



The Austral Alvist's Aide



APRIL, 1961

BULLETIN
of the
ALVIS CAR CLUB, VICTORIA

"ALVIC"

The Bulletin of the Alvis Car
Club, Victoria.

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This publication is the official newsletter and journal of the Alvis Car Club, Victoria. It is printed in an edition of approx. 150 copies by the Hon. Editor, and is issued free of charge to Club members. Contributions and letters are always welcomed.

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EDITORIAL.

Unfortunately the facilities for producing the smaller size of "Alvic" are no longer available, so the Editor is obliged to make do with the quarto size of this issue. However, the content of the issue remains unchanged. We are especially blessed with a trickle of articles from members at long last, not the least of which is Horrie Morgan's very amusing screed on his first vintage car. Others who have contributed recently are Roy Henderson, Derek Holyoake and John Cole. Many thanks to these, and may they be a fine example to the rest to do likewise.

And not only articles, but photographic blocks too. We are very indebted to Austin Wood, who has supplied us with five cover blocks to appear in the next few issues of "Alvic". All we need now is the famed "Myth of the Alvis" to arrive, and we will be overjoyed.

APRIL GENERAL MEETING

8 p.m., Friday, April 21st, 1961, at the Clubrooms.

NEXT EVENT

The annual Kalorama Rally on Easter Monday, commencing at 10 a.m. SHARP from Linlithgow Ave. to Kalorama for the day.

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

The March meeting saw some visitors to the Club from the Combined Vintage Car Clubs. Jim Kelso and Ian Parfitt from the Vintage Drivers Club talked on Kalorama and the Combined Vintage movement, and some mention was made of possible future activities. The Club was informed that the Committee of the C.V.C.C. had agreed to admit Edwardian Rolls-Royce cars to the Kalorama Rally. This caused some dissention among members, but these cars had already been admitted and they duly appeared at the Kalorama Rally on Easter Monday.

The trophies for the Mornington Gymkhana were available at the Meeting to Derek Holyoake and David Muirden. As the latter was not present due to a wog of some sort, this was privately presented later on.

Two new faces were seen at the Clubrooms in Harry Shugg, who has just bought a Three Litre, and has previously driven a TA 14 saloon, and Noel Cossins, who took over Rick Manton's 12/50 Tourer. These are regarded as being prospective members.

Frederick Howard appeared again, and returned the Three Litre service sheet that he borrowed for the mechanic working on his Grey Lady, which had the misfortune to throw a gudgeon into the bores. It appears that when the engine was pulled down there was no gudgeon circlip at all, or even any remains of one in one of the cylinders. The result was a neat tram-line that meant a sleeve job. Gilberts of "alvern carried out the repair work, although we hear that the mechanic concerned scorned to be offered any advice on working on the Alvis engine, replying that it was just the same as any other engine, and that although he admitted that he had never worked on an Alvis engine before, he would soon find out all about it. Knowing the Three Litre engine as we do, and the traps involved in its reconditioning and assembly, we earnestly hope that he did find out about things correctly. It appears also, that the last time the engine was touched was at the Works in Coventry, so the Club wrote to them about the lack of a circlip. They replied quite categorically that they could not have left one out, and suggested that it must have disintegrated and all the pieces been drained out of the sump when the oil was changed.

It was very unfortunate that more members were not present as entries for the Kalorama Rally this year were very light as far as Alvis cars was concerned, there being only 6 Club cars entered. Entry forms were available from the C.V.C.C. at the meeting. Last year there were twice that number of cars.

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COPY FOR THE ALVIC

We are very eager to print anything regarding your cars or experiences in them. Please write us a few lines for our Jottings section, or an article if you can. Remember, we are not telepathic - tell us and we will print it. Keep it to yourself and we can't. Copy to the Editor, or c/- Clubrooms.

The pathetic opening line in the January Supplement to the effect that "There were no jottings because nobody told us anything" prompts me to start a saga on -

" MY FIRST VINTAGE CAR "

The place, Perth, W.A., the year 1938, Lloyd Jones and myself in a second-hand car yard. The focal point, a long, low, different vehicle among the American hacks, the price £25. The car - a Chenard Walcker. Model - unknown. I haven't been able to identify the year. Distinguishing features, a double reduction diff. with the final drive by plain spur gears in the brake drums. The rear brakes were external contracting, but were useless due to grease leakage from the reduction gear. The other stopper was on the drive shaft.

The engine was ordinary - side valves, the only things that come to mind are tubular con. rods, pressure feed to the gudgeons, and a long intake manifold that put the carburettor intake down low, a point to be remembered later.

After fitting new rings and a valve grind, everything else worked. We tried her out, but the attention we attracted was embarrassing. Not only was the "Wart Hog" entirely different from anything else, it was a matter of noise. The engine was remarkably quiet, but those brake drum spur gears really howled.

We touched 70 on test and she handled well, could be thrown around corners in a manner I had not experienced before, being used to various American models.

Full of confidence, we decided to return to work, not just around the corner, but to Port Hedland, with miles of real bush roads to cover, and petrol and oil never less than 100 miles apart.

The first 200 miles were uneventful, and then we struck the sand plains, the road being just two ruts with corrugated bottoms and this is where I first appreciated a factor that before had only been a text book term - "Unsprung weight".

If one tried to get above 15 m.p.h. the heavy diff. alternated between hitting the chassis and whacking the ground. A look outside showed the wheels rising to a foot in the air, and the ground impact was terrific.

At least the rear end was solid, chugging along in the 10-15 m.p.h. bracket for hours on end. This drove one cuckoo and a flat out rear to get beyond the oscillatory period would be tried but to no avail - it was always a return to chug and suffer.

One period of feverish activity was a fire from an overflowing vacuum tank on to the starter motor. The reaction when the starter was operated was reminiscent of the gangster method of wiring a bomb to the starter button. In this case, a few shovel-fuls of sand put the fire and the starter motor out of action.

Somewhere we got out of the sand and were making up for lost time as fast as the yellow beams of the headlights would permit, when ahead appeared two red lights.

Now this was the time when high mounted twin tail-lights were popular, and they looked rather like a parked car, which we welcomed as suspicion was growing that it was the wrong road anyhow, when into the rays of the front head lamps came a vision of a washed out bridge, 12 ft. across and 12 ft. down. The tail lights were in fact red lamps - one each side of the washaway.

A quick twitch on the wheel ($1\frac{1}{2}$ turns lock-to-lock) put us right into a wire netting fence which, with an assortment of twangs and snapping posts, gave away for about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile in either direction and bowed in about 50 yds., rather like an arrestor net on an aircraft carrier.

The noise of the fence going, or the sudden stop of the diff. howl brought a farmer's house to life about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away, and a stream of bobbing lights over the fields put us flat out with wire cutters, etc. to make an opening to insert the crank handle, then we reversed violently, dragging the fence just as far in the opposite direction.

A few violent tugs and we were free and fleeing back to safety. Daylight showed a fallen signboard - we were on the wrong road.

Thinking about it now, the farmer probably thought we were hurt, but all we could think of was that our holidays were too short to replace those posts and straighten the netting.

Gradually we worked our way into sheep and cattle country, gates disappearing to be replaced by grids.

Remember I said the "Hart Hog" was long and low - the exact length escapes me now, but I do remember that the wheel-base of a two ton Republic truck was shorter by two inches. The front axle clearance was five inches and at the open flywheel, six inches.

The gate grids were above ground level, due to erosion of the soil and we used to creep over, hoping to keep the flywheel clear. One day, however, to a tortured scream from the ring gear teeth, we halted, to find the front wheels beyond the grid and in the air, the new suspension point being the flywheel.

Building a ramp for the front wheels was unsuccessful due to the dry sandy soil falling into the grid pit.

The final effort was to break up a petrol case, lay the pieces across the grid under the flywheel, then with one of us on each bumper, the front and rear wheels were lifted free and, balancing on the flywheel, the bus was walked sideways until the flywheel dropped into a gap in the grid rails, allowing us to start the engine and creep forward until the rear wheels hit the grid and lifted us free.

That open flywheel caused a bit of trouble, especially when we ran into rain, the water being scooped up to hit the sloping floor boards and then deflected onto the engine. This was a minor trouble as the average temperature of 100 soon dried things out.

When we struck our first flowing river precautions were deemed necessary as, with thunderstorms and flash floods a real danger, being in a river bottom is not the safest locality.

So out came another petrol box, and the gap from the floor boards and the engine compartment was walled up. Then flat out we tackled the water. Halfway across there was a roar from under our feet, the clutch inspection panel in the floor boards blew inwards, followed by a fountain of water. Within seconds the water was over our knees and rising rapidly but opening the doors allowed it to drain away.

The last of the journey into Port Hedland was free from incidents, but not from pushing and shovelling, as we ran into two inches of rain and were the first vehicle to brave the mud.

The torque at low revs. and the large diameter wheels made mud baths fairly easy except when the axle and flywheel got submerged. Different entirely to the high revs. and wheel burying tactics necessary in the then and now modern car.

After recuperating at Port Hedland we started on the last 150 miles inland to the locality of the bridge building job we were on. This was through dry sandy spinifex plains and the road was two ruts which gradually got deeper. We found that after a few hundred yards of travel, the car would stop due to the rampart of sand and spinifex pushed up by the axle. We would reverse, climb out of the ruts, go around the obstruction and continue ad nauseum. This was slow travelling and when we camped the first night out, a new V8 utility pulled up and the driver ticked us off. His reason being - "I saw the levelled road and reckoned that it had been graded, so I opened her up, then I hit a wall of sand and went up in the air and landed 50 yds. down the track."

After many miles of our grading efforts, it was noticed that the bus was losing power, and finally the engine stopped. After this it could not be started - the cause - no compression. The reason was that the low speed stirred up the sand, and that because of the low carburettor intake position, the rings had worn away. Our remedy was to put oil in the cylinders through the spark plug holes, and rush the plugs back before the oil heated, drained into the sump and we lost our seal. This worked well for a while, but as wear increased and power faded, we stalled more and then more oil was required for any sealing effect, so it wasn't long before our spare gallon of oil was in the sump, and the sump oil was too thin to act as a seal.

The next sealer was our two gallon tin of cooking fat, which thickened by many camp oven roasts was nice and gummy and the two gallons saw us through to our destination.

One of our memories of the cooking fat period was that when the engine first kicked over, there was a delicious aroma of baked onions coming from the exhaust pipe. Would make a good additive to the petrol of a man's car.

During the period on the bridge, we decided that more clearance was necessary, and two inches was sawn off the bottom of the stub axle bush section and the sawn off part was placed on top as a spacer, this gave us seven inches clearance and grounding was reduced. But what it did to the steering, no ruts were deep enough to prevent the bus from taking off sideways like a startled wallaby.

If it had been composed then, our theme song would have been:

'She won't go straight Mate -
So tie me "Wart Hog" down.'

After using the bus without any mechanical trouble for about two years, we decided to go into business ourselves and we took up the fishing rights of Monte Bello Islands, the idea being to catch sharks and use the liver oil as a substitute for cod oil, the flesh for animal food, the scraps as fertilisers. As power was required to drive the air blower for the oil burners wanted for heating and drying, the "Wart Hog'S" engine was pressed into service.

This was the period of the Nazi build up, and one night we returned to camp to hear over the radio that Hitler had invaded Poland. On the instant we decided to enlist, and next day up anchored and away.

I have not been back, and the three of us have never met again, but if my opinion is wanted, I should say that engine with its stubbornness and strength is just as good now as before the atom bomb went off.

H. W. MORGAN.

Y Y Y Y Y Y

Basil Bowes wishes to remind members that he is still running a Mystery Photo Competition. The photos along the Western wall of the Clubrooms are numbered, and one has to fill in the numbered list and say what the various photos are or represent. Prize - a Case of best fresh-picked apples, direct from John Cole's orchards at Tyabb. Entries are unlimited.

JOTTINGS

- * Graeme Quinn has recently bought a TC 21 Three Litre Saloon, which we understand was a one-owner car, driven by a lady for some years. It certainly looks very attractive and the works were reputed to be in good condition, although the car did seem to go very hard at all. The body seems to have the usual wooden body rattles and shimmy, and the net result is that Graeme says that it is "just an Alvis". Latest developments show that the peculiar knocking sound that could be heard from within the engine, actually emanated from the bearings, and Graeme has had to order a complete set of bearings from the Factory. When the crankshaft had been pulled out and inspected, Graeme reports that the crankshaft is bent 7 thou. Sounds nice!
On the Alfa Romeo front, Graeme has had the whole rear of the body torn off and sent to the body-builders to have a steel frame made. The rest has been stripped of paint etc. pending a complete body and paint job. Knowing how this car can go, it should be some car when in all its glory. Graeme tells us that driving the chassis up to Rob Roy rather "scared the pants off him" especially with an open exhaust.
- * It appears that John Larsen has had to relinquish his claim for Basil's SG Silver Eagle, and Bill de Bruyn and new chum Cussins are apparently currently choosing their weapons for the duel to decide who shall be next in line.
- * David Muirden's DHC Speed Twenty is in trouble. After Norm Johnson's visit David noticed a queer, dulcet, but very regular clonk at the back of the car. Thought it was a brake shoe hitting the drum each time round. On closer inspection however, it turned out to be a tooth broken off the pinion. The crown-wheel was untouched, but rather than take any risks, he has put the car off the road, and is awaiting a new crown-wheel and pinion from England to the tune of £40 odd. The tooth was broken off on the reverse side of the pinion teeth, not the driving side and it is suspected that this happened when the car was rolled in reverse to start it. David is taking this opportunity to pull the back of the car apart and attend the loose body woodwork. David is also looking for a good TA 14 saloon.
- * Basil Bowes has been having trouble with a most elusive knocking sound in his Three Litre. Basil says that every darn thing rattles in the Three Litre engine compartment design, and that everything he quietens is replaced by another noisy component. "What a contraption" he exclaims.
- * Prospective member, Harray Shugg who used to drive a black TA 14 saloon, has recently bought a Three Litre, and seems happy with the new car. Just look at the bumper bars, though! Previous owner claims that he had never hit anything with them, but that he used the Golden Square car park every day for some years. This explains a lot. We've seen them mangle the whole frontispiece of a floating American barge recently, when the brakes didn't halt their break-neck parking techniques, and the concrete wall came up much, much too fast. Harry is keen to become a member of the Club, and has put his TA 14 up for sale. Generally speaking, it is a sound car, although it will need some work - mainly bodywise - to make all ship-shape.

OUR COVER PICTURE

This delectable 4.3 Sports Roadster belongs to Jim Whitehead of the Sydney Club, and has the engaging name of "Red Ruby" - positively the most immaculate P.V.T. in Australia, and a thoroughly desirable machine.

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- * There is no "Alvistory" this edition due to yet another mishap. Don't worry, though, it will appear next month as usual.
- * Tasmanian member Chris Mayne has just been wed during Easter, and Dr. and Mrs. Mayne flew over to Tas. to attend the wedding. Unfortunately, we don't know the bride's name, but we nevertheless, wish the couple all the best.
- * In a letter from Norm. Johnson, he says that in the little time that circumstances allowed them in Victoria, both Erica and he enjoyed themselves immensely. As you will no doubt remember, their brief stay here co-incided with what was the year's first cold break-through from Antarctic parts and lasted for the four days the couple were here. It is therefore rather droll to read "We also liked the tiny bit of the countryside which we saw, but were surprised at your cold nights and jolly hot days".
- * Les Millor has made arrangements with A. S. Broad to recondition his TA 21 engine. Nothing drastic, though.
- * Old member, Graham Thorley, wife Joan and youngest son Ian, leave on Wed. 12th for their 800 sq. mile farmlet in Nth. West Australia in a 4 wheel drive Chev - ex Signals van. He intends to drive from Melb. to Port Augusta, then by-passing the "gibber country" by loading the box and dice on the "Ghan" to Alice Springs, and then driving up the North-South Road to Katherine Springs, and then west as far as the 4 W.D. Chev. will go. As it is virgin country from then on, this is an unknown quantity, but from this point they will proceed per four-legged friend and pack horse.

When they have prepared a site for the Homestead, they will cut and prepare a track back to the Chev. (this could be 200 miles) and then take the Chev. etc., back to the Homestead site.

We are sure that all will join in wishing Graham (Foundation Member) Joan and Ian, every success in their venture. Even in these days of Pedal-Wireless, Flying Doctor Service, and the like, a venture such as this demands plenty of GUTS, as until such time as a suitable landing space for light aircraft is prepared, they are completely on their own, the nearest neighbour being hundreds of miles away.

- * John Murray, South Australian TA 14 expert, visited "Alvista" during Easter, but missed out on the Kalorann Rally. He has acquired a 12/70, the pre-war TA 14, and is preparing its restoration.

1961 KALORAMA RALLY.

Another very successful Kalorama Rally was held on Easter Monday this year, although the Alvis numbers was not anything like as great as last time. Our Club was not particularly in evidence, although we made no mean contribution to the competition in the Gymkhana. There were close on a dozen cars fronted up this year, with new cars in Andy Hennam's very neatly presented Firebird Tourer, and John Cole's newly acquired blue-and-black Crested Eagle Saloon.

John Cole did it again! How he does we don't know, but the boy who carried off the Acceleration and Braking last year in the 16.95 fabric rattle-trap last year, this year won the Slow Running Race in the smooth running Crested Eagle. He was the only Alvis prize-winner.

Other notable prize-getter in the Club was Graeme Quinn, who won this year's Acceleration and Braking Contest, driving Terry Plummer's Bugatti. Doc. Donnan also did very creditably in the Speed Twenty, which, as usual defies the ravages of age, country life and a dicky clutch.

As far as the Rally itself was concerned it was noticeable that the events were very much better run and chosen than last year. Things would have been even better as far as vehicle control was concerned, if cars could have been marshalled into their proper order on the ground and competitors called for in number order as far as possible. However, despite one or two annoyances, things ran smoothly enough. The Flag Race was obviously a great improvement on the Potato Race of last year. Roy Henderson and Ian Parfitt as events Marshals are to be commended on their efforts, as are Basil Bowes as a Concours Judge, Jim Kelso as President of the Combined Vintage Car Clubs, Laurie Rofe for his sterling effort as Announcer, and all the other members of the Organising Committee who helped to make the whole day what it was - a pleasant spectacle, in almost ideal weather, and well-organised.

After the actual Rally, those who could afford the time rallied to Paul Conrad's Montrose home for a Barbecue evening. This was a most enjoyable evening, and all thanks must be extended to one of the greatest of Alvis enthusiasts in Paul Conrads and his 14.75 Beetle-back (with the 20 h.p. engine in it now), the 12/50 Special that continues to astound people, and what is probably the daddy of all Go-Karts, made about eight years ago, when the present Go-Kart was unheard of.

All members got home all right in the long run, despite a little consternation on the way back late at night, when David Muirden ran out off petrol in the 12/50 b.b. and the Simms Coupling slipped to give an ultra retarded spark. When David Pulled up the bonnet, the exhaust manifold was red hot and the actual pipe was white hot. He didn't need any torch - this Alvis had inbuilt lighting. The heat was fantastic. However, in true 12.50 style, after the whole lot had been cooled down, and some petrol filched from Bas. Bowes TA 21, the car carried on, and has been as good as gold since then, as far as the engine has been concerned.

Let us hope that the great lack of Speed Twenties and 12/50s noticed this year at Kalorama will be overcome next year. (We noticed that David Bamford's Speed 20 made it to the Kalorama Spectators park. Had apparently just been put together again the night before.)

CARS FOR SALE.

★ TA 14 SALOON. 1948 Model.

Harry Chugg, of Hansen St, Mount Waverley (27 3267) is offering his black saloon for £230 or near offer. It is in good order throughout and has had recent overhauls done on starter motor, front springs, fuel pump and carburettor. The interior is sound, but the door locks and hinges need attention. The instruments are good, except for the fuel gauge. Recently renewed tyres. Registered till late in the year.

★ 12/50 Beetle-back.

1926 Model, with many redeeming features, including all nylon bushed suspension, new gearbox, clutch, cardan shaft, universals (Hardy Spicer) carburettor, magneto and generator, steering box, king-pins, speedo, engine mountings, re-wired, new hood and hood bows. Springs have all been recently renovated. The body has been rebuilt and the body panels mainly surfaced. Has few faults, and comes with a colossal assemblage of spare parts, including a 12/60, 12/40, 12/50 Four seater Tourer.

This grand collection of rare vintage cars and spares can be obtained for £250 or near offer from David Muirden, 16 Rix St., Glen Iris.

★ AUSTIN 8 h.p. Tourer, 1948 Model.

This very reliable, little modern car is available at £65 from David Muirden. It is very economical (40 m.p.g.), has had a rebored engine, new clutch and gearbox, combined with good electrical equipment. The body is very sound except for the radiator grille, which needs welding and some panel beating on the wings. Excellent tyres, radiator.

★ RADIATOR CAP for Speed Twenty and 3½ Litre. Internal coarse thread on the radiator and coarse external thread on the cap. This is brand new from the Factory. New radiator also, from the factory has a different cap, so the originally ordered cap is now surplus to requirements. Cost price. See David Muirden.

★ 14.75 Tourer.

Cliff Eaton's 14.75 is available for offer at 86 McKinnon Road, McKinnon. This is the ex-Lehner cut-down chassis car, which needs very little to complete it. Comes with various spares.

★ SG Silver Edge Sixteen.

Basil's Saloon SG is available for sale, and has been almost completely renovated throughout mechanically. Brand new brakes throughout - new cables, drums, linings. Springs all brand new. Engine reconditioned. Will make an excellent car once the few body repairs are effected. See Basil Bowes at 21 Edgar St., Glen Iris.

★ Cliff Eaton has a 4 cyl M.L. Magneto for sale and wants a 12v CAV Starter Motor.



VICTORIA

Club Rooms, "Alvista," 21 Edgar Street, Glen Iris, S.E.6, Victoria, Australia.
Meetings at 8 p.m. on the Third Friday of every month.

ALL ALVIS OWNERS AND ENTHUSIASTS WELCOME!

Those wishing to become Members please forward

Entrance Fee: 10/-

Annual Subscription: £2.2.0.

Country, Interstate and Overseas Annual Subscription: £1.1.0.

Please make cheques, etc payable to **ALVIS CAR CLUB, VICTORIA.**



The Club prides itself on its **SPARE PARTS SERVICE** which besides having increasing stocks on hand also imports genuine new and secondhand Alvis parts for Members at cost price.

The following items are usually kept in stock:—

- Rubber Mounting Cones for Vintage Engines and Gear Boxes.
- Simm's Vernier Couplings — complete.
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- Wiring Diagrams for most Pre-War Models.
- Service Data accumulating rapidly.
- Electrical, Magneto, Speedo Repairs — 18 months' Guarantee.
- Club Car Badges: 30/- Lapel Badges: 7/6.

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