

7-9 NOVEMBER 2025 NEC STAND – A changing scene

This year, we did not make any attempt to follow a theme as there was little direction from the sponsors apart from the Lancaster Insurance Pride of Ownership Awards, restricted to their selected vehicles. Year on year, it becomes more difficult to find members who are willing to display their cars and /or to take time out of busy schedules to deliver cars to the show. Hence, it appears more difficult to showcase the very best of the marque; there are also those of the opinion that just an average Alvis should not be ignored. Phil Gunn attempted to coerce a number of Midland members closer to the NEC, but a number of them had to drop out and we were more reliant upon Fisher Restoration and Red Triangle to deliver cars to the show. Our selection this year was to cover vintage, post-vintage and post-war eras but has can happen with many cars, they do 'fail to proceed' from time to time and it was unfortunate that James Swan's 12/50 Alvista saloon did not make it due to a lack of spark, much to the disgust of those members who felt the vintage models were under-represented at the show. It is what it is, since the Club do not support paid delivery to and from the show.

In order to be fair to other clubs, our AOC stand was reduced in size this year, requiring our allocation to be limited to 5 cars, but with the loss of one at the 11th hour we spread our 4 cars around the available space. This turned in our favour as the selected cars were highly viewable and photographable from all angles. The worthy candidates were therefore a 1960 Graber TD21 two door Special coupe in a subtle hue of grey metallic, freshly imported from Switzerland last October and having received a lot of attention and upgrades during the last twelve months and even now, not quite finished for return to its owner. Our two other post-war choices were the smart-looking maroon/cream TC 21/100 Mulliners saloon of Vic Round, which is currently for sale, and Jerramy Topping's very tidy pale metallic green TE 21 Park Ward saloon, which looked gorgeous under the lights. Pre-war was represented by the 1939 Speed 25 Charlesworth drophead-coupe in black/blue, now a deceased member's sale. Interestingly, both the Graber TD21 and the Speed 25 were some of the most photographed or videoed models at the show and many visitors believed these two cars to be the best exhibits. Certainly, young family members, and adults alike, were flocking to have their photos taken in the driving seat of the Speed 25 and get a feel of the luxuriance of its very special and well-equipped interior.

New member subscriptions were certainly down - around 4 this year, but with at least 3 potential candidates, and a few wishing to acquire an Alvis. As usual Peter and Rosie Milne with the laptop membership database, we were able re-inform visiting owners of their membership numbers and to re-sign a few lapsed members as well. We did have around 34 club members on Friday, 25 on Saturday and 20 on Sunday, though a fair number slipped the net by failing to sign-in. We were able to help at least three 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 DWS jacking systems, steering wheel, SU pump fitments, radiator caps, door handles, hood fitments and trafficators etc. The Club and I were also selling a range of Alvis -related books which proved popular; a number of them from elderly members who wished to donate the proceeds to the Club.

We were once again in Hall 1, stand 610 this time, which was very close to the restaurant on the west side of the Hall, which meant we became a seating area for tired visitor bodies or worn -out children. By comparison with our neighbouring stands, The Alvis models sparkled in supplementary LED lighting. The stand build up again commenced on Wednesday late-morning and afternoon and was more or less completed by 5:00 pm, leaving Thursday to finalise all the display material; we

broke down the stand on Sunday evening in record time thanks to a super-efficient team of helpers, which left us with 3 cars to clear on the Monday morning by 12:00.

As last year, public interest in our stand was amazing, and it was intriguing to see that the TD 21 Graber was the most popular on Friday, whereas the Speed 25 was coveted by everyone on Saturday, which promises a resurgence in interest in the older cars, especially since there is an increasing trend for ownership of the modern classics - fully supported by the IONICS auction which was dominated by cars of the 80's and 90's. Sunday was definitely a bit quieter this year, as I believe ticket prices were higher that day. But, there were almost 73000 visitors this year.

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