with ease. The construction of the *Boa Constrictor* and the materials used means that the chromium plating on the radiator cowl and the radiator cap itself are not scratched or damaged in the process. I now have two of these—one I carry in the car and the other hanging on the garage wall. I am sure I will find other uses for the *Boa Constrictor*. I am sure it will be ideal for removing stubborn jam jar lids!

On a recent visit to Sandringham I visited the royal automobile collection. I took a photograph of Prince Philip's TD21. I do not know, if this has been featured in the magazine before, anyway I have sent you the picture by snail mail.

Yours sincerely  
**Munro Donald**

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*The photograph of HRH Prince Philip's TD21 appears on the next page—J.N.B.C*

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HRH Prince Philip's TD21 in the Mews at Sandringham.

Photo: Munro Donald

Squirrel House,  
19 Dayton Lane  
East Hampton  
New York 11937  
USA

Email: philip.fenwickelliott@sothebys.com

Dear Julian,

I wonder if I am the only member to have grown a little tired of the Berluti advertisement on the inside cover of *The Bulletin*.

Whilst no doubt grateful for the advertising revenue I find the shoes bear little or no relation to anything an Alvis owner would dream of wearing. A decent pair of old fashioned brogues would be far more appropriate, or indeed any footwear limited in style to that which one might have seen during the years in which Alvises were made. I find having to look at a modern pair of Italian shoes a complete distraction from the pleasant nostalgia associated with a keen interest in Alvis cars.

May I respectfully suggest a little editorial judgement is exercised upon the suitability of advertisements in our magazine, the excellence of which is much appreciated, and keenly awaited each month.

Yours sincerely,  
**Philip Fenwick-Elliott**

P. S. I commissioned what may well be the only all aluminium TE21 drophead coupe from Red Triangle



a few years ago, which safely arrived at my house in East Hamton, New York, by FedEx, a year later. Red Triangle sent me photos whilst it was being built up from what they informed me was the last unbuilt 3 litre chassis. Having struggled with two earlier TF's, in terms of obtaining a satisfactory level of restoration, I can attest to the undiluted pleasure of owning and running a "new" TE, and the pleasure of knowing that with good care it will see me out without worrying about the wheel arches rusting away.

---

*I hasten to add the editor has no control over advertisements in The Bulletin!—J.N.B.C.*

---

16 Hillcrest Avenue,  
Market Harborough,  
Leics.  
LE16 7AR

Dear Julian,

I was saddened to read the letter from Harry L. Watkin Jr. in Bulletin 469. Like him, I look forward to seeing the promised full report of the USA Tour and hope that it will put the record straight, removing any negative aura there may possibly be. (For my part, I have done my bit by providing a write-up which has appeared in the Bulletin of the Alvis Register—describing the Tour from the Vintage participants' point of view—and I hope giving a balanced picture.)

Let me assure Harry—along with Wayne Brooks and Bill Borden and any others I should include—that all the efforts by our friends "over there" were greatly appreciated by those taking part. The Route Book for example was a magnificent effort—beautifully presented and, easy to follow; whilst the route chosen took us to such good places that we would never have found for ourselves.

I'm truly sorry that anyone should be given a negative impression about such a wonderful experience. I for one had nurtured the ambition for years that I would like to take my 12/50 over to tour the Eastern States, but never expected to be able to do it. Here was the chance to be grasped and Elizabeth and I were both very glad we took it (incidentally, she did nearly all the driving—all I had to do was to sit there and follow those clear instructions).

Unfortunately, we missed one or two of the treats that were on offer, but you can't do it all and that was our choice. True there were some gripes. Some of the hotels for instance seemed to be surprised to find that this large party which had made a long-term booking would actually like to find some food. And the Tour might have been a little less "pushy" for some of us—so many miles to cover and tantalising glimpses of places that we might have liked to explore at times.

But—credit where it's due—Wayne & Co did a great job for us and we wouldn't have missed it for worlds. I only wish we could go back and do it again!

Yours sincerely  
**Murray Maclean**

Culvan  
Wester Cullicudden  
Balblair  
The Black Isle  
Ross—Shire  
IV7 8LL  
Email: gilberts@culvan.freemove.co.uk

Dear Julian,

I thought the enclosed might fill an odd corner in the Bulletin sometime—James H. Galt was of course a very long standing and very successful Alvis distributor. The advert appeared in the Glasgow Herald of 20th May 1932 and came to light under two carpets and two layers of linoleum in my daughter Marianna's flat in the West End of Glasgow. The papers—there were several—are fascinating reading, but the gems for me are the adverts on the motoring page. No Alvises sadly, but the 1926 short chassis 3 Litre Bentley sports 4-seater at £245 would do! There is a surprising sprinkling

of French exotica, a 1929 Darracq 7 seater saloon at £100, a 1928 Senechal sports 2-seater at £35 and a 1927 Voisin 16/50 sports saloon in red and black for £130. The rest goes down through a couple of small Rolls-Royces through Daimlers, Sunbeams, Humbers, Armstrong-Siddeleys and Rileys to the Austins and Morris of the day. Clyno and Cluley both put in appearances.

Galt himself was a professional footballer (Rangers I think) who set up in the motor trade when his playing days were over. 52 Woodlands Road (not far from the said flat) has long been redeveloed, but Galt's workshops on the other side of the road survive, as a classic car dealers. Not long ago I inspected a passable TD 21 there.

I am working on a revamp of the Club website, and have some ideas for its development. Progress is slow because of employment, gardening, working on the cars, DIY in the house and the flat, in no particu-

lar order! I don't think anything will be apparent until the dark cold nights are upon us!

The 12/70 is back from its body rebuild and retrim, looking great and running very well indeed just the usual list of small jobs to tackle, and the Silver Eagle engine is away at the machine shop for new bearings.

Keep up the good work on the Bulletin—I may even contribute something later on in the year!

With kind regards,  
Robin Gilbert

**ALVIS**  
"WISE SAYINGS" SERIES.  
No. 9.  
"DISCRETION OF SPEECH IS  
MORE THAN ELOQUENCE."

Occasionally you may find an Alvis owner who says little about his car. There is a certain reticence—an air of reserve—though were you to request a demonstration of his car's abilities the wish would be granted as soon as expressed.

Such owners are no less appreciative of their Alvis than the more eloquent, but they feel—and perhaps rightly—that words after all can compare but poorly with actual experience—and in this way their discretion of speech is more than eloquence.

**ALVIS**  
FOR SPEED WITH SAFETY.  
**JAMES H. GALT, LTD.,**  
ALVIS DEPOT FOR SCOTLAND,  
52 WOODLANDS ROAD, GLASGOW, C. 3.  
Telephone: Douglas 4525-6.

No.1 Berrington Cottages  
Astley  
Nr Stourport-on-Severn  
Worcs DY13 0RL  
Email: Malcolm.Boote@tte.de

Dear Julian

Further to the correspondence concerning 3 litre water pump impellers, I'd already been set on this track by seeing what Malcolm Cox had made—and I've persuaded the head of engine design at work to turn his intentions (momentarily I hasten to add) to the question of what's the most efficient design for a three litre impellor using the latest technology—ream upon ream of detailed calculations poured forth from the battery of computers at his disposal and we arrived at something remarkably similar to what Mr Cox has produced out of his head—but at least the fee was reasonable, two bottles of single malt.

Nevertheless, this design has been sent to a machinist who I know and he's currently producing one for me, we were going to produce it in stainless steel, thereby dispensing with the steel insert at the back—but due to ease and speed of manufacture we've decided to try it out in brass, and keep the insert.

If anyone else wants one, the person making it is Peter Jaye of Jaye Engineering—Tel 01908 855 467 or Fax 01908 855 527—Peter's an absolute gentleman with a great knowledge of old and interesting cars—I've already paid for the CNC programme needed to produce the component—so subsequent ones shouldn't be too expensive. Although I've not run mine yet, as the engine is only just ready to begin assembly—I'm sure it will make a noticeable difference to the cooling of the engine, but to gain any benefit you still need to make sure that the radiator is in good condition and the water galleries in the engine are not full of silt and sludge.

The other thing that I'm going to try is a new oil pump which will allow the fitting of a spin-on oil filter—I'm convinced this will be a substantial improvement in terms of longevity—once more this idea originated with Malcolm Cox. This oil pump has been machined from solid aluminium and will use 1990's Opel oil pump rotors which are virtually identical in terms of overall dimensions to the original, but with a more efficient profile—I think that it might even be possible to fit these to a standard TA/TC oil pump with a little modification. This is still unproven so I don't want to recommend it to anyone else until I've run mine—If everything works properly I'll try and write something more detailed for you with photos etc

Yours sincerely  
**Malcolm Boote**

Lapiere Str 4  
D 89335 Ichenhawsen  
Germany  
Email: RRemp71690@aol.com

Dear Julian

I have found two outstanding books on the market which I think are worthy of a Bulletin book reviewers. The books are:

**Stout, Strong & Sturdy** (The Alvis Stalwart Story) a development history by John L. 50 pages



full with pictures, drawings and detailed information about the Stolly history. ISBN 3-9805216-0-5 Kónig Veriag 1998.

**In National Service** (The Rolls Royce 'B' Series in British MV's) include Saladin, Saracen, Stalwart and many others by **Pat Ware**. 204 pages tells the story of the development of the petrol engined post war MV's. ISBN 0-9525563-0-8 Warehouse Publication 1995

Some interest in Alvis modelling too?

The Alvis "Big three" FV 600 MV's are all available in Scale 1:35 from a little British model manufacture named "Firing Line". Here the address:

Latimer House,  
18, Latimer Road,  
Winston, Bournemouth  
BH9 1JY Dorset, UK  
Tel. 01 202 536502  
Fax 01 202 536575

May be they will be able to send you a catalogue-page with more information about their Saladin/Saracen/Stalwart models.

Regards  
**Roland Remp**

---

*Thank you for more Military Vehicles material. I have not yet come across the Stalwart book, but when I do I will certainly review it. I wrote to "Firing Line", and sent them a copy of The Bulletin with an invitation to supply details of their models but no reply was forthcoming—J.N.B.C*

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The Manor Bed & Breakfast  
Mickle Trafford Manor  
Chester CH2 4EA

To all Alvis owners

Fancy a break in Chester? I own an Alvis TD21 which I use for most of my motoring.

I have just opened a Bed and Breakfast on the outskirts of Chester (only 3 miles from the centre of the city). I would like to offer Club members a discount of 10% on their first night's stay or, if you feel adventurous come in your Alvis for a 20% discount.

With or without your pride and joy I would love to meet you to swap experiences.

Please contact me on 01244 300555 or email: [info@mickletraffordmanor.co.uk](mailto:info@mickletraffordmanor.co.uk) or see the web site on [www.mickletraffordmanor.co.uk](http://www.mickletraffordmanor.co.uk)

Looking forward to meeting my fellow members.

Yours sincerely  
**John Jackson**

The Ridings  
Birlingham  
Persore  
Worcs  
WR10 3AA

Dear Julian,

I am in the middle of restoring a TD21 Mk1. This has entailed the purchase of a car from Chris Prince and a chassis/bodyshell from Nick Simpson. The chassis/bodyshell had undergone previous restoration work and is consequentially sound and rust free. The donor car has provided all the mechanical parts glass interior trim etc. It has been almost a pain free process bolting on the various parts to the bodyshell and I have avoided having to deal with the dreaded rust removal phase.

My reason for writing to you is to seek help with regard to the front suspension. I have successfully removed the top and bottom suspension links pins bushes etc after torching the old springs. I now have acquired new springs, shock absorbers and the remaining suspension parts to fit on to the bodyshell. I do however not have the correct front spring compressor or access to one.

The specialist dealers seem unwilling to lend their compressors out. Is there a member out there willing to lend me such a tool. I will of course collect or pay package/post. Alternatively it would seem to me with more members having to deal with front suspension problems as time takes its toll on our cars that the club could well obtain such a tool to hire out to members.

It should not take too long to recoup costs and to go into profit at say £10 a time for hiring the tool. The alternative is to have the car trailed to the nearest specialist for what is essentially a straight-forward task.

Yours sincerely,  
**John Tudgay**

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*The problem of spring removal has been addressed in an article in The Bulletin in the Sixties. However this is not something that we hear about very often. Would members like to comment?—J.N.B.C*

---

119 Glen Fall  
Yate  
Bristol BS17 4NA  
Email: ANGUS.DARCY-DRAKE@innogy.com

Dear Julian

Referring to the "Alvis Bros" butter wrapper on P351 of the latest Bulletin. A little more information for you. Alvis Bros are alive and well, being based in North Somerset on the side of the A38 just South of Bristol. The South West Section gave away some of their cheese as a prize on our stall at Blenheim Palace.

I daresay several other members will probably also inform you of this particular "pearl", but there we go!

Kind regards  
Yours sincerely  
**Angus D'Arcy-Drake**

9 Beaufoyo Avenue  
Ferndown  
Dorset BH22 9RQ

Dear Julian

As usual, another issue of the Bulletin contains much of interest.

This time the letter by Michael Doland. His 1928 beetle back first appeared in the Alvis Register in October 1956 in the hands of one John Craggs. In 1960 another Register member, Dr R C Birt, purchased the car the records showing that it was painted white Dr Birt is still a member of the Register and it is just possible he may have inherited some photographs. His address is:- The Old World's End, Church End, Paglesham, Rochford, Essex, SS4 2DN, Telephone no. 01702 258607.

The ducks back on page 296 is the well known Julian Berrisford car which I first saw in 1950 when Norman Laxton owned it.

The other Alvis ex-Guy Griffiths is CO 9044 on page 301. Car no. 9199, engine no. 4199, the 12/50 was active in the Register from 1956 until 1963 when it's owner dropped out of the Register. From Guy Griffiths' articles in "The Automobile" I get the impression he was mainly responsible for the increase in the Register membership! Quite a number of new members had their first taste of 12/50s thanks to Guy's salesmanship.

In response to Tim Hills request in Bulletin Issue no. 470 for comment on the Henry Williamson's Silver Eagle may I offer the following.

The first SA 16.95 left the Works in October 1929 so any reference to May 1929 can be put down to author's licence. The early SA models were fitted with a single Solex carburettor with the option of twin carbs. for an extra £12-10-0. Few were so fitted. Triple carbs. became standard in 1930.

However, in November 1929 a special Silver Eagle saloon was completed for Frank Hough of Henlys and fitted with triple carbs. As the Williamson car was first registered on the 30th November 1929 for none other than Whitney Straight I would think that triple—carbs. were *de rigueur* so far as he was concerned.

DR 6084, car no. 12717 is today alive and well in the hands of A J Marsh. an Alvis Register member, and is in A1 condition.

Yours sincerely  
Norman Johnson

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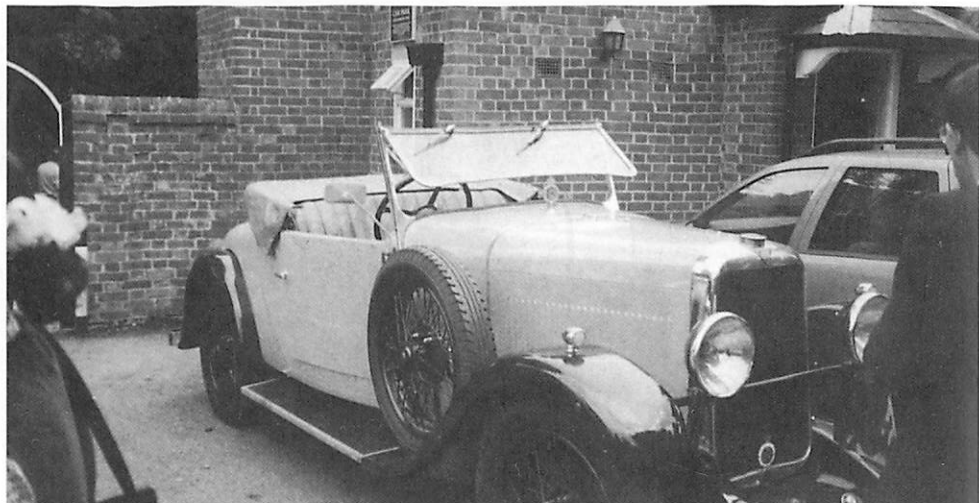
Corner Cottage  
Chaddleworth  
Newbury  
Berks RG20 7EJ

Dear Julian,

Many thanks for your letter and magazine.

Enclosed is a photo of the late Professor Peter Moores' Alvis 12/50 which was used in the funeral cortège last year along with the Bentley and Lancia which I wrote to you about. The Alvis has been given to his young nephew to keep it in the family. I spoke with him recently and mentioned the Alvis Owner Club and our previous contact. I gave him the magazine and he is going to contact the General Secretary with a view to joining the club over here. He has also promised me some photos of





*The late Professor Peter Moore's 12/50, now in the hands of his nephew. Photo: Derek Mewton*

it, which I will send to you for your magazine at a later date.

All the Best,  
Yours sincerely  
**Derek Mewton**

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*It is to be hoped that we can gain a new younger member—J.N.B.C*

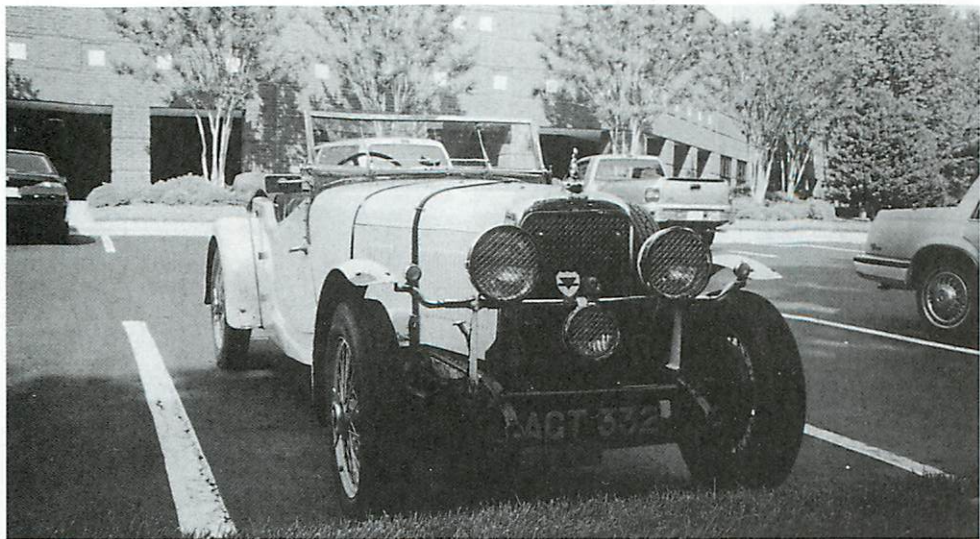
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8513 Lyman Oak Court  
Huntersville, NC 28078-6873  
USA  
Email: hlwatkin@att.net

Dear Julian,

As promised, enclosed you should find colour prints of Tom Howard's Firefly/TA14. I hope they will be suitable for the Bulletin.

I did ride in the car, and it seems to go quite nicely, and appears very solid. The doors open and close properly, and the panel fit looks decent. Tom says the paint and leather is original, but I assume he means that the paint is original to the time when the TA14 engine/gearbox was put in, and the bodywork was changed. I do not know the dates involved, but I am certain Wayne does. The paint is old, and there are chips, especially on the wings. The leather is worn, has some cracks, but feels fairly supple. Tom told me that the man who changed the engine also put Jaguar brake drums and wheels on it, and switched the brakes to hydraulics. Sorry, but it didn't occur to me to make sure that there were hydraulic lines going to each wheel. As you can see in the photos, the wheels do have the "jelly-



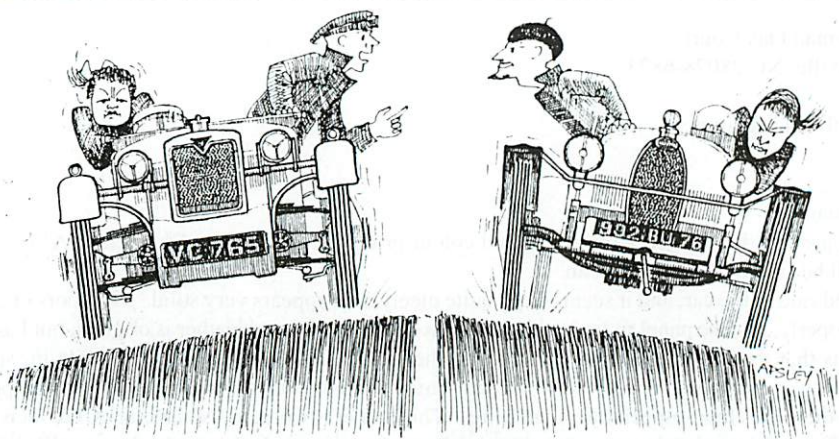
Tom Howard's Firefly/TA14

Photo: Harry Watkins

mould" centre piece (unique to Alvis?). I did notice that the tachometer did not seem to work, but Tom says all the gauges do function. And he is aware that the hare is facing the wrong way. There is also what appears to be a complete and original set of tools fitted into the boot lid.

I have not spoken to Tom Howard since the day I saw the car, so I do not know whether he has sold it. One thing Tom did say was that he might be coming to think that the Alvis was a better buy than the other car, gotten at the same time as the prime reason for purchase. Apparently, even though older by one and a half decades, the Alvis is in much better condition.

Best regards,  
Harry Watkins



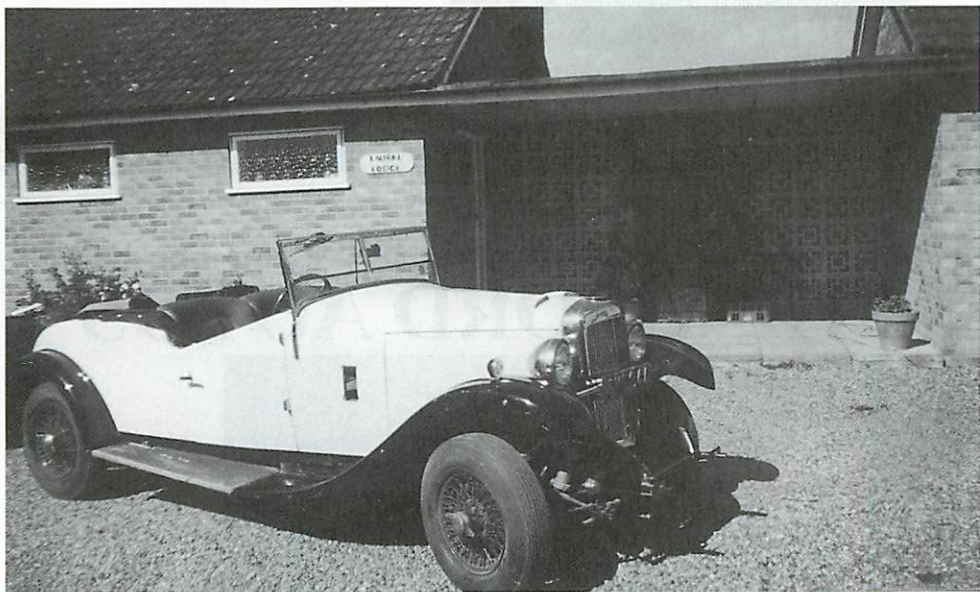
"... FINEST MANAGER THE ARSENAL EVER HAD..."

# POSED, PROBED AND SOLVED

– The Registrar's Column –



## TODAY'S SPECIAL – YET ANOTHER HELPING –



*Stan Kerridge's TC21/100 with 1931 Harrison body.*

*Photo: Stan Kerridge*

About five years ago I decided to attempt to catalogue the efforts which had been made to convert the Three-Litre model into special format, and the first thoughts on this were written up in a "P.P.S." in Bulletin No. 441 of November 1996. A sequel was published in Bulletin No. 459 of September/October 1999, and it is with this preamble that I would like to add two more to this survey.

Taking the earlier of the two first, it was in course of the process of recovering the original





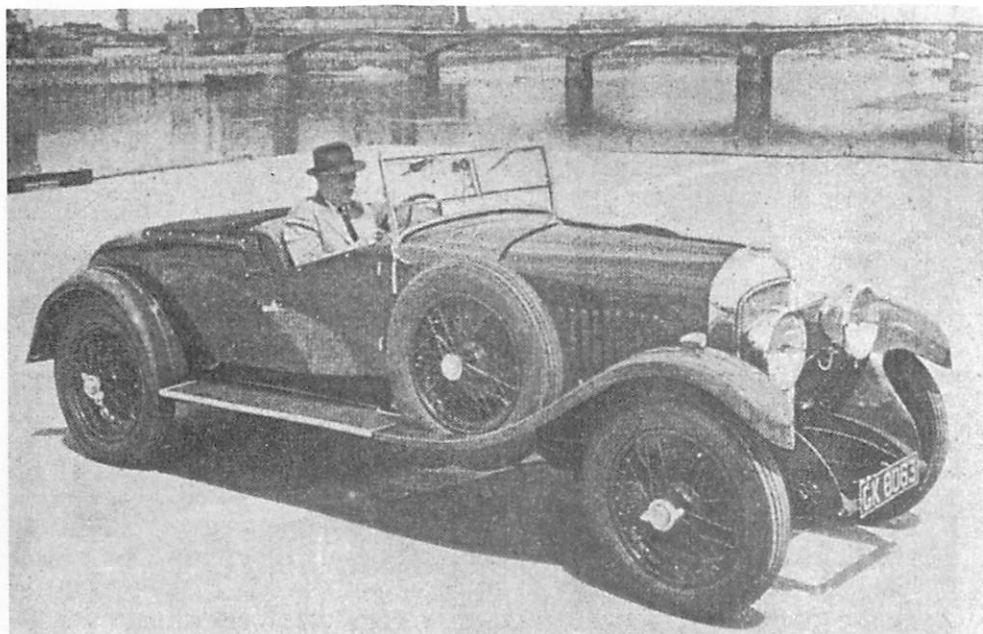
PYG 344 in "as found" condition.

Photo: Steve Kerridge

registration mark PYG 344, for TC 21/100 chassis 25854 that owner Stan Kerridge filled in the details of its conversion, which starts in the usual way with a saloon body beyond economic repair. Stan had fortuitously come across a tourer body by Harrison, which had originally been fitted to a 4½-Litre Bentley chassis FS 3621, registration GK 8063. For an account of the activities of Harrisons, the coachbuilders I can do no better than to refer readers to Nick Walker's *A – Z of Coachbuilders*, page 120. This car had apparently ended up in Nairobi, and in 1961 was brought back to Jack Barclay Ltd for renovation. This process was reported on in *"The Motor"* of August 2nd, 1961, prior to despatch back to Kenya. It went from there to the U.S.A. and it is from there that the car once again returned to these shores more recently, this time to have a new body fitted, which is where Stan and the TC 21/100 come in.

Transfer of the Harrison body to the TC 21/110 chassis has proceeded quite harmoniously. It sits lower on the Alvis, because of the much smaller wheels and tyres, and therefore I suspect that it would look even more imposing using something like Alan Wildin's interesting 17 inch wheel conversion. Stan has supplied a photograph which, interestingly mirrors the pose of the 1961 *Motor* photograph, almost exactly.

The next listing is an altogether different device. For a little while now it had been rumoured that the inveterate builder of pre-war based specials Jack Clover, was turning his hand to the Three-Litre model, with a special to be known as the *Speed Twenty-One*. Sure enough, its first outing was at International 2000, having apparently been finished the day before. Those of us who were lucky



*The 4½ Litre Bentley with the Harrison body which was transferred to the TC21/100 chassis.*



*Jack Clover's TD21 Special at Blenheim.*

*Photo: J.N.B.C*

enough to see it were able to attest just how successful the project has been, not only from the meticulous construction which is typical of Jack, but also from the near faultless proportions—something extremely difficult to achieve with the engineering layout of this model. I hope that eventually Jack can be persuaded to pen a full account of the rejuvenation of TD 21 chassis 26309. Meanwhile—many congratulations.

DAVE CULSHAW

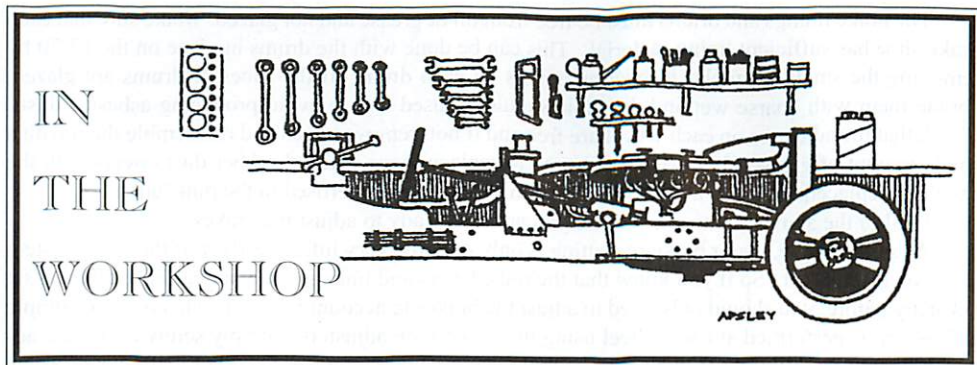
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*A recent photograph from Ed Halemán of his TA14. It looks superb.*

*Photo : Ed Halemán*





## HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF THE 12/70 BRAKING SYSTEM

In the following article I have tried to provide an outline description of the 12/70 braking system, some areas to check before performing any adjustment and a fault finding guide. I have found a workshop guide, called *Practical Automobile Engineering Illustrated*, very useful. It gives a very complete technical description plus instructions on setting-up the entire system from scratch assuming that it has been removed from the car (or that you are unsure of how well someone else fitted it!).

The 12/70 was one of the first Alvises to make use of many proprietary parts rather than designing everything 'in house'. One result of this new policy was that Alvis 'bought in' fully compensated rod and cable operated Bendix Cowdrey brakes. This system incorporates 11" diameter single leading shoe drum brakes on all wheels and despite feeling a bit 'wooden', will pull the car up remarkably quickly and straight when in good condition and adjusted properly. The only regular maintenance required is to adjust the free play at each drum to take account of brake lining wear. Other than that and basic preventative maintenance 12/70 brakes should only require major adjustment at 25,000 mile intervals (or a classic car lifetime!) according to the 12/70 handbook.

Before beginning to set the brakes it is worth checking that all the components are in good order. On my own car I found that the brake compensators were the major culprits when trying to track down its 'hedgeward tendencies'. These swinging bracket assemblies are found on each axle and must be free to swivel at each pivot point. The clevis pins and pivots must be a good fit to allow movement without 'slop' and they should be well greased to ensure that they stay free. If the compensators are seized they will allow uneven braking force to be applied to each wheel which is very undesirable and will cause a distinct pull to one side on braking. It is worth noting that any tendency to pull to one side under braking cannot be caused by brake adjustment (unless hopelessly out) since the compensation system employed will always take up any slack and equal out the force applied to each pair of brakes, if working correctly.

Having confirmed that your compensators are free, move on to check the brakes themselves. Drums can wear out of round or become scored. These faults may cause jerky braking felt through the pedal or a general reduction in braking efficiency. Rectification can be achieved by skimming or replacing the drums. I have not found any tolerances stating a maximum 'oversize' for 12/70 drums and can only suggest that they look pretty 'beefy' and can probably stand machining within reason (my local machine shop have always been very good at pointing out when things were going too far, yours will no doubt do the same).

The brake linings and drums must be free from oil or grease and not glazed. Make sure that each brake shoe has sufficient lining material. This can be done with the drums in place on the 12/70 by removing the small triangular inspection covers on each drum. If the shoes or drums are glazed, abrade them with coarse wet and dry (this should be used wet to avoid producing asbestos dust). Check that the adjusters on each wheel are free and if not, remove, clean and reassemble them with a small amount of grease (this is the ideal time to replace those cracked rubber dust covers with the excellent replacement items available from John Wheelley as advertised in the pink 'un)

If all of the above points are in order you are now ready to adjust the brakes.

As stated above, major brake re-setting is only required very infrequently or if the brake system has been dismantled. So if you know that the rods, levers and linkages on your car have all been set correctly before, you should only need to adjust the brakes to account for wear. This is a very simple task which is performed at each wheel using the brake shoe adjusters. Simply screw each shoe adjuster clockwise until tight then slacken back three quarters of a turn or five clicks (if your adjusters are free enough to click!) Make sure each wheel is free to rotate and the job is done.

If you have disturbed the settings of the brake rods or linkages, or you are uncertain if they were right when you got the car then this may be a good time to check things over. Adjusting the brakes is best done with no weight on the wheels so jack the car up and support it using axle stands under each axle (if you have enough stands). The maintenance routine from *Practical Automobile Engineering Illustrated* which is included below is very detailed and explains all the steps required.

The following points may be helpful when looking for faults:

<b>Fault</b>	<b>Possible Cause</b>	<b>Solution</b>
Car pulls to one side	1. Seized compensators 2. Oil contamination in drums	Strip compensators, grease and re-assemble Clean/Replace brake shoes
Brakes have excess drum adjusters travel	1. Too much slack in one or more brake adjusters 2. Poor adjustment in pedal assembly 3. Worn pivots/cable/clevis's at any point in the brake system	Set drum Adjustment required Replace as required
Brakes Judder	1. Oval or badly worn drums	Skim/replace drums
Brakes lack power	1. Hard/Glazed linings 2. Brake linings badly worn 3. Levers operating inefficiently due to poor adjustment or wear 4. Your expectations of an old braking system are too high	Remove glaze or reline shoes Replace Adjust to achieve correct operating angles Drive more slowly/buy a newer car!

When you have finished all the adjustments, you should have brakes working the way Alvis intended them to.

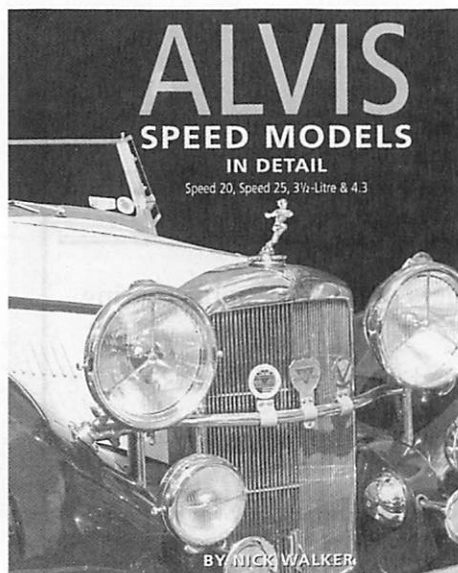
Best of luck, it's not as bad as it looks!

**GEOFF WINWOOD**



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

*Alvis Speed Models In Detail—Speed 20, Speed 25, 3½ Litre and 4.3 by Nick Walker. 160pp. Price £35.00. Published by Herridge and Sons*



Given the importance of the six cylinder cars of the nineteen thirties to the Company, it seems remarkable that so little has been written about them in the past. This lack has now been superbly remedied by Nick Walker in his latest book.

The early story of the development of the Speed 20 is particularly interesting evolving as it did from the Silver Eagle. Indeed Nick reveals that Alvis was thinking along the lines that the new car would be a Silver Eagle Sports, rather than an entirely new model.

As an expert on coachwork, Nick explains that it was the double dropped frame that set the new Alvis range apart from those of other manufacturers of the time. He also goes on to discuss the replacement of Henlys as the main Alvis agents by Charles Follett, who had a very good eye for coachwork design, and who it seems was of prime importance in the creation of the new Speed 20 and the marvellous family of sports and touring cars

that followed. By all accounts the relationship of Follett with T.G. John and Smith-Clarke was a stormy one, which in the end failed, possibly greatly to the loss of Alvis. There is no doubt that the coachwork on the Speed 20 sold the cars and as the range expanded and was extended, the coachwork became ever more luxurious and spectacular.

After the long introductory history of the Speed 20, Nick goes on to describe the car in detail and then the various changes that occurred during its life. Then come the descriptions of the 3½ Litre and then Speed 25 and 4.3. It is fascinating to read the details of these developments and the problems that the company had. Nick gives comprehensive mechanical details as well as the history of the models. It is pleasing to see how often he compares the Alvis range with those of other manufacturers of the period showing Alvis' rivals, and he includes pictures of them. Most could not match the low lines and elegance of the Alvis but Nick is independent-minded enough to reveal that the Alvis was by no



means superior in every respect. A refreshing approach.

A splendid selection of photographs both contemporary and more recent compliment the text as do line drawings. The last two chapters *On the Road Then* and *On the Road Now* are most interesting and put the cars in the context of the times as well as explaining to potential owners what they might expect today.

This a very well and elegantly produced book and I can say without hesitation that it must be on the library shelves of every Alvis enthusiast whether an owner of one of the Speed models or not. A splendid book that perhaps leaves room for volumes on other Alvis models.

J.N.B.C

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*Wilfred Freeman—The Genius Behind Allied Survival And Air Supremacy 1939 To 1945* By Anthony Furse. 384pp. Price £24.95. Published by Spellmount.

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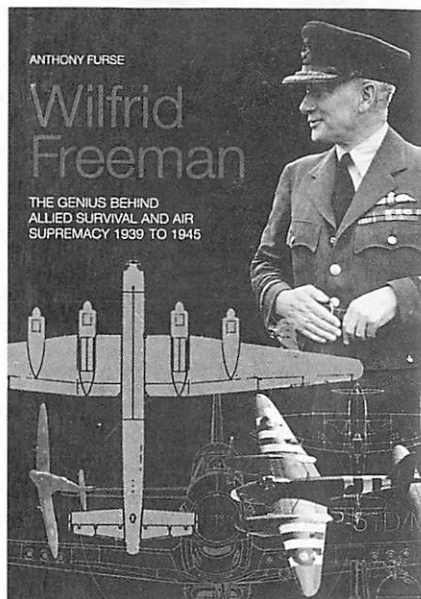
Wilfred Freeman is probably not a name that springs to mind in connection with the Second World War but he had an enormous influence. An active pilot in the First World War, he took a permanent commission in the RAF after the War and throughout the twenties and thirties moved up in the ranks of the service. In 1936 he joined the Air Ministry and was responsible for many decisions on what aircraft and engines should be developed for the RAF.

In this position Freeman was intimately involved with the acceleration of rearmament in the latter thirties. It was he who authorised the production of the first Spitfires and Hurricanes and later ensured that the Lancaster came into production. From his experience in the First World War Freeman was insistent that aircrew should not be expected to endure war in second-rate machines and so he was quite ruthless in cancelling production of aircraft which he decided were no good.

Among his greatest triumphs were the acceptance of the Mosquito against other RAF leaders' advice and the decision to put the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine into the Mustang which created the finest fighter aircraft of the war. However life at the political end of aircraft production was not easy. Lord Beaverbrook was appointed Minister of Aircraft Production in 1940. Ignoring what had been done previously, Beaverbrook concentrated on production ignoring spares and aircraft repairs and took the credit for what Freeman had done previously. Freeman was now moved to Vice Chief of Staff of the RAF under Portal. Here he was in the thick of things and again his vast experience was brought to bear on many operational difficulties.

Later when Beaverbrook was removed, Freeman returned to the Air Ministry and was involved again with many important developments such as the jet engine.

This is a vastly interesting book about an aspect of wartime leadership not normally written about. It is very well written by someone who both understands the subject and has researched it well. Alvis enthusiasts will be disappointed to read that Freeman blocked the development of the pre-war



Alvis aero engines based on Gnome Rhone designs on the basis that they were "too heavy and underpowered". But he did encourage Rolls-Royce to use Alvis as a sub-contractor to repair Merlin engines.

One of the most interesting books that I have read recently.

J.N.B.C.

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*Can You Afford To Walk? The History Of The Hounsfield Trojan Motor Car* By Eric Rance and Don Williams. 256pp. Price £35.00 Published by Bookmarque Publishing.

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The Trojan was a rather eccentric motor car the anti-thesis of the Alvis. It was designed to be very cheap both to buy and run and it was also designed to be very slow, not normally exceeding 30 mph. A considerable contrast to the *Master of the King's Highway*.

Although the Trojan had a low performance and was very much a people's car, it was nevertheless a very ingenious design. The engine was under the floor and had a pull hand start in the cockpit. It had chain drive and solid rubber tyres and the engine was a curious two-stroke with vee shaped connecting rods which have to bend slightly on every revolution of the engine.

This machine was the invention of a designer named Leslie Hounsfield. The prototype was built before the First World War but production did not start until after the war when Leyland took this on. The authors of this book have done an excellent job in writing about a dull car in an interesting manner. It really was a classic piece of British eccentricity and yet the Trojan was immensely successful being most famously used by Brooke Bond as vans for delivering tea. It was very easy to drive at a time when driving

cars was not easy and it was economical.

The Trojan was very tough and could go almost anywhere and they were often used in mud-plugging trials. In 1926 a Trojan was driven to London overland from Singapore taking an incredible pounding on the way, but the three intrepid Singaporeans who drove it succeeded in reaching London.

The Trojan is all but forgotten now and it is pleasing that the story of this odd car has been properly written.

J.N.B.C.

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*Sparks And Flames—Ignition in Engines An Historical Approach* by Crawford MacKeand. 168pp. Price US\$19.00 Published by Tyndar Press. Card Covers.

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Although most of us take for granted the straightforward—well sometimes straightforward—process of ignition of internal combustion engines, it is perhaps surprising to learn how long it took to get to what we think is a normal system. This excellent book provides a fascinating background to the search for reliable ignition of internal combustion engines.

The earliest internal combustion engines, gas engines, often used a flame to provide ignition by employing complicated valves that would allow the flame to come into contact with the mixture in the cylinder via a sort of touch hole. As may be imagined, ignition led to the flame being blown out so

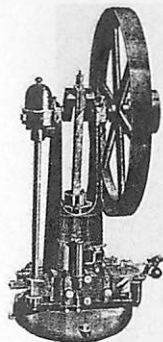
## SPARKS

and

## FLAMES

Ignition in Engines  
An Historical Approach

Crawford MacKeand



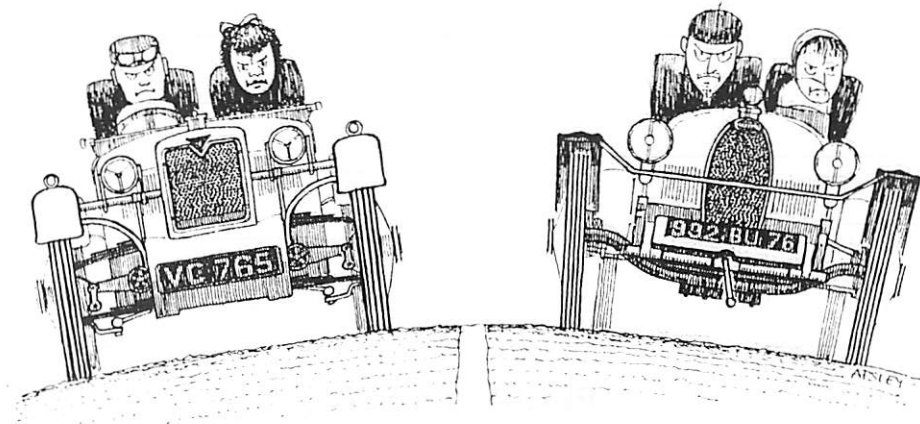
there had to be another flame to re-light the flame.....

Next came the hot tube whereby a tube heated by an external burner, projected into the combustion space and ignited the mixture. This was quite a reliable system except that fires were not uncommon and the timing of the start of combustion could not be controlled. Although many experiments had been made with electricity a hundred years before the advent of the internal combustion engine, it was not a high-tension spark that was first used but a low-tension discharge. This required make and break contacts inside the combustion space, which with the problem of sealing rods and cams as well as exposing these moving elements to the temperature of combustion, seems a somewhat Heath Robinson device. Nevertheless, low-tension ignition worked very well as anyone who has seen the late Sam Clutton's 1907 Itala racing car in action, will testify.

The author finally proceeds the use of high-tension electricity to generate a controlled and timed spark either by coil or magneto, the system that the Alvis owner readily appreciates. The book has a modicum of electrical theory, plenty of line drawings, but surprisingly no photographs, a comprehensive bibliography, and an index.

Altogether a very useful technical volume for the library.

J.N.B.C.



"...AND SO FERRARI WIN YET ANOTHER GRAND PRIX!"





## SECTION NOTES

### – Alvis Activities From Around The World –

## NORTHERN SECTION

### AN UPDATE FROM THE THREE HORSE SHOES, DURHAM

The monthly meeting on the last Tuesday of every month continues to be well supported. We rarely have less than twelve members attending so why not come along and join us. On Wednesday April 11<sup>th</sup> North East members who went on the American Tour 2000 were cordially invited to Bill Rankin and Terry's in Matfen Village, Northumberland. The occasion was a "World Premier" showing of Les and Marjorie Siddle's own video covering the Tour. My involvement had been in editing five hours of footage down to about two and a half hours of final film with suitable music and sub titles. Fortunately all the people who attended the "launch" did feature somewhere in the film and were not left on the cutting room floor. I can only guess that the video was enjoyed by every-one by listening to the comments afterwards, certainly nobody fell asleep. The success of the evening was greatly enhanced by generous helpings of wine and nibbles (it was a banquet really). Thanks again to Bill and Terry for their hospitality.

### WEARDALE SUNDAY LUNCH APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup>

As a follow up to the very successful Stan and Barbara Hicken's Sunday lunch run on 26<sup>th</sup> November last year, Les and Marjorie Siddle organised another similar get together for the Durham Meeting attendees. It was originally planned for Sunday March 4<sup>th</sup> but this was cancelled due to the outbreak of foot and mouth. With the easing of restrictions particularly in upper Weardale a new date of Sunday April 29<sup>th</sup> was organised. The format was to meet at Marjorie and Les's house in Wyiam on Tyne for morning coffee at 10.00am and leave about 11.00am to make our way to the *Cowshill Hotel* for Sunday lunch at about 12.30pm. The morning started grey and overcast with rain on the coast but mainly dry elsewhere. A beautiful array of six Alvis cars adorned the cul-de-sac in Wylam, Les and Marjorie's 12/70 Tourer, Garth and Sue Jeffrey's Speed 25 Tourer, Stan and Barbara Hicken's TA14

Drop Head, Ted and Penny Garner's recently acquired TA21 Drop Head, Maurice and Pat Marinar's TA21 Drop Head and Ian Murcott and Jackie Grieveson in the TD21 Saloon. After coffee and biscuits and an hour's natter we all set off for Coweshill in upper Weardale. The route was via the A69 to Corbridge than A68 to Kiln Pit Hill and down to the end of the Derwent Reservoir at Edmundbyers. This is where the fun really started, climbing out of Edmundbyers, over Muggleswick Common (1500 Feet) and down into Stanhope in Weardale the snow started falling very heavily, big wet flakes, the sort that your windscreen wiper blades can't move, with the result that the arc gets smaller and smaller until it looks like a vertical letter box. At this point some drivers had to get out and clear the snow by hand. My confidence that once we had dropped down into Stanhope in the valley bottom the snow would at worst be replaced by rain was totally unfounded. The snow continued to fall heavily for the remainder of the journey up Weardale to the *Coweshill Hotel* by which time there was at least two inches lying on the road and surrounding landscape. This gave the whole area a real Christmas card appearance. The welcome at the Hotel was cordial and warm with a large fire burning in the bar (if you were lucky enough to get near it). Our excellent lunch was served in a private room upstairs with all the dishes brought up on a lovely dumb waiter. The snow continued to fall heavily, the conversation flowed unabridged and before we knew it the time was 3.30pm. Any thoughts we had to visit the Lead Mining Museum in nearby Nenthead were abandoned due to the weather conditions. Having said that the snow stopped right on cue, the skies cleared and the sun came out. The snow melted on the roads but the fields were white as far as the eye could see. The cars dispersed, most going home via Allenheads, Allendale and Hexham, everyone agreeing that the day had been extremely enjoyable and thanking Les and Marjorie for their efforts. Shame dictates that I haven't mentioned that Pat and I were in our V\*\*\*\*\*L A\*\*\*A but we didn't have the heater on once, honest!

**TERRY POPPELWELL**

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## **MIDLAND SECTION**

### **HOWARD ARMS MEETING**

The July noggin-and-natter once again transformed itself into a meal in the pub garden—not a barbecue this time, but a hot buffet meal served outside. For once the weather was almost summer-like, and we were able to remain outdoors for the whole evening without wrapping ourselves in progressively more layers of clothing as darkness fell.

There were ten Alvis cars in the car park that evening, and thirty-four members taking part. There was a hint of nostalgia in the air, since nearly all of the committee which had organised the last three "Internationals" (to be precise, two Internationals and one Golden Jubilee) were there. So the talk was of valiant deeds done, and of how quiet and relaxed life had suddenly become. Also in attendance were Ron and Jane Walton—who are on the point of moving into the Midland area—plus their old friends Roly and Jan Simmons, and new attendees Peter and Sue Cross from Cheltenham (whom many will remember from the US Tour).

The Howard Arms meeting takes place at 8.30 on the last Tuesday of every month, and both members and their partners will be made very welcome.

**NICK WALKER**

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