

CLUB OFFICERS

- Hon. President: David Bamford, 30 Fiddes St., Moorabbin, S. 20.
Hon. Vice-President: David Caldwell. Scribe: David Muirden
Club Captain: Alister Cannon. Social Secretary: John Larsen.
Hon. Treasurer: Andy Hannam, "Crowsall", Doveton Ave., Dandenong.
Hon. Secretary: Position vacant.
Hon. Editor: David Muirden, 116a Kooyong Rd., Caulfield, S.E.7.

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. Editor, and is issued free of charge to all financial Club members. Contributions and letters are always welcome.

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

8 p.m., Friday, 15th March, 1963 at the Clubrooms, 21 Edgar St., Glen Iris, S.E.6.

- Business:
- a) Election of Hon. Secretary.
 - b) Discussion on future of "Alvic".

It has been suggested that instead of producing "Alvic" in future, that the Club subscribe on behalf of members for 40 copies a month of the Bulletin of the Alvis Owner Club of Great Britain. This will cost about the same as the present expenditure on "Alvic", but will have the following advantages:

- 1) It will not entail any work by Club officers other than mailing.
- 2) It will appear regularly every month without fail.
- 3) It is commercially printed and contains a monthly photograph of a different Alvis car in England (or Australia) and devotes much of its space to service articles.
- 4) Periodical notes from our Club will be included whenever they are sent over for publication.
- 5) The bulk subscription automatically makes each financial member of our Club, an Associate member of the A.O.C. without any further payment. (i.e., this way the Club pays £1 per member to the A.O.C. at a reduced rate, as against £2/2/- sterling for individual private overseas subscription). Financial members of the Alvis Car Club, Victoria will be able to buy A.O.C. car badges, ties etc.

Disadvantages:

- 1) Each issue of the Bulletin will arrive here two months late.
- 2) Much of the content of the Bulletin is devoted to English Club news and administrative information.

N.B. It is intended to publish a Notice-of-Meeting sheet to go out with the Bulletin here, which contains our own news and administrative notes, Cars for Sale Notes, and any other Jottings or Events news.

The True, Unexpurgated, Authentic, and Personally Witnessed History of the Victorian Alvis Club (for which I expect an honorary doctorate from the British Tractor Institute) by a Gentleman of Quality.

While I consider "Alvic" as it is now, is a far superior journal to the Sydney "Alvibatics" as I last knew it some 9 years ago, I have always thought that the latter journal gained a good deal of reader-interest from the (no doubt deliberately) provocative contributions of the Sydney Club's stormy petrel - David Manson.

When the history of the Club is fully written, I am sure that the worthy historian will say something like this: "Alvic" was a pleasant journal which did sterling work for many years in a small way, it was really put on its feet by the controversy started by Terry Plummer's article, which appeared in the January 1963 edition under the Letters to the Editor heading.

While Terry's letter has caused me to 'take my quill' (and other cliches which I forget) I must warn you dear reader, that while I was there and Terry was not, the learned gentleman who compiled our Bible (and I do mean the Christian, King James type - not 'Alvic') discarded the version of Mark, who was present at a certain incident of early flight, and accepted that of Paul of Tarsus although it was written some 300 years after the event. So beware - read and enjoy; do not form hasty judgements; and above all, please do not beat poor Terry over his red head with his own torn-off leg, for sad to say, even a genius such as I could conceivably be at fault - in a minor way, of course.

Anyway as I see it (and have it recorded) the facts are these :

* I bought a Speed 20. I found that there was an Alvis Club in Sydney. That Club had four members in Melbourne. I obtained their addresses and found that one had gone away, and two had sold their vehicles and were no longer interested.

* The remaining member was keen, but after a few months, ran away to sea (to get his master's ticket).

* I wrote to Sydney and asked permission to form a local Club as a branch, and offered to pay to Sydney one half of all subscriptions, as a levy to support services such as Alvibatics, which Victoria could not then afford to produce itself.

* Permission granted, I placed advertisements in various papers, and as a result the 'nucleus of hoary-headed, decrepit old gents' got together. By some strange mischance I was elected - or steam-rolled my way into the position of FIRST CLUB PRESIDENT with John Calloway as Secretary and John Spragg as Club Captain.

* At the annual meeting held in October 1955, I stood down (after three terms without a knighthood) and Graham Thorley was elected SECOND CLUB PRESIDENT, to be followed after 12 months by Ron Allen.

* In April '57, I was again elected President, and on my suggestion it was ruled that the retiring President should become, ipso facto, Club Captain.

* After that came these beardless youths - these Johnny-come-lately's, these interloping nouveau riche, to whom Terry refers.

Having cleared up the Book of Genesis, let us look at the "Ten Minutes Which Shook the World" :

Although we had agreed to pay half of each subscription as a levy to Sydney, this had only been done once, in the very early days, and a letter had been sent asking for release from this undertaking, as we needed all our funds for local development, and no levies had been paid for years.

About six months before the blow-up, one of the two gentlemen who provoked that incident commenced agitation for a split away from Sydney, and I was inclined to agree with him.

Right in the middle of this campaign there came a letter from a newly-elected female executive of the Sydney Club, in the form of a statement charging us for levies back to the time of the flood.

As we now had some 60 members (and Terry - we also had our Club Room) this came to a tidy old sum, and the arrogant terms in which the demand was couched, touched off the spark and ignited the dynamite.

It was resolved to break away there and then, but it was pointed out by our tame genius (me) that we should prepare for our coming liberation, and approve a constitution before giving Sydney the 'Khybor'. A draft constitution was duly drawn up, typed, photostatically enlarged to ten-times size, and posted up on the walls of the Club Room (Yes, Terry, it had been built then) where it was left over two meetings for all members to read and consider, so that the meeting-time would not be taken up in detailed discussion!

It was then put to the meeting, and only points brought up by members were discussed. The constitution in its amended form was passed by the meeting in less than thirty minutes!

We now had a constitution of our own, and Sydney was told to go bowl their collective hoop while we enjoyed the freedom of liberty, equality - and all that rhubarb.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, the iron hand of the ruthless dictator Morrow had seized the throats of the Victorian members and forced them to suggest that the meetings should be run formally for the first hour (so that we could get more business done, and to allow members to express their views on that business) and then close the meeting for informal chatter. We even used to have old-fashioned things like minutes, so that Terry could refer to them when writing his history of the Club at a later date.

However, a certain gent who has 'kept the name of Alvis before the something or other for ever so long', and who attended about every fourth meeting (always late) and who would not come at all if our meetings conflicted with Vintage Club meetings, and for whom our meeting nights were changed to no avail, and who always spurned us and rode with the Vintage Club at mixed meetings, considered that he and his particular buddy (who shall remain nameless, but who was to be elected President in my place) considered that they had the right to stand at the back of the meeting, and discuss personal matters in a loud tone while the formal business was being done.

The blow-up was over whether the President had the right to call these people to order, in view of the fact that one had "travelled a long way to come to this meeting and wanted to talk to his friend".



for so long, a spy from the Vintage Car Club, and his self-styled architect of a friend, whose name is similar to one who is frequently ridiculed but who has possibly some integrity, managed to wrought their evil, and as is always the case, then departed from the Club.

However, while all this is of historical interest only; to the members who make up the well-run, energetic, and above all, pleasant Club which it is today, the ultimate aim of all organisations is to reach such a state and I consider that whatever the means may have been, they made possible the present happy state of affairs.

BOB MORROW.

BOOKWORM'S SECTION

" THE SHAPE OF THE MOTOR CAR " by Leslie Everett. Hutchinson. 166 pages. Aust. price - 18/9

This is yet another of those books of general interest to the motoring historian which makes good reading, although, as usual, Alvis does not rate a mention, while rare curiosities such as the Calthorpe, Horstmann, Deemster, Crouch etc., receive very good treatment. However, as a history of the main development of the motor car it does a particularly good job, and it also points an intelligently-directed finger towards future developments.

A certain nostalgia pervades the book throughout whenever the author is discussing modern automobiles. Let us select as an example this paragraph:

" Purring along effortlessly in a modern saloon car, with its press-button control, finger-tip steering, luxurious suspension, and air-conditioned interior, I drift back mentally to those far-off days. I am jolting along on the hard seat of the home-made body of our old Darracq. I hear again the shattering thump-thump of its noisy twin cylinders and smell the old familiar smell of burnt oil and heated metal. The steering wheel becomes upright and rigid in my hands, shuddering with every pot-hole in the road. I am back again for a few brief moments in those adventurous days and wondering, as always, whether all those bits and pieces, which I fashioned so laboriously and happily in my workshop to replace the ever-breaking portions of the engine and transmission, are going to hold. I am wondering, as ever, if I am going to reach my journey's end . . . "

As far as the pure Alvist is concerned this is not worth buying. But that is not to say it is not worth reading. There are some really delightful passages that in themselves vindicate the publisher's support of the book. For example, the notes on his father's 12 hp. Darracq:

" Father purchased an extremely ancient Darracq, a two-cylinder 12 h.p. car which was towed into his garage with great pride. Engine, chassis, everything was complete except the body. Nothing daunted by this lack, father set to work to build one. As he was at work during the daytime, he decided to build it at home, during the long winter evenings.

Unfortunately, we lived in a flat, so garden space was extremely limited. With the true enthusiasm of the pioneer that he was, he selected the bedroom as the most suitable place to construct the body. Evening after evening he would retire from the living room and saw, hammer, and chisel away to his heart's content. For months, mother slept surrounded by sheets of iron, wooden frames, and cramps. Sawdust seemed to be ever floating in the air, and sleep was impossible until the early morning hours.

"Finally the upholstery was in place, the last fillet screwed down, and it was ready for transport to the chassis. Then came the climax. It was too wide to get out of the door! Regretfully father dismantled it, and we pushed it piece by piece through the window, carted it to the chassis, and re-assembled it.

I don't remember anyone praising it for its elegance. Most people gave one glance at it and shuddered.

Our Darracq was a noisy, smoky monster of a car. "Genevieve" of film fame was a lady, even if a somewhat temperamental one. Ours was certainly no gentleman. One of his favourite diversions was to run short of water, sending out a searing, hissing jet of steam. Another was to cease firing on one of his two cylinders, causing his passengers and driver to be thrown violently forward in fits and starts.

His crowning achievement, however, was reserved for an isolated spot in the country. To us nowadays, with reliable transport, it seems unlikely that there could be such a spot, but in those harassing times, towns seemed very remote to adventurers on ancient vehicles of unreliable habits.

We had just descended a slight slope in really fine style - in fact we remarked upon the quietness of the transmission. At the foot of the slope father accelerated with the hand throttle to get a good run at the hill before us. In spite of the ever-increasing roar of the engine, our speed grew slower, until, with the engine racing madly, we came to a halt. Father looked puzzled for a moment, and then switched off the noisy engine. A sudden peace descended upon the scene. Never had the country seemed so quiet.

"Clutch gone," he announced briefly. Spreading an old overcoat on the ground, he crawled underneath, only to reappear a moment later looking even more puzzled.

"Did you hear anything fall off?" he asked. We shook our heads. He lit his pipe and contemplated the rise down which we had just come. Then he motioned to me and we set off to retrace the track of the car. Reaching the crest of the rise, we saw a group of women chatting together outside the garden wall of a rustic cottage. Tentatively, father approached.

"Excuse me," he said nonchalantly as though it was an everyday occurrence, "have you seen a transmission shaft lying about?"

The group stared at him uncomprehendingly. "A piece of round steel about this length," he hurried to explain, his arms extended in the manner of a fisherman describing 'the one that got away'.

"Oh!" said one of the women, a look of dawning comprehension in her eyes. "Is that what you call it?"

She led the way into the garden and picked up the weighty shaft. "Would 'a come in jest right for proppin' up me old pear-tree branch. Pity!"

We thanked her and walked back with the shaft. Arriving at the car, father pulled out the unbelievable equipment with which he always travelled and practically set up a workshop in the back of the car. There he repaired the damaged shaft, crawled underneath and fitted it. Half an hour later we were once again snorting along the country road, a proud compliment to the engineering skill of the mechanic-drivers of those pioneer days."

or his experiences with a friend who couldn't yet drive:

" A friend of mine once possessed a Wolseley Stellite, which was principally remarkable for a very high body, highly polished brass-work, a remarkable flexible engine, and a nice selection of 'crash' gears. As he had never driven a car before, I was deputed to instruct him. Arriving at a quiet country lane, I vacated my seat at the wheel, and he took over. With the utmost confidence and a terrible amount of grating from the offended gearbox, he forced home the gear lever, revved up the engine till it seemed it must dissolve into fragments at any moment, and then abruptly let in the clutch. Unfortunately his selection in the matter of a gear was somewhat unhappy. With a lurch that cracked my head against the windscreen, we shot suddenly backwards, the steering wheel swung round, and we cracked up against a five-barred gate, much to the surprise of a ruminative cow which was gazing thoughtfully into space. It registered pained surprise as its meditations were thus rudely interrupted, and "mooed" feelingly as the gate crashed up against it. The engine spluttered and died, just as my friend stepped on everything, and the car came to a sudden halt.

We clambered out of our seats, and went to the back of the car to ascertain the extent of the damage. It was at this moment that the cow turned slowly and deliberately round and demonstrated to us exactly what she thought of the car in what I can only describe as a highly anti-social manner. I disengaged the gear lever, hurried round the front, and wound vigorously at the starting handle. As I slid into the driving seat and moved that car away from further insults, a derisive 'Moo' followed us down the lane."

I leave those who are interested to read for themselves his remarks on the Austin "Chummy" (p 111-114) and other similar whimsies.

Probably this is an excellent book to buy as a present for a car-minded friend, and make sure that you read before you hand it over. Last, but not least, it has the great virtue of a copious supply of good photographs, which aptly illustrate the important points of the text.

DAVID MUIRDEN.

HOW TO RUIN AN ORGANISATION

(with apologies to
Russ Tyson, on ABC
Breakfast Session.)

1. Don't attend meetings.
2. If you do attend - come late.
3. Never accept office. It's much easier to criticise than do something.
4. If asked by the Chairman for your opinion, just tell him that you have nothing to say - and then, after the meeting, tell everyone how things should have been done.
5. Hold back your subscriptions as long as you can, in order to give the Secretary and Treasurer a lot of unnecessary work and embarrassment.
6. Never subscribe to your journal. This bucks up the Editor, and enables him to make constant improvements.
7. Don't bother about getting new members - let someone else do it. After all, there's plenty of others who have time for that sort of thing.
8. In short, do nothing more than is absolutely necessary, but when other members roll up their sleeves and do the lot, howl like mad about how the organisation is being run by a clique.

REAR AXLE BREATHER LEAKAGE

One or two cases have come to light where on the TA 14 rear axle, excessive oil has leaked out of the breather which is situated on the top of the axle casing approx. 7" to the offside of the centre.

There is no apparent reason for this leakage, except the pressure which builds up inside the axle due to the normal temperature rise. Also, there would appear in some instances, to be an ejector effect with the wind blowing over the domed shap cover of the breather.

The axle oil level should be carefully watched and if any excessive leakage is found from the breather, an effective cure can be made by the following method:-

Remove the breather by unscrewing it from the casing, drill a vertical hole in it with a 7/32" drill up to the four cross holes and also counter-sink the bottom with a 5/8" diameter drill.

TA 14 SPARKING PLUGS

Data Sheet no. 89 referred to alternative sparking plugs for TA 14, and we now advise you that the standard equipment is either Champion L. 10 or Lodge C.N., both of which have been proved equally suitable for this model.

INSTRUMENT VIBRATION

On the TA 14 a slight vibration might be experienced at certain engine revs.

This vibration is generally due to the electric time clock, which cannot be altered in construction to eliminate the noise.

A simple cure is to fix a metal strip from the facia board to the steering column bracket bolt. We can either supply these strips or they could be made up locally, in which case we suggest a metal strip approx. 3/4" wide x 16 gauge, bent over at one end and screwed with a wood screw to the rear side of the facia board at the nearside bottom corner adjacent to the cut-away for the steering column. The strip should then be drilled to marry up with the steering column support bolt, so that there is a definite tie between facia board and steering column.

SLOW RUNNING ADJUSTMENT TA 14

With the after-burn device fitted it is possible for the ignition key to be turned sufficiently for electrical contact to be made and for the engine to run, without pulling after-burn cam sufficiently high to give sufficient revs for slow running. It is therefore necessary to turn the ignition key its full distance to make sure of correct slow-running adjustment.

Where you experience complaints of engine stalling, you will look at this point and give advice where necessary.