



*The Austral Alvist's Aide*

DECEMBER, 1961

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.



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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. Editors, and is issued free of charge to financial Club members. Contributions are always welcome.  
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DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING

and XMAS PARTY

8 p.m., Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1961 at the Clubrooms, 21 Edgar Street, Glen Iris.

Bring along any friends, wives etc., and something to help the supper. Please bring your own supply of refreshments.

OUR COVER PICTURE

This sleek, brand new TD 21 belongs to one of our overseas members, Dick Birks of Sheffield. Dick was one of the founders of the flourishing Alvis Owner Club in U.K. just after the war. Dick took delivery of this black sedan earlier this year, just before he made the trip out to Victoria to see us in July. At one time, he was toying with the idea of bringing the car with him, and we wish in a way that he could have. Dick has much praise for the car itself and Alvis Service Department. He added that there were unfortunately a lot of annoying little things wrong with the car when he took delivery such as windscreen wipers that didn't work etc.. Also, he was very annoyed at the Sales Department, who merely handed him the keys and without explaining anything about the car, told him he could drive it away! Considering the name Alvis Ltd. has here and abroad, this news is quite startling, and certainly ought to be remedied immediately.  
P.S. Guess who is driving the car in the photo? It's Rob Gunnell.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Middlesex,  
England.

Dear Sir,

I meant to write to refute certain statements made by one Bas. Bowes in the August "Alvis" about FWD matters. But the answer was largely taken from my mouth by G.N.S. Davies' article in the September issue. Friend Bas spoke through his hat about "non-existent 14.75 FWD chassis" and implied that there was no such thing as a FWD Alvis with a dead rear axle. Davies has shown in his first article that the original FWD had a duralumin chassis with dead rear axle. And an unknown - but small - number of later models had a steel chassis with a dead rear axle. I've never heard of the wooden chassis arrangement; I can't imagine T.G. John doing any such thing.

Bas must be forgiven for denying the existence of such a beast as a 14.75 FWD Alvis; I didn't know such a thing existed myself until last Saturday! I met Ken Day of the A.O.C. at a film show we had (at which a short film of the 1928 Le Mans was shown - there were two FWD Alvis entries, one of which was driven by Cyril Paul and S.C.H. Davis). The latter was present at the film show, and the very car has just been bought by Keith Bretell after lying fallow for 21 years. Anyway, Day says categorically that a one-off special was built for T.G. John using a 14.75 h.p. engine in the 1928 FWD chassis! No-one knows what became of it, and in any case it seems much more likely that the car that Burney got hold of was in fact one of the very early 1926 ones, or late 1925. It might of course have been fitted with a 14.75 engine.

The whole FWD business is riddled with false rumour and uncertainty. George Davies did some good work with his articles in Motor Sport in 1958, but he carefully avoids giving the exact type numbers. "The Vintage Alvis" is not very reliable in FWD matters. And in the Science Museum at South Kensington there is a model, loaned by Alvis Ltd. of what is described as a 12-80 blown sports model. This is almost sure to be incorrect in fact, as it is a 1928 short chassis model, FD I think, developing 50 b.h.p. unblown. In blown form they were credited with 75 b.h.p. The straight-eight FWDs of 1929/30 were certainly called FA 8/15 by the works. But Brettell's 1928 4 cyl. Le Mans car has a dashboard plate engraved FA 12/50! It ran in the race unblown according to "The Vintage Alvis"; and this is borne out by the absence of any reference to a blower in S.C.H. Davis' account of the 1928 Le Mans in his book "Motor Racing".

The 1926 straight-eight FWD was certainly listed in the Alvis catalogue as the 12-80 blown sports model, but search of the 1928 motoring journals reveals no mention of any such thing as a 12-80 model.

There is ample opportunity for detective work, but not much positive data to go on. Alvis Ltd. have, of course, only the memories of their older employees to rely on, and memories are rarely always reliable.

May I wish your Club members a Happy Christmas and much trouble-free motoring in 1962?

Yours sincerely,

D. PRESTON.

(Ed. Alvis Register  
Circular.)

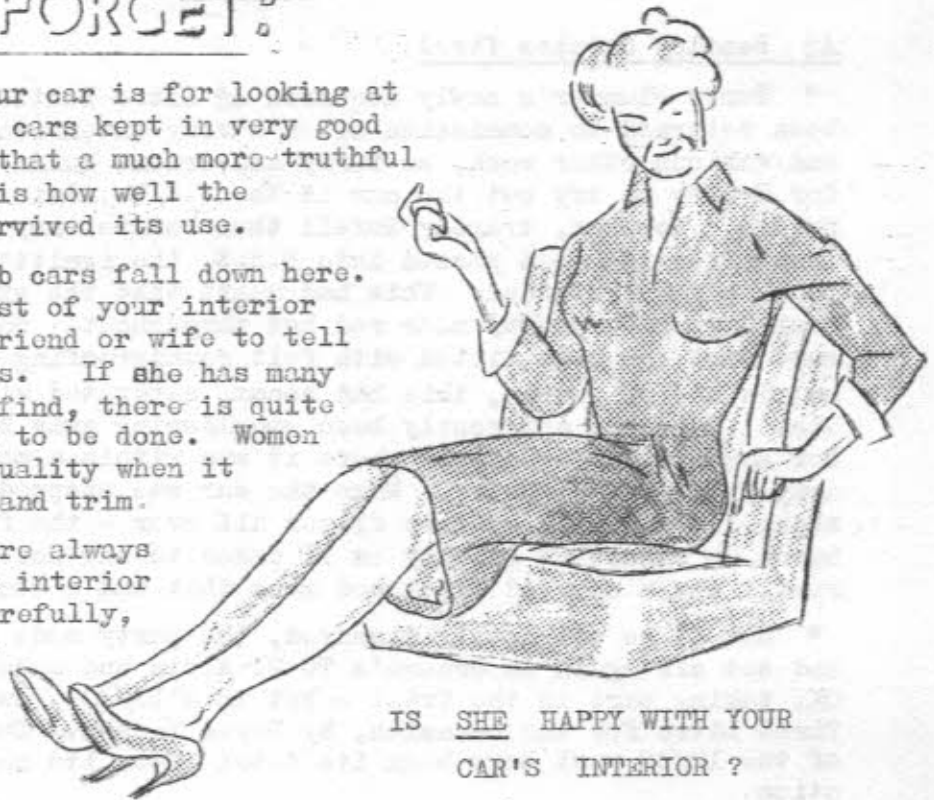


# DON'T FORGET!

The outside of your car is for looking at and is often on Club cars kept in very good order, but remember that a much more truthful indication of a car is how well the lived-in part has survived its use.

Quite a lot of Club cars fall down here. Probably the best test of your interior is to get the girl-friend or wife to tell you a few home truths. If she has many gripes or faults to find, there is quite definitely more work to be done. Women are good judges of quality when it comes to upholstery and trim.

Reasonably, they are always complaining when the interior is not maintained carefully, and their best white dress or coat comes out of the car with grease smears or oily marks.



IS SHE HAPPY WITH YOUR  
CAR'S INTERIOR ?

V V V V V V V V

## BERWICK GYMKHANA

The Vintage Drivers Club Ltd. is holding a gymkhana at the Berwick Showground on Sunday, December 3rd. They have invited Alvis Car Club members to come along free. There will be no entry or admittance fee and all proceeds from the public attending will be donated to the Berwick Pre-School Committee.

This event will be a sort of second Kalorama Rally and will be run along similar lines. There will be two classes - one for Veteran and Vintage, and the other for Post-Vintage Thoroughbred cars. Prizes will be awarded for each of the two classes. No unregistered vehicles will be allowed to compete.

Barbecue facilities will be provided only so it will be necessary for entrants to bring their own food.

Any Club members with vintage or post-vintage Alvises who wish to enter will have to complete the entry form by Friday, 17th November (the night of the meeting). This is very important. Entry forms are available from the Secretary at the Clubrooms.

Cars will assemble at the Albert Park Lake (near MacRobertson Girls' School) at 10. a.m. and proceed in convoy to the event. Further details will be supplied on return of the entry form.

## JOTTINGS

### 4½ Bentley catches fire!

\* Terry Plummer's newly acquired 4½ Litre Bentley Tourer had just been returned to commission after a very extensive engine overhaul and various other work, so Terry and Graeme Quinn & family set off for Sydney to try out the car in the N.S.W. Alvis Car Club's '200' Trial. However, tragedy befell them before they got there. Not long after they had passed into N.S.W. the ignition was discovered to be highly retarded. This had meant that the exhaust system must have been pretty near red hot throughout. Now, the car had some time ago been fitted with felt soundproofing under the floorboards and of course, this had become saturated with oil, grease etc. This had apparently been smouldering away beneath the car for some time, especially where it was within a matter of an inch away from the silencer. When the car was stopped, the whole thing literally burst into flames all over - the fabric body was burnt up almost as quickly as it takes to say so. The overall result was a charred blackened mess that was a Bentley.

\* Not to be completely dismayed, the party made the trip home and set off again in Graeme's TC 21 Alvis and made it to Sydney OK. taking part in the Trial - but in a 12/40, swapped for the Three Litre for the occasion, by David Manson. This road appearance of the 12/40 must have been its debut after its considerable hibernation.

\* The Bentley was brought back to Melbourne, and Terry was very lucky that he had a decent insurance cover on the car and collected around £600. He was last heard to say that he was giving the car to Martin & King with the £600, so that he will soon be able to walk along one day and drive home in a (virtually) new Bentley.

\* While in Sydney, Graeme and Terry attended the Annual General Meeting of the Alvis Car Club of Australia, at which they represented our Club when the issue of federation was again brought up. Apparently, the Sydneysiders are feeling the pinch in their Club in many ways, especially financially when "Alvibatics" is professionally duplicated each month. In fact, there were some suggestions that "Alvic" could serve both Clubs in a Federal Club, leaving "Alvibatics" as a quarterly magazine. This was not the first time this has been suggested, but for various reasons it is definitely not practicable. Terry reported that they did not support moves to make contact with the N.S.W. Club any more than the present amiable social level, in accordance with this Club's policy on the matter. In fact, there is no desire whatever at this end to federate officially, especially as the memory of the intense dissatisfaction some years ago with our Club operating as a branch of the Alvis Car Club of Australia - a dissatisfaction so intense that we were forced to break away and form our own independent Club. Nowadays relations between Clubs are very cordial mainly because each owes the other nothing, and has no matters that could cause recriminations, especially in financial matters. The situation is best left as it is.

\* New Overseas member:

Norm Routledge (famous for his Speed 20 Special in England, his expert driving of same, and his nonpareil knowledge of things Alvis) has honoured us by becoming a member of this Club. He also has what is often described as a "hot" Bullnose Morris, and a Three Litre. He makes a very welcome addition to our Overseas members list which is slowly but surely increasing in magnitude.

\* More news from Simon Ramsay in U.K.

Sy says that he will be returning here early in 1962, but that meanwhile he is enjoying himself immensely.

\* Among other things he has just spent a very enjoyable 5 days touring in "Smokey", with Rob and Ann Gunnell.

\* He visited G.N.S. Davies and viewed this enthusiasts collection: 2 FWDs - one long, one short chassis - 2 12/50 tourers - a Speed 20 tourer - and last, if not best, a Rhode. Yes, a "Remarkable Rhode". Sports model too!

\* He spent more than one day at the Motor Show, at Earls Court, visiting, of course, Stand No. 98, where he had the pleasure of sitting in the driver's seat of the TD 21 exhibit.

\* Earlier in his U.K. visit, he stayed overnight with Norm Routledge. To his dismay, he found he was unable to fit in the driver's compartment of Norm's Speed Twenty special. He therefore missed out having a run in it.

\* Prince Philip's gearbox:

Incidentally, G.N.S. Davies says that H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh's TD 21 is fitted with a Speed 25 gearbox - the all-synchro type. What a magnificent combination!

\* Thoroughbred versus Mass-produced cars:

Having over the years owned British, Continental and American cars, I have frequently been asked why I prefer thoroughbred cars in preference to those of the quantity-produced variety.

I am told invariably that Mass-production cars convey people from A to B just as reliably as the thoroughbreds, and that, furthermore, the modern pressed steel bodies usually outlast the coachbuilt types fitted to most thoroughbreds. All this could be quite true in most cases, especially when the fantastic costs of the dies etc., required for mass production are considered. It is easy to understand why the limited production of thoroughbred makers means an adherence to older coachbuilding methods. And, in all honesty among my prewar cars, I must hand the kudos to the American built bodies.

True, mass-produced cars can go from A to B with more or less the same reliability as do more select types, but whilst being conveyed from A to B, the thoroughbred provides that extra something that makes it of better quality. Such things as superior roadholding and better instrumentation can greatly increase confidence in the driver and reassurance to the passenger. It is still true to say that given a free choice of cars, most ordinary people would wish for the Rolls-Royce, Bentley class of car.

I could mention another quite good example of people's preference for



quality. We invite a representative cross-section of people to a party and offer them their individual choice of liquid refreshment. Having made the choice, each person is offered the beverage in two identical sized containers - a tin pannikin, and a crystal cup or goblet. I'll wager that the greatest percentage, if not all, will prefer the crystal cup.

But why is this, you might ask? The tin pannikin will stand far more hard usage than the crystal cup, and the beverage will be the same in each container. The answer to my mind is simply that given a free choice most folk prefer handling quality.

\* INTERNATIONAL ALVIS TROPHY

As the originator of the International Alvis Trophy Contest, I must register my disappointment that no time or place has been organised for our series of tests.

This is probably due to our lack of a Club Captain. However, this is hardly a good excuse. I notice that the Alvis Owner Club in U.K. have completed their tests and submitted the results to the Trophy Judge, Mr. Wiltsher, of Alvis Ltd.

If this Club does not wish to concede defeat without even a try then it had better get weaving, as our results must be lodged with Mr. Wiltsher before December 31st.

\* Big saving in insurance:

I'm sure many members will be interested in the following:

The other day a motorist chap I know greeted me with great gusto.

"Why this abnormal enthusiasm?", I enquired, as he nigh-maimed me for life by pumping my hand so exuberantly.

"Well," he beamed, "you've saved me £8".

"Oh, have I?", said I, "how clever of me".

"Yes indeed," said the chappie, "you remember our little chat about car insurance the other day, when you plugged for a certain firm."

"Well," he continued, "yesterday I received notice from the crowd I had my car insured with, that renewal was due and that the car was now valued at £350. As a special favour they would insure it at that figure for a £27 premium.

"Thinking I would test the concern you had recommended, I decided to pay their office a visit, but whilst enroute I called in on another insurance firm. This second firm listened to what I had to say and then came up with an offer to insure my car, valued at £350, for a £24 premium."

"I thanked them and said I would let them know my decision later. I then called at the office of your recommendation. Their proposal pleased me no end.

"They valued the car at £400 and would insure it for that figure for a premium of £19. Needless to say, I signed up there and then."

Shake, shake, shake. Oh, my poor hand.

\* Poser:

The question is: How do they produce the flats on the tiny steering box hemispheres for an SG Silver Eagle? Quite a poser!



# ALVISTORY

G.N.S. Davies continues:

(Alvis had designed a new car to compete in the 1926 British Grand Prix) Considerable attention had been paid to streamlining the body; the undertray was perfectly flat, the only components protruding into the air stream being the wheels (still of four-bolt, disc type), axle extremities, and rear Hartford shock-absorbers. The wide radiator was covered by a sloped cowling, giving the car a very business-like appearance.

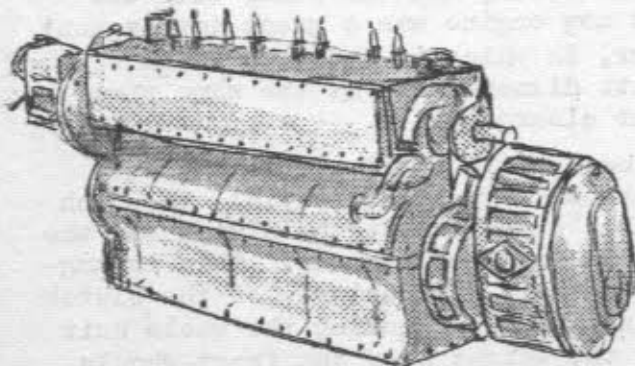
As the date of the British Grand Prix approached it became all too obvious that even if the car could be made ready in time, adequate testing was going to be almost impossible. And so it was to be; a single car was entered, with Major Harvey as driver. He did, in fact, practise, but trouble developed - hardly surprising in so new and untried a car - and the Alvis was a non-starter.

The J.C.C. 200-mile Race was to take place on September 25th, which gave the works team none too much time to prepare. It did prove possible, however, to give one car a trial run at Shelsley on September 4th, and, conducted by Harvey, it climbed very well, though it was not among the fastest owing to unsuitable gearing. Acceleration, however, was impressive, and the rear wheels were seen to be snaking all the way up the final straight. One of the early four-cylinder cars was also entered, and with this car Harvey took third fastest in the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -litre class, with a climb in 53.6 secs.

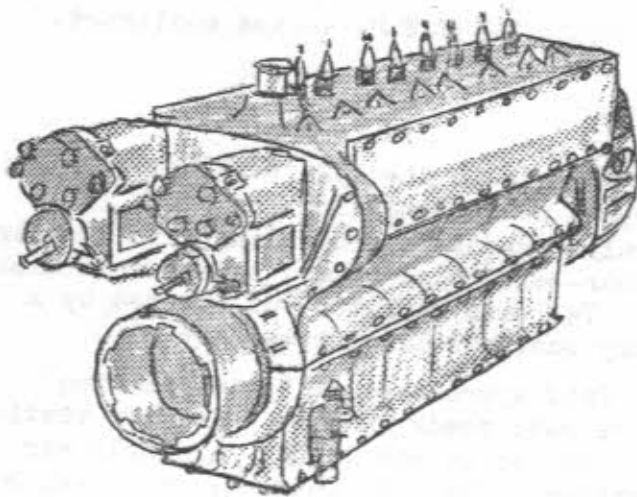
Two cars were entered for the 200-Mile Race, drivers being again Harvey and Lord Cottenham. The regulations were slightly modified in that crash hats were now compulsory, and no mechanics were to be carried; this latter being the result of accidents in the previous year's race, in which two mechanics had been hurt. The cars now had their nose cowlings removed to improve cooling, and the tails housed 35-gall. petrol tanks.

Once again, the particularly nasty gremlin who concentrated his energies on Alvis F.W.D.s appeared in the race. In the early stages, Harvey, who had been driving a splendid race, found himself baulked by a Fiat while coming through one of the artificial corners, went into a violent slide, made worse by the weight of fuel in the tail, and found himself marooned on a sandbank. Having no mechanic to help him restart, he had to option but to retire. Lord Cottenham, finding his engine completely without oil pressure, had left the car on the other side of the course and walked back to retire. This was particularly unfortunate, since when the mechanic

went out to collect the car he found that the trouble was caused by a faulty flexible connection, which he repaired in less than ten minutes, driving the car back to the paddock.



← THREE-QUARTER REAR VIEW of the 1926 Alvis racing engine. The Roots supercharger, driven from the back of the crankshaft, projected into the cockpit.



ADVANCED AND UNUSUAL - Front view of the 1½-litre straight eight engine prepared by Alvis for their 1926 front-wheel-drive Grand Prix cars. The horizontally-opposed valves operated by two high-set camshafts are responsible for the unusual head and cover plates. Note also the two B.T.H. polar-inductor magnetos driven from the front of the camshafts.

For 1927 Alvis' racing department concentrated their energies on preparing for two races only: the second British Grand Prix on October 1st, and the 200-Mile Race a week or so later. The early push-rod, four cylinder cars had now been dropped, and no F.W.D. car was listed for sale. The results of lack of time for adequate testing and preparation were very fresh in people's minds and it was hoped, by concentrating on two events only, to prevent a recurrence of the previous year's troubles. An additional difficulty, ever present through Alvis racing history, was dire shortage of ready cash, and many and various were the devices used to circumvent this difficulty.

The straight-eight Grand Prix cars, around which all the works team efforts were to revolve during 1927, had been completely redesigned since the previous year. The engine, although retaining its non-detachable head, now had hemispherical combustion chambers and valves inclined at 90 degrees, operated by twin overhead camshafts, with dashpots enclosing the valves and springs. As on the first eight-cylinder engines, twin polar-inductor magnetos were used, one driven from each camshaft. To drive the camshafts, one huge idler pinion, over a foot in diameter, transmitted the drive from the crankshaft to the camshaft pinions. The supercharger, of Roots type, was gear-driven on the off-side of the engine, and the inlet manifold was cast into the cylinder block itself. Within the sump were no less than four gear-type oil pumps, two of them scavengers which passed oil to an oil cooler, mounted beneath the very wide squat radiator. These two pumps operated one at each end of the sump, to eliminate any chance of oil starvation due to surge. The two feed pumps (one high one low pressure) dealt one with the crank, and the other with the camshafts and timing gears. This new engine was a great improvement on its horizontal valve predecessor, in which it had been found impossible to fit valves of adequate diameter and at the same time provide the pistons with sufficient clearance.

A multi-plate clutch was again used, with no flywheel, but the final drive had undergone many changes. The differential, to which were bolted the inboard front brakes, came between the clutch and the gearbox, which protruded right out in front of the car. This arrangement caused some additional complication, particularly of the clutch withdrawal mechanism, but had the advantage of making the whole unit very compact, and of concentrating the weight over the front wheels.

SERVICE DATA SHEETS.

DATA SHEET NO. 18.

27th September 1938

ROOF REAR DRAIN TUBES

These tubes are carried from the rear of the roofs down through the rear quarters and protrude through the rear wheel arches.

In some cases the rubber tubings are left too long so that they foul the tyres when the car rolls or is heavily laden. The noise set up if the tubes foul the tyres is somewhat alarming, and is in the nature of a loud roar or screech.

By cutting off the rubber tubes by about 2", greater clearance will be given and no fouling will be experienced.

DATA SHEET NO. 19.

30th September 1938

12/70 DYNAMO FIXING BOLT

To prevent rattle and vibration, and also to assist accessibility, the 12/70 dynamo is now mounted with a male and female bolt and nut in place of the single long bolt, springs and distance tube. The new parts are N 19631, one off standard 5/16 B.S.F. bolt, 5  $\frac{3}{8}$ " long, 1 distance collar, N 19630.

The old fixing bolt can best be removed by sawing it through and removing in two halves. The methods of fitting the new parts is as follows:-

Insert the distance collar between the front face of the dynamo flange and the rear face of the crankcase lug. Insert the female part, N 19631, through the front dynamo flange and the crankcase lug, and lock up with a standard spring washer and nut at the front end. Next place a double spring washer up to the 5/16" bolt head and insert this bolt from the rear through the crankcase and dynamo rear lugs, and screw it into the female portion. The dimensions are so arranged that the end of the threaded bolt will bottom into the female portion and will lock solid so that the double spring washer will just bear against the rear crankcase flange without actually nipping.

Care must be taken that when tightening the bolt the rear flange is not distorted. In other words, that the double spring washer shall not be too tight, but just sufficiently close to prevent vibration.

It is not suggested that all cars should be modified to this condition, but where an occasion arises that the bolt needs replacing, then the new type should be incorporated.

DATA SHEET NO. 20.

12th October 1938

12/70 REAR AXLE

If it is found necessary to take up end float in the rear axle shafts, this can be done by removing shims between the wheel bearing housing and the brake carrier plate, to do which the hub and brake drum must first be extracted. It is important when reassembling to make sure that the axle shafts have from 3 to 6 thou. end float, especial care being taken to see that they are not pre-loaded, otherwise excessive wear will be set up on the inside faces of the axle shafts and the hub roller bearings.



17 HP. PUMP DRIVE

A few cases have come to light where the pump drive has come out of position on the 1937 17 h.p. cars.

When mounting the dynamo it should be pushed rearwards into the water pump, which should previously have been fitted into position. Then draw the dynamo forward 3mm. which location will give the correct position of the slot in the end of the dynamo spindle.

DATA SHEET NO. 22

9th November 1938

12/70 THERMOMETER

A few cases have been observed where the thermometer capillary tube has fractured at the bulb end. We have therefore incorporated a clip which is mounted on the nearside top stud of the water pump housing, and which carries the capillary tube over the top of the water pump instead of underneath the pump.

Instead of the four or five small coils of about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter, as previously arranged, the capillary tube is now being supplied with two coils of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter in a horizontal plane. It has been found that this diameter coil and the supporting clip give adequate support and prevent the tubes from fracturing.

It is not suggested that all cars should be modified, but should you have occasion to fit a new thermometer unit, we suggest the tube should be carried in the above manner. The part number of the clip is N. 13950, and a small rubber tube  $5/16$ " outside diameter by  $3/16$ " inside diameter by 2" long is slipped in place over the capillary tube and inserted in the clip.

DATA SHEET NO. 23.

16th November 1938

MARLES STEERING GEAR L.7

The above steering gear is used on the 4.3 litre, Speed 25 and Crested Eagle models, and a new cam roller bearing assembly, No. P.A. 3507, is being incorporated in place of the old type Part No. P.A. 2262. The new cage is a definite improvement, and is strictly interchangeable with P.A. 2262.

It is important that the new cage should be assembled correctly, and to do this the cage assembly should be fitted on to the coned inner race on the cam, and then the outer race assembly over them. The cage assembly should not be assembled with the outer race first.

SERVICE NOTE:

Tightness in the steering is usually due to insufficient lubrication at every point. Check that the one-shot lubrication is working at all points by undoing each point one at a time and depressing the pedal. See that some oil oozes from the tube. On other cars, use a grease gun. If the nipple is blocked or the internals seized, a high pressure gun with penetrating oil will usually free the seized surfaces gradually.