

8-10 NOVEMBER 2024 NEC STAND – HALL OF FAME

Once again, we had to consider how we could select cars conforming to the Lancaster Insurance Classic Car 'Hall of fame' theme and interpreting the stand display in our own way; since this was supposedly allowing us to showcase the very best of the marque, then that is what we always do well! Alvis International in Kent allowed me to pre-select some very worthy candidates and most of those owners followed through, so that made car selection a great deal easier.

Our choice was eventually Miles Pinniger's Offord/Carlton 4.3s, driven to the event by Glen Daniels the TC21/100 DHC of Bob Moore and Eric Ody's Vanden Plas Crested Eagle DHC, also both driven to Birmingham on the Wednesday before build-up of the stand. Earley Engineering delivered two cars for us, a 1935 Speed 20 SC Charlesworth two-seater and a superb and very early TD 21 DHC, one of the factory demonstrators and publicity cars, complete with press photographs. The Speed 20 was in fact a unique car and all the more appealing for its original paintwork and interior patina which thrilled all the visitors either for its originality and just three owners as well as the quirky Spitfire mascot – making it one of the most photographed items at the show. Last, but not least was Glen and Elizabeth Matthew's 1937 Silver Crest Holbrook saloon, which is an outstanding restoration and great credit to them, remembering that the car has suffered floods and dereliction from the late 1940s. Both Glen and Elizabeth spend a huge amount of time encouraging younger visitors to sit in their car and get a feel of the luxuriance of its very spacious interior.

New member subscriptions were around 10 this year, and thanks to the presence of Peter and Rosie Milne with the laptop membership database, we were able to re-sign quite a few lapsed members as well. We did have around 90 club members either on or visiting the stand over the weekend. Quite a few of those the new members were either new owners of Alvis or were being steered towards acquiring one. We were able to help at least four visitors with trying to identify former family-owned cars and whether those cars still exist and help a number of members with parts for their cars, including Vanden Plas badging, wheel covers, choke linkages, carb parts, ash-trays, grease caps and spinners, sun-visors, glass lenses, etc.

We were once again in Hall 1, stand 820 this time, which was very close to the restaurant on the south side of the Hall where our usual supplementary LED lighting and gantry which lit up our stand brightly, in comparison to those neighbouring our stand. Aston Martin had followed our example and were well lit and the RREC Rolls Royce stand was again visiting our stand and making enquiries regarding similar lighting arrangements for next year. The stand build up commenced on Wednesday afternoon and was more or less completed by 6:00 pm, leaving Thursday for Silver Crest delivery and to finalise all the display material; we broke down the stand on Sunday evening in record time thanks to an earlier commencement of cars leaving the Halls and a super-efficient team of helpers, which left us with 4 cars to clear on the Monday morning by 12:00.

As last year, public interest in our stand was amazing, and it was so intriguing to see their wide-eyed amazement regarding the quality of Alvis. Our volunteers were almost flat out in engaging with visitors throughout each day, with the greatest floods of visitors between 11 and 14:00. Footfall was this year probably greater than usual over the three days, circa 70,000 being the normal figure and as usual we received many, many comments that the AOC stand was one of the best.

Once again, an excellent show that was well supported by AOC volunteers for each day, and we offer our thanks to them and to those who displayed their cars this year, without whom none of this would happen.

Steve Horne