

OWNER

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CLUB

# The Bulletin

No. 441 November 1996





Here's a nice period action shot of some well-known Alvis racing exponents. Michael Mays was known for his Brooklands performances with the highly tuned Silver Eagle. We have read in the *Bulletin* recently of Lofty England's Alvis connections. Here they are together, Mays driving with Lofty as passenger at a JCC Members meeting at Brooklands in 1938. They gained a special award in the High Speed Trials. Good to see a 12/70 on the track. DDU834 looks like one of the rare Mulliner sports models but Club records show it as a Cross & Ellis tourer. Perhaps the 12/70 Model Sec. may care to comment and tell us if the car still exists.

PHOTO Nick Simpson Archive.

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## ***ODD BODIES***

If I came to a conclusion at all, following completion of my recent series on Three-litre conundrums, it was that the Works were no mean 'special' builders.

A telephone call from member Stephen Tillyer with a view to identifying the remains of a TD21 'special' in his possession, led me to consider that perhaps it was time to review the aspect of special-building on the Three-litre chassis. The timely photograph of the Martyn derivative in the March *Bulletin* was to make the idea of a follow-up feature an absolute certainty.

Of all the Alvis models, the Three-litre is probably the one which lends itself least to 'retro' styling. This is because its relatively small wheels, a radiator mounted well forward, and a high fixed steering column rake. Some of the specials reviewed in this feature have taken one or more of these considerations into account.

Let me say right at the outset that what follows is not intended to be a definitive list - on the contrary I am sure that there are quite a few more out there whose current custodians and/or constructors might as a result be persuaded to pen a few lines about their experiences.

Whilst few would disagree with the general aim that an Alvis car should ideally be restored with the coachwork with which it was despatched, it is in fact that for one reason or another there are a number of vehicles (and this applies to all our different models), which have lost their coachwork, but are otherwise mechanically serviceable.

They are in fact, in exactly the form in which 'The Works' constructed them: i.e. prior to despatch to the coachbuilder. Special bodies are thus quite easy to justify in nearly every case, because nearly every model could be bought as a chassis.

As I have pointed out in a previous article, with the Three-litre, the chassis option was withdrawn - which is ironic, and may partially explain the dearth of Three-litre specials, despite the comparatively high volume of production - around 3640, of all types between 1950 and 1967.

The pen-portraits which accompany the photographs of the text, are taken in chassis number order, beginning with:

**23935/JVE 194**

This was constructed by Dr Keith Eaton, and was extensively written up in the



*Bulletins* of Dec 1971, and Jan/Feb 1972. It is a straightforward re-bodying of a standard chassis, in the form of a four-seater tourer. The retro look is achieved by the use of TA 14 front wings, and PI00 headlights. The car used a special registration: FOM 6, for a while, from which I believe it has now been separated. The vehicle is still around.



### 23938/JP 9025

This was an academic exercise, built over 30 years ago in my school workshops - at a time when TA21's were being given away. In those carefree days when technical education was taught with spanners and micrometers and was FUN. There was a time when all my fifth formers, boys and girls could drive a three-litre chassis with competence around the playground, complete with a jury-rig petrol tank (one pint) strapped to the steering column, and an orange box for a seat. I commend the experience - at least I know how the Works test drivers felt.



*"Body by well-known Continental maker" as an ad might say*

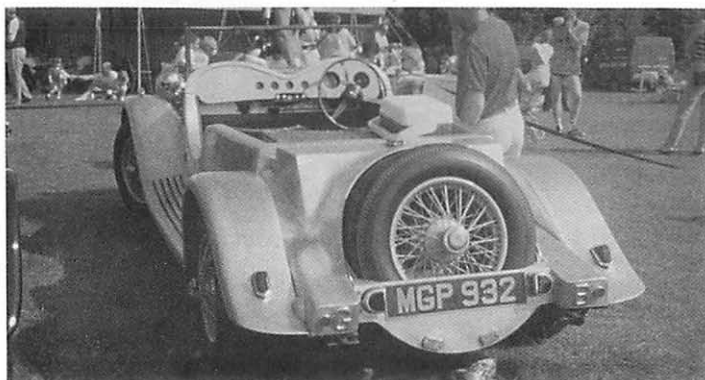
The photograph dates from the time when we added rudimentary weather protection in the form of a VW Beetle body which just happened to be about. Incredibly - it fitted like a glove. The tapering on the body sills was identical with that of the TA21 chassis side members, and the VW engine compartment cross member sat neatly on the Alvis cross member to which the shock absorbers are anchored.

Looking at it in retrospect, I realise that I had created an Embiricos for the Impecunious. I console myself with the thought that A.F.N. Ltd, produced the

Frazer Nash 'Continental V8', in much the same way - but using a Porsche 356 body shell (for which make they happened to be concessionaires) .

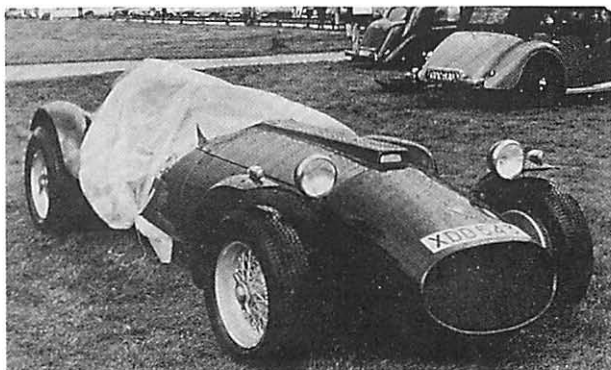
#### **24169/MGP 932**

This is Alan Wildin's well-known design (*below*) again on a basically standard chassis. Alan's ambitious conversion to 17 inch wire wheels does much to address the problem of proportion. A regular and lively performer at many club events - and that's just the car.



#### **24537/JYS 899 and XDD 534**

Probably the most ambitious conversion of a TA21, Rod Jolley's Special, we understand, incorporates an IRS set up. Was often seen in sprint events, but with its lighting and cycle wings attached, it could quickly be made street-legal.



## 25098/BHC 701

Previously pictured in the March 1996 *Bulletin*, this is the Martyn special - a distinctive interpretation which succeeds, particularly at the front end, because of the engine repositioning. A more detailed account of its construction should be penned.

## Unknown/unknown

Understood to be based on a TC21/110 chassis, as yet unidentified, the shortest known Three-litre special was that constructed by Brian Conway.

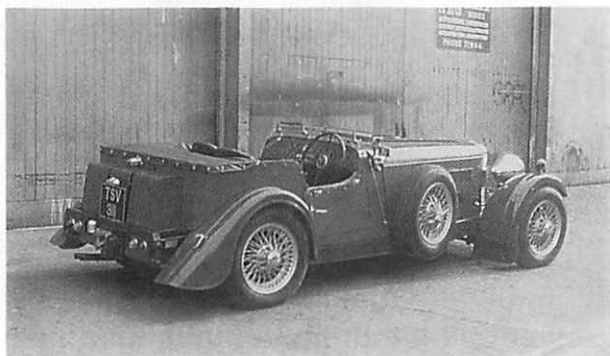
With shortened wheelbase, and manxed rear end much weight was jettisoned, resulting I believe in a FTD, on at least one occasion. Brian tells me it was given away in the Atherstone area, but cannot remember the base vehicle. Can any Midlander put a chassis or registration number to this one?



*Yclept 'Jumping Jehosephat' by photographer Bill Fryer*

## 25436/ONE 898 and TSV 311

Another TC21/100, this time. No knowledge of who constructed this one, but a very successful exercise. The proportions are nearly spot-on, with only the Morganesque rear wings a fraction tail heavy. High marks.



### 25773/HRG 341

Seen offered for sale during 1995, this is another TC21/100. A standard chassis seems to be employed, and a four seater body, with what seems quite professional weather protection. More information please?



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### 25989/WXL 3/re-reg

This erstwhile TD21 is the car which precipitated this review, and what remains of it have recently come into the possession of member Stephen Tillyer. Not previously recorded in club member ownership, it was last sighted in the car park at V.S.C. Silverstone in 1982, and is another manxed version, which Stephen tells me is peculiarly on 16 inch wheels.

The badger setts in its rear flanks are particularly appealing. Wonder if it had drain holes in the light clusters. Definitely another candidate for the caption: "Don't laugh Madam, your daughter might be inside."



I would be pleased to hear from any member aggrieved at having their 'Special' left out. Contributions about the construction of those mentioned should be sent to the Editor, as indeed should ideas for alternative versions.

All that needs to be decided is the type of radiator mascot that this new breed of fun car should bear?

Might I suggest a pair of cats - one Manx, for obvious reasons, the other Cheshire, which latter would signify a successful conversion.



*The TA14 "oily hand" gang at Chatsworth. Left to right: Chairman Wheeley; Alvis apprentice (1st class retired) Ron Walton; 'Spanner Newby of Bona Radiators; Prof Culshaw of Posed, Probed and Solved (not a pop group); 'Compo' Fletcher hiding his credentials behind the Alvis sporran; M le President; 'Smokey Fairburn and 'Inky' Smith TA14 model sec. Not a group to meet on a dark night!*

*Pictures: (top) Hazel Buck, (bottom) Bernard Nield*



*TA14 picture at Howden; Jonathan Smith (r) hands it to Albert Ainsworth*



## The Chatsworth Weekend

And so to the climax of the celebrations. Starting from T G John's birthplace at Pembroke Dock the picture had been driven round Britain by a succession of TA14s and was due to reach Chatsworth on Sunday 18th August.

Two days earlier the first cars began to arrive at the Ashbourne Lodge Hotel, the chosen base for the weekend. After-dinner strolls revealed seventeen cars resident that night, attracting estimates of the eventual numbers for Sunday.

Entertainment for Saturday began with a 35-mile treasure hunt taking the assembly, swollen by new arrivals, to the Tramway Museum at Crich. Setting out towards Leek we were encouraged to drop in at the Old Yew Tree Inn at Cauldon.

The contents of this hostelry were so unusual that members were reluctant to leave, and the car park soon became an Alvis traffic-jam. With a player-piano going full tilt a sing-song was soon in progress, whilst others wondered at the variety of antique exhibits: who could resist the charm of Queen Victoria's stockings (black of course). It was difficult to return to treasure-hunt mode, we were sure we had already found it.

The clues provided by John Pryer soon showed the complex workings of his mind (and what was the function of those stone 'beehives' in the middle of the field?). However, the exit from the Manifold Valley up a 1 in 2.5 left-hand hairpin bend will be remembered with affection by all participants.

At Crich we were given dedicated parking on a grassy slope behind the

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bandstand, many of us glad to seek the shade from scorching sunshine. The tramway museum is now a most impressive development with examples of many types, British and foreign, and well worth visiting.

Other cars joined us during the afternoon so that on return to the hotel there were 36 cars resident plus several 'living-out' and 88 sat down to dinner. The 50th anniversary cake, courtesy of Eileen Eve, was on display and we were both informed and entertained by Ron Walton and Dave Culshaw as after-dinner speakers. The balmy evening encouraged strolls round the car park and conversations late into the night. By this time it was clear that there would be



*Registrar Culshaw on the horns of a dilemma*

a healthy turn-out of Fourteens on the morrow. Sunday dawned fine and it was all action in the hotel car park as the Fourteens marshalled-up and set off escorted by the other models.

At Chatsworth an impressive number of cars was already in place and a steady stream of arrivals sustained our interest. More and yet more Fourteens appeared, many not seen previously in the North, such that counting the total became very difficult.

Fortunately we had the services of John Murray, a Fourteen owner visiting from South Australia, who compiled the registration numbers of 52 TAs and 3 TBs and suggested a total attendance approaching 90 Alvis.

The story of John's own car was well told in *Bulletin* 424 with illustrations of the fixed-head coupé body that he constructed. A main feature of the day was the self-judging concours where all members were asked to indicate their choice

of best car in a number of categories. As a result John Wheeley presented prizes as follows:

1. Best Mulliner saloon:	Andrew Robison,	HHP 703
2. Best Tickford d h c:	Ron Walton	JYF 59
3. Best Carbodies d h c:	Ron Buck	ARB 14
4. Best Shooting Brake:	D Fensome-Arden	FAK 707
5. Best TA14 by other coachbuilders:	Andrew Raine	KPT 873

A prize was also awarded to Bill Hubbard for his bravery in bringing on a trailer the dejected 'Woody' SMV 224. It is interesting that several people voted this the car they would most like to take home.

The proceedings were rounded off by presentations of the much-travelled picture to Martin Wickham to take to Coventry. It is not yet decided whether this will hang in the boardroom or in the entrance foyer at Alvis plc, but it will be proudly displayed to commemorate this sturdy model.

To Colin Newby, Mick Fletcher and all others involved in organizing this event our grateful thanks for a truly appropriate celebration weekend.

*Fillcap*

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## ***Testing times at Holyhead Road***

**Ron Walton concludes his reminiscences**

Alvis, like all car manufacturers immediately after the war, had a steel allocation for car production controlled by a government department and linked to export achievement. One result of this was that Arthur Varney (who was responsible for the apprentices) offered me the opportunity of being the company's technical representative in Europe on the conclusion of my apprenticeship (in the event it never materialised).

This meant spending the last period of apprentice training in the service organisation. The service manager at this time was George Webley, during my previous session the service manager was HO Vaux, with Lofty England as service superintendent.

My next meeting with the Fourteen was on service road test. This was my second session on road test, on the first occasion I was the charge-hands' tool bag carrier, this time I was allowed out on my own. Harold Cook, the charge-hand tester, used to give me the Fourteen utilities, whilst he would play with the 4.3's and Speed 25 himself. Harold was in my opinion the most experienced road tester in the company. Having been with Alvis since the early days he had experienced all the faults in all the models and was a master of diagnosis.

Fortunate was the owner who had Harold to put an ear to his car and get a verdict, brief and to the point. Not having any photographs of that period I was fascinated when Dave Culshaw recently showed me Bill Clark's photographs of the unsmiling Cook in the Vanden Plas-bodied Fourteen. The Fourteen utilities had been sold as chassis and after the body had been fitted had to be returned to the works for approval before the twelve months warranty could be obtained.

There were some professionally-built bodies, commissioned by major distributors like Brooklands of Bond Street, but the majority were of poor quality constructed by woodworkers with little or no experience of body building. This arrangement obviously helped Alvis sell chassis when bodies from Mulliners and Carbodies were in short supply but did nothing to improve the reputation of the Fourteen.

The principal objective of the road test was to ensure that the integrity of the chassis had not suffered as a result of the body being fitted, but we did endeavour, for the sake of the company's reputation, to have them running as well as possible before they left the works. It was usually necessary to readjust all the linkages and controls, tuning the engine to a desirable standard, including always resetting the after burn eliminator. The road tests consisted of driving a few miles out of Coventry to a straight part of the Keresley Road





*Ron's TA14 entering Gruyères on last year's tour of Switzerland*

favoured by Alvis and Jaguar tester. Here a Fourteen would normally do 75 mph, but the utilities were all sorts of weights and shapes and some ran out of breath before the bend came up.

One or two runs also sorted out the brakes. One wonders if Alvis even seriously considered making an attractive estate car themselves (like the Lea Francis), they required less sheet steel than the conventional body and the body-making skills were available in Coventry.

My testing and other service activities continued at the London Service Depot, Temple Fortune, where I seemed to meet up with a better class of Fourteen, local owners brought their cars in for routine servicing and the problems went to Coventry.

The Fourteen that we drive today, for obvious reasons tend to have noisy engines, gear boxes, and rear axle's and a few body rattles. When they were new the engines were quiet (relatively), the gear boxes were perfection with good synchromesh and the rear axles unheard (on most), the steering was precise and the body quiet, the whole car felt good and was a pleasure to drive.

On one occasion I was driving a Fourteen owner in his car through Golders Green and thinking to myself "this is a good one" - everything felt right, and I found that I responded by driving it just that bit more smoothly. After a little while the owner beside me said "Isn't this a delightful car, I'm really enjoying being driven in it." So they weren't all problematical in their youth.

It was at Temple Fortune that I acquired my first four cylinder Alvis a TK12/60, much modified and with a beetleback body, from Tubby, the works

electrician. It served me well as daily (and night time) transport for five years and now belongs to Roger MacDonald at Fleetwood.

One of my fill-in jobs was technical writing which was more significant when the Three-Litre was about to be launched, but included information on the Fourteen, some to Newnes which probably found its way into their Motor Repair books.

A proportion of service personnel always staffed the annual Motor Show at Earls Court, and I found myself involved in the late Forties and early Fifties spanning the Fourteens and the introduction of the Three Litres. Two memories stand out, the frequency with which the faithful would come onto the stand, feel the front wings of the Fourteen between thumb and finger and pronounce the sheet metal to be thicker than any other car.

Only recently someone told me that his father always said you could make a complete Ford out of an Alvis bumper! The other was the introduction of the TB14, unfortunately at the same time (1948) as the Jaguar XK120. Lofty England had recently moved over to Jaguar taking a few Alvis personnel with

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*JYF 57, Ron's Tickford dhc, now back on the road after extensive restoration*

him, and there was much leg-pulling between the two stands. The cocktail cabinet in the floor of the TB14 was no match for the performance of the XK120, but strangely for Jaguar it was painted a delicate shade of pink - nipple pink according to Mr England.

The latter part of my apprenticeship was taken up by the introduction and then trouble-shooting with the new Three-litre and after that with the Saracen, and finally I became the company's first Service Manager, Military and Cross Country Vehicles, before leaving Alvis to go into works management in 1956.

The next time I drove an Alvis Fourteen was in February 1990. I had retired in 1988 and for some time had toyed with the idea of rebuilding an Alvis for "fun", the problem was what type of Alvis - the first decision made was that it should be a post-war car of the type I had been involved with, and my preference was for a Fourteen or Three-litre Tickford dhc. At this stage prices were rising steeply and owners were hanging on to their rapidly-appreciating cars, it looked as if the choice would have to be widened.

At last an interesting looking Fourteen saloon appeared in the AOC Bulletin. After several telephone calls an expedition was fitted out to Huddersfield and there from a bleak hilltop garage emerged this attractive black and ivory saloon ANH 10. Attractive to me because it had never been restored in the expected sense but always cared for, still with the somewhat faded original interior.

Whenever I get into ANH10 after an interval away I always feel pleased to be in it, it smells good, it's comfortable, with a good driving position, pleasant steering and with the gear lever and hand brake in the right place. It looks good, with a nicely proportioned and attractive Thirties front end and with good lines finishing in a strong but elegant boot which adds to the overall balance to the car. Whilst the saloon provided a car to drive I still wanted a car to rebuild and John Wheeley pointed me in the direction of one which filled the bill. It

was a 1948 Tickford dhc, JYF 59, which although just about unusable, was clapped out in every department. It was fun to drive a car in this condition which we did that summer to find out exactly what needed to be done. The head gasket blew between No. 1 and No. 2 on one occasion and the return journey was made on two cylinders with a lot of racket and very reduced hill climbing ability.

It is fascinating for me, now a Fourteen owner, to look back 50 years to when the car was new. The thought of owning one in those days never crossed my mind and most of the people who worked on them would have condemned them to Roach's scrapyard after ten or fifteen years as they would any other Alvis for that matter. The characteristics which made it rather stodgy to a young man, its simplicity, its robustness, its Thirties styling have all contributed to its long life and attractiveness.

Its outstanding reliability is a direct result of those conventional features plus the fact that all Alvis cars prior to 1949 appear to have that little extra weight and thickness of material built in, at that time to achieve reliability rather than long life. It is also these characteristics which make the car so attractive and interesting to work on.

As well as being the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Fourteen it is the 50th anniversary of the death of TG John, the man who made it all possible. He had the guts to give up a safe career and go it alone (or almost alone) and he had the unenviable job of finding the money, keeping the banks, creditors and shareholders happy whilst delegating the more interesting jobs to others and allowing them to get on with it.

Thank you Mr John.

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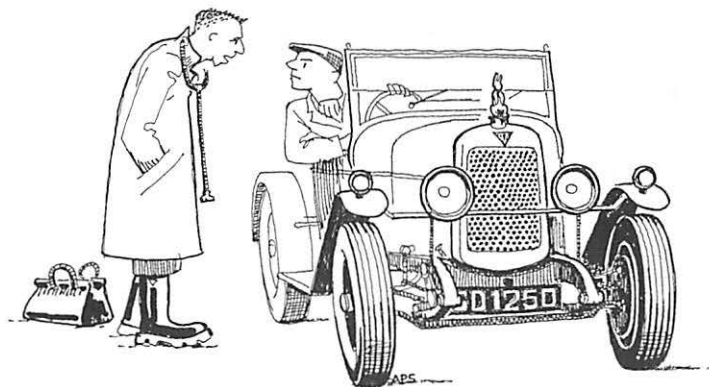
## Obituary

It is with much sadness I have to report the passing of **Audrey Blacow**, the beloved wife of Andrew and mother to Julie.

This super lady was always present at most Alvis days from the mid 50s until recently. She was so keen she did all the foreign tours, all the Alvis days and weekends possible. She had friends all over Britain and the Continent, due to the club and her friendly attitude with people. Her introduction to Alvis was as navigator in Andrew's 12/50 Beetleback for quite some years, until a 'modern' SP20 was bought in the late 60s for the growing family. She was most enthusiastic about all matters Alvis, game for anything and always first to say 'yes' while others deliberated. I know you will all join with me in offering Andrew and Julie our sincere sympathy.

*Chris Holt*





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# Countdown

(to the AOC's 50th anniversary)

**'Hind-Sight' leafs through the Bulletins of 40, 30, 20 and 10 years ago....**

## November 1956

Satisfactory report of Stonebridge Meeting.

Plans to repeat the format of 'Heston' as an Alvis Day in 1957.  
Prefer site other than airfield.

New members include Albert Armitt (No. 824) with TA14 21536/JP 6741.

*[This car jostled with the Buck TA14, in the concours stakes for a number of years - where is it now?]*

Article - Clink writes again, this time on Speed 20 Roadholding.

Cars for Sale include: Firefly Shooting Brake - about £50.

## November 1966

G N S Davies M. 200 writes on his straight eight F W D racing car.

Albert Armitt writes on maintenance of the TA14 sliding roof.

New members include Barry Wragg (No. 3357) with Speed 25 14592/FLD19

Also Barry Chappell (No. 3361)

with TC21 25364 *[the latter will eventually become Northern Section Secretary]*

Cars for Sale include - 1960 TD21 with Webasto 56,000 miles - £500.

## November 1976

Silver Jubilee Tour report - day 8/9

Midland Sprint

Rivers Fletcher writes on his Speed 25 Special 14459/EJ 5824

New Members include Alan Firth (No. 5618) with C/E 25 14516 [new South West Chairman] and Rod Yeend (No. 5623) TE21 27345/HMD 333C [former South West Secretary]

Cars for Sale include - Silver Crest 13979/CTT 792 - £600

## November 1986

I A D Duxford Report

Ballerina Radiator Mascot.

DT81      Cars for Sale include:  
1963 TD21 Ser II dhc ex Benjamin Britten c £8,000

# Tips for the TE

Mike Meakin writes from experience

My early TE21 (chassis 27019) used to suffer from an irritating "shuffle" when cruising along at moderate speed on a very light throttle - it appeared to alternate between hesitating and rolling on. Convinced that it was a carburation problem, Hugh Metcalfe, the previous owner, had fitted twin vacuum gauges - one from each carb - in to the driver's cubby hole, so as to see what each carb was doing whilst under way.

I was led down the same garden path and found myself talking carb balancing at Red Triangle with Rowland Simmons. Since there seemed nothing amiss with the settings, he suggested that the fault was with the vacuum advance. It turns out that some early TE21s left the factory, generating too much vacuum on a light throttle, so much so that the ignition was advanced beyond the optimum causing the engine to hunt up and down, despite a constant throttle.

The cure was to fit a small brass grub screw in to the vacuum pipe olive at the carburettor end (it was threaded internally for the purpose!) so that the only ignition advance is provided by the distributor bob-weights. The "hunting" disappeared immediately and the car has remained absolutely smooth since.

A second incident (which Peter Lakin loudly dubbed "Designer Jingle") occurred last weekend at Crich Tramway Museum. Having spent a splendid day we fired up TFL and drew across the grass when the jingling of what was clearly a heavy lump of something clearly connected with the engine but going round at its own speed was obvious.

Brief inspection from above and below confirmed that it was something which was connected, but should have been securely attached to the engine - the crankshaft "torsional Vibration" damper had divorced itself from the other half (bolted inside the bottom pulley) and was idly whanging around, firmly

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detached from everything. Mindful of the cost of a replacement crankshaft for a three litre, we concluded that this was potentially a VERY EXPENSIVE incident and we should call for the truck and have the car ferried home.

Monday's call to Red Triangle revealed that crankshaft T.V. dampers have been out of stock for some 10 years with no demand for remanufacture. The suggestion was to remove the starting handle dog, draw off the bottom pulley, unbolt the damper thereby freeing the unstuck disc. Reassemble the damper plate, pulley and handle dog and throw the disc away! Earlier engines were not fitted with the damper and Red Triangle have found that discarding an "unbonded" disc has no appreciable effect on the engine.

The great snag with all this was that to gain enough room to move the bottom pulley the radiator should be removed (and probably the grille too, should a pulley extractor be required to persuade the pulley off the crank).

Setting about the task, I decided that the "key" to the task being DIY or professional was whether I could undo the handle dog from the crank nose. By dint of my biggest and heaviest (W/D) spanner, it freed. I removed the fan belt from above and was greeted by a clang from below, in the pit.

The loose damper disc had only been prevented from coming completely off by the fan-belt" Poring over the parts list for the TE/TF reveals that different specifications (power steering/late engines) called for different sized bottom pulleys. My early TE has no power steering and therefore has a pulley smaller than the centre of the crank damper disc.

Had I but known on Saturday that all I had to do was remove the fan belt to allow the loose disc to be removed, replace the fan belt and motor on!!

One other little snippet - trying to find the correct fan belt for my TE21 always was difficult, until I was told to set the dynamo somewhere in the middle of its adjustment and run a piece of string around the dynamo, water pump/fan and bottom pulleys, marking where the end overlaps the string.

This gives you the approximate belt length in metric (in my case 1.02m). Having found the right "vee" profile, it seems that the four figure reference that follows is the belt length. That explained why the V 917 belt listed for the TE21 would not fit, but PWFT 1013 does.

Funny old world isn't it?





Another delightful offering from the pen of our member Tony Phillips-Smith. The card measures 8" x 6" and apart from the club logo is blank for individual messages. The cost (as last year) is £5 for 12 cards, or multiples thereof, and includes envelopes and postage. Order from the chairman, John Wheeley (address on page 2).

I am grateful to Tony for donating the card to the club.

*JWM*

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#### **TA14 Register**

Members' attention is drawn to the fact that the recently-published TA14 Register is numbered 7 on the cover.

It is actually No 23 in the series, replacing the previous No 7.

Members should alter their copies as the next register, the SB Speed 20 will be number 24.

*Dave Culshaw*

## Events

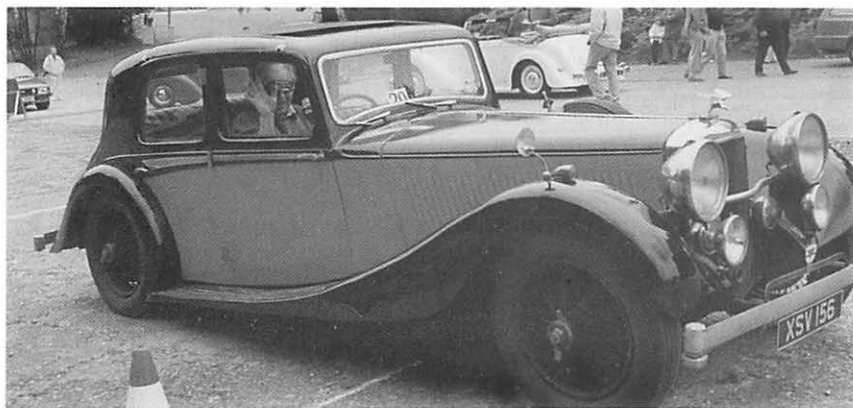
### South East Day - Brooklands Museum, September 22

For the past three years South East Alvis Day has been accompanied by heavy rain which, whilst not spoiling the enjoyment of those attending, certainly made life difficult for all the officials and marshals. 1996 promised to be no different with ominous weather forecasts in the week before.

However, the South East section committee played their trump card and arranged to borrow member Hugh Gibson's caravan in place of the rather old and not too watertight tent used in previous years for signing on and results analysis etc. Therefore it did not rain, if you ignore the short, sharp 'lay the dust' shower at lunchtime.

The committee was rather anxious about following last year's, very successful, 70th anniversary of the front wheel drive car. Would members have had enough of Brooklands - five years on that trot now?. A week before the event entries and ticket sales were very low and the thought that Brooklands had been overused was uppermost.

We shouldn't have worried, on the day 57 Alvis cars were in attendance with a good representation from other sections. Brooklands museum continues to develop its collection and displays, providing something of interest for almost everyone. This year the vintage aeroplane enthusiasts were in luck with 33 vintage craft flying in on the day. We were also treated to a glorious view of Concorde flying over in the morning.



*A blindfolded Noel Davies tries his luck in the driving tests in his Speed 20*

The normal day's activities were supplemented by an additional ascent of the Test Hill in the morning to allow some international students of architecture, who are working on the plans for the proposed new aviation building, to sample the delights of Alvis cars with hoods down. I did see one or two white knuckles as they returned along the banking!

Some devious driving tests, under the supervision of new committee members Peter Galea and Derek Tourle, tested some drivers to the limit but everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. The entry to the counours was low in numbers but standards were as high as ever.

Old hands Steve Horne and Jim Oakman returned home with the perpetual trophies that they had brought back from last year for best overall of the day in the pre-war and post-war classes. A new competition, for all to enjoy, was added this year: identify the part, 20 obscure spares chosen by Malcolm Davey and Ray McMullen. This was won by High Gibson who successfully identified 10 items.

Overall a good day, seemingly enjoyed by all who attended. Thanks are due to all those section members who manned gates, supplied tea and cakes, marshalled and organised raffles. Without such 'volunteers' Alvis Days simply wouldn't happen.

*Brian Maile*

#### CONCOURS

##### CLASS A (VINTAGE)

1. J R Walker
2. Roger Cowell
3. R E Hoare

FWD Le Mans  
FWD 12/75  
12/50

##### CLASS B (PRE-WAR)

1. Ian Anderson
2. George Butlin
3. Tim Walker

Firefly  
Speed 25  
Speed 25

##### CLASS C (POST-WAR SALOONS)

1. Jim Wilson
2. Roger Pulham

TC21/100  
TE21

##### CLASS D (POST-WAR CONVERTIBLES)

1. John Holder
2. David Little

TE21 DHC  
TC21/100 DHC

#### DRIVING TESTS

##### CLASS A (VINTAGE)

1. Ian Horner
2. Heather Milne-Taylor

FWD  
12/50

3. Martin Wickham	FWD
CLASS B (PRE-WAR)	
1. Steve Horne	SP20 DHC
2. Frank Kay	SP20 SLN
CLASS C (POST-WAR SALOONS)	
1. Jim Oakman	TA21
2. Anthony Saunders	TE21
CLASS D (POST-WAR CONVERTIBLES)	
1. John Chamberlain	TA14 DHC
2. Mark Hargreaves	TC21 DHC
ARTHUR HARDY BOWL Steve Horne	Speed 20 DHC
TONY SANDERS CUP Jim Oakman	TA21 SLN
BEST OVERALL Steve Horne	Speed 20 DHC

### Bent Valve - the Doug Richardson memorial

For a decade or so the northern section has enjoyed this annual event organised by our friend Doug Richardson. The foundations for this year's event were laid by Doug and, when he became ill, continued by Barry Foster. The chosen venue was the School House Garage, Ilton where member Dennis Wheatley and Lucy had cleared the large garage and prepared to host the post-run barbecue.

The contingent from the north-east had the TA14 Duncans of Ian Murcott and Les Siddle and the 12/60 of Terry Popplewell. The section having decided to run the event as a memorial to Doug, we were pleased to be joined by his girlfriend, Sheila Smith, who navigated for Terry. The four-cylinder contingent was strengthened by the Ainsworths' TA14 tourer, the Rogersons' Firefly drop-head and the Wiggins' 12/70 saloon.

Keith Strutt came solo in his TC 21 saloon but the other Three-litre cars carried full loads with the Adams, Chasney, Ritson and Wilmott families all at full strength. Previous winner, Malcolm Mossop, volunteered to man a check-point, and drivers were being really nice to him!

Fifty miles of minor roads criss-crossing Wensleydale and its branches took the entrants through a sequence of remote and often beautiful villages that we never see in our trunk-route based travels. The Mossop check-point was set up outside The Crown at Grewelthorpe, an idyllic spot where sustenance was readily available if there should be lengthy gaps between passing Alvis.

Gaps there were, but generally cars were arriving earlier than expected. First cars to finish discovered a new arrival, the 12/60 tourer of Bob Forrester



joining us for the barbecue. Mr Forrester (*above*) is now aged 80, has owned RN 1875 three times during its long career and can tell some tales about their exploits together.

The winners emerged as the Adams family in the TA21 who had abandoned the stop-watch and opted for a gentle Sunday morning drive in the country. The last bent-valve made by Doug Richardson has been mounted as a memorial trophy to be awarded annually, on this occasion to Freda Adams. All agreed that we had secured Doug's memory in the most pleasant way possible.

*Bernard Nield*

### **5th Alvis En Provence - August 31- September 1**

Our annual holiday in France was timed to culminate with Peter Black's event. The weather had been mixed but brightened up beautifully as we assembled in the Place de la Paix at Mondragon for the traditional breakfast or casse-croute of French bread, pate, cheese and red wine.

As we munched away the place came alive to the sound of Alvis engines; Speed 25 drophead, Firefly drophead, the brace of superb TC21/100 dropheads of David Little and Geoffrey Spencer, the Presidential Speed 20 and the Chaternay's Graber to mention a few.

With a blast on the Presidential air-horns the rally got under way and headed for the first *degustation* at the Cave de Seguret via the N7, Serignan and Camaret. They have good wine at Seguret and this was not lost on Nic Davies who had come all the way from Wales properly equipped for the job in a late '20s Rolls-Royce shooting brake which was swallowing cases of Cote-du-Rhone in an awesome manner! Time to push off towards lunch at Entrechaux and as time was pressing the President had selected a *Route d'Exploitation* as a short



cut. This was little more than a dusty track between the vines for several kilometres. Suddenly we descended via several sharp hairpin bends through Crestet to the Restaurant St Hubert. Aperitifs were followed by a lovely outdoor terrace lunch and we were off on the 26km climb of Mt. Ventoux for the afternoon jaunt. Keith Strutt beamed amicably from the wheelhouse of his TC21 as he swung through the *virages* giving Doug and Jean Pound a bit of a white-knuckle ride. The Vallons blasted to the summit in their Jaguar hotly-pursued by the Hornsbys in their Speed 25 and with the rest of us.



*Strutt and Pound push on to lunch*

It took a while to get back from Ventoux to the Hotel Manoir at Mornas where the gala dinner awaited. Super food, lots of discussion, more wine and late to bed did not make it easy for the Sunday morning start! The bleary-eyed crews headed via Pont St d'Esprit over the Rhone into the Ardeche to visit the Grotto of St Marcel D'Ardeche. A slight technical problem with regard to timing had everyone voting to miss it and head for the next *degustation* instead!

A pleasant route through the Gorges D'Ardeche led to the village of St Paulet de Caisson to the Cave Cooperative. A local vintage car enthusiast arrived in his Aries - a rare beast never before encountered by the Tech. Ed. except in books. The locals in the car park fell upon the Alvis cars with much interest and Alvis drivers were seen to be under considerable strain to choose between discussing their motors and heading for the wine. The Chaternay's beamed happily in their red berets and the springs on Dave Little's TC took on a few more degrees of reverse camber as he and his brother hurled more cases of C de R into the boot before heading for lunch in Mondragon.

Another fine *repas* was followed by the President's awards. A good selection of cups, trophies and bottles were handed out to the by now very merry 'concurrents'. Pat Simpson and Hanna Wagner who had organised the Saturday breakfast rushed back to Chateau Vilbrequin to set up for the Presidential Champagne Party. Nice Provencal sight that - diners at a long table out of doors, bottles of wine glowing red in the candlelight and plenty of Champagne. If Marianne was looking down on us that evening, she would have approved.

*Nick Simpson*

# REGIONAL ROUNDUP

## Midland

### COTSWOLD WEEKEND, AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 1

There was a good turn-out for the fourth Cotswold Weekend, now restored to its normal date of end-August. Things were aided by good weather, but not so by the existence of rival club events on the same dates. Nevertheless both Robin and Julia Bendall and Chris Taylor made the journey from northern climes, and most welcome they were.

Twelve cars lined up in Roger Pulham's forecourt, and one more joined in later. Particularly welcome was David and Lorna Pryke's Speed 20 VDP saloon, which David's father had had the temerity to sell before David decided that he had better restore it to the family's ownership. We were also pleased to see Jack Francis, who has brought his TA14 drophead all the way from Peterborough.

Another fiendishly clever route (with the usual marshals at critical junctions) took us through minor roads via the Slaughters, Guiting Power and Salperton to Northleach, where the Countryside Collection had opened their doors early specially for us.

Then on to the more southerly Cotswolds, through equally-beguiling countryside; we went through Ablington, Fairford and Southrop and on towards Burford, yet hardly touched a main road. Our destination was the Cotswold Wildlife Park. Full marks to Roger and his "gang" for yet another well-organised event, and may the Weekend continue to flourish



*Elaine Hargrave-Silk shows the way at Lower Swell*

### RED HOUSE, SEPTEMBER 10

A fairly routine meeting attended by 15 who, between them, had covered events at Tatton Park, Northern, Cotswold weekend, Beaulieu, South Western Alvis Day and Chatsworth. October 8 meeting is to be Pub Grub - by special request.

The brewery is once again threatening to rebuild/reshape/re-organise/ruin the Red House which is causing some apprehension and which may affect our 30th anniversary meeting in April 1997 so it's a fingers crossed job.

Perhaps we should clap these 'consultants' in the village stocks which face the pub's front door and use our sump drainings to decorate them.

E S

## East Anglia

### THE GREEN MAN, MILL END GREEN, NR. DUNMOW

A sound core of members continues to meet with occasional additions. John Davies made a welcome foray from the Maldon area in July: perhaps our nearness to Duxford was the cause of an evening's aviation argument. (I have seen the photo John, and it is the aircraft, but not as we know it.)

Graham Clode produces a monthly treasure trove, usually of books, from the car boot sale and he has certainly achieved some remarkable bargains - this month volume I of the latest Riley history, immaculate, cost £3. Eric and Mary Stapleton are in the throes of organising a Centennial Car Show for the local combined parishes and have been soliciting suitable entries. Faced with a temperamental TA14 starter motor, Paul Lankester formed the cunning plan of discussing possible causes with us all: sure enough, when he went to demonstrate the fault at closing time it performed impeccable. Achievements

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further afield confirm the quality of this group of owners. Steve Horne (TD21) and Jon Tracy (12/70) showed up well in the awards at Midland Alvis Day, while your scribe got lucky with the raffle at the same event. He gained many Brownie points with the wife of a certain prominent member of the section by not choosing the bottle of whisky.

The pub has recently changed hands, but the only visible signs so far are more high profile dining facilities and a grand piano (ES again?) Alvis visitors are assured a warm welcome on the fourth Thursday of the month from 9pm.

*John Oliveira*

## **BURE VALLEY RAILWAY AND THE BROADS - SEPTEMBER 15**

An event which attracts members from a radius of over 100 miles must be off to a good start; when that start is backed by a total attendance of 35 adults in 12 Alvis motor cars the organiser (Jack Clover) is entitled to feel that he has a success on his hands.

The recipe of a perfect early autumn day, a picnic, and ride on the Bure Valley Railway combined with a boat trip on the Broads is evidently a winning combination. The Bure Valley is a small railway and its carriages provide two-a-side seating in dimensions only marginally more spacious than a Firefly Special.

Stations have been tastefully designed and included a pleasant picnic area which the AOC monopolised, not to say overflowed. A short walk through the cosmopolitan heart of Wroxham brought us to the waterside for a topdeck cruise downriver in a 'paddlesteamer'. The high viewpoint allowed us to see considerably more than the average hireboat. (A task for the Registrar's PPS: did George Formby ever bring his SP25 to his Wroxham 'cottage' - now to be demolished for road improvements?)

A return to Aylsham at 5.15 allowed time for a final cup of tea and some photos of our engine (bearing an Alvis headboard) before departing. Basil Payne and party (TA21 dhc) made a start on their journey to Louth having made a considerable, and much appreciated effort to be with us for the day. Robin Smith, Steve Horne and John Goldsworthy pointed TDs and TE21 to Tiptree, Thaxted and Brighton respectively and the 'usual suspects' David Little (TD21/100), David Talbot (Sp20), John Wheeley (TA21), Colin Moore and Ray Canning (TA14s), Paul Gallifant (S Eagle) started for their homes.

This was a day when the section was especially pleased to welcome many family parties and members' friends - it's flattering that members find the events are worth bringing others to. It is equally gratifying that members come even without their Alvis motor cars - Frank Allwood, Steve Tillyer, Mike Sedgeley and Roger Gooding. And finally, Steve Stephens. We did see you Steve, as you

drove into Aylsham and we steamed out and we all waved. Thanks for coming and we look forward to meeting you again next time. Thanks too to Jack for his time and trouble in setting up this excellent day.

*J O*

## VISIT TO THE NATIONAL STUD

On a sunny day in August a dozen or more Alvis owners (well, a couple had Rileys), thought they would investigate thoroughbred transport which would run on grass. Cheaper, no vapour lock problems, and the leaded variety will not run out. We all visited the National Stud at Newmarket.

After a pleasant picnic lunch, a convoy of wheeled thoroughbreds approached Newmarket on the A1303 from Cambridge, a very impressive road; miles of wide, neatly cut grass verges, equally trim hedges or paling fences and individual trees. It spells wealth. The whole of the 500 acres occupied by the stud was of the same standard, or better. Further improved that day by a line up of 12 impressive cars.

Our long golden-haired guide whilst apologising for being an MG owner, gave us an informative tour. Any thoughts of cheap, grass-fuelled transport were quickly laid to rest. Never mind about luxury stables, vet's charges and food; the services of a stallion can buy several Speed 20s. Mind you, at least one person was heard to envy the life of a stallion. Can't think why!

Perhaps the best part of the day was to have about 35 people join us. Some came from some distance like Roger and Pat Cooper from the Midlands, and Derek Williams. Thank you Roger Gooding, for arranging a great day.

*J C*

*Malcolm C Elder & Son*

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## Northern

### RAMBLINGS

The third weekend in July is the traditional date for one of the largest classic car meetings in the north of England. This is organised by the North East Club for pre-war Austins and held at Newby Hall near Ripon. Despite its title that Club offers membership to any make of vehicle that is old enough to qualify, and it offers invitations to certain other one-make clubs to attend that meeting.

These are given specific plots on which to arrange their vehicles, creating a well-structured display of wide-ranging interest totalling in excess of 600 vehicles and still rising.

This year the Alvis contingent reached a new record level of 36 cars, appropriately spearheaded by twelve TA14s (rehearsing for Chatsworth?) and including nine 4-cylinder and six "Speed" models in the pre-war category. Amongst the post-war three-litres was the 1961 TD21 saloon of David Riley, superbly restored in two-tone metallic grey, attracting much attention. Dave Windridge appeared in his Speed 25 Charlesworth saloon (*below*) another excellent restoration returning to the road after many years.



A major feature of Newby is the large group picnic adopted by our members. This is encouraged by the apparently unfailing sunshine that attends this event year by year, drawing forth various kinds of sun-top including Robin Willmott's famous coolie hat. Later in the afternoon we were able to photograph what have come to be called 'the brothers' cars': the Speed 20 saloons of Jim Betterton and Anne Nield were previously owned (simultaneously) by David and Rob Walters respectively. These two unique examples of Van den Plas and Lancefield coachwork now visit the same pub meet at Hovingham.

There is something particularly welcoming about this venue and it has an



unfailing appeal for those who have once sampled it. Join us there next year and push the Alvis total to a new record.

*Fillcap*

## Wales

### CLYTHA ARMS, ABERGAVENNY - JULY 11

Fourteen members and friends with six Alvises assembled for a pleasant social evening. It was great to especially welcome Bruce and Luise Earlin on holiday from the 'States and Paul and Linda Speed from Hong Kong.

We had an interesting line-up of cars with three Speed Twenties, Geoff Russell with his Firebird tourer, the Hay Duncan Fourteen and Rob and Karin Lloyd in their highly polished TD21. Alan Chorlton left his TF21 at home in favour of a Yamaha. Can't think why.

*Nick Simpson*



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### WE BLOW THE DUST FROM SOME OF THE CLUB'S NEW ARCHIVES

*FROM THE AUTOCAR: 25 JUNE 1954*

ALVIS OWNER CLUB There will be a concours d'elegance and rally at the Ettington Park Hotel near Stratford-on-Avon on 4th July. Details may be obtained from G B Stokes, 56 Stonebridge Road, Coleshill, Birmingham. On 17th July another Rally - the Surrey Night Rally - will be held. Details from K R Day, 31 Lawrence Avenue, New Malden Surrey. There will be a 'noggin and natter' at Osterley Hotel on the Great West Road on 7 July.

## READERS WRITE



*Another view of AFS 301 - this time from the front*

### **From morsel to meal**

*I refer to Mr Oliveira's letter detailed in the September Bulletin concerning the provenance of 3½ litre AFS 301.*

*According to the last owner (supported, it would seem, by the vehicle's documentation) who owned the car from 1977 until January this year, the owner of the car from new was a General Shepherd of Fife, the car being purchased for him by his wife in 1936.*

*During the war years, the car did service as a staff car on an airfield near where the General was stationed. In 1974, when the General died, the car was laid up until the second owner, Anthony Armstrong, who then resided in Glasgow, purchased the car in 1977. Mr Oliveira recalled hearing of the advertisement and advised me he later wrote but never received a reply from Anthony Armstrong.*

*However, far from the car being in obscurity for several years, Anthony Armstrong joined the Scottish branch of the AOC in the eighties until the early nineties, attending meetings, I am advised, at the RAC Headquarters in Glasgow where the commissionaires removed the parking cones to allow AFS 301 to sit outside the portals while the owners was otherwise engaged inside. Under Anthony Armstrong's stewardship, the car's originality and patina were*

*carefully and skilfully maintained and it is to this reserved, unpretentious but extremely gifted artist that all credit is due for ensuring that such a unique car has survived intact during a very turbulent period for true classic cars, many of which with such originality were sold overseas to very eager buyers.*

*For my part, I therefore consider myself most fortunate indeed that he chose to pass the baton of stewardship to me, thereby allowing the car to remain in this country to carry on the task of preserving a small part of Alvis heritage.*

Michael Warner  
The Old Rectory  
Thorpe Morieux  
Suffolk  
IP30 0NW

### **Middle cut Rolls**

*I share John Oliveira's admiration of AFS 301 and, thinking of Charlesworth am reminded of the Rolls-Royce Wraith which was being rushed through for King Farouk in 1940. (It was possible in those days for craftsmen to knock up an extra £4 per week if a car went through quickly).*

*In 1940 foodstuff was scarce and having had a whip-round one lunchtime the shop lad was sent out to see what he could capture. Liptons and Home and Colonial provided John West's Middle Cut, some bread and butter.*

*The sandwiches were eaten at make-shift tables propped up on Tate and Lyle boxes and one man nipped out to the pub, returning somewhat out-of-focus. When he was drilling to fit lights on the Wraith he managed to get one 15 degrees out ... seeking the help of his panel-beating friend the only thing to bend round the wing was, yes, the John West which was duly tinned in and re-drilled. Honour was saved. Foreman no wiser.*

*When it was later found that the mahogany intended for the rear seat had gone missing, the Tate & Lyle boxes were pressed into service, splints and all, given a couple of coats of varnish and hey presto, only in bright sunlight was it possible to make out the trade mark. So perhaps John's "delightfully Light Fifteenish flavour around the rear quarters" could be matched with 'a trip round King Farouk with John West and Tate and Lyle'.*

*I apologise to those of our readers who are offended by these indelicate references - so different from the home lives of our own aristocracy.*

Ernest Shenton  
Gandria  
Caverswall Common  
Stoke on Trent ST11 9EU

## Lanchester letters

*Mr Walton's article adds some very interesting information to Alvis history. Can he, or our Patron, tell us who the other gentleman is in the photograph of the 12/70 which made the fastest lap in the last race ever run at Brooklands?*

*Mr Walton writes that I implied in my book that George Lanchester was the Assistant Chief Engineer. I should say my comments on this period of history are based on correspondence with Lanchester. He made it very clear that all design matters required Smith-Clarke's approval and that Harry Mundy was responsible for gearbox design.*

*Mr Walton wonders whether Mr Varney collaborated with Mr Dunn or not in the design of the TA14. I recall Mr Varney telling me that a director, whose name I forget, was involved with him. I also have Dunn's report to Smith-Clarke on his impressions of the post-war Alvis written in 1945. I think Mr Walton is correct in saying it was a well-known secret.*

*To trace the birth of the 12/70 and influences on the design, I suppose you have to go back to the difficulties of replacing the very successful 12/50 followed by the 12/60, the ACE and the Firefly. Perhaps the main influence was the need for Alvis to build cheaper cars in the 12 to 20 h.p. range filled by the 12/70 and 17 and 20 h.p. Silver Crest. Of one thing we can be certain - all design work required Smith-Clarke's approval while John managed the finances.*

Ken Day  
"Sentosa"  
Ronneby Close  
Oatlands Chase  
Weybridge Surrey

*Malcolm C Elder & Son*

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## Highest mileage Alvis

*On driving down the M1 after spending an idyllic day at Chatsworth viewing many splendid TA 14s the clock went round for the second time.*

*I am sure there must be many Alvis owners, particularly those with pre-war models whose cars must have completed 300,000 or perhaps even 400,000 miles.*

*In the hope that it might provoke some interesting correspondence can we have some bids please for the highest mileage Alvis?*

*John Goldsworthy  
Stream House  
Amberley  
Nr. Arundel  
West Sussex  
BN18 9NB*

## Electric 12/60

*I was most interested by Ben Lenthall's monograph on Alvis colour schemes. I have been pondering for some years whether to re-paint my 12/60 as it was originally, i.e. electric blue. I would be much obliged if anyone could give me a hint as to what this colour actually looked like.*

*Checking through the unrestored pre-war cars I have enjoyed in the past, I find the colours are as follows:-*

<i>TJ 12/50</i>	<i>Air Force Blue.</i>
<i>Firebird</i>	<i>Dark red with a black leatherette roof and wings</i>
<i>Silver Eagle</i>	<i>Grey with a matching hood, black wings</i>
<i>TJ 12/50</i>	<i>Black with red wheels.</i>
<i>Speed 25 SC</i>	<i>Dark Green with dark green wheels.</i>
<i>Speed 25 SA</i>	<i>Black with red body stripe and brake drums and brown upholstery.</i>

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