

CLUB OFFICERS

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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. 80 copies, by the Hon. Editors, and is issued free of charge to all financial Club members. Contributions and letters are always welcome.

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

8 p.m., Friday, 18th January, 1963 at the Clubrooms, 21 Edgar St., Glen Iris, S.E.6.

KALORAMA VINTAGE RALLY, 1963

The annual Rally will be held on Sunday, 24th March at the Kalorama Reserve as usual. There are however, a few changes in the administration this year. These have been necessitated by absence of the support of the Mount Dandenong Pre-School committee, who formerly provided catering facilities and handled the parking and entrance supervision.

The Council of the Combined Vintage Car Clubs have advised us that the following measures have been taken to help fill the gap:

- 1) There will be no free barbecue for entrants.
- 2) The catering facilities will be provided by professional caterers, who have been given the contract for the day, but are not under the control of the Organising Committee. Food, drinks and afternoon tea will be available from these caterers.
- 3) Each Club is to provide 3 volunteers for marshalling of spectator parking and entry. These officials will be required for approx. one hour. One of these officials will be required to sell programmes around the ground.
- 4) Entrants should observe moderation in the consumption of alcoholic drinks on the arena, particularly during events.
- 5) Children and spectators should be kept back from the cars in the arena.
- 6) Passengers are not allowed in the cars during events.
- 7) The start of the event will be at Linlithgow Ave. at 10 a.m. sharp as previously. There will not be an organised procession to Kalorama, but competitors are asked to follow a given route and proceed without undue delay to Kalorama. Competitors may enter at the start on payment of 10/-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Although postponed on many occasions in the past, the evil day has finally arrived when I must resign from official office in the Club. My new course in Dental Science is so exacting on my time and energies that I can no longer do justice to either editorial or secretarial duties, both of which have fallen woefully behind schedule in the last few months.

The Club should surely be able to find a satisfactory Secretary from among its present ranks, as this job entails less than might be imagined by the hesitant and wary. However, the Editorial post will not prove so easy. Both David Bamford and myself have not found that we can continue to do justice to "Alvic" and our private lives at the same time. This can only lead to a weakening of the content and punctuality of the magazine, and, to my mind, "Alvic" is not a magazine that should suffer half-measures. In my opinion, it should continue as it is or not at all. If the former case is not practical, it would be better to issue a monthly Notice-of-Meeting sheet, containing a few paragraphs of Club notes and administrative details (after the fashion of the Newsletter this Club issued before 1960). A slightly larger form of "Alvic" could then be issued when possible, say once or twice a year, and this magazine would contain service data, Alvistory and other items of non-dated and permanent interest to Alvisists here, and elsewhere. It could also take the form of a Year Book, similar to that issued by the Alvis Owner Club of Great Britain, containing a list of names and addresses of current financial members and their cars, brief reports of the main Club events for the year and any other items worthy of permanent record.

It is particularly unfortunate that this should have to be, when the progress and growth of the Club has been manifested in its journal. The end of a regular Club magazine could well mean a recession in membership and interest, particularly the country members whose only contact with the Club is in "Alvic". Bearing this in mind, it occurred to me that we might do well to avert this by subscribing on behalf of our members to one of the 3 remaining Club magazines, and issue this monthly in "Alvic"'s stead. This may not in fact be feasible, but unless something of this nature is done the next few years may well see the decline of the Club to a stage where even the remaining stalwarts loose interest. The number of extant Alvis cars here is dwindling quite rapidly, and therefore our membership is not likely to become any larger. This means that we must take all means at our disposal to hang on to the members we do have at present. The decline and fall of the Lancia Club of a few years back bears ample testimony to the results of ineffective stability afforded by the lack of a magazine or basic Club records. On the other hand, the phenomenal success of the Vintage Drivers' Club, or of other entities such as the Goggomobil Club, goes to show the rewards of efficient Club organisation and regularity in its publications. Enthusiastic leaders breed interest and a similar enthusiasm in the members, and law and order at meetings, coupled with worthwhile publications, are the necessary pre-requisites for an interested and permanent Club membership.

Shumder

FRONT DRIVE ALVIS

Extract from "The Autocar", June 25th, 1943.

*Experiences of an enthusiast who owns two of these cars: Rebuilding and Modifications.

Rather more than a year ago ("Talking of Sports Cars", April 17th, 1942) a front-wheel-drive Alvis enthusiast, Austin C. Partridge, provided notes on two cars of this type that he possesses, one a two-seater and the other a four-seater, and both 1929 models. In the meantime, Mr. Partridge has been able to meet the original owner of his four seater car and glean a good deal concerning its early history. This he now passes on, together with details of further modifications he has carried out, which are likely to be of interest to those who own or have ever owned an example of this front-wheel-drive machine. Although the FWD Alvis was not built in large numbers, enough of these cars have been in circulation to give it a definite following. It was, after all, one of the most unorthodox designs ever put on the ordinary market by a British manufacturer, and especially in its day, more than ten years ago, was one of the most advanced, providing a quite remarkable performance as a $1\frac{1}{2}$ -litre. Here then are Mr. Partridge's notes:

"After the cessation of private motoring during the war, I utilised the precious moments of spare time to fit double Hartford shock absorbers on the two seater, and whilst attempting to carry large lumps of Alvis on the back of my bicycle, I became entangled with some tramlines, and instead of spending my rest day at the garage, I arrived at the hospital with concussion.

Earlier History:

"Thus it was during convalescence after this misadventure, I found an excellent opportunity to write to Mr. E. Farley, the original owner of the four-seater car, UW 2017. Mr. Farley ran it in many sports car races around the 1930 period, and I had the pleasure of learning from him some of its history. We discussed at some length the performance possibilities of this particular type of Alvis, and I venture a description of those qualities, together with the notes on the latest modifications carried out on the two-seater.

" Supercharged UW2017 was entered in a race for sports cars of four cylinders held at Brooklands in June, 1930. The race was three laps of the outer circuit, and the Alvis was heavily handicapped on account of its being supercharged. UW2017 gained first place at an average speed of 82.04 m.p.h. from a standing start, and won the "Daily Mirror" cup. Immediately after this race it was suggested that, as Mr. Farley had the fastest four-cylinder Alvis of the day, it would be a good idea to match it against one of the straight-eight FWD Alvis. A handicap was arranged and UW2017 started off the line: the project then fell somewhat flat as the straight eight had some trouble and could not start. During the same year, Mr. Farley tried the car at Shelsley, and results were far better than had been expected of a front-wheel-drive car. He can find no record of the actual time for the hill but the Alvis, hugging the

bends and ploughing furrows into the banking with its hub caps, was second.

"The old green four-seater also won several races at Skogness, and in those days it was good for "100 and some". The engine was absolutely standard, and the usual 4.77 axle ratio was used, in conjunction with oversize tyres to give a slightly higher overall ratio. It is interesting to note the performance of an unblown two-seater FWD four-cylinder Alvis which Mr. Farley was also racing at about the time in question. This car was fitted with a high-ratio axle, probably 4.3 or 4.5, Hartford shock absorbers, two S.U. carburettors, extra high compression pistons, aluminium body, with spare wheel carried inside the tail, and a wind deflector below the front of the radiator to assist cooling.

In the '500'.

"This car was entered for the 500 Miles Race at Brooklands in 1931 and completed 300 miles non-stop at an average of 99 m.p.h. Two laps after a pit stop, Mr. Farley was forced to retire after a 'blow-up' caused by some mysterious lubrication trouble. He considers that the use of a blown engine is advantageous only as far as acceleration and hill-climbing are concerned, having little effect on maximum speed; this has also been my experience. It is interesting to note that the cars raced at Le Mans in 1928 were unblown and put up a very good show (see 'Motor Racing', S.C.H. Davis). It appears to me that the four wheel independent suspension must have been a great advantage in all sporting events, especially at Brooklands, at a time when contemporaries were mostly 'vintage-hard' in their springing.

"My own personal experience is somewhat limited, as I have done no competition driving. I have, however, pushed the mileage on the four-seater from 40,000 to 85,000 with fast touring and have had a speedometer reading of 82. It seems such a long way back in the dim past that I can scarcely recall what it was like to drive with ten gallons of Discoll in the tank and the blower in operation. Taking all things by and large it must have been jolly good.

"Before laying up the car for the duration, I narrowly escaped a very serious accident whilst indulging in a spot of fast cornering. I was negotiating a sharp right-hand turn with a little more than usual enthusiasm when the steering seized solid at full lock. I shot across the road in front of on-coming traffic and pulled up astride the pavement. No damage was done and on investigation it was found that one of the lower front springs, due to excessive loading, had fouled on the steering push-rod. The car was very heavily laden with luggage at the time, a fact which may have had something to do with the occurrence. Farley mentioned a similar experience, so I shall have to consider the question of a modification in this direction.

Worst Things First.

"On contemplating the rebuilding of my two-seater I deemed it wise to commence with the back-aching work, to proceed with the bits and pieces and to conclude with the interesting overhaul of the power unit and gear-box. A start was made with the back end, and the rear suspension was liberally re-inforced with extra leaves. A set of rear springs from a long chassis car was used for this purpose, and the four extra leaves in each spring made the world of difference to the feel of the suspension, which was previously far too soft. I wish

to correct a statement I made in my previous notes. It was said that the rear springs of the short chassis were not interchangeable with those of the long chassis. This is incorrect, as I have now discovered, and I can only assume that a pair of ill-fitting springs lying amongst my spares originated from an earlier 1928 model. Stronger brake cables were next fitted. These were of the Bowdenex pattern, complete with greasers, and were obtained from a modern vehicle in a breaker's yard; they had to be considerably adapted - a fiddling business. The fitting of Hartfords all round was a formidable task, too. It was decided to use the large diameter double type as these were very much in evidence at the local breaker's yard being fitted to most of the large saloon cars of the 1930-34 period. A dozen shock absorbers were purchased, with arms of various lengths, and after pulling them to pieces, I had a marvellous assortment of short arms, medium arms and long arms, all interchangeable.

"For the rear of the car a short arm was used inconjunction with a medium length arm and the shock absorber was connected to an extended shackle pin made for the purpose. Special attention was paid to clearance between the chassis member and the end of the pin. It was just managed at $\frac{1}{8}$ " , and this allowed unlimited travel under working conditions, the angle between the shock absorber arms being 90 degrees at rest. The work carried out on the front suspension required an abnormal amount of manual effort, considering the results achieved. All eight springs were removed from the chassis and in order to do this, the radiator, wings and hubs had to be dismantled. The springs were all pulled apart and the sixteen spring loaded damping clamps were discarded. The thirty-two protruding lugs for holding these clamps were cracked off the main leaves with a hammer, and the rough edges so produced were cleaned down with a sharp file, all leaves then being cleaned of rust and paint.

Yards of Cord and Tape.

"On reassembly, all spring leaves were smeared with graphite grease and bound with the aid of a hundred yards of best quality blind cord, sixteen reels of insulating tape and a pint of shellac. The shock absorbers were each fabricated from one medium arm and one long arm cut down in length by half an inch. Mounted transversely, they sat two on each side of the car, and special brackets made to connect them to the chassis. The other connections were made to specially constructed shackle pins. The standard size pin was retained at the lower universal hub assembly, the special pin at the top of the hub being four inches longer, and has a shoulder at each end to accomodate the Silentbloc bushes on the Hartfords.

"Twin S.U.s are from a 3-litre Lagonda, mounted on a home-made manifold made from $\frac{1}{2}$ " mild steel plate and $1\frac{1}{2}$ " electrical conduit. A balance pipe of $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter is fitted, and it has a set screw adjustment at its centre.

Built-up Windscreen:

"A fold-flat windscreen was constructed to replace the unsatisfactory screen originally fitted, which was far too shallow for a tall person to see through. This new screen was built up from numerous pieces of material bought at a junk yard. There remained only the power unit to receive attention; the bodywork, exhaust system and steering were overhauled. Immediately the car came into my possession two years ago."

BOOKWORM'S SECTION

" MOTORING FOR BEGINNERS " by Dudley Noble. Teach Yourself Books, 177 pages. Aust. price - 9/3.

The experienced Clubman will say that this little volume will not tell him much that he doesn't know already. But he might be quite surprised at the wealth of information in the book. I certainly was when I spent a spare hour or so browsing through the many matters of driving and maintenance on cars from a general, layman's angle, and learnt a lot from it.

The book comes in three main sections - Driving, "The Works" and Maintenance. There are, of course, many books covering much the same ground, but I venture to say that there are none that tell as much for such a low price. What is even better, it does not only tell about the modern tinware motor vehicle. Its remarks apply to 95% of the cars built since 1920.

For the tyro mechanic, it is particularly useful in explaining such things as car gearings (both g/box and diff.) and how they are chosen, the various types of transmission, engines, carburetors, suspensions etc..

It is full of many questions (and their answers). For instance, see how many of the selection below YOU can answer satisfactorily right now:

1. How thick would the film of lubricating oil be inside a properly-fitted big-end bearing ?
2. Describe the basic constructional differences between a) a normal friction clutch and b) a fluid flywheel.
3. What is the meaning of a) synchro-mesh ?
b) a "crash"-box ?
4. For what reason are universal joints employed and where ? Describe two different types.
5. How should the driver set his controls when 'coasting' ? What should he NEVER do to arrive at the same effect ?
6. How would you re-engage top gear after descending a hill with the gear in neutral ?
7. Why should an excess of lubricant in the wheel-hub bearings be avoided ?
8. Describe three ways whereby the tendency on the part of the cylinder bores to wear may be minimised.
9. How is it possible for the brakes to catch on fire ?
10. Should you 'double-declutch' when changing into a higher gear ? Give reasons for your answer.

If all of these questions present no difficulties at all, then this book is not for you. However, if you find trouble with more than one-third of these queries, then the 9/3 spent will be very well spent. (By the way, the book is NOT a paperback, but a well-bound number in the well-known Teach Yourself series.)

The only section of the book that Australian drivers can afford to bypass is the section on English road laws and regulations, which, of course, are not necessarily the same here. But the section on driving techniques is very good. It seems incredible to me that so many drivers on our roads don't know many of the aids to efficient relaxed driving, such as the best way to grip a steering wheel for both comfort and safety (This applies to some of our members too.) The five-to-one, or midnight grip is unfortunately very prevalent and must contribute considerably to driving strain on any but the shortest trips. Use of the correct twenty-to-four grip would make life much easier for a large number of drivers.

The book also explains other elementary things such as the correct technique for cornering at speed, braking at corners, "double-declutching" driving on ice or loose sand, correcting skids, obtaining maximum tyre life and 'cornering power', interpreting instrument readings, fault-finding, maintaining and overhauling components.

None of this, of course, specifically refers to Alvis cars (or to any other make), but virtually all of it applies.

In all, this is very good value, and ideal for the tyro car-owner, who wants to find out more about his car than how to sit in it and point the front wheels in the right direction.

DAVID MUIRDEN.

(Next issue: Review of "The Shape of the Motor Car" by Leslie Everett.)

HELPFUL HINTS

* Squeaking bonnets fixed:

Bothered by a very annoying squeak from the bonnet of his car recently, one of our members investigated the cause and found that it came from the rubber strip that runs across the top of the scuttle and supports the bonnet.

He softened some ordinary soap under the hot water tap, then rubbed it in well along the rubber strip. This cured the trouble instantly, and the bonnet is still quiet after some weeks of daily use. Being a proper rubber lubricant, genuine soft soap would be better.

* Rustproofing earth clips:

Many electrical jobs around the car require a good earth. To do this properly, it is necessary to scrape away any paint and rust until the metal becomes bright and clean. Unfortunately, this area then becomes a rust danger spot, particularly where it is affected by rain and weather. After cleaning right down to the metal, coat the area well with a rust inhibitor, such as Metalprep, Genolite etc., rubbing in well with steel wool. Wipe dry and then apply one or two coats of aluminium paint. Being metallic, this paint makes a good electrical contact, but being a paint, it protects the area from rusting.

* Oil for One-Shot Lube:

For the post-vintage cars fitted with the one-shot chassis lubrication system, use only straight 90 (or even 140 if necessary) but do not use any of the E.P. lubricants of this SAE rating, as the additives they contain will do considerable harm to the system. Don't use engine oil!

OIL CONSUMPTION

If any complaints of excessive oil consumption are made on the TA 14, it is strongly recommended that you verify the figures given by the owner. A careful check should be made and figures in the region of 1,500 m.p.g. can be taken as entirely satisfactory.

The idea that an engine should consume no oil is entirely wrong. Furthermore, as the majority of engines improve in consumption over the first 2,000 miles, no action should be taken during that period. If however, you are satisfied after this period that the consumption is really excessive, we can supply new piston rings which will make a distinct improvement. These rings are now being fitted as standard on all new cars.

Points to note when fitting:-

- a) The pistons can be easily withdrawn from the bottom of the engine after removing the sump.
- b) The layout of the new rings is: top ring, plain type; middle ring, stopped (the recess portion must be at the bottom); lower ring, scraper.
- c) No alterations whatever are necessary to the pistons.
- d) When the pistons and connecting rods are removed it is advisable to check the alignment or squareness of the pistons to the big end bore. It is easy to set the connecting rods to correct this.
- e) Care must be taken in fixing the gudgeon pin locking bolt so as not to twist the connecting rod. A check with the piston in position on the connecting rod is therefore advisable.

Part Nos: C.2974 Compression Plain - 4 off per set.
 C.2975 " Stopped - 4 off per set.
 C.2976 Scraper - 4 off per set.

AFTER-BURN SWITCH STIFFNESS

As explained in Data Sheet No. 80, the object of the after-burn device on the TA 14, is to close the carburettor butterfly completely when the ignition is switched off.

It has been found in some cases that when cooling down, the carburettor housing shrinks on to the throttle butterfly, causing it to bind. The ignition-key operation is hardly strong enough to overcome this binding, and therefore it is a good plan to either depress the accelerator or pull out the choke control before switching on the ignition from cold.

The operation of the accelerator or throttle control will open the carburettor butterfly and overcome the binding caused by shrinkage.

It is also important to check the operation of the linkage, and adjust as necessary to ensure that the stop connected to the cable swings free when the ignition is switched off, and connects with butterfly control rod when idling, so that a small throttle opening is maintained during idling. Stalling will otherwise result.