



VICTORIA

# NEWSLETTER

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## EDITORIAL

It is now apparent that some members do read this Newsletter. My plea for contributions has been well received and, in fact, I have so much material this month that space simply won't allow me to print it. Oh well, there's always next month and I thank those who have helped me out.

IAN McLENNAN

## CHAIRMAN'S CHALLENGE

Once more we look forward to the colder winter nights with the open fire and the port bottle. By the time this arrives with you we will have had our Ron Wilson Gallop in Gippsland on the Queen's Birthday weekend. This will be the usual most enjoyable tour to the high Wilson standard.

We have a reasonable number of members who have not paid their subscriptions for 1984. Those members will receive a notice with this Newsletter.

Members should remember that August is the Auction Night - so start to look for items for sale at the auction. See you at the next meeting.

Regards, RICHARD

Reading the April Newsletter, it seems our Club Captain needs a helping hand. How about ringing him, say two nights before the event and, if there are not enough ABLE TO ATTEND, a substitute plan can be adopted.

SHIRLEY WINSLADE

ALVIS IDLE CHATTER

The 12/50 D.B. of Alister Cannon is now undergoing elective surgery with particular emphasis on the water passages and cooling - to cure a complaint that has plagued this smart car for some time.

"Now it can be told department". The charming wife of a former prominent member and Alvis owner, who now favours another Marque - has purchased a 12/50 in pieces and is attacking the restoration with enthusiasm. Won't it be good to see a Red Triangle sitting beside a Black Label. Incidentally, the aforesaid former Alvis owner has just received his pilot's wings - congratulations.

Ron Wilson's 12/50 Tourer developed some strange and unhappy noises in the engine room and is destined for some in-depth probing and hospitalisation.

Simon Ramsay's 12/50 Tourer is looking better every week and is developing into a very sporty-looking machine with some subtle alterations to the body work. Watch your arm and that outside stove-pipe, Simon!

RESULTS - ALVIS/RILEY GYMKHANA, 6 May, 1984

EVENT 1 - SLALOM :

1. Riley Elf	23.14 secs	8. Alvis SP20	27.43 A. Tope
2. Riley Elf	23.70	9. Alvis 12/50	27.46 W. Barber
3. Riley 2½lt	25.84	10. Riley 2½lt	29.99
4. Riley Kestrel	26.02	11. Riley 2½lt	30.95
5. Riley 2½lt	26.13	12. Riley 2½lt	32.96
6. Riley Lynx	26.19	13. Riley Pathfinder	38.27
7. Alvis TB14	27.33 R. Graham	14. Riley RME	43.10

ACCV NON ALVIS :

1. Saab	26.84	D. Caldwell
2. Valiant	28.66	I. Blackwell
3. Saab	29.28	M. Caldwell

EVENT 2 - GARAGE :

1. Riley Elf	26.08	8. Riley 2½lt	34.66
2. Riley Elf	28.52	9. Riley 2½lt	35.31
3. Riley 9	30.66	10. Riley 2½lt	36.00
4. Riley Kestrel	32.31	11. Alvis 12/50	39.83 W. Barber
5. Alvis TB14	32.40 R. Graham	12. Riley 2½lt	40.98
6. Riley 2½lt	33.25	13. Riley Pathfinder	47.69
7. Alvis SP20	33.58 A. Tope		

ACCV NON ALVIS :

1. Valiant	31.71	I. Blackwell
2. Saab	38.74	D. Caldwell

EVENT 3 - CLOVER LEAF :

1. Riley Elf	42.83	9. Riley 2½lt	46.49
2. Riley Elf	43.06	10. Riley 9	46.65
3. Alvis TB14	43.20 R. Graham	11. Riley RMB	47.56
4. Alvis SP20	43.95 A. Tope	12. Alvis 12/50	48.96
5. Riley Kestrel	43.99	13. Riley 9	49.57
6. Riley 2½lt	44.71	14. Riley Pathfinder	49.96
7. Riley 2½lt	45.07	15. Riley 2½lt	58.34
8. Riley 2½lt	46.09		

ACCV NON ALVIS :

1. Saab	42.94	D. Caldwell
2. Valiant	46.42	I. Blackwell

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ian,

Here is a follow-up to my last stricture on our poor turnout for events.

The journal of the Daimler Owners' Club is called "The Driving Member" and the masthead incorporates a drawing of the Daimler fluid flywheel. If this title means what I think it does, then perhaps the publication which deals with red triangular activities should be called the "Non-Driving Member" and should include a picture of an Alvis clutch with the plate left out!

The recent combined gymkhana with the Riley Club only serves to bear this out. We had virtually the same dramatis personae as for our Day Trial, minus one 12/50 (driver in the land of the long white cloud) and plus two members in lesser breeds without the law. Again a total of five starters!

On reflection perhaps this is not all that surprising. If our members are not going to turn out for a nice drive in the country on a sunny Sunday morning, it is highly improbable that they will do so if there is any possibility that they might be called on to drive their cars in anger - particularly if there is also the likelihood that it might rain!

Having made these strictures, and in doing so probably offended some of our members, it must be admitted that the Riley turnout was no better. There were five various RM series Rileys, one Kestrel and one Lynx, together with one honorary Riley (a Mini called up for its national Elf service) and Ford, one Holden and one Volvo (oh, when the Saint comes drivin' in). When one considers the relative numbers of Riley and Alvis cars on the road, this is perhaps an even worse showing than the Alvis one.

Well, what do we want. A car club with members actually driving their cars or simply an antipodean branch of Red Triangle?

BILL BARBER

A THOUSAND MILES IN THE TB14

The title of this article is not strictly accurate, but "A Thousand Miles" sounds much more impressive than a mere 825 miles. Maybe I should say 1300 kilometers, but the odometer registers miles and that is what it was, 825 miles round trip.

Bev and I had originally intended to compete in the races at Mallala and the Collingrove Hillclimb in South Australia. Circumstances conspired against us and we couldn't go to South Australia. As I had taken a few days off from work, we took the opportunity to take a short drive to the Snowy Mountains area.

Before we went, I put new floorboards in the TB14. I hated to put in new full sheets of ply and add all that extra weight, but the old boards really needed replacing. The new boards were cut and drilled, using the old boards as patterns but, guess what, the screwholes didn't line up with the captive nuts in the body frame. However, that problem was overcome. A coat of paint to help protect the new floorboards, new sealing felt underneath, new felt under the carpets, and after three days hard work, we were ready to go. Our schedule was to leave on Monday bright and early and the weather over the weekend was damp and miserable.

I was really not looking forward to driving with the hood up, but luckily Monday was quite fine. Our first stop was Benalla for morning tea and to fill the petrol tank. Of course, I picked the service station with petrol at full price, while only a couple of miles further on, it was 2c per litre cheaper. We were cruising at 3500 rpm (about 65 mph) and around about Broadford the TB14 seemed to clear its throat, or burn out the carbon, but a couple of times while overtaking, I found 4,500 rpm (80 mph) came up quite easily with quite a bit more in hand.

A THOUSAND MILES IN THE TBl4 (continued)

We left the Hume Highway at Wodonga and turned right to Tallangatta, where we had a beaut counter lunch at a very reasonable price. Then on to Corryong where I filled up with petrol again. We again branched right to Khancoban and the Alpine Highway. This road was 25 miles of gravel, winding corrugated road as far as Thredbo, and the TBl4 doesn't like corrugations when going around corners. I suppose it is not reasonable to expect traction and road holding when the back wheels are off the ground at least 50% of the time. Some hills were quite steep and a couple of times I was down into second gear for over a mile.

We found bitumen again at Thredbo, and pressed on to Jindabyne, Berridale and Middlingbank with a gale, or even a hurricane behind us. Directly above us was clear blue sky with big black clouds behind us, but rain commenced to hit the inside of the windscreen not the outside. About 5.30 pm, after perfect navigation by Bev, we arrived at our destination.

Tuesday, we relaxed after first checking the TBl4 for oil and water, no water was used and only a drop of oil. Then we examined the 1000 acre property where we were staying, on foot and in an FWD Toyota. The country was very lush and our host was very grateful for the good season after having to handfeed the stock for the past two years. On Wednesday we went to Charlotte's Pass in a modern car and photographed Mt. Townsend with snow on the top but not Kosciusko - because it was covered in cloud.

Thursday morning about 9.30 am we set off on the return trip in bright sunshine, but very cold in the open car. We filled with petrol at Coomo and turned left at Nimmitabel for Bombala and Cann River. Four or five miles from Bombala we left the bitumen for a very pot-holed gravel road. The pot-holes were immense and very deep and impossible to dodge. Also the shadows on the road from the gumtrees helped to conceal the pot-holes and the poor old TBl4 took a beating, even though we were down to 1500 rpm. The road is being resurfaced and straightened but it was still 25 miles of very hard going.

We had quite a good run home along the Princes Highway to about Drouin, where the sun went down and the weather broke to a light misty rain. Sitting so low down in the TBl4 with the windscreen wet on the inside as well as the outside with everyone else driving on high beam, made the trip to Dandenong and the Mulgrave Freeway nerve-wracking to say the least. We arrived home safely about 7.30 pm in dry and pleasant conditions for the last 20 miles.

The TBl4 proved to be a very pleasant car for touring 391 miles up and 434 miles back, the running time being about 10 hours each way, including all stops and the petrol consumption was not very good at 22 miles per gallon. Water consumption was nil and oil consumption about 3 pints. Next day I found the petrol tank weeping, no doubt from a rock on the Bombala Road. That has now been repaired and the TBl4 is ready for the next challenge.

R.C.

MORE ON THE MILLER/ALVIS FWD SAGA!

Mark VIII, 18 : While learned scholars have consulted every living, (and dead for that matter) authority as to whether the Alvis FWD layout was stolen from Miller or not, no-one (your humble scribe included) seems to have thought of the obvious answer. Just have a look at the cars!

The Miller method employed a deDion axle in the form of a single tube, bowed forward to clear the transaxle with the kingpins mounted on the outboard ends and the outer universals buried in the front hubs.

The Alvis layout used on "Tadpole" and the horizontal valve GP cars used a deDion axle in the form of twin tubes mounted vertically and swept back at the outer ends with the kingpins located at their extremities and the

MORE ON THE MILLER/ALVIS FWD SAGA (continued)

universals located between them, presumably in the interest of simplifying the hub construction. This would seem to be fairly conclusive evidence that the concept of a deDion axle located by quarter elliptic spring and friction dampers used as radius arms was just another case of great minds thinking alike. It does not parallel the case of Pratt and Whitney aero engines which were built pre-war by BMW in Germany on payment of licence fees and by Mitsubishi in Japan without any royalty cheques going back to Hartford Conn.

It might be added that the good Harry stayed with his single dead axle beam for as long as he built cars with front or four wheel drive but Alvis developed their ideas and employed the transverse quarter elliptic independent system on their later front drive cars with OHC engines. BSA also used this layout on their front drive three wheelers and the Scout four wheeled cars developed from them. Similarly DKW and Adler used similar geometry on their fwd cars although in their cases, presumably because they were transmitting much less torque than the Alvis only a single spring was used at the top and the bottom on each side rather than two. It would be interesting to know who copied who in these cases. After all, the only other really successful fwd car in the vintage period was the Tracta which employed a species of Lancia like sliding pillar suspension.

The final clinching argument however must be that the Miller deDion tube was of built up construction. The section between the spring/damper brackets was separate from the ends and was made removable to facilitate access to the transmission. The Alvis layout had each of the two superimposed tubes as a single piece. Of course Alvis were never all that concerned with maintenance on their fwd cars as witness the need to remove the entire power unit from the chassis just to reline the front brakes.

None-the-less the writer still retains the highest regard for the work of Harry Miller and of Griff. Borgeson too for that matter.

The Biblical reference is "Eyes have they, but they see not".

With best regards, BILL BARBER

AROUND AND ABOUT IN NEW ZEALAND

Responding to an invitation from good friend and Club member in New Zealand, Ron Blanchett, to go over and compete in the VCC North Island Rally in Palmerston North, Alan McKinnon and I flew into Auckland on 5th May. It had to be Auckland since the airport at Wellington cannot handle the large international jets. So a hire-drive Toyota Corolla (local new price \$NZ 15,250.00) was obtained and we set out to traverse the North Island. Easter traffic was very heavy and we arrived at the Blanchett home after dark, where a very warm and long into the early hours welcome awaited us. Ron was very busy organising the Rally next day, so we collected his 12/50 Ducksback which we were to drive and got it ready to compete the following day. The 12/50 is the Special ex Factory Sand Racer and would be the fastest and smoothest Alvis I have driven. Even at an indicated 75 mph it still has a ton of urge and handles superbly. The day of the Rally came with fine weather, but a very cold wind and some 140 cars in competition. The easy but fast acceleration of the 12/50 got to me and, ignoring most of Alan's navigation and directions, we set out to enjoy ourselves. Some 200 miles later, we finished, after setting a rally record of 26 'U' turns, but it was great fun. At the Presentation Dinner that night, which proved to be rather heavy in terms of libations, we were surprised to find we had gained 40th outright.

After a rest day, we exchanged the 12/50 for a modern car and in company with Ron Blanchett drove to Upper Hutt to meet again our old friends Mike and Jane Curry.

AROUND AND ABOUT IN NEW ZEALAND (continued)

We spent a night in Wellington and early next day boarded the Cook Strait Ferry to cross over to Picton and the South Island. On the Ferry we met V.C.C. Federal President, Norm Skevington and his charming wife, Marie, who upon hearing that we would be coming to Christchurch, immediately offered us the hospitality of their home for as long as we wished to stay. Such is the legendary friendship of V.C.C. members in New Zealand. The hour long cruise along the Queen Charlotte Sound into Picton, on deep blue still water with hills either side is a treat to remember. From Picton, we drove through fairly dry grazing country into Murchison where we put up for the night at an ancient but comfortable hotel, which had a fire escape made from Dexion angle, making us all vow we would leap into space in an emergency, rather than trust such a Meccano set.

Next day we drove across to the West Coast along the very beautiful and awe-inspiring Buller Gorge where one part of the road has been cut into the mountain face with a snow-fed pale green river rushing below some 300 feet down. From Westport, through Greymouth and Hokitika, along mountain roads to rocky ocean cliffs, we made for Harihari, a small town but boasting a 44 unit DB hotel motel. As we got higher, the temperature dropped and it was very cold next day as we got to Franz Josef and the Glacier. I could not hope to describe the scenery, particularly as we climbed the Haast Pass. The snow encrusted mountains all round the calm serenity of the many lakes, the feeling of awe of the huge rock outcrops, the brilliant pale green and foaming white of the snow-fed rivers, it was all too wonderful to take in.

Then it was down the centre of the Island to Invercargill, where we met member Cyril McCrae, spent three days in that town during which we enjoyed hospitality which extended to an enormous wild-duck dinner and then it was off up the east coast to the interesting city of Dunedin. There was much to see there, but too soon we had to leave for Christchurch. Our stay there was taken up in discussion about the Pan Pacific Rally to be held in 1986, and to see the facilities that would be made available.

Before we departed from Christchurch, we had made a promise to be part of that Rally and to visit the scenery of the South Island again. And, if you want to share the friendship and hospitality of New Zealand and to travel around some of the most scenic parts in the world in February, 1986, watch next month's Newsletter for some details. But, for the present, our sincere thanks to Ron Blanchett for making it all possible and our deep appreciation to those good friends who gave us such a happy time.

RON WILSON

AND EVEN MORE ON THE MILLER/ALVIS FWD SAGA II

Comment on "Borgeson on Miller", by W. Boddy, on pages 299 and 300 of MOTOR SPORT for March, 1984.

1. WB says that GB refutes the status of the fwd Alvis as a British "first". False. It was GB who first pointed out that "first" years ago. What he calls "The Alvis Dilemma" in his article he defines therein as being the problem of explaining "how Alvis scooped Miller".
2. WB seems to take umbrage that GB rejects the Hull & Johnson (British) theory of simultaneous invention. GB, with rare expertise in this area, finds that explanation simplistic and highly improbable. GB presents what he terms "one possibility".
3. WB says that GB "is trying to convince himself that Miller drawings must have crossed the Atlantic". False. The essential details of the design solution could have been sketched on a scrap of paper in a minute or so, anywhere.

AND EVEN MORE ON THE MILLER/ALVIS FWD SAGA II (continued)

4. WB speaks of GB's "contention" that Alvis engineers copied Miller. False. GB stated that this was one possibility. It was the one which seemed the most likely to S.C.H. Davis, whose credentials in this area are outstanding.
5. WB asks, "... how else would a pioneer FWD racing chassis have been laid out at that time?", suggesting that there was no other solution, demonstrating his ignorance in this area. Miller himself favored a transverse engine, ahead of the front axle, but his client was not of accord. Other solutions were readily available, including those of Ben F. Gregory. All this is spelled out in GB's article.
6. WB refers to Brett Riley and Mark Dee, for Riley Brett and Mark Dees.
7. WB says that S.C.H. Davis "disclaimed giving such information to Smith-Clark". False. There never has been the slightest reason for anyone to think that Davis might have had such information to give. How he would have gotten it would really be a dilemma.
8. WB speaks of Brett "... having said he knew nothing of the new Miller development when he was in England". False. What GB wrote was that Brett claimed that he knew nothing about how Alvis scooped Miller. There is a world of difference here.
9. WB states that GB restored both of the ex-Bugatti Millers. False. In his article, GB states that he turned the unrestored ex-Duray car over to the Indianapolis Speedway Museum at his own cost (in a ridiculous excess of enthusiasm). GB did restore the ex-Hepburn car (not the interior of the engine, but he had other Miller engines which he dismantled and reassembled, guided by Jean Marcenac) with his own hands, which is partly how he happens to know what he does about the structure of those machines.
10. WB is not very clear when he says that "speeds in America were not recognised in Europe at that time". The British lost no time in recognising them when they began running for records there in the late '20s. The AAA was the national affiliate of the AIACR (now FIA) from long before the period in question. For the then very insular Americans it was national records which had practical importance; international records generally were of academic or no interest.
11. WB cannot "quite believe" the story about Duray winning at Salem with a dead engine, as described by a once-famous authority, Fred Wagner. Dees reports that another authority, John Burgess, director of the Cunningham Museum, was an eye-witness to that event. His explanation is that Keach cut his engine in response to a bad pit signal; thus letting Duray shoot past.
12. WB says that GB "loses a mite of credibility by saying he cannot easily distinguish between Arpajon ... and Montlhery track ..." False., What GB said was that the French press coverage was confused and contradictory, which he explained in detail.
13. WB says that to refer to Zborowski as "a sometime sportscar manufacturer" is stretching things. He is correct. The sources upon which GB relied at that time were not. Actually, the precise nature and extent of Z's financial commitment to Aston-Martin seems to be unknown even to the most serious students of the marque.
14. In referring to the Linas-Montlhery autodrome circuit, GB erred in writing "which included a 0.777 mile banked concrete oval". He should have written "which included a 0.777 mile portion of a banked concrete oval".

It is an interesting coincidence that GB's source for that dimension, given as 1.250 km, was the profile map of the autodrome in WB's 1961 book, Montlhery - The Story of the Paris Autodrome, 1924-1960. Elsewhere on the same unnumbered page of that book, WB gives the circumference of the oval, expressed as 2.5 km and 1.6 miles. As an equivalent of 2.5 km, 1.6 miles is in error by 4.65 %.

AND EVEN MORE ON THE MILLER/ALVIS FWD SAGA!! (continued)

This is equal to 245.52 feet, approaching the length of an American football field. In the context of speed trials, where distances are measured at least to the meter and the foot, this error is grotesque. WB's book contains others like it.

In the almost quarter-century since the publication of that work WB still has not recognised his 1.6 mile error; he still used that figure in his criticism of G.B. Errors of WB's such as these and his stating in the same book that the international governing body of the sport is the CIA (page xii) are honest ones, such as all human beings make. The systematic distortion and misquoting of the words of others is a very different matter, morally and legally.

Probably not very many readers of MS have ready access to AQ. Therefore it would have been a responsible act for WB or the editor of MS to have quoted the words of GB which were being challenged. This, however, would have destroyed the illusion that WB was making sense. The words which are criticised are to be found in two articles in AQ XXI/4. One is titled "Fresh Footnotes to the History of Miller Front Drive" and the section titled "The Alvis Dilemma" is on page 416. The other article is titled "Leon Duray - Just the Fastest" and the portion referring to Montlhery is at the end of page 431 and the beginning of page 432.

Dear Mr. McLennan,

Just a line to thank you for your objectivity in printing both sides of the story in the ACCV Newsletter.

(signed) GRIFFITH BORGESON

TRADING POST

Re: ALVIS SPARES : Darrien Cassidy recently notified me that certain 3 litre spares were not available in club. Thanks, Darrien. I wrote to Red Triangle in UK, enclosing an international reply coupon. (Always do this or you won't get an answer.) They replied immediately with prices and lots of information. I sent the money to them and 18 days later I received the parts, just 34 days in all. With service like this, I think it very unfair to expect the Club to supply our parts, unless in stock. Surely we can fend for ourselves.

COL WINSLADE

SELL Vespa motor scooter and two for spares or restoration. \$175 cash, the lot.

SELL post drill, blacksmith's type hand operated "Dawn", duco appears to be original. \$35.00

SELL Jeep trailer, square guard model 1943/no. 173. Good tyres and spare wheel, Vic reg, lights fitted, bought in 1949, green. \$575.00

I have bought interstate some various N.O.S. 3 litre parts. Most are for sale, but I would consider swap as I need a left front bumper section, and a panel with air pipe that fits inside left front guard, for 1951 TA 21 3 litre.

SELL Chev Ute 48 Stylemaster, 29 HP 6 cyl, OHV, 1 owner, all original, running order \$875.

SELL International Ute 1939 ex Army, khaki/green, 26 hp sv engine, chrome headlights. A spare motor and gear box included. Simple restorer \$650.

I do not have any shockers with 4 1/2" bodies, but do have several early double acting arm models with timing marks.

As I am retiring from motor wrecking I have lots of parts and cars for sale. Try me, I may have it.

COL WINSLADE, P.O. Lake Boga, Vic, 3584. Phone (050) 37 2244.

FOR SALE Ken Day Alvis Book \$30.00 see A. Tope.

WANTED Pair headlamps to suit 12/50 - R. Wilson 874 2450.

WANTED Drag link to suit 12/50, steering box to suit 12/50 - G. Hopkins

WANTED Magneto to suit 12/50 - R. Creed 716 2193.

FOR TC 21/100 : 1. Driving side rear wheel hub 2. Tail light lens (qty. 2)  
3. Windscreen washer bottle (Trico) 4. Horns (qty. 2)

Dean Prangley,  
28 Blackstone Street,  
Indooroopilly, Queensland, 4068.

EDITOR'S NOTE : This ad will surely please John Needham - nice to hear of Dean.