



VICTORIA

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MT. GAMBIER INTERSTATE RALLY 13/15 JUNE, 1964

The Editor was unable to attend the Rally so that correspondents who were there have come to the rescue (bless'em) and their accounts of the week-end appear below. The Editor is almost speechless with gratitude.

The Rally was extremely well supported by enthusiasts from Victoria and S.A. The bookings in the Motels could have been better organised, as we were split among four motels. Roy Henderson and his son being alone in the Blue Lake Motel, which wasn't much fun for them.

It is doubtful whether anyone from Vic., apart from John & Geraldine Murray, were at the starting point on the Geelong Road at 9.15 a.m. on Saturday. The writer should have been, but having inadvertently spent the Friday night in Canberra owing to fog closing Melbourne air port, he was not available. As far as can be ascertained, we all dined at the Commodore Motel on Saturday night, thereafter availing ourselves of the hospitality offered in the Lehner/Ramsay apartment. Much talk and conviviality ensued.

Sunday morning the component parts of the Rally came together, some with joy, some rather thoughtful it appeared. After much discussion we all headed for Port Macdonnell, or rather we thought we all headed there. Sid Lehner, whose 3 litre was punctured was unfortunately not informed of our destination and was left behind. Writer also blundered by leaving his mother-in-law in Mt. Gambier. This error was discovered at Port Macdonnell when a quick turn round was accomplished and a rather quick 3 litre headed back to our starting point. On the way back a D/H 3 litre was seen approaching, containing Sid and one passenger, who was fortunately none other than writers relation. Luckily both those left behind are possessed of a sense of humour.

Adam Lindsay Gordon's Cottage provided a wonderful place to park and display all the attending Alvis cars, as well as being an interesting historical spot. An interesting fact to note in the lineup of cars was the complete absence of vintage Alvises and only two PVT's, J. Murray's 12/70, and Ron Bloyd's Speed 25. The balance being T.A. 14's, 3 litres and Grey Ladies. It is known that many members are busy restoring earlier models, and that this takes time, money and effort. Owners of these cars would perhaps be willing to attend a Rally closer to home than Mt. Gambier, and during a warmer season, this idea could perhaps be promoted and discussed at a later meeting. This is only a random thought, of course, as the Mt. Gambier Rally was primarily one to enable the South Australian and Victorian enthusiasts to meet, which aim was accomplished admirably.

Lunch was had at an excellent fish Café at the Port. The afternoon happenings are unknown to your reporter as relatives in Portland had to be visited. Before we left for Portland we saw Nick Davies in his motorised caravan talking of things Alvis to all and sundry.

Sunday night was passed at JEN'S Hotel, (a restaurant where we were first booked having proved to be unlicensed on Sundays) where a very good dinner was provided, and the use of a lounge for a yarn and a drink after. On Monday morning we all departed our various ways. We had had a wonderful weekend, admittedly not having accomplished anything tangible in the way of trials etc. (there being little or no opportunity as no ground was available) but it was felt that the meeting of the two contingents, and the fun we all had at the Rally will be beneficial for the Club and will lead to more Rallies of a similar kind.

Mt. Gambier Interstate Rally Cont'd.

Those who were there:-

- S.A. - Vic. Elliott, John & Geraldine Murray, Ron Bloyd, Ian Polson, Dr. Mayne, Bill Richards, Dick & Mrs. Dunn, John Dunn, Glen Merry, Wendy Roach, Jack Baker.
- VIC. - Mrs. Morris, Sid. Lehner, David & Evelyn Muirden, Alister and Rosalie Cannon, Simon Ramsay, Terry Plummer, Graeme and Jane Quinn and three children, Roy Henderson and son, Keith and Merrill Welsh and Janice, Mrs. Fanning, David and Moira Wischer.

MT. GAMBIER INTERSTATE RALLY JUNE 13/15 1964.

Or - "who told the chef at Jen's it was "Porterhouse" Steak?"

4.30 p.m. Saturday June 13th. The beginning of the rush - starting with a wedding, then the Breakfast, then a mad dash hither and yon to pick up children, deliver children, kiss the bride and my wife goodbye, and then, at 9.30 p.m., off to Mt. Gambier with my son John, for the Alvis Car Club's annual interstate rally with the Sth. Australian contingent. My! its a long road at night! All of the 200 miles to our bivouac at Hamilton in the wee small hours of Sunday morning.

Luckily (or is it due to my fine mechanicship?), this is no tale of mangled metal, just a shiver by shiver account of the joys of modern motoring when most people with any sense would be safely tucked in bed.

Unfortunately "Bertha" was hors-de-combat through age and lack of finance so it was necessary that we make the trip in a (shudder) FX Holden. However this may have been all to the good, as it is well known in enlightened circles that spare parts and short motors for such vehicles are readily available in most milk bars, news stands and sly-grog shops. Have you ever tried at your local pub for a short motor for a Silver Eagle? "Whats that?" you say, "S/E's don't need short motors as often as Holdens!" "True" I say, "But isn't it lovely just the same!"

However, back to Mt. Gambier, by Alvis, Holden, Steam car or any other means short of walking.

At about 11.15 p.m. Ballarat came up over the dark horizon, and after picking up a hat full of fish and chips, we swung out onto the Glenely Highway into the darkness, which seemed to stretch an awfully long way out into the darkness, which seemed to stretch (or have I said this before?).

We had set our sights (radar style) on Lake Bolac 145 miles from home, but as this was reached at about 1 a.m., and the road and the night were excellent for our purpose, we decided to carry on toward Hamilton, another 70 odd miles further on. The main fault in this area was the composition of the road surface; beautifully laid, but of a white stone which was rather trying on the eyes, especially as my headlights were set a trifle low.

About 10 miles short of Hamilton the fuel gauge showed nearly empty and the clock showed 2.30 a.m. so I reckoned I'd had enough - John had already decided this, as his snores lustily proclaimed - so after a few more miles hunting for a safe place to pull in - though I'll bet our only danger was from an occasional stampeding goanna - we found a by passed section of road, and after knocking over (almost literally) a cup of hot soup - with a prayer for the inventor of the thermo flask - we settled down for a quiet nap across the seats of the FX. (Alright Graeme Q I know you can't do it, but at least we tried!)

After about four hours tossing and turning about, banging my head on the door and my elbows on the steering column, and nearly breaking my drinking arm, which somehow got wound through both spokes of the steering wheel then down around the brake pedal, I cried quits and staggered out into the darkness to view the stars, much as did Ron Allen and Bob Morrow view the flowers in the delightful film snippet so often enjoyed at Edgar St. Then hurriedly dived back into the car for an overcoat and a blanket, as some silly clot had left the 'fridge dooe open, with a fan in it going flat out just to blast me out of my boots! When I became somewhere near normal again I tottered out to fill the tank from a four gallon tin which I had, in my profound wisdom, included in the paraphenalia of my Safari into the unknown.

Have you ever tried to pour petrol into such a tiny hole when you're shivering fit to bust, and its so dark you have to light a match to scratch yourself?

I did, and I am sure that if anyone had tossed a butt into the proceedings just then he'd have blown up half the Western District, I'll bet that place still reeks of petrol! Having accomplished this heroic deed, and hoping that at least one or two pints had gone where it was supposed to, we shook ourselves - as if that were necessary! - knocked over the rest of the soup, and set out for Hamilton and breakfast, only to find that the people - sensible types - were still locked up safely in their warm beds.

Coleraine proved just as wise, but at last, at Casterton at 8.00 a.m. we were lucky enough to be welcomed in to the dining room of the Glenely Hotel, by a lassie who obviously thought that we were the ones who should be locked up - even the local dogs weren't up and about yet!

I wonder why the day always looks rosier after a good breakfast? Be that as it may however, when we eventually wandered back to our beds-er-car, the sun really was shining and it looked like being a lovely day. The last 40 odd miles soon flashed under our wheels and at 10.30 a.m. the outskirts of Mt. Gambier loomed into sight and thus ended the first stage of our weekend.

PART 2

After the long night drive our main wish was for a clean'up and I felt as though I hadn't been near a razor for at least a week, so after filling up our depleted tank at the Shell garage, we located our motel - The Blue Lake - anda very comfortable one too - and proceeded to make ourselves presentable. The next move (there's no rest for the wicked - or Alvists on Safari!) was to locate the rendezvous at Port Macdonnell.

On the way we stopped off to peer into the famous Blue Lake, said some suitable "Ooh's" and "Ahh's", and felt sorry for the poor convicts who had to dig the darn thing.

At Port Macdonnell we were greeted by Keith Welch, who had thoughtfully realised that we wouldn't have a clue as to the actual meeting spot, and so back to Adam Lindsay Gordons cottage "Dingley Dell". Here on beholding a delightful spread, covey, herd, or flock of Alvises (or Alvi) I shamefully sneaked my Holden in behind some bushes that it might not be seen in such illustrious company, and on stepping forth, was suitably welcomed by sneers and sarcastic remarks such as --"Show me how you can stretch out on the seat of a Holden!" I got my own back on this particular fellow on the way home on Monday however, by deliberately (?) permitting him to burn me off on a rather uneven stretch of road. (I'd forgotten to light my afterburners, and he, the wretch, had Jane and Terry P. pushing like mad from behind!)

Incidentally there's no doubt about that Welch fellow; Glen Merry of Adelaide was having a little bumper trouble, and Keith, on diagnosing the trouble, raced off for a spanner. Returning, he dived under the car and was in the process of dismantling it fore and aft when someone suddenly woke up that we were under Alister's T.A. 14. Really took some explaining to, believe me! This really put Keith off balance, so he rushed off and pulled Glens ignition system to bits. I still wonder how Glen, the poor

boy, managed to go all the way to Adelaide striking matches at each plug hole in turn. Was his firing order 153624 or 426351??

Among the good people I met this day were Glen and his pretty passenger Wendy (I never seem to have such luck) Vic Elliott, Dick Dunn and Son John, Bill Richardson, Ron Bloyd, Ian Polson, and of course, John Murray and Doc. Mayne, and not forgetting a most delightful lady in Mrs. Fanning - Moira Wischer's mother.

Lunch was followed by a quiet (faster than sound) trip back to the Lakes, then after a look into the town sink, where the storm water is supposed to disappear without trace, (I have a sneaking suspicion that little men with buckets carry it off and dump it back in the Blue Lake, which allegedly never drops, in spite of being chief supplier of the town's water) followed again by a period of complete chaos wherein I was separated from the rest of the convoy on the way to the famous stone quarries and was finally found going around a roundabout for the 14th time, we finally decided to pack it in and head back into town.

The last event of the day was dinner at Jen's, the Local Savoy Plaza without the floor show, though our table had its own floor show as our very own Mrs. Morris kept us all in stitches with comments on the soup, the steak, the chef and various other topical subjects.

After dinner we retired to the lounge, where we spent a pleasant hour discussing this and that, drinking grog, pulling the architecture to bits, drinking grog, etc. until 11.30, when the waiter, his pockets bulging with tips, began switching off lights, winding up the guests, and putting out the clock.

My, that bed at the Blue Lake Motel was soft, though for all we cared they could have bedded us down in the wood shed, we'd have slept just as well!

The journey home was something of an anti climax, a mostly perfect road, no traffic, and a chariot running like a bird - especially on the uneven stretch to the border, FX's are notoriously light in the tail.

Only two incidents were of note, one, the aforementioned battle with the Quinn racing team, and two, when we had the shock of our lives when a Mark 10 Jaguer shot thru' below us as we took off from a particularly large bump, and disappeared into the wild blue yonder (the Jag., not us).

Later at Lake Bolac I spoke to the Jag's passengers, and they informed me that at 90 m.p.h. it was like riding in an armchair, one of those £4,000 ones.

Melbourne was reached at 4.30 p.m. and our weekend was over, another example of man's triumph over his adversities, wherein he shoots through and leaves it all behind.

Epilogue - Many hearty thanks to David and Moira Wischer at our end, and John Murray at the other, for the part they played in organizing an excellent week-end, and I still maintain that this is better than highly organised events crowding the time, especially after so many miles under the belt, and many more to come on the trip home.

Roy Henderson.

Thoughts for Organisation of Future Rallies

We have learned something from this Rally. The accommodation, though mainly satisfactory, could have been improved on. By booking a nucleus of Rallyists into a hotel with a lounge suitable for a gathering of all those attending, we could have avoided the uncertainty and last minute arrangements which were necessary at Mt. Gambier, in order to bring all Alvists together.

Another improvement could be made on the prior arrangements. As it now stands the usual system is for one organiser, or in the case of Mt. Gambier, one in Melbourne and one in Adelaide, to make all bookings, take deposits, make cancellations etc. The proposal in this:- The "Organiser" investigates accommodation, conditions of Hotels and Motels and their tariffs. Then he makes recommendations as to which would be the most suitable on a circular to all members of the Club, leaving the actual bookings to be made by individual members. These ideas are gleaned from experience and suggestions of members who attended Mt. Gambier.

ALVIS EXPERIENCES

Our 3 Litre Alvis, now named Victoria, had her hydraulic system overhauled by Patons after our brake relining efforts. A little difficulty was experienced in obtaining the correct master cylinder, which needed replacement, but it was found that Lockheed used the same one for Austin Shurlines and some of the Humber range. Thus they are quite readily available in Melbourne. Our 12/50, which we obtained at an elevated price from Gardenvale, was put in the garage, named Albert, and was contemplated upon. The brakes were not bad, but were hardly ever needed, as the clutch slipped so badly the car would hardly move anyway. The wiring is so bad that Keith Welsh put on a black armband when he first saw it, and said it would soon be its own funeral pyre, and incidentally mine too unless something was done NOW!! So I disconnected the battery. On reflection, he placed Albert ahead of its driver on the 'what to save first list.' I presume it was purely the reaction of an Alvis enthusiast, but I'm not game to ask him. We fixed a new bonnet for Albert, all aluminium, and he looks quite handsome. Upon lifting the bonnet though there is another problem staring us in the face. The carburation consists of twin Amals, with curious linkage. The manifolding is unusual. Luckily we have managed to obtain an original inlet manifold from Paul Conrad, via Alister Cannon, via David Muirden. Now we need an exhaust manifold. Does anyone have one for a 12/50 model SC? Any leads to locate one would be most appreciated.

It may be remembered that we nearly dropped the 3 litre on David Bamford some weeks ago. Almost a pity we didn't really as he got his own back on the writer last weekend. In a spirit of friendly co-operation we arrived at the resting place of the Speed 20 where our help was required to remove the motor from the mangled front end. The Messrs. Bamford had a cunningly contrived gantry with a block and tackle. Finding the easiest job possible the writer set to with a will. When the engine was safely stowed on the back of a utility, the workers, having no further need of the gantry etc. dropped it on me! Casually. - They all laughed. Sitting on a rose bush with 12 feet of what had been a gantry around the neck made me begin to feel like Beyore when he lost his tail. (Apologies to A.A. Milne).

JOTTINGS. by Scribe

The Alvis Car Club 10th Anniversary Presentation Dinner held recently was an unqualified success. The surroundings in the Private Dining Room at Union House Melbourne University were tastefully furnished and the silver table setting excellent. The food and the service were very good and contributed in large measure to the enjoyment of the evening by all those present. Past president Roy Henderson spoke briefly on the History of the club and presented the trophies for the past years' events to the winners. The main trophy of course, being the Basil Bowes Memorial Trophy and replica which went to Alister Cannon. John & Geraldine Murray made the trip specially from Adelaide to be present at the Dinner. This indicates remarkable enthusiasm to our mind.

JOTTINGS Cont'd

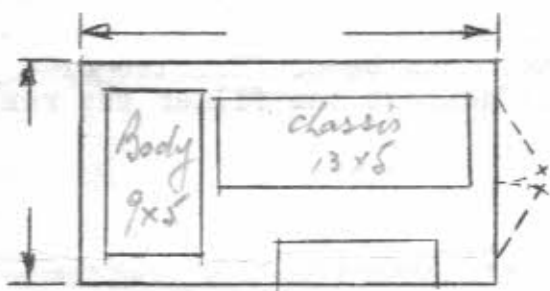
Thanks are due to Rosalie Cannon and Margaret Caldwell for organising the dinner and to David Wischer for arranging the liquor supplies.

RESTORATION OF A 12/50

This week we present Part 2 of Chapter 1, Restoration of A 12/50.

7. Body Types - In broad terms, these are eight basic body types to choose from:-
 - (a) Two Seater Sports - Either polished aluminium ducks back or beetle back painted bodies with dickey seat for one person.
 - (b) Two-Three Seater Drop-head Coupe - Wide enough in the beam to sit 3 (I've had four, two of them being of the fair sex, it was fun but the gear lever did its usual trick) with double rumble seat.
 - (c) Four-five Seater Tourer - wide in the beam.
 - (d) Four Seater Sports Tourer - narrow in the beam.
 - (e) Four Seater 2 door Sports Saloon.
 - (f) Four Seater 4 door Saloon - A town and country carriage.
 - (g) Three-Quarter Coupe - Commonly called the "Doctor's Coupe", complete with luxuriously upholstered dickey for two.
 - (h) Four Seat 4 door Sports Atlantic Saloon.
8. Forewarnings - Take heed of the following tips to save possible heartburn later in the restoration:-
 - (a) Buy wisely in the first instance. The one component of a motor car that is virtually impossible to replace is the body. Make sure that the body work defects are not beyond your powers of reclamation. A saloon obviously poses a greater problem and work load than an open car, particularly its doors which might require an outlay of £5. 15. 0 each and perhaps 50 man hours of work. The whole car foundation is the chassis frame, make sure it is a sound one. Also remember that the bill for a set of 5 new tyres and a battery is a Fifty Guinea matter. It is advisable to be prepared for this expense from the outset and to buy a car at a lower price simply because it is poorly shod.
 - (b) If you are 'pushed' for money count the cost before you start. It is thought unlikely that a complete restoration will cost less than £200 which figure includes the initial cost of the motor car provided you have bought at a fair price. For instance, a 12/50 costing say £80 and worth that amount, may well require an outlay in the region of £120. This is of course a rough guide. Also a further guide the cost of particular spares and repairs as experienced by the author in 1960, 61 and 62 are given in Appendix 2 (this appendix will be a much later handout!)
 - (c) Count the cost in time. A comprehensive restoration will take a minimum of 300 hours and more probably between 600 and 1000 man hours of work. It took me nearly 22 months to restore UL 5405, the 1929 saloon. Other people I've talked to appear to take a similar time. Bachelors, I was one once, can take less than half that time if they concentrate on this one pursuit.

- (d) De-register and turn in the insurance policy as early as possible if any refund is obtainable.
- (e) Space - Covered accommodation is considered an essential. The author worked in a garage measuring 20 ft. x 11ft. which is thought to be the minimum size in which one can keep all under cover. The space was utilised as below.

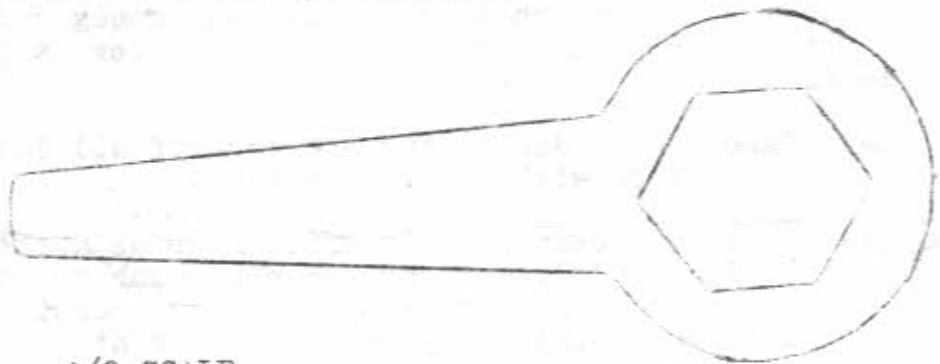


A smaller garage will suffice if one leaves the body sheeted in the open, but beware of small boys shying stones at the windscreen or using it as a Pirates' Ship, I've had this experience.

- (f) Decide the fate of the car battery. Either sell it before you start or use it for evening work with a lead lamp. In this event you will need to invest in a trickle charging set.
9. Paper Work - A full blooded restoration can involve a lot of letter writing and if one works on a 'hand-to-mouth' basis there will be lengthy delays between ordering/seeking spares etc. and getting them. One must put as many jobs as possible in hand in good time. Do your reconnaissances for spares in the first instance by letter - its cheaper in time and money and one can approach several sources in order to secure the lowest priced spare. It is recommended that:-
- (a) Carbon copy duplicates are made of all letters written in connection with the restoration.
- (b) A small pocket book is written up as necessary of work to be done and dimensions and part numbers etc. of bits or parts required. Keep this book on your person, it will help to keep your mind off your daily work at the office/works or what have you.
10. Tools and Equipment - The following hand tools and equipment are considered essential.
- (a) Bench - This should be substantial and well anchored. Tailor its height if possible to match the height of your belly button from the ground.
- (b) Vice - A jaw of about 4 in. is thought adequate.
- (c) Set of spanners and 11 in adjustable - have both open jaw and ring spanners if possible.
- (d) Small, medium and large bladed screwdriver.
- (g) 10 in. and junior eclipse hacksaws and blades, using blades 22 teeth per inch.
- (h) 1 pair combination pliers.
- (j) 1 mole wrench.
- (k) A selection of files, flat and rat-tail, and swiss files.
- (l) $\frac{1}{2}$ in. breast drill and high speed trist drills. A $\frac{1}{4}$ in. drill is a useful addition.
- (m) A set of 3 scrapers (Moore & Wright retail a good set for about 19/-

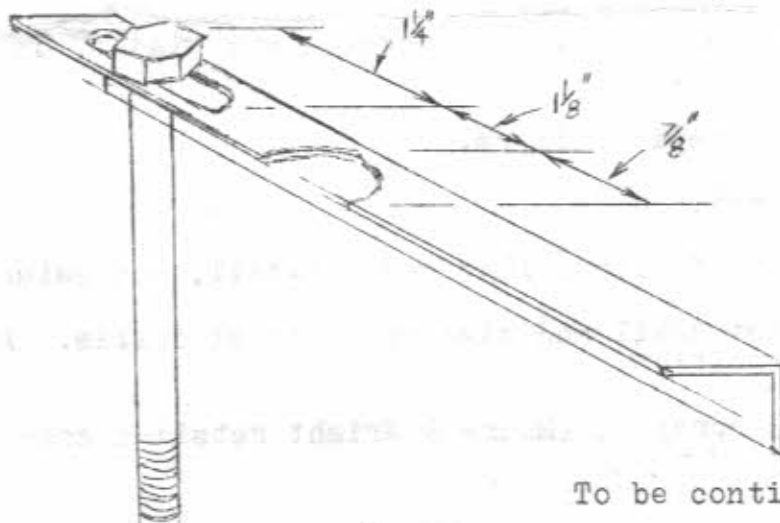
- (n) Wire brushes.
 - (o) 6ft. steel rule and 6 in. rule.
 - (p) Set of narrow blade feeler gauges.
 - (q) 3/16 in; 1/4 in; 5/16 in; and 3/8 in BSF die nuts and ditto 1/2 in taper taps.
 - (r) Paraffin trays and baths; these can be constructed of 1 gallon castrol oil tins with the side nearest the filler cap removed by tin snips.
 - (s) Pair of tin snips.
 - (t) Chassis stands of sorts - 1 per corner.
 - (u) Wood working tools, ie. tenon saw, chisels, set square, etc.
 - (v) Cold chisels, centre punch, brass drifts.
11. Special Tools - It is worth while making the following special tools yourself early on in your 12/50 ownership.

- (a) Hub Nut Spanner - If you cannot buy a suitable spanner cut a spanner to the following pattern out of 5/32 MS or 1/8 plate. The hexagon measures 2-1/16 across the flats and an overall length of 9 1/2 to 10 in. is adequate.



1/2 SCALE

- (b) Hub Greaser Nut - If you have a spare aluminium hub nut, drill, tap and fit one of the standard 1/8 BSP tecaletit grease nipples. This nut can then be employed when the routine task of hub packing comes around.
- (c) Valve Removal Tool - Obtain a piece of 1 in x 1/8 angle iron about 12 ins. long. At one end cut a 7/16 in wide slot about 1 1/4 in long. Then cut a U shaped hole on the same flank. The U cut should start 1.1/8 in from the end of the end of slot and be 7/8 in across the U. The sketch below gives an idea of the shape of the weapon. Provide a lever fulcrum bolt 3/8 in x 6 1/2 in long threaded 1 1/2 in.



To be continued.