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OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING

and

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8 p.m., Friday, 19th October, 1962 at the Clubrooms, 21 Edgar St.,
Glen Iris, S.E.6.

Business:

- i) Reports from Club Officers on the past year's activities.
- ii) Recommendations from such reports.
- iii) Election of Office-Bearers for 1962-3.
- iv) Next event.
- v) For Sale Notices.
- vi) Correspondence.
- vii) General Business.

TRIALS FOR INTERNATIONAL TROPHY TESTS

Unfortunately, these trials were doomed to failure. Although some considerable trouble was involved in booking the Fisherman's Bend airstrip for Oct. 7th, it turned out that the strip was in the hands of the Melbourne Hot-rodders when the few entrants arrived. To cap this, the weather for the event was shocking, and this doubtless turned away all but the most dedicated souls. These two factors were particularly unfortunate as the time is fast drawing close for the submission of entries for the International Trophy.

Further details on another date for the Trials will be given at the October General Meeting.

For those members who find information on 12/50s hard to come by, the following notes are reprinted from the Alvis Register Circulars:

12/50 Oil Pressure & Pumps:

Most 12/50s seem to run happily on oil pressures as low as 5 -10 lbs hot, although it must cause many earnest hearts to feel uneasy. Suggestions are as follows:-

- 1) Check relief valve seating.
- 2) Check rocker shaft feed, hot. There should be oil running down push rods and dripping slowly out of the end caps of the rocker shaft. It is neither necessary nor desirable to have a copious flow to the valve gear.
- 3) Check oil pump. On dismantling, there must be evidence of the top face of the pump seating well on the body. Check the four studs for security. There must be NO end float detectable when, with the pump gears placed in the pump body, a straight edge is placed across the top of the body. It requires much patience to achieve this. This can be done by rubbing both parts of the body down with carborundum paste on a sheet of plate glass, bolting the whole thing up every now and then with pieces of shim foil placed between pump gears and body, until the gears are just too stiff to turn with a one thou. shim. A maximum of one thou. end play is most important, otherwise there will be a serious oil leak within the pump from pressure side to suction side.
- 4) One should take endless trouble over the fit of the end faces of the delivery pipe inside the sump. Most engines when stripped show signs of leakage at these points.
- 4) Sometimes the oil pump can be replaced by another, suitably adapted. A Morris 14 pump gives 60 lbs at 60 m.p.h., 40 lbs at 40 m.p.h. and 5 lbs at tickover. A Standard 8 or 9 circa 1933-5 oil pump will fit the 12/50 and perform better as the pinions are twice Alvis depth. The pump also combines the relief valve. Mods - remove all external unions and stop holes with sealed screw plugs. Reduce spigot diameter to that of Alvis pump and drill holes in the top face of Standard pump for oil passages and stud holes for securing. The Standard drive shaft and key are the same as the Alvis and require no alteration.

Reducing Oil Leak Into Rear Brakes:

- 1) Buy some good grease remover (eg., Gunk) and thoroughly clean the whole back axle housing and fitments. You will find at least three breather holes bunged up solid with dirt. You will also find the back axle ratio stamped above the oil filler.
- 2) Withdraw the halfshafts and clean the oil return threads, which are also likely to be clogged.
- 3) Check rear axle oil level and make sure it is not overfilled.

(Ed. Note: In case you're wondering where the breather holes in the rear axle are located, one car seen recently had one on top of the rear axle casing in the centre, and there is one about three inches in from each extremity as well. They are about 1/8" diameter. They may, of course, not exist on all models.)

BTH Breaker points: The gap on the breaker points should be 12 thou. Check every 2 or 3 thousand miles as they wear fairly fast, and need regular re-adjustment.

JOTTINGS.... from Graeme Quinn.

Like, Late.

A certain unusual coffee lounge in Malvern seems to be attracting those members of both the Alvis Car Club and the V.S.C.C. who feel that 1.00 a.m. on Saturday is too early to go to bed. We believe that it was around 4.00 a.m. when some people decided that it was time to depart.

Prospective Member?

Alan Roberts, who owns the Le Mans 2.3 Litre Alfa Romeo Team car has mentioned that he is interested in acquiring either a Speed 25 or a 4.3 Litre Saloon. Post - vintage Alvis' are not new to Alan, who once owned the ex-Luxton Show model of 1935. (I wonder where this car is now.)

Alvis Sold

David Roberts has sold his Silver Eagle and has now acquired what is fast becoming one of those common Alfa Romeos.

Verse.. or Worse.

I came across the following verse recently, and I feel that it illustrates the frustration one feels when one is compelled to go anywhere near a popular resort on a fine Sunday afternoon.

I ran into some trippers,
In my swift De Dion Bouton,
Squashed them flat as kippers,
Left them "aussi mort que mouton".
What a nuisance trippers are
I must now repaint my car.

Huge Ends Dept.

Upon dismantling the 12/50 motor, Paul Bamford found the source of the loud knock in his engine to be No.3 big end, which had contrived to increase the normal amount of clearance to one of $\frac{1}{4}$ ". The motor is now about to receive a thorough overhaul. The rest of the car will not be ignored either. Hope for an all too rare model.

Speed Twentyfive Sold.

John Murray's Speed Twentyfive has been bought. The new owner is Bill Dobson, a familiar character around the V.S.C.C.

Supercharged FWD.

John Cole went to see the supercharged FWD that was advertised in South Australia. He brought back a number of photographs that he took of the car. John was rather disappointed in the condition of the car as the splined hub wheels had been converted to bolt-on, and the original headlights had been replaced by an American pair.

More Cole.

John has bought the silver Silver Eagle that we used to see in Les Lee's hands. By my tally, this brings the Cole stable to a grand total of four cars. Does any other member have this many or more? Granted no-one else has the room to store four Alvises, but surely it signifies something. Maybe we should all start in the orchard caper, seems to be very profitable. Must also be invigorating, I think, for him to be able to drive home to Tyabb in that Spartan machine on a winter night.

Tale of a Speed Twenty, or, Never a Dull Moment.

D. Bamford.

About fifteen months ago I put my Speed Twenty away for a very necessary "rest - cure". Long were the nights, and slow was the progress, but little by little I was getting a decent car. I thought I had checked everything. However, when the car was all together, I found the things that I had not checked. The first bug to show up was in the starting system. The heavy duty cable carrying the current from the solenoid was a lot worse than I thought it was. This was swiftly replaced. The solenoid itself then refused to operate. A check on a test bench found it to be completely burnt out. This was swiftly replaced with another Rotax solenoid of exactly the same model. All this between 11am. and 12 noon on a Saturday. Then came a trip to Bairnsdale in what I believed to be a reliable car. The car boiled all the way down there. Cause; blocked radiator. Remedy; Backflushing. Then came the piece de resistance. The starter motor commutator decided to dissolve and promptly gave up the ghost. As none of Bairnsdale's electrical engineers could help me, this took the edge off the party no end. Back in Melbourne, after a very cold and wet ride with no side curtains, a week and eighteen quid fixed that little problem. The night after I returned the starter motor to its rightful place, the differential wanted to hog the limelight. This, gentlemen, was the "coup de gras". The diff. carrier split pins had been accidentally left out and this was my reward for not checking; a pinion minus three teeth. David Muirson and Henderson's Ltd. helped me to reduce the cost to approximately half that of a new diff. from Coventry. Even if you are a mercenary type it pays to belong to a club.

The differential is now fixed, and I am waiting with baited breath for the next thing. If this small story can serve any purpose, or hold any moral, it is to say "check and double check everything when you work on your car". I would hate to see anyone else have the trouble after supposedly completing the job that I have had. But, to quote the Real enthusiast, " This in no way dampens my enthusiasm for motoring".

ALVISTORY

from Basil Bowes.

(The following is a report of an interview with the late T.G. John, and was published in the December 1929 issue of "Motor Sport". It is of particular interest, as it is probably the only article in which Mr. John expresses his views on front-wheel-drive. The accuracy of those statements may now be assessed after 33 years.)

"As the Alvis concern have, since the war, been so much to the fore in the development of the really fast light car in this country, it was with special interest that we called on Mr. T. G. John recently to obtain his views on things in general, and sports cars in particular.

Mr. John, who founded the Alvis Company, and is their managing director did not enter the motor industry until comparatively recently. In fact, he received his early training in the Navy, and the high efficiency and dogged persistence of the firm he now controls, is doubtless due in no small measure to the influence of the Silent Service. At the beginning of the war, he was with Armstrong's in charge of aero engine development, and this made him even further qualified to produce a fast car, and with this in mind he founded the Alvis concern in 1919.

We felt, continued Mr. John, that there was a definite market for a really high performance light car, and decided to cater for it. At the time, this class of vehicle was not made in this country, so we experimented and put the first Alvis on the market. This was a 10 h.p. two-seater and had a four-speed gearbox, which was a novel feature on a car of this type. It was not a cheap car, as it was priced at about £750, but it was really fast, and we entered it right away for competitions, and in those days there was a hill climb or speed trial nearly every week in the season. We did pretty well and cleared up quite a few events.

We had intended to stick to the 2-seater body, which was what we called the Zephyr body, built with a steel tube frame, covered with aluminium panels and strengthened with bracing wires after aeroplane practice.

This was extremely light, but had the disadvantage that it magnified noises more than a wooden frame, and as later customers demanded bigger bodies to carry four people in reasonable comfort, we dropped this type. Those who found that they liked going fast also found that they wanted to have a similar performance with more like touring comfort, and we increased the size and strength of the chassis.

We did not make any special racing cars, and all our competition work was done on hotted-up standard jobs.

Our first big success was the winning of the 200 Mile Race of 1923 with an ordinary un-supercharged car at over 93 m.p.h. and we then felt we had really shown that the Alvis could go fast. In 1924, the famous Talbot trio came home 1,2,3, and due to Were's accident in his Morgan, there was some confusion in the lap-scoring. However, it was eventually sorted out and it turned out that we were 4th, 5th, and 8th and we were pretty satisfied.

Next year we increased our engine to 11.9 h.p. and about this time we had a good day out after records and did 700 miles in under 8 hours, getting 39 records. We also did well at Shlosley-Walsh hill climb, as the President's cup for touring cars was won by Alvis 3 years in succession.

However, you don't want to hear a list of things we won - anyone can get those from the catalogue, though one performance we were specially pleased with was the 1500 c.c. standing start records for the mile and kilometre, at 80.84 m.p.h. & 72.27 respectively.

We continued to enter standard cars for as many events as possible, and though we naturally did not always win, we learnt a lot and we nearly always managed to finish. In the George Boillot Cup race at Boulogne, both the Alvis cars finished, and were the only British cars to do so, and we were still rather alone in this class against foreign competition.

With regard to racing expenses you wanted to know if our shareholders grumble about what we spend on racing. Well, for one thing, we don't spend a great deal for all the cars we race are built from standard material so they cost no more than any others, and for another, we find racing successes are a great help to business.

Of course, if we did as some firms have done in the past, and built special "freak" cars, it would not cut much ice when they won and the expense would be terrific, but a good deal of our racing is done for us by private owners, on standard cars.

Then you were asking about front-wheel-drive. Of course everyone wants to know about that, and some people have suggested we have given up selling F.W.D. cars. This is not so at all, and we have some in production at the moment, but although it is one of our standard models, it is a special type for a special purpose, and we don't wish people to buy them who do not really want them. We had a case the other day of a clergyman who had been sold a front-wheel-drive supercharged saloon to use for visiting the parish! This is an example of what may happen if a car which is at present intended for special work, i.e., really fast road work, is 'pushed' as the type for everyone.

Cases like that do much harm to the development of a new idea. Front-wheel-drive will come, as it is theoretically correct and has been shown to have many advantages in practice. The tractive effort is always in the direction you want to go, and not straight ahead as in the present type.

However, the present type is now more suited for general use, and when the new type is recognised as generally desirable, we shall be in a very nice position. Not only have we had valuable experience, but we have developed a considerable number of patents, which will put us in a good position. Any new ideas take time to mature and become approved by the public, but it is the people who get ahead and work on it instead of waiting till it is asked for, who are the ones who will reap the benefit. I have personally avoided one or two serious accidents in my own front-wheel-drive car by executing the most violent swerves, which in an ordinary car would have most certainly inverted it.

There has been a lot of talk about whether a front-wheel-drive car is difficult or dangerous to drive, and I can only give an instance of a driver taking one over, who was completely strange to the type and had to drive it in a race.

One J.C.C. 200 Mile Race, George Duller was to drive one of our cars, and the cars duly arrived at Brooklands a few days before the event for practice. The first thing we found with Duller's car was that there was no oil pressure, and this meant stripping the lower part of the engine to fit a new oil pump. The work was eventually completed, but not in time to give George Duller any time to try the car. We said it was too risky to take over a car of a new type which he had never driven in his life, but he was not worried. He said: "Cottenham has sent me a wire telling me how to drive it, so that will be all right!" These instructions amounted to the words: "When in doubt, step on it and steer."

This applies to all F.W.D. jobs and is where people get into difficulties. When you are taking a corner too fast, the one thing which will pull you round is the engine, if the drive is in the direction you want to go, which in front-drive cars it is.

Well, Duller started in that race, and led to the first bend, and went into it much too fast to be pleasant, and got into a terrific skid. But he remembered his injunctions and put his foot down hard, and he just came out of it and went round, and was well up in the race till his engine had some oiling trouble.

Of course, Duller we know, is a first-class driver, but no one on earth could drive a strange car in a race at over 100 m.p.h. and get away with it if there was anything radically wrong with the idea, and we claim it to be radically right. We have had engine trouble of course, everyone who races has some, but we have never had any bother with the front-wheel-drive.

A good example of the luck of racing is to be had from our recent 1,000 miles record. We sent down a car to see if it was all in order for the record; after all one of the first essentials is that the car should be capable of the necessary speed as well as being able to last! This engine proved quite up to expectations, so much so that they thought they would improve matters a bit, and see if it could be made fast enough for the hour record.

It was doing well over the 100 mark without being too much hotted-up, but they then put on a larger blower and started in to "make it go". It soon came up to near the speed they were after, and was doing about 116 m.p.h. on the lap. The car had a very high third gear, and it was sometimes done to change into third to go onto the member's banking. They decided that it liked third and was a bit over-geared in top, so they tried a complete lap all out in third.

Result -- a wire to the works that they had "thrown a con-rod", and please they would like another motor. Of course, racing engines are not built in a day, and we had not got one specially tuned to this pitch. Still, we wanted that record, and there was nothing for it but to take an engine out of production and send it down. They got it, ran it a bit to get everything right, and got the 1,000 miles and several other records. And owing to a stop on the way, which put them behind schedule, they had to lap at 107 m.p.h. for some time to pick up again.

Oh yes, it's a great game building a high-efficiency car, but you have to keep very much awake to avoid getting left behind, and there is no doubt that without competitions and racing, it would have taken another ten years for us to get as far as we have."

TUNING TRIPLE S.U. CARBURETTORS

(by courtesy the Alvis Owner Club's Handbook.)

* The purpose of this article is to give a concise step-by-step guide to members wishing to tune triple carburettor installations. It is based on two assumptions:

a) That the engine is in good condition with even compression on all cylinders and that ignition timing, contact breaker gaps, valve clearances and plug gaps are as recommended by the makers. All ignition parts should be in good condition.

b) That any wear in the butterfly spindles, washers, jets and needles and in the clevis pins of the rich mixture control linkage (where applicable) has been made good. Also that the filters and float chambers are clean, the petrol pump is working satisfactorily and that filters in the float chambers are sound and do not leak.

* For tuning, the following steps should be taken:

1) Remove the suction chambers and ensure that petrol levels are about $\frac{1}{8}$ " below the top of each jet.

2) Ensure that each needle is correctly fitted in its piston. The shoulder of the needle should be flush with the face of the piston.

3) While the suction chambers are off, screw up each jet until the tops are flush with the bridge of each carburettor. Push the jets hard up against the adjusting nuts.

4) Clean the interior of the chambers and also the pistons; abrasive materials should not be used.

5) Replace the pistons and chambers and, after tightening the latter, ensure that each piston moves up and down quite freely. Insert a little thin oil into the top of each chamber.

6) If any piston fails to drop smartly when raised, the chamber screws should be slackened and then re-tightened. A fractional movement of the chamber may occasionally effect a cure. Failing this, it will be necessary to re-centre the jet and the higher of the hexagonal nuts under the carburettor should be slackened off. The piston should now be raised to its fullest extent and dropped so that the needle driving into the jet, now free to move laterally, will re-centre it. It may be necessary to carry out this operation several times before the jet is correctly positioned and the nut can be finally tightened.

7) The engine should now be started and run for about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour, after which it should be set to run at about 800 r.p.m. Disconnect the rich mixture control linkage, or push in the easy start bowden cable.

8) Unscrew the 3 clamp bolts on the throttle spindle connections. Then, taking one carburettor at a time, slacken the throttle adjusting screw until the hiss at the carburettor intake disappears. Re-tighten the screw until the hiss can just be heard. The intensity of the hiss should be equal on all carburettors.

9) The mixture must next be adjusted bearing in mind that the jets are in the full weak position. When the mixture is correct, tighten clamp bolts and reconnect any appropriate linkages, keeping the jets pressed up and altering the linkage where necessary.