

LIONS' CLUB (ALVIS) MOTOR SHOW, WANGARATTA, 1965.

On Saturday February 27th 7 Alvises in all gathered on the Wangaratta Showground Oval (an 8th almost made it, but had to turn back between Euroa and Benalla with water pump problems - Horrie Morgan's F.W.D.). The rallying point on arrival was the Total Service Station where the cars were washed down prior to the Grand Parade through the town to the Showgrounds. As one membered remarked to me later it was almost worth the trip just to see someone else wash one's car. About 20 cars formed the Parade:- Mrs. Morris in her immaculate T.A.21 3-litre Alvis Saloon; Sid Lehner in his T.A.21 drop-head coupe; Graham Martin in his recently sprayed T.A.14; David Muirden in the Speed 20 drop-head coupe; Athol Ham in his T.A.21 D.H.C.; David Caldwell in his unsprayed T.A.14 Saloon were the Alvises represented. Si Ramsay and John Cole had not then arrived in the Silver Eagle. They did so later in the afternoon after rear cycle-guard trouble and much welding on of brackets on the trip up.

On arrival at the Ground the cars were parked drawn up in line across the oval in brilliant sunshine and the judging of the Concours d'Elegance began. The editor found himself pressed into service as a judge due to John Murray's inability to attend. He learnt quite a bit about the business from the other three judges Cyril Guiver, Bill Higgins and Max Porter.

Frequent trips to the bar were necessary as the sun blazed down. Mrs. Morris' T.A.21 was outstanding in the Modern Class and won the silver trophy. David Muirden's Speed 20 as the only representative in the P.V.T. section carried off the silver trophy for that section. He also won a pewter tankard in the Motor Khana for winning the Acceleration and Braking Test. Athol Ham carried off the Sack Race with mountainous leaps, also collecting a pewter tankard. Three Alvises competed and carried off 2 out of 4 events in competition with current model cars on exhibition at the Show. Not bad at all.

Horrie Morgan got as far as Euroa before water-pump trouble forced him to turn back. Bad luck, Horrie. Next time.

A thoroughly enjoyable weekend. It is to be repeated next year. Alvisists who missed it should save up their "bikkies" and firmly resolve to go next year.

BASIL BOWES' DAY TRIAL HELD SUNDAY MARCH 21st.

Between them, Alister Cannon, Keith Welsh and David Bamford provided us with a well-planned observation trial over a well-selected course with lots of juicy winding stretches with one hill-climb thrown in on the way. Those who didn't or couldn't compete missed a gem - a really enjoyable day's outing over a course which provided reasonably fast driving over a course which gave plenty of exercise for driving skill without harm to the car.

What an enjoyable change from the daily bumper-to-bumper to let the car go loping along good gravel roads with rarely another vehicle in sight!

The course led from Dandenong to Officer then off via a side-road to Emerald, Monbulk and Sylvan Dam for lunch. After lunch we wound through Launching Place, Yarra Junction on through Powell town to Neerim Junction and back to the Princes Highway near Drouin and Back to Dandenong. The outing concluded with an enjoyable barbecue at 6 The Outlook Heathmont (we enjoyed it anyway.)

Competing were Derek Holyoake (T.A.14.), Graeme and Jane Quinn (Alfa-Romeo), Paul Bamford (12/50 beetle-back), Andy and Patsy Hannam (Firebird), Roy Henderson and family (Holden), David Caldwell and "Chuck" Sutherland (T.A.14.), Si Ramsay and Kevin Bruce (Silver Eagle).

Fortunately Keith Welsh followed the field round in case of trouble and was able to help Si Ramsay when the Silver Eagle had the battery rendered u/s with an internal open circuit caused by the battery lead short circuiting. Up in the wilds near Powell town.

Our thanks go to Alister, Keith and David for the time and energy they put in to put on a notable event.

All Alvisists who were able to compete and didn't really missed something.

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JOTTINGS

By Scribe

A delightful story comes out of Wangaratta. On the way up from Benalla, in the T.A.21 D.H.C., Athol Ham was challenged by two young bloods in a Morris Cooper. Athol confided later that he began to lose them at 98 m.p.h. Shortly after the gales of the Showground closed behind him, Graham Martin's brother-in-law Warren, in attendance on the gate was greeted with the spectacle of a Min-cooper pulling up in a cloud of dust. Two bloods afore-mentioned raced over. "Hey mate, did a grey heap come through here?" "Yes." "What sort of car was it?" "An Alvis." "A what?" "An Alvis." "Oh." Two bloods returned to car and drove off. They must have been quite impressed to track Athol right to the Ground.

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David and Moira Wischer have added a baby daughter to their collection - 4lb. 6oz. dark hair, dark eyes. Mother and daughter doing well. Just prior to this Alister and Rosalie Cannon began their collection with a heavy-weight son of 10lb. odd. Congratulations all round are in order we feel.

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Simon Ramsay and Kevin Bruce had visions of spending a chilly night in the area near Powelltown when the battery of the Silver Eagle packed it in after a main lead short-circuit. Fortunately Keith Welsh had followed up on impulse and being the auto-electrician that he is, was able to get them going again. A follow-up car might be a good idea as a permanent feature for our day-trials.

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Former member Frank De Pinna of GTV-9 fame came along to the meeting the other night after I.M.T. Frank is in the thralls of restoring a Lancia Lambda, but is considering buying a T.A.14, as a second vehicle. In the wee hours of the morning Derek Holyoake and yours truly were thoroughly cross-questioned on the merits and demerits of the T.A.14. We couldn't wish him a better choice. Frank's address is 32 Campbell Street, Brighton XM1613.

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John Bangsund, proud owner of a T.A.21 3-litre Saloon became a member of the Club at the March meeting. We wish him, on behalf of the members many happy hours with the Club and thousands of miles of pleasurable motoring in the Alvis. John's address is 19 Gladstone Avenue, Northcote.

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Paul Bamford's newley-restored beetle-back 12/50 had its first competition outing with the Club in the Day Trial on Sunday 21st. We noticed it touring along in fine style ahead of us on the Princes Highway at a surprising gait. We were doing 50-55 and not drawing any nearer. Later on along the route it mounted the steep pinch 'up to the sky' in fine style ahead of us. Bad luck that tyre trouble marred an otherwise excellent debut.

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JOTTINGS

Graeme and Jane Quinn and family in the Alfa-Romeo joined us at Sylvan for lunch and then completed the course with gusto. The Alfa went through its paces when warming up for the trip home after the barbecue with sundry roars and explosions before roaring off with a triumphant bellow into the night.

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Andy Hannam, with Patsy as navigator gave the Firebird its first competition outing since the new differential was fitted. To judge by the beaming faces they both enjoyed the motoring thoroughly.

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John Fowler turned up in his T.A.14. drophead which is mobile again after a certain amount of engine re-building, to watch the start of the trial entrants get under way from the clubrooms. Unfortunately John was unable to join in due to a prior engagement later in the day.

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CARS WANTED, FOR SALE, ETC.

Ray D'Alton was a welcome visitor to the Clubrooms the other night. Ray still wishes to sell the Silver Crest Saloon for the best offer received. He feels that the 3-litre Alvis is sufficient to cope with and has decided regretfully that the Silver Crest must go. Ray's address is available from the Club Secretary, Roy Henderson (See Club Office Bearers)

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Simon Ramsay wishes to sell the aluminium-bodied Silver Eagle 2-seater roadster. The going price is £170. Simon's address is 14 Kenley Court, Toorak 'Phone No. 20-4810.

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Brian Dodd of Sydney (who is coming to Melbourne shortly) still wishes to sell his 3-litre Grey Lady. His address, and the price asked can be obtained by ringing Club Secretary, Roy Henderson at 544.5249.

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Roy Henderson has his Martin & King fabric-bodied Silver Eagle Saloon Bertha for sale for £25. Phone No. as above. Address under Club Office Bearers.

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David Muirden's Speed 20 is for sale at £400. He can be contacted at Flat 15, 37 Domain Street, South Yarra. Phone 26.2337.

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Wanted T.A.14 gearbox complete, in good condition. David Caldwell, 6 The Outlook, Heathmont.

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We met Max Foley at Wangaratta. Max told us that his 12/50 has been sold to someone in Albury recently. Meant to ask Max the full name and address of the new owner but the Parade moved off at just the critical moment.

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Late report on the Vintage Car Rally held at Kalorama last Sunday, 28th March, by the Council of Combined Vintage Car Clubs of Victoria. This was obviously one of the most successful, if not the most successful Kaloramas to date. It has obviously established itself in the public mind. No more. We were on the gate for a spell and the lack of hesitation with which most public cars headed for the gate seemed to be evidence of this. Alvis was quite well represented with Paul Bamford's 12/50, Des Donnan's 12/50, Horrie Morgan's F.W.D., David Muirden's Speed 20 D.H.C. were those noticed. Lurking on the outskirts were the Caldwell and Fowler T.A. 14's and the Cannon and Lehner 3 litres. The organisers deserve congratulations for a lot of hard work resulting in

ALVISES I HAVE OWNED

By Marc Pain.

This issue, thanks to the kindness of Marc Pain, will begin a series describing the various Alvises he has owned since just after World War II. How we wish we had more contributors like this. What about someone describing his experiences in the recent day trial for the benefit of those members who have not yet attempted a trial and don't know how easy and enjoyable it is? But we digress. Here is Marc's story:

A story of the Alvis cars owned and set down
in chronological order.

My admiration for the marque began long before I owned an example of one, and would date back about 30 years. I well remember the glorious sight of the maroon Speed Twenty saloon on Charley & Lord's stand at the 1935 Royal Easter Show. I certainly "fell for it" on sight! However, at £1,350 it was far away financially for me, indeed.

In those days even the second-hand Vintage Alvises were beyond my financial resources as they were always priced around the £100 mark (pre-inflation days), and my limit always seemed to be about half that amount!

So after various Morris Cowleys and even lesser breeds I went from a once-beautiful German Stoewer tourer (6 cylinders, 2½ litres and two Zenith carburettors, of circa 1923 vintage, which incidentally, I "blew up" after less than 5 miles, and in despair, sold for scrap) through several real Vauxhalls (14/40 models) before acquiring my first Alvis.

However my Alvis days did not commence until after the war, and I certainly started out with a mechanically woeful example! Having, as already stated, a yen for an Alvis and being in a position to indulge, I commenced to look around. Of course, I had no idea that there were so many about as there were - although still not in large numbers.

I answered an ad. for a 12/50 and found "the poor old thing" (the only adequate description) at the back of a North Shore garage, reasonably original as far as body work went, but in poor condition.

The diff. was broken; it had no battery; the tyres were poor; the front brake cable guide pulleys and covers were gone and some "clot" had connected the shoe operating levers to the cross-shaft levers with 5/16" mild steel rod with bits of cable by bending the rod in a U shape with no provision whatsoever for the movement of the wheels when steering! Fortunately this nonsense was so slack that the front brakes could not possibly operate.

I foolishly paid £125 for this car and towed it back to my workshop after having started the engine to ascertain if it would go. It sounded reasonable - no more, no less.

Considerable work was then undertaken. By a stroke of luck, I obtained a complete, genuine diff. assembly, which was duly fitted. Pulleys and cables for the brakes were manufactured on proper engineering lines but were not identical with the Alvis design as at that time I had no data at all on the 12/50, or, for that matter, on any Alvis.

The engine was dismantled and was found to have thrown a rod at some previous date, and an odd one had been substituted. Otherwise the engine was reasonably sound and after new rings were fitted, nobs re-metalled, valves ground, etc., the engine was reassembled. The carburettor was really sad and it literally fell to bits. I have never since seen a brass Solex in such a horrible condition. A brass copy Tillotson was purchased and fitted, and the car was road-tested.

It ran satisfactorily until I applied the brakes. I gave the pedal a hefty push and I thought the diff. had been torn out! The noise of the juddering had to be heard and felt to be believed. I did all the usual things, such as relieving brakes, champfering shoes, etc., but to no avail.

However, after getting replacement tyres the car was registered. The number plate issued, and having the prefix "US", did not seem a very happy omen.

To improve performance I dispensed with the up-draught carburetter and after some modification fitted a down-draught ex Willys Jeep (as you see I was not then a purist and had a lot to learn). This, of course, necessitated a fuel pump, and a Toronto pump was duly installed. These two units could always be depended upon to give trouble! I couldn't tune the carburetter to eliminate a "pop back" on acceleration and, as it had no aircleaner and no room for the bonnet, the foot-long flames that it emitted were quite spectacular. It caught fire once but I was able to frantically extinguish the small blaze before it reached the fuel tank. I was lucky to drive 20 miles before the fuel pump failed and I was able to locate the fault.

There were no shock absorbers left and boy! oh boy! did she bounce over the rough stuff! I well remember a run we did over a very rough road in the Royal National Park south of Sutherland. What with the bouncing, shuddering on braking, and flames on acceleration, we were a sight to behold and a lot of people derived much enjoyment out of our car's antics but not including myself, my wife or her sister. However, my young nephew of about 18 months definitely enjoyed it all with his chuckles and laughter at each and every bounce.

Well, the inevitable happened, of course. I was really chastened, and after replacing the down-draught carburetter with the up-draught one, I sold the car at a considerable loss and resolved if that was Alvis then no more for me!

Shortly afterwards, I purchased a medium quality American car in particularly good condition which gave good reliable service and horrible handling. My wife liked this car, having not yet become educated in such things as real motor cars!

The purchase of my second Alvis commenced accidentally. I required a smaller car and advertised for a 10 to 12 h.p. English car. The really long odds came to light as an applicant phoned offering a 1929 Alvis roadster of 12 h.p. He claimed it was very good and had four new tyres. New tyres were relatively scarce at this time (1948) and obviously despite my former unhappy experience the yen for an Alvis was only dormant.

First, I tentatively arranged the sale of the De Soto and then went out to look over the Alvis. It was a 12/50 Beetleback in reasonable condition only. The tyres were new, it performed moderately well and the brakes did not shudder. The radiator shell was brown (no Brasso used for many years) and the rear of the body had a certain amount of corrosion. It was a 12/50 "big port" short-stroke, SD series, although I was not aware of this at the time.

I paid a not inconsiderable sum of money and took the car. The former owner was an author living in Potts Point, and we were at this time living at Gynea Bay which is about 25 miles south of Sydney.

I started towards home and the car performed quite well for about half the distance. Then the "gremlins" attacked again! Every time I had to stop, the engine stalled and took much persuasion and lots of time to start again. Coupled with this it commenced to show signs of serious fuel starvation. However, eventually I completed the journey some 2½ hours late.

My good wife was at the gate waiting for me. It was now dusk and visibility was not very good. However, the car did look a little different to the Yank tourer

"What have you got there?" she inquired,

"An Alvis" I replied a little sheepishly,

"Whatever did you do that for?"

No reply from me, but I began to think deeply "Am I going off my rocker, selling a perfectly good car for another 'pig in a poke'?"

However, the next morning I didn't feel quite so discouraged and decided to get the car into reliable order, and then sell it. At the end of the week we were to drive up to Katoomba for the weekend: a distance of 70 odd miles and up about 3,000 ft. altitude.

I realized the magneto - an old Simms - was completely "shot" so I purchased a good Lucas unit, then cleaned out the fuel system completely, and fitted a new wind-screen. The car was greased and I completed a general tune-up and check-over.

We commenced our journey in very mediocre weather and not too much optimism. The real surprise was to come. The performance steadily improved with plenty of power available. It sounded well and after my initial disappointment we really enjoyed our trip no end.

However, on the return journey we had electrical trouble finishing the trip with no tail light and isolating certain wiring after short circuits had occurred. But we realized that we did have a real motor car. I decided it was worth spending quite a lot of money and much work of a major nature to bring the Alvis up to first class condition.

I had this car for some years and spent on it some hundreds of pounds. The engine was rebored and was found to be very original, having, of course, the beautiful dural con rods. Still without any technical "gen"! I ran into trouble with the pistons. The machine shop supplied and ground pistons of the correct compression, but 12/50 pistons have a greater distance between top of the piston and the top ring land, and also have a heavy chamfer at the top. When assembled the top compression ring showed and, of course, the engine would lock when assembled if the cylinder head was fitted. This was overcome by chamfering the pistons and planing the head savagely and then fitting a compression plate between crankcase and block. However, I was not particularly happy about this arrangement. The engine was finally completed and, as I mentioned, without special data, I set the ignition timing, as per past experience with other cars, to 10 degrees B.T.D.C., the valve timing being carefully noted before dis-assembly was attempted.

After running-in a trip was successfully completed to Melbourne and back, and I was quite pleased with the performance of the car.

Shortly afterwards I was fortunate enough to discover an Alvis 14.75 h. p, 6 cylinder saloon. This came about completely by chance.

I used to travel to work by train at this time owing to petrol rationing, and one afternoon, on casually glancing out of the window I spied this interesting car. It was not far from my home and I located the house without much trouble. The Alvis Six had been left with the householder to have a few repairs carried out.

I must digress for a moment. This particular car had, some time previously, been offered for sale by the son of the original owner. I had looked at it then but, although a very nice car, it required quite a few repairs and I thought the price was too high. The car had not been sold and the repairs were being carried out prior to the car being offered for sale again.

Knowing all the instruction books were with the car, I persuaded this chap to lend them to me for a week. I then photo-copied the important illustrations and had the text typed. Now I was on the way!

After tuning the engine properly, the car went like a "big port" Alvis should. My wife and I enjoyed a tour, cruising at 60 m.p.h., to Canberra, and collected a bird along the road running by Lake George. It was the first time (with a motor vehicle) I'd "clocked" a bird so I reckoned we had been travelling at a satisfactory speed.

We did several trips to Melbourne and elsewhere whilst I owned this splendid car, once doing a creditable travelling time of 12½ hours from my home at Kingsgrove, Sydney, to the City of Melbourne.

With one exception, when I had been experimenting with an unusual coil ignition system, I never suffered a breakdown in all the years I owned this Alvis, and in those days I really drove hard - my cruising speed ranging from 60 to 75 m.p.h. with the occasional bursts to top speed just to see if the engine was in need of tune!

The written performance guarantee for the Big Port 12/50 from Alvis Car and Engineering Co. Ltd. was for 80 m.p.h. This figure I could just obtain on a new and carefully calibrated Smiths speedometer which one could then purchase. To digress once again, It was quite surprising what genuine and original parts were still available then (in the late 1940s and early 50s), these being a residue of pre-war stock.

To round off the story of "KO". As time and money permitted various overhauls were carried out, such as new gears (manufactured locally), new ball-races, etc., for the gearbox. The rear brake shafts and bushes were renewed, the brake shafts being bought new from the then not inconsiderable stock of the late Tom Lord. The differential also came in for attention, it only requiring diff. carrier races to make it 100%. Of course, the brake and clutch cross-shafts had to be rebuilt and new bushes made and fitted.

More next issue.

We continue the serial history of the Alvis and its makers from the point where we left off in the February issue - the non-acceptance of the general motoring public of the "new fangled" front-wheel drive. Read on from here.

It was years indeed before Citroen pushed the concept of front wheel drive successfully down the collective throat of the motoring public with financial success. The good fortune of Citroen has lasted until this day. Obviously, motorists were more acquainted with the idea of front-wheel drive when Citroen introduced it to the market.

Alvis Ltd. deserve full credit for a venture which was in its day radically different in concept - so radically different in that time that it almost led to financial disaster for the Company. After the 1930 racing season the factory withdrew from active participation in racing and turned its attention to the more orthodox rear-driven designs. The 12/50 was superseded by the twin carburettor 12/60, and the six cylinder Silver Eagle was introduced to the motoring public. The 12/50 model TJ was left in production until mid 1932, so ending a production run that extended back to 1923.

ALVIS CAR MODELS (1920-1930)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>MODEL</u>	
1920-21	10/30 Zephyr. Side Valve)
1922	10/40 Side Valve)
	11/40 Side Valve)
	T.C. 12/40 Side Valve)
1923	10/40 Side Valve)
	S.A. 12/40 Side Valve)
	S.A. 12/50 Overhead Valve) 4 Cylinder
1924	T.C. 12/40 Side Valve)
	S.A. 12/50 Overhead valve)
	T.D. 12/40 Side Valve)
	S.B. 12/50 Overhead Valve)
1925	T.D. 12/40 Side Valve)
	S.C. 12/50 Overhead Valve)
	T.E. 12/50 Overhead Valve)
	T.F. 12/50 Overhead Valve)
1926	S.C. 12/50)
	S.D. 12/50)
	T.E. 12/50)
	T.F. 12/50)
	T.G. 12/50) 4 cylinder
1927	S.D. 12/50)
	T.G. 12/50)
	T.H. 12/50)
1928	T.G. 12/50)
	T.H. 12/50)
	S.D. 12/50)
	T.A. 14/75)
	T.B. 14/75) 6 cylinder
1928-29	F.W.D. Models	
	F.A. 12/50)
	F.D. 12/50) 4 cylinder
	F.E. 12/50)
	F.A. 8/15) 8 cylinder
1929	T.A. 16/95 Silver Eagle)
	S.A. 16/95 Silver Eagle)
1930	T.A. 16/95; S.A. 16/95; S.B. 16/95)	6 Cylinder
	T.B. 16/95; S.D. 16/95; S.E. 16/95)	
	All Silver Eagles)
	T.J. 12/50) 4 cylinder