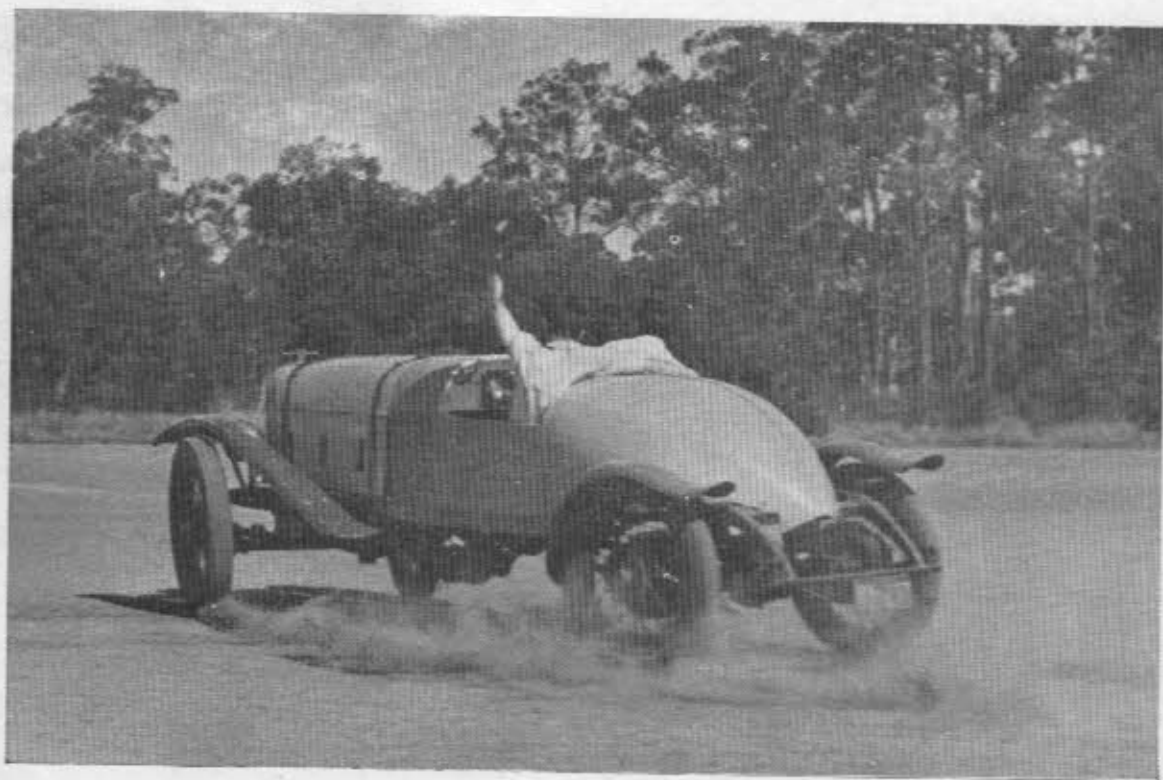




*The Austral Alvist's Aide*

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ISSUED FREE



Hon. Registrar  
"Alvista"  
21 Edgar Street,  
Glen Iris, S.E.6  
Victoria, Australia.

BULLETIN  
of the  
ALVIS CAR CLUB  
VICTORIA

Hon. Editor  
"The Alvic"  
16 Rix Street,  
Glen Iris, S.E.6  
Victoria.



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.

AUGUST GENERAL MEETING.

8 p.m., Friday, August 18th, 1961 at the Clubrooms, 21 Edgar St.

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OUR COVER PICTURE

This unusually bodied 12/40 belongs to Sydneysider, David Manson, who is the Secretary of the Alvis Car Club, Australia. This particular shot was taken during October, 1951 at the Pitt Town Airstrip, with Marc Pain driving the Manson 12/40. This body has since been taken off and a more sporting and attractive ducksback type body put on. A novel feature of this laminated wood body is that the spare wheel is not slung from the centre of the wheel at the rear of the tail as shown on the ducksback on the back cover of "Alvic", which rather tends to crack the tail and eventually break it off. David has devised a cunning wheel slot underneath the tail and parallel with the top surface.

NEXT EVENT !

Special MYSTERY TOUR on Sunday, 27th August. See later page.

## JULY GENERAL MEETING

Unfortunately, our President Roy Henderson was not able to be present at the July Meeting, so Vice President, Cliff Eaton took the Chair for a very short meeting.

We were pleased to welcome some new faces at the meeting. The new owner of Harry Shugg's TA 14 was present, as was TA 14 owner, Bill Jackson, who showed those present the ex-Pol car, newly overhauled and with most of the loose nuts and bolts etc. tightened up.

### New Members this Month:

Graham Martin, of Wangaratta, with a TA 21.

Bill Jackson, of Surrey Hills, with a TA 14.

### Decorate Your Car:

#### CLUB BADGES

A new batch of these is available at the usual price of 30/- each. They are a colourful and tasteful asset to any Club car. They are stocked at the Clubrooms and are available at Club Meetings or from Basil Bowes at other times. Cheques payable to A.C.C.V., with Exchange and postage added where applicable. (1/- Postage.)

Also available are Alvis Lapel Badges at 7/6 each.

### Odd Parts for Sale:

#### ALVIS SPARES

The following parts are brand new and available at any time from the Spares Service. Other parts, as usual, are available by special order:

#### for Vintage cars:

- 12/50 Bronze Water Transfer Ports (rear) -- 7/6 each.
- 12/50 Aluminium Front Water Offtake (top) - 15/- ea.
- Vintage Engine and Gearbox Conical Mounting Rubbers -- 3/- ea.
- 12/50 Shackle Bushes (Nylon) -- 6 -- 8/- ea.
- 12/50 Spark Plugs (TMB 60 or D 8) - 7/6 each.
- 12.50 Simms Couplings (front half) - 2/6 ea.
- 12/50 Radiator Mounting rubber bushes -- 6d. each.

#### for Post-Vintage Cars:

- Corrugated Drive Plates and Studs. P.O.A.
- Hub Grease Caps (Left and Right Hand) P.O.A.
- Timing Gauges for all 6 cyl. cars (incl. Three Litres).
- Speed Twenty and 3½ Litre Radiator Caps. (external coarse thread).
- Rubber Gear Lever Hoods for all-synchro box - 4/- each.  
(can be used if needed on TA 14 and Three Litres)

#### for all Models:

Speedy and guaranteed electrical repairs of all sorts. Also engine parts for post-war cars.

# MYSTERY TOUR

AUG 27th

The "Mystery Tour" has been designed as an enjoyable afternoon's motoring on the less frequented roads of the area North and North-east of Melbourne.

It will finish with a "Barbecue" under cover, at a hotel which is approximately one hour's run from the centre of the city. The trip covers a distance of 100 - 110 miles through very pleasant country. The roads, with the exception of about one and a half miles which are under re-construction, are first class bitumen.

Included in this event will be one or two unusual sub-events of a decidedly "vintage" nature, but basically the tour will be, we hope, an enjoyable trip on good roads that can be made into a pleasant family outing.

The details of the event are as follows:-

START:

The Starting-point will be opposite the Golden Fleece Service Station which is between the TAA entrance and the ANA entrance to Essendon Airport. The event will start at 1.00 p.m. sharp and points will be lost for late arrival.

MAP:

The map required is "Broadbents' 100 miles around Melbourne". (Any edition)

ENTRANCE FEE:

The entrance fee is 6/- per car.

DINNER:

An evening meal will be provided at an excellent hotel, the proprietor of which has offered us a private room. The charge for the meal will be 7/6 per head for the basic meal. Extras such as entree and soup are a small additional charge.

WHEN:

The start is at 1.00 p.m. sharp on Sunday August 27th.

## ANNUAL DINNER DANCE

A fully-organized Annual Dinner Dance is to be held in October this year. The tentative date given by the Social Secretary is Thursday, October 26th. The estimated cost is approximately £2 per head, but this depends on the number of people who attend. The greater the number the cheaper per person.

The venue will probably be the "Bambolina" near the corner of Glenferrie and Wattle Tree Roads. There will be no parking worries. The organizer's worry is that a minimum number of 50 people is absolutely necessary. If we don't get the required 50 we may not be able to have a Dinner Dance. Therefore please keep this date free and try, where possible, to bring a partner. Further details at the next meeting and from the Social Secretary.

## JOTTINGS

h\* A smoke signal from the Old Country tells us that the TD 21, recently acquired by the Duke of Edinburgh is probably a really hand-built car and not just an ordinary TD. It is rumoured that it has a few inches more head room than the standard model, amongst other things. It is not clear whether the loftiness is for the Duke's pop hat or so the roof clears the crown when he takes the wife out for a spin. Or is it a slight case of 'uneasy lies the head . . . '?

### Unusual 12/70:

h\* South Australian member. John Murray, of TA 14 and Speed 25 fame, has been rebuilding a 12/70 he recently acquired. We have heard mutterings for some time about this car, which was originally a Tourer. John, a Consulting Engineer, has done some real ground-work on this job, and has put up a good show. The Secretary and Hon. Editor were privileged to inspect this car a few Sundays ago, and can report that a meticulous job has been done. It is a little unusual as 12/70s go, because it has been converted into a TA 14 wherever possible. The scuttle has been altered into TA 14 style with the firewall full height in front of the battery. The dash is a complete 14 replica, as is the steering wheel and centre. An extensive course in body strengthening has been undertaken and special braces built in under the scuttle to stop sway. The lamp bar at the front takes care of the characteristic TA 14 wing wobble and a renewed and strengthened boot, lid and spare wheel carrier not to mention rear bumper makes the whole car a very solid one. The body does not move at all even over really rough roads. The roof is rather odd in a way. The soft top has been dispensed with and an Armstrong Whitley roof has been suitably cut down and riveted to form a covering over the rear seats, while a retractable duck covering over the front seats makes possible a neat touring coupe-de-ville position for those sunny days. Definitely a note-worthy effort in rebuilding what might be called a "wreck".

### Work proceeds on "The Immaculate"

h\*\* Following the rebore of the Editorial Sp. 20, it was discovered that the head was very badly damaged and would require a complete overhaul involving new valves, guides, seats. The seats can be built up here by Thompson, but he quoted about £35 to do it. The Editor is awaiting advice from the Factory regarding a new head complete with valves and guides.

He thought that he had the answer when he recalled the Twenty Crested Eagle of Vin Drough's but further investigation revealed that the ports were quite different and could not be suitably adapted to the Speed Twenty manifolds. This means that there is no cheap way out, and cheapest way out at present is about £75.

Albert Broad reports that the rebored engine apart from the head is in very good order now, and the new cam followers have completed the job - who ever last repaired the engine forgot to put the oil holes that feed the camshaft and followers, into the paper gasket between block and crankcase, so these have been starved of oil for some thousands of miles, and have required replacement.

## JOTTINGS

### The SG rolls again!

- \*\* Noel Cossins has made considerable progress on the ex-Bowes SG Silver Eagle Saloon. Following the reassembly of the engine with all its new parts, the car was towed away from the Clubrooms and it was not long before it rolled back under its own steam. Noel's father, apparently a wizard at automotive electrical overhaul, rewired the car and amused himself tuning the triple SUs. The net result is that the car runs very sweetly, although with the customary overhead clatter. Noel has had new running boards made and rubber coated and this improves the car no end. Next job, we believe, is a fibreglass sunshine roof and a new boot and rear bumper.
- At the moment, Noel has gone off in the car to the Skiing Championships. Bit too cold for most of us, but apparently not for the car.

### Elusive Rattle Found:

- \*\* 'Rat-a-tat-tat. Rat-a-tat-tat!' Don't worry, it's all right. That is the sound of the Bowesmobile (TA 21) idling when hot. Sounds quite dreadful, but actually it isn't harmful. What's more it's definitely not in the engine - that is proved to be whisper quiet.

The other day, everyone at Broads pounced on the Three Litre, determined, we suppose, to catch the elusive knock unawares. Four men pored over the front of the car trying to catch it. Says one "It comes from here". Says another, "No, it can't, it comes from up the front here." Says yet another; "Be blowed, it's down under here". "Well, you're all wrong - its coming from the top here!", says the fourth.

This went on for some time, and then the forty odd noises round the workshop all seemed to come from the front of the car. Says number four insistently - "I keep telling you, it comes from the front cross-member!" "But how could it?" the other three replied. "They haven't attached anything to the cross member that could rattle!"

Out of playfulness, number four gives the front cross member gives a sharp blow with a hammer. Silence. More silence. The engine kept ticking over as before, but no "rat-a-tat-tat".

It's still not known what it is or was that caused the noise, but it seems to have gone, although Bas reports that it can just be heard at speed.

### Trip to U.K.

- \*\* No sooner does Plummer come back from England than Sy Ramsay decides to trek off in that direction himself. He sailed in the "Fairisky" last week, and we presume that he will be visiting the Factory in due course. Seems to be quite the fashion for Australian Alvisists to make pilgrimages to the land of origin these days. Even the Editor is making tentative plans for making the trip in just over a year's time.

### ALVISTORY ROAD TEST

This month the attached reprint concerning the Speed Twentyfive Alvis makes up the Alvistory. Don't worry though, the FWD Series is still in progress and will be continued shortly. The reprints are by the courtesy of G/Capt Shipley of the Alvis Owner Club.

### Member lost in snow.

\*\* Dr. Peter Graham writes that he and Mrs. Graham are now both fine and have very little remaining disability from their recent ordeal at Mt. Kosciusko. This is very good news. Being lost, foodless and cooped up in a hole in the snow for 4 days, can hardly be enjoyable.

### Blown hoses in TC 21:

\*\* Graeme Quinn reports blowing both top and bottom radiator hoses on his TC 21. We remember him losing great quantities of water on the Interstate Rally. He says that the pressure valve in the overflow checks OK, so the burst hoses don't quite figure. Perhaps it's just a case of old age.

### Broken Three Litre Shaft:

\*\* Dr. Gove, in Adelaide, had the misfortune to break the crankshaft of his Three Litre. We wonder if it was a cast shaft as was Cid Lehner's. Then, of course, there was Dr. H. Smith's with the same complaint, though we understand this broke when they tried to straighten a bend. This recalls Graeme Quinn's story that his TC shaft was alleged to be 4 thou. bent when it was pulled down for a regrind and new shells.

### Speed Twenty Head Gaskets:

\*\* Work on the Editorial Sp. 20 has shown that owners of 20 h.p. Alvis cars should beware when buying head gaskets. The Payen gaskets on sale here in Melbourne appear to be really a 16.95 one as the holes for the bores prove to be less than 73 mm, and therefore protrude into the combustion chamber with consequential detrimental results. Barry Gough found this trouble, first confusing the issue by assuming that the pistons were too high and thus chopped the gasket about. But, obviously the gasket had to be overlapping the bore to be touched at all. The Ed. has had two special gaskets made with the correct bore allowed for. If the owners of such engined cars wish, the Spares Service is prepared to place a quantity order for head gaskets of the correct dimensions. Which do you prefer? Solid copper as in the Three Litre, or the usual copper-asbestos type?

### Twenty Horsepower head parts:

\*\* Alvis Limited quoted this week for the following items:  
19.82 valves (KE 965) at 17/6 each.  
" " valve guides at 12/6 each. All prices sterling.  
" cam followers at 8/6 each.

### Les Lee's Front Wheel Drive:

\*\* Now that the magneto has been reconditioned, Les Lee's FWD should be about ready for its tryout on the road. This car has had much hard work done on it and has been completely rebuilt mechanically. Among other things, the water-pump caused many headaches before being mastered, and the brilliant designing and fabricating of the front inboard disc brakes and all that goes with them, is a very creditable undertaking to say the least. We are all rather green with envy, first because Les owns a F.W.D. at all, and secondly, because of his ability and ingenuity in restoring it.



## BAS BOWES SPEAKS.

During the 40 or so years that I have been a devout reader of every motoring journal and article I could lay my hands on, I have occasionally come across mis-statement of facts or boners. The writers of such articles, being human, have erred. Such mistakes may mislead the unwary, who, having seen the mis-statement in print, accept it as gospel. This is unfortunate but true, and often leads to heated arguments.

Whilst perusing the May edition of the Alvis Register Circular my eyebrows arched somewhat when I read under the title of "Alvis History", I quote:-  
"Browsing through 'Lost Causes of Motoring' by Lord Montagu (Cassell 31/-) we found some bits of Alvis history which we had not heard before. One concerned the Burney Streamline car which was designed by Sir Dennis Burney in 1928 - he was the designer of the airship R100. The experimental car was made in the corner of a hangar at Howden, and consisted of an Alvis 14/75 F.W.D. chassis turned back to front. The steering was welded up and a normal steering axle fitted at what used to be the back-end, in place of the dead rear axle. Presumably the diff. unit was turned around to make the rear-engined car travel in the right direction" end of quote.  
How remarkably clever of Sir Dennis. Turning a nonexistent 14.75 F.W.D. chassis end for end in the first place, and then, as FWD's had four-wheel independent suspension, he fitted a normal steering axle at what had been the back-end, in place of the dead rear axle. Wonders will never cease.

Allowance must be afforded the author of "lost Causes of Motoring" who, I presume, is not deemed an Alvis expert. But how come the editor of the Circular did not make comments, or is it that I am wrong and that there actually was an Alvis 14/75 F.W.D. with a dead rear axle, as in all fairness to the quote it does state 14/75 F.W.D. and not 14.75 F.W.D.

Alvis Ltd. state that the F.W.D. models were as follows:-  
4 cylinder- FA., FD., FE., 12/50, and the 8 cylinder FA. 8/15. Years of manufacture were 1928-9. Strangely enough, in my mind's eye, I recall seeing sketches of an Alvis F.W.D. in an English motoring journal of the 1920's illustrating its chassis' wooden side members, (the artist had gone to the trouble of sketching in the grain of the baulks of timber, and they were baulks about 3" by 9") and I feel certain a 14 HP engine was mentioned in connection with Alvis F.W.D. at this or some other time. This quite easily could have been the sketch of a prototype.

By the way, for those who do not already know, the Burney Streamliner was a rear-engined straight 8 car, also Crossley made a smaller version, under licence, fitted with a 6 cylinder Crossley engine, which gave this car a top speed of 72 m.p.h., whilst the same sized engined orthodox Crossley had a top speed of 68 m.p.h.

Reverting to the Circular quote of interesting extracts in "Lost Causes of Motoring", I again quote:

"The other concerns the origin of the 10/30. It appears that Capt. D.M.K. Marendaz, on demobilisation, joined T.G. John at an engineering firm in Coventry. Marendaz, though a brother officer, knew G.P.H. de Freville, who had acquired the designs of a 4 cylinder 1,500 c.c. side valve engine of sporting potentialities, and it was Marendaz who persuaded John to lay down 50 of these engines, which were, of course, the 10/30 unit. Well, who did design the engine". End of quote.

(Note: Marendaz Specials were side valve engined cars with quite remarkable performance.)

Whilst on the subject of boners, although not an Alvis one, I think you will agree that this is a boner to end all boners. Sy Ramsay dropped in at "Alvista" the other day and while I carried on with a spot of club work he read a Yankee motoring journal he had just purchased. Every now and then he interrupted my train of thought with such questions as, "What car is that?", showing me one of the photos in the book, or, "Have you ever heard of a -?". Somehow or other I had, and also gave the right answers to the photo questions. Showing me quite a large photo he asked me what sort of car it was. "Why a 6HP Darracq, "Genevieve" of-course". "Well read what goes with it" he replied. As I read the blurb, incidentally it was written by a Yank who claims to be a motoring authority and turns out various motoring magazines by the score.

Unfortunately I haven't the tripe at hand, and therefore cannot quote, but under the large, boldly printed heading "Spykker", and above the already mentioned photo of "Genevieve" although there was no caption to the photo mentioning that name, nor 6HP Darracq, the gist of the blurb was:-

"This car was the star of a motion picture, but Spykker cars did not derive any benefit in spite of the success of the film, and their sales failed to increase".

Yankee twaddle superba. Shades of Barnum and Bailey.

I really must record for the benefit of non-readers of the Melbourne "Age" (3.7.61) as I feel that, like the famous slogan of K.L.R, (it's) "too good to miss". In "News of the Day" under the sub-title "Swaggy" I quote:-

"The last of the swaggies isn't dead yet. Several people have told us they have seen him humping his way around the suburbs. The last sighting was at Preston. It seems that he a fair chance of survival even in the jungle law of Victoria's road traffic. His clothes are decorated with luminous tape, and he has a bicycle tail lamp sewn onto the seat of his trousers".

How about humping your bluey and come a-waltzing matilda with me, I mean him?

Speaking of the jungle law of Victoria's road traffic reminds me I read that Melbourne now has over half a million motorcars. That's not a bad effort for a population of just over one and a half million people, and the experts say that our city should have a million cars by 1970. I do not think "jungle law" really applies to the rest of Victoria's traffic, but it most certainly does apply to Melbourne's metropolitan traffic. What with trying to dodge potholes (craters), and keeping an eagle eye out for the louts of the road, I must agree that driving along the roads of and around Melbourne, is not exactly a happy passtime.

BAS BOWES SPEAKS

- ★ David Bamford reports his SB Sp 20 is coming along nicely, he is about to replace the wheel driving plates and studs.
- ★ Bruce Czynski says that prior to the Honey-moon trip his Silver Crest dropped another valve. Could this be yet another example of the effects of not fitting genuine K.E. valves?
- ★ David Goyder says the gearbox of his T.C. 19.82 Silver Eagle did not suffer as much damage from its lack of lubricant as was first thought. Another combined 1st/2nd layshaft gear will fix things up.
- ★ Max Ilbery's Silver Crest is also slowly but surely drawing closer to the great day. At the moment things are slightly held up owing to Alvis Ltd. sending mountings only for one end of the engine instead of both ends.
- ★ Besides having A.S. Broad give his SC Speed Twenty engine the real works, the Hon. Ed. talks of having him do likewise to one of his many 12/50 engines (spare) so that he can drop it into his bootle-back when the unit at present in situ expires. In the meantime he is keeping his fingers crossed hoping the 12/50 remains mobile long enough. Runs the Austin 8 most of the time now! Says it's much more reliable.
- ★ According to Jottings there has been quite a spate of Three Litre crankshaft breakages lately. I don't quite understand how a solid 7 bearing shaft can bend. Hang it all, there's only a whisper of white-metal in Vandervell bearings, and even if they ran, there would surely not be enough play to allow such a robust shaft to bend particularly the earlier Three Litre cast shaft. If this can happen, well heaven help the 4 bearing shafts as fitted to almost all other 6 cyl. engines, and I shudder to think of what took place in the 3 bearing shafts which were so prevalent of yore.  
Whilst on bent shafts, A.S. Broad tells me that they had a Ford Zephyr engine come in for recondition which proved to have a bent shaft. At the owner's risk, Albert tried straightening it on the hydraulic press, and to everyone's utter amazement it sprang absolutely true.
- ★ Haven't heard from the Hon. President why his TB 19.82 Silver Eagle wasn't ticking to enable him to attend the last meeting. Nothing serious, I hope. Probably in the gearbox.
- ★ Derek Holyoake's Firefly should soon be in the running. The works are OK, having just been rebored. The trouble is with the body, mainly mudguards, I understand.
- ★ Sy Ramsay got away all right for foreign climes. Should be a nice trip as she was bound north via Singapore, instead of the usual route West via the Bight. He expects to be back around the New Year, so allowing two months travelling time, he should have 3 months to look-see all in U.K.
- ★ Alan Greenlees should have fitted the fixed headlamp reflectors kindly supplied by John Murray to his TA 14. These will enable him to convert to double filament globes. I had them resilvered by Colonial Lamp, so they should be A 1.

CARS FOR SALE

- h\*\* TA 14  
1950 Model, body rough, mechanically good. £120 or will listen to reason. Contact: Ray McDonald, 102 Dank St., Albert Park.
- h\*\* MERCEDES.  
1934 Model, with many features, including 4 wheel independent suspension. Approx. £60. Contact: Ted Hazlett, McLaren St., Mt. Waverley.
- h\*\* AUSTIN 8 h.p.  
1947 Model. Full and excellent running order. Mechanically first-class, but body needs attention, although sound. This little car is an economical little vehicle and would provide ideal reliable transport for a student or impecunious Alvis owner who wanted a second hack car. A gift at £65.
- h\*\* ALVIS 12/50.  
1926 TE Beetleback 3 seater in very good order. Large number of items overhauled recently. Comes with a huge pile of spares, including a complete 12/60 and 12/50 Four seater Tourer. The lot for £200, or will haggle for car alone.
- h\*\* ALVIS SPEED TWENTY DROPHEAD  
1935 Model, "The Immaculate". SC Speed Twenty, with the most delightful lines ever invented by the Company. Carnation Red baked enamel finish. Just been completely overhauled in engine department including rebore, new head, valves, big ends etc. New radiator complete recently installed as has been differential, brakes, electrics, windows, instruments, tyres etc. Comes with original tools, Eagle mascot, P 100s., 6 wheel equipment etc. £500. £300 spent in last few months on mechanics.  
For the above three cars contact: David Muirden, 16 Rix St., Glen Iris.
- h\*\* ALVIS 12/50.  
1926 Model, TE Four-seater Tourer. Black finish in v. good order. Good fettle throughout with good engine and gearbox. Reliable and economical. With vintage car chimes. £120 or near offer.  
Contact: Noel Cossins, Manton St. Burnley.
- h\*\* TA 14.  
1950 Model Black Saloon. This car is in good order both bodily and mechanically and has just been rebored, including stellited valves. This engine is a real beauty and runs like a watch. The interior is particularly comfortable and the sunshine roof works perfectly. This car is currently on offer at £215, which is a reasonable price. Contact: Bill Jackson, 7 Boronia St., Surrey Hills.



"The Alvis 25 sits down resolutely . . . is low built . . . and the 2.5 litres will do all that I require."

## Auto Attraction

Experiences with the Alvis Speed 25

By Oliver Stewart

PERFORMANCE is a useful measure of motorcars; but as has become increasingly obvious during recent years, other things besides performance exert an influence upon the owner of a car and help to determine whether he will like that car or not. It is with the object of trying to seek out and pin down these other things that I propose to discuss the Alvis Speed 25, which I have been using recently and with which I have so far done a full running-in period of about 7,000 miles.

In *The Motor* of September 13 there appeared a road test report of this model, showing a top speed of 96.5 m.p.h., an acceleration from 0 to 50 m.p.h. in 10.4 secs. and a 35-ft. stop from 30 m.p.h. I shall take that report as read and proceed to look for the other reasons which have caused me personally to like this motorcar better than I have owned—except one.

### Driver's Considerations

Let it be clear that only the driver is being considered, and then let the question be put as to how he savours the differences—apart from those which are indicated by speed-recording instruments and the like—between one car and another. Obviously his closest contact with the car is through his hands and, consequently, importance must attach to the steering and gear changing. The steering of the Alvis Speed 25 does combine in a notable

degree high gearing and low effort.

This combination is an ideal frequently enunciated but rarely attained—and no wonder, for the two things are to some extent mutually exclusive. But there are half a dozen motorcars I could name which have this high-gear steering and a wheel capable of being manipulated at low road speeds without much effort.

At high road speeds the steering requirements change. There is no trouble about effort, almost any steering is light enough at over 70 m.p.h. But still the car is sending up through the steering wheel to the driver's hands messages which may be sympathetic or not. What makes them sympathetic?

At high speeds the steering which wins approval is the one that looks after itself, that remains steady and does not kick. That means that the entire chassis design comes into play; for the problem has now swung over from one of leverage to one of stability. The car must be stable so that at speed it seems to be docile. Again the Alvis, perhaps partly because of the independent front-springing, meets the requirement.

It is stable and it sits down resolutely at the highest speeds to which it can be wound up on appropriate road stretches. In fact, there is no "steering" to be done when the car gets going and the steering wheel merely suggests the continuance of full control. A young ditch can be tra-



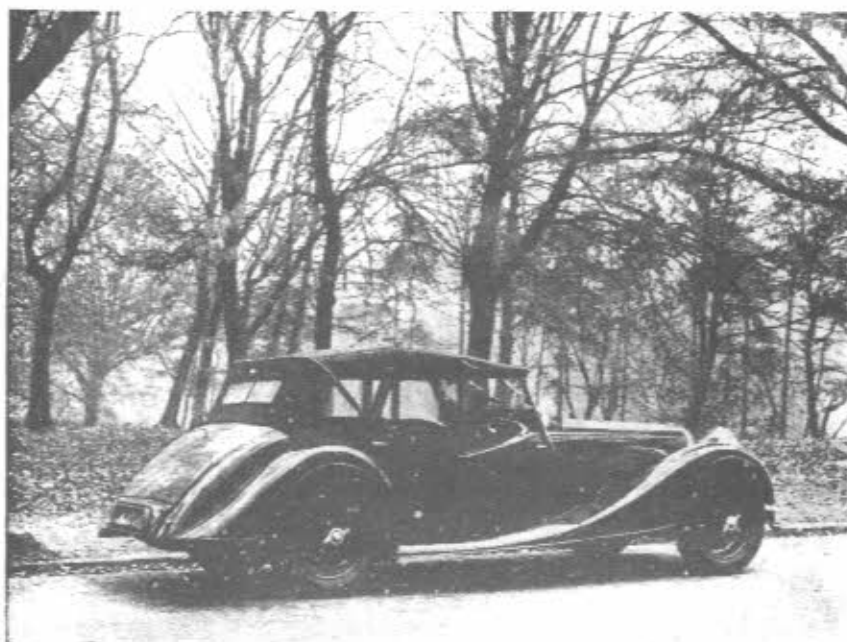
"The steering . . . does combine in a notable degree high gearing and low effort . . . an ideal frequently enunciated but rarely attained."



" . . . The gearbox is all-synchromesh, all-Alvis . . . You can feel the gears going in yet you cannot make inappropriate noises."

## AUTO ATTRACTION

Contd.



"Among those trustworthy and silent vehicles of to-day, I am certainly ready to accord first place to my present Alvis."

versed and—again owing to the front-wheel mounting—no shock felt on the hands.

After the steering wheel, the gear lever, which again sends its message through the hand of the driver. It is an all-synchromesh, all-Alvis and all-the-rest-of-it gearbox. If it is asked why it should be preferred to gearboxes which are, as it were, more unobtrusive and more remote in their workings, I would say that the reason is that, although I have outlived the desire to use skill in changing gear, and although I detest going through an elaborate ritual in order to move up or down one, I still like to know that I *am* changing gear and to feel some sort of mechanical event immediately following the gear-lever movement.

Now this car's gearbox, which has an impressive series of patent specification numbers behind it—rather like the decorations of the successful public man—does eliminate the use of skill and at the same time permit the driver to know and to feel what he is doing. You can feel the gears going in on the lever with this box, yet you cannot make inappropriate noises. You cannot even crunch in when absent-mindedly getting away from a standstill.

#### Foot Control

Now let us turn from the hands to the feet. The clutch pedal says something to the driver every time he uses it. The remarks will seem pleasant if they are soft spoken and this clutch is that. The brake pedal does not, I think, do a great deal towards making one like or dislike a car. If the brakes pull to one side or the other they will annoy, but the stoppability of brakes—valuable in emergency—is not one of the ordinary matters of motoring which add or detract from a car's appeal.

c6

Obviously the pedal must not want an elephantine effort in application; but otherwise it can do little to attract or repel.

Some people are very picky about accelerator pedal pressures; but I doubt if the difference between the most perfectly adjusted and balanced pedal and the worst, is going to affect to any large extent the car's owner-appeal.

#### Generalities

We may now reach from the particular to the general. There is the general seating arrangement, and the general appearance of the vehicle. The Alvis Speed 25 is low built and, although I have derived a good deal of comfort from swaying and swimming along in high-built bridge-scraper American saloons, I still think that the greatest attraction comes from low build.

Low build is not only good for stability, on account of the low centre of gravity, but also good for owner-appeal on account of the increased confidence and increased control which low build seems to give. It is also indubitably true that the Alvis front is one of the handsomest fronts of all and that its excellence is contributed to by the lowness of the line.

Sit in the Alvis Speed 25 and you are ready to believe that it would be impossible to turn it over—a belief which, however illusory, is extraordinarily satisfying. And I must mention the absence of mascot. The flat, unadorned radiator cap which—wonder of wonders—really is a radiator cap, appeals to my eye more than all the silver sylphs, peculiar pennants or weird wings.

It seems to be necessary still to mention the engine. I like it because it pulls its capacity. It is of only just

over 3.5 litres; but they are all working litres. They all do their bit, and it is a considerable bit. There is nothing more futile than carrying about in front of one lots of cubic centimetres which are idling nearly all the time. For my purposes, 3.5 litres will do what I want. I have looked at the bigger-engined Alvis, but I am satisfied with this one. And this engine has a most charming movement between about 2,000 r.p.m. and 3,500 r.p.m. It is also to be remembered that this new Alvis is quiet and smooth, indispensable adjuncts to the present-day sports car.

And now for some adverse criticisms. The hand ignition lever, which must be used a lot, makes a noise like a discontented cornrake. As the rest of the car, including engine and gearbox, is almost inaudible in this model, there is no reason for the minnow parts to make a whale of a noise. The windscreen wiper is also too noisy, and I object to having a vast blob of "works" hung on top of the windscreen. Some of the instruments are difficult to read. When the car is getting up around the eighties it is disconcerting to have to dive down somewhere under the dash in order to note the exact revolutions rate of the engine. But none of these things is of the kind that makes enemies or spoils a car's attraction.

#### Indexed Attractions

It would be an advantage to all who deal in motorcars if there were to be an index of attraction against which all models could be listed. But it would be extraordinarily difficult to find the right place in the index for each vehicle. Not only does each person want a different thing; but the same person may be attracted by different things.

I said that I liked the Alvis Speed 25 second best among all the cars I have owned. The car which came first was one whose name I will not give. It was a car in which I never did a hundred miles without trouble. I spent my life encased in a layer of oil and grease, my pockets bulging spanners. The car had a third gear (and by this those of the inner circle will be able to recognize it) which made a noise like a gargantuan dentist's drill . . . but we—of the inner circle—with a nicety of phrase hardly to be improved on, said that it was a "singing" third.

I can say that I have never had so much trouble as I had with that car. I never knew that any car could give so much trouble. Yet troublesome cars, like troublesome women, sometimes exert an attraction more potent than the ones that never give any trouble at all. And that amazingly wayward, untrustworthy, noisy, smelly car will always keep first place in my affections. And the trustworthy, silent, smooth vehicles of to-day can never displace it. But among those trustworthy and silent vehicles of to-day I am certainly ready to accord first place to my present Alvis.





## VICTORIA

Club Rooms, "Alvista," 21 Edgar Street, Glen Iris, S.E.6, Victoria, Australia  
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