



**A
BRIEF
HISTORY
OF
ALVIS**



1940 The Car factory was destroyed in the Coventry Blitz. Development of Alvis aero engines ceased.

War Years. Alvis controlled 21 shadow factories in which over 10,000 aero engines (mainly Rolls-Royce Kestrel and Merlins) were made, over 3,000 serviced and many more overhauled. Over 10,000 bomb trolleys were manufactured, with nearly ten times that number of spares. Over half a million castings and machinings were produced.

1944 T.G.John retired.

1946 T.G.John died.
J.J.Parkes joined Alvis as Managing Director.



1946 TA14 DHC Chassis # 23435

The TA14 (4 Cylinder, 1892cc, £1276 inc. P.T.) was announced, based on the pre-war 12/70. Development of the Leonides restarted and manufacture of the engine played an important part in the Company's activities.

To meet Government need to export, Alvis undertook the

manufacture of the Thompson Auto Platen printing press until 1951.

1947 Leonides engine in production for twin-engined aircraft made by Percival Ltd.

The Company was awarded contract to design and develop six wheeled high mobility fighting vehicles. The initial design, the Saladin, led to the Saracen (FV 603) troop carrier, Salamander (FV 652 fire tender) and Stalwart (FV 560 and FV 562) cross-country and amphibious load carriers.

The Alvis Register was formed to cater for owners of vintage cars including the 12/60.

1948 A 500 hp version of the Leonides engine powered a Fairey Gyrodyne helicopter to an international helicopter speed record. The Leonides was used in both Bristol Aeroplane Company and Westlands Ltd's helicopters.

1949 J.J. Parkes became Chairman of the Company.

1950 A Sports version of the TA14 was finally put into production, known as the TB14 (4 Cylinder, 1892cc, £1276 inc. P.T.).



1950 TB14 Chassis # 23504



1952 TA21 Chassis 24573

The TA21 (6 Cylinder, 2993cc, £1,946 inc. P.T.) was announced. Its 3 litre engine, with improvements, would remain in production until car manufacture ceased in 1967.

1951 The TB21 roadster, (6 Cylinder, 2993cc, £1,946 inc. P.T.) sports version of the TA21 was put into production.



TB21 Chassis # 25138

1953 TA21 Coupe by Graber Chassis # 25089



Herman Graber purchased some of the first chassis to fit his own bodies for sale to Swiss customers and for exhibition at the Geneva show. G.T. Smith-Clarke retired.
Inaugural meeting of the Alvis Owner Club

1952 Alex Issigonis joined Alvis to design a prototype of very advanced high performance saloon with V8 engine of 3500cc. The project was not a success, as body provision would demand volume of 5,000 units per ann. which Alvis could not afford.

1953 The TA21 was updated and called TC21 (6 Cylinder, 2993cc, £1,946 incl P.T.). The TC21 was itself further modified and renamed TC21/100, 100 denoting a genuine 100 mph.

1954 TC21-100 Chassis # 25483



The Leonides Major became the standard engine in Westlands' Whirlwind Helicopter.

The first South East Section Newsheet of the AOC was published; it became the present 'Bulletin'.

1955 Production of the TC21/100 ceased when coachbuilder, Mulliners, was bought out. Alvis bought the rights to build Graber bodies. The car became known as the TC/108/G.

1956/7 A few TC/108/G's (£3,451 incl P.T.) were produced, based on the Graber design. About 16 bodies were produced by Willowbrook Ltd.

Saladin and Salamander were now in full production and Alvis recorded their best profit to date due to success of aero engines and the armoured vehicles.

1958 The TD21 Series I (£2,993 incl P.T.) started production. Body style was based on the Graber and the bodies are produced by Park Ward. This firm joined with H.J.Mulliner to become MPW.

1959 Minor modifications made to the TD21 Series I.



1963 TD21 Chassis # 26961

The Leonides engine was used in the Saunders Roe Hovercraft

SR.N1, which made history by crossing the English Channel.

1961/2 The TD21 Series II (£2,882 inc. P.T.) was announced with disc brakes all round, optional 5-speed gearbox. Minor changes were made to body styling.

1963 The TE21 Series III (£2,774 inc. P.T.) was announced based on the TD21 with uprated engine, 5-speed gearbox as standard and twin headlamps. Twin headlamps on either side represented the then favoured style for 'desirable motor cars.'

The first major contract for the Stalwart was received.



1964 The Stalwart was in production, the new amphibious go-anywhere military vehicle.

1965 Alvis merged with Rover.

1966 The TF21 Series IV (£3,325 inc. P.T.) was announced with 150 bhp engine, revised dashboard.

A mid engined experimental Rover sports car (P6/BS) built at Alvis.



1967 Car production ceased. Rover was taken over by the Leyland Motor Corporation.

Alvis was awarded a contract to develop a new CVRT (Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance, Tracked). The Scorpion (Fire Support; prototype 1969, production began in 1970) and the Scimitar (30mm Cannon, prototype 1969) were developed into seven more vehicles on the same chassis:

- Spartan, armoured personnel carrier,
- Striker, anti tank GM vehicle,
- Sultan, command vehicle
- Samaritan, armoured ambulance
- Samson, recovery vehicle
- Stormer, First exported in 1982 as carrier for Starstreak missile system) and
- Streaker, high mobility G.P.carrier.

Red Triangle (Autoservices) Ltd was formed to handle the stock of spares and provide service facilities.

1972 Production of the Leonides aero engine finally ended.

1973 J.J.Parkes retired. New M.D. Maj.Gen. A.G.Lewis.

1979 A.G.Lewis was replaced by A.J.Quayle.

1981 Alvis was sold by British Leyland to United Scientific Holdings for £27 million. (1980 profits were £7 million, including sales in 12 countries).

1987 An order placed for wing flap gearboxes marked the return of Alvis to the aircraft industry. Alvis acquired rights to the manufacture of the Mk 8 Wheelbarrow, bomb disposal robot.

1989 Alvis took over Self-Changing Gears, a specialist company in the manufacture of transmissions mainly for military vehicles

1990 Alvis moved its Coventry factory from Holyhead Road to Walsgrave. The original factory site was redeveloped.

1991 Self Changing Gears became part of Alvis Aerospace Division and received an order for wing flap gearboxes for the Airbus.

United Scientific Holdings changed its name to Alvis pic.

1993 Alvis purchased Morfax, a competitor company making bomb disposal robots.

1994 Alvis celebrated its 75th Anniversary and bought Unipower, a heavy vehicle manufacturer. The Company launched the Alvis 8, an all purpose cross-country vehicle designed in South Africa with mine protection.

Now, in 2009, no new vehicle carries the red triangle. Alvis military vehicles are largely a memory, as are the aero engines, trolleys etc. Only those of us who own Alvis cars and a few military vehicles can keep alive the memory of a small but excellent engineering company.

