



CAR ALVIS CLUB

VICTORIA

(INC.)

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 30 ISSUE No. 5 MAY 1991.

CLUB ROOMS:- at the rear of "ALVISTA", EDGAR ST., MALVERN. Near Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Pool.

MEETINGS:- THIRD FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH (EXCEPT DEC./JAN.) AT 8.00 pm.

**** EVENTS **** EVENTS **** EVENTS ****

MAY. FRIDAY 17.5.91. Club General Meeting. GUEST SPEAKER

JUNE. FRIDAY 21.6.91. Club General Meeting.

JUNE. SUNDAY 23.6.91. Pub Run to the Reefton Pub. Organised by Alister Cannon. Details of where to meet, what to wear and how much to drink in the June Newsletter but keep the date free and hope for a fine day.

Keep in mind the **AUCTION NIGHT on Friday August 16th.** Last year's event attended by the ladies bearing gifts of produce etc. was such a success that it will be repeated this year. So start turning out your shed and start baking, pickling, jamming and confectioning.

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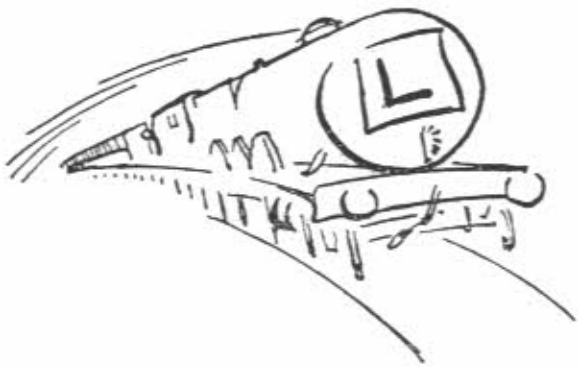
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

By the time you read this article, the most important event of the Club Calendar for 1991 will be over and all the participants will have returned home.

I refer to the First National Alvis Rally, based on Echuca - Moama. The opening dinner of the Rally is at the Moama Motor Inn on Sunday evening, the 28th April and the closing dinner is on Friday the 3rd May.

All the previous Interstate Rallies have been very enjoyable but when you get one with Ron Wilson as Rally Director, well, that is something again! We are looking forward to a relaxed and relaxing Rally, based on meticulous planning; it is certainly chock full of interest. We are also looking forward to meeting all our old Alvis friends and seeing those beautiful cars again as well as some new ones.

BOB GRAHAM.



Dear John,

Claire and I would like to record in the Newsletter our everlasting thanks and appreciation for the great assistance so freely given on moving day, by Messrs. Wilson, Hood and Graham.

By the way, I have discovered that, contrary to general opinion, Nuvolari is not dead; he is standing at Stud near Wangaratta!

Things are swinging here in Kelly country. There is a 30,000 gallon tank going in next week. Claire has just finished digging a 40 ft. hole, 4 ft. deep to put it in!

However the highlight at Easter was a visit by two A.C.C.V. members in a well known vintage Silver Eagle. I refer of course to Inspector John Kent of the Wangaratta Constabulary and Geoff Hood.

Must close now as the forelady is cracking the whip.

Regards.

MURRAY & CLAIRE FITCH.
Church Street, Glenrowan 3675

ALVIS AGNITIONS.

There is not a lot to report this month. Your Editor has been slack; he disappeared at publication time and went on the First Alvis National Rally. There is heaps to report about that highly enjoyable week and it is hoped to make the June issue of the Newsletter a "Rally Special". Reports have already been promised from several States and the issue should include some high quality photographs of highlights of the Rally. At the time of writing the Editor has no photographs in his possession at all so please send in a print (or more) of your favourite scene. Screen printing will be used so the quality of reproduction should be good but, unfortunately, costs will be high so there will be room for only six or eight pictures. Please do not send in anything that you wish to have returned and if you have thought of a good caption please enclose that. During the week of the Rally there was alot of fun, good company and a host of magnificant and interesting Alvises. So share your pleasure with those members who were unable to attend. At this stage the only comment to be made about the Rally is a special thank you to **RON WILSON** for getting it all "just right". What do ex-Rally Directors do when they retire? They pickle tomatoes! Sounds like Ron is getting ready for the Auction!

ED.

JUNE NEWSLETTER
COPY DEADLINE
WEDNESDAY MAY 29TH

ADVICE NEEDED.

I am a sailor in the Australian Navy. My parents live in Western Australia and my brother-in-law, who lives in South Australia, owns an Alvis.

My father and mother have been busted for drug-running and depend upon my two sisters, who are prostitutes in Melbourne,for a living. My only brother is serving a life sentence in jail on charges of rape and murder.

I am in love with a prostitute who has syphilis and solicits around the Naval dockyard. She says she loves me but knows nothing of my family background. We intend to marry as soon as her illnesses clear up. My being an alcoholic doesn't bother her at all.

When I get out of the Navy we will open a whorehouse in Brisbane and my two sisters will work there to keep the business in my family.

The problem is this: I want to marry this girl and bring her into the family and I want to be honest with her. Should I tell her about my brother-in-law being an Alvis owner?

Dear John,

When you asked me to write an article on Disasters I thought that you meant past ones, but you must have great powers of insight brought forward, no doubt, by the high office you hold. You meant Future Disasters!

The trip to Adelaide at Easter went well and was made more interesting by going via Broken Hill where we had lunch beneath the walls of Little Kremlin, otherwise known as the BIC. Mallala was our first (and last) event. Practice showed the Alvis in all her glory, only limited by the two wheel brakes. The first race was a five lap one and half way round lap one my back wheels locked solid and I spun off.

Looking in the top of the gearbox showed a broken selector so it was gearbox out and Kevin Shearer kindly offered to weld it up. We returned to Adelaide where he and his son-in-law did a really good job. About 8.00 pm. I staggered out of his workshop to find the Holden had been nicked! (Read on, it gets worse.) Next day, in a borrowed car, we installed the box to suddenly find the gear lever had been left in the back of the Holden. Kevin came to the rescue by welding up a temporary one using some scrap water pipe. So I just made race one which was an eight lapper which went well even if I was lapped by the quick cars. However during the warm up lap for the next race the crankshaft broke - at which time I retired! (Things get better now.)

The cops rang at 5.30 am. next day (after a super night at the Sporting Car Club of SA) and said they'd found the car, with only minor bits missing. We retreived the Holden and Alvis and accepted a kind invitation to drive a Dodge 4 on the Lobethal event. It was super, with all the race cars being issued with 3 day road permits so one could see a F5000 or an Alta or a Lea Francis car sprinting around the old GP road circuit.

It was a super Speed Week and I must say the Historic Racing mob are always a pleasure to be with. There was plenty of good driving, lies, good red or beer afterwards. Nev Webb and Geoff Russell both won heaps of pots and I was awarded the Hard Luck Trophy as well as the Furthest Travelled one. I look forward to the next Speed Week, but next time I'll try not to hit the other two leprechauns we saw near Broken Hill.

Cheers.

DES DONNAN.

P.S. Good luck at the National Rally.

FRENCH ALVIS CLUB FORMED.

L'Alvis Club de France has just been formed with its HQ in the South of France, 8 km. from Avignon. It will extend a warm welcome to any Australian old car enthusiast whether he has an Alvis or not. The flat rate subscription is ten dollars, which will not ruin anybody.

The Club Outlook is international, sporting and anti-red-tape. The magazine will be unpretentious, irregular and iconoclastic. Technical aspects will not be neglected and an outspoken correspondence will be encouraged.

Forms of application for membership may be obtained either from Eric Cunningham or direct from the president :

Peter Black, Chateau Vilbrequin,
30131 Pujaut-en-Provence, France.

Eric Cunningham is suspicious that this may be a Peter Black leg pull! (ED.)

Dear John,

I found the discussion in the NL as to why people drive on the sides that they do quite interesting. It was my intention to contribute my six penyworth earlier but enquiries at the U.S. Consulate took some time.

The origin of the differing practices goes back some 200 years. English coaches were driven by coachmen who sat on the vehicle itself. This meant that he had to sit on the right side of the coach so that he could use his whip. On the other hand, French coaches were driven by postillions who had to sit on the rear-most horse on the left file, so that he could whip his horses as required.

As has been already established, the drivers preferred to sit on the "outer" side of their equippages so that when meeting others coming the other way, they were in a better position to judge the clearances. Roads were very narrow, for the most part, in those days. If they so desired, they could chat to each other.

During the Napoleonic years France occupied the whole of continental Europe, Sweden and Russia excepted, and all of this area was subject to the "Code Napoleon". Thus we had the situation whereby the entire population of the continent drove on the right, with the exception of Sweden. Sweden changed to "drive on the right" in the late 1950's as the trans-continental motor traffic made the Swedes feel too insular (and dangerous) in continuing their old ways.

In the U.S.A. stage coaches were all driven by a driver seated on the vehicle. This meant that he would normally sit on the right side so as to be able to use his whip. This being so, why do they drive on the right side of the road? An enquiry at the U.S. Consulate could not provide the answer. It could be that the narrow roads common throughout the North American continent made it safer for the driver to sit on the "outside" so as to see just how close he was to running over the precipice!

On the continent of Europe some makers stuck to a right hand driving position although the road rules insisted on driving on the right hand side of the road. Etore Bugatti, for instance, never built a left hand drive car in his life. Similarly, it was only in the years after WW2 the Lancia and Alfa Romeo offered cars with left hand drive. Ah! The lure of the export dollar! This type of snobbery was also to be found amongst the upper crust U.S. manufacturers. Pierce-Arrow for instance retained their controls on the right side of the chassis for many years.

Of course the septic tanks have so often done the right thing for the wrong reasons. Eurpoean GT cars were generally trimmed in black so as to avoid annoying reflections. Now even the most staid of American touring cars looks positively funereal on the inside. By the same token the most fashionable position for the control lever for an automatic transmission is between the front seats. However, since this control is usually used only twice per journey it could perhaps be better located where it originally was - on the steering column.

I hope that these rambling remarks will at least explain why the Europeans and the made Engleesh drive as they do.

BILL BARBER.

NOTES FROM THE NATIONAL ALVIS RALLY by ALICE

At the Echuca Rally Red Triangle
Where great motels Ron managed to wangle
They came from afar
In each type Alvis car
No matter what Angle of Dangle.

On the first afternoon Bev and Bob
Were doing a wonderful job
Of providing the nosh
Toothsome nibbles so posh
I'll go home resembling a blob.

Have you heard about redheads & Bruce Jorss?
They tell me they've seen nothing worse!
Rumour says that the deed
Was done by Paul Reed
But neither admits it, of course.

Please call on Ron Wilson and Gwen
They've said they will satisfy all men
Or almost, you know
They can't satisfy Joe
Or Tom Dick or Harry, or Ken.

Who was it who had a birthday
Started throwing his two cents away
And took change of a dollar
Until a great holler
Made him save it to try the next day?

On the drive out to old Perricoota
Royboy brought his antique brass hooter
But we just couldn't trust it
So removed our Alvis mascot
To be sure and foil any looter.

During lunch at the Aquatic centre
Many worked on the Wilson Brain Bender
In fact to be seen
Was some chap called Dean
Beating his head on a Grey Lady's fender.

Eric Cunningham records Alvis history
So if your car's a bit of a mystery
Just give Eric a call
He'll research it all
And the language won't ever be blistery.

Captain Ahab's a bit of a star
With his white "beluga whale" car
So you'd better start zooming
When you see them looming
Have you heard of beluga caviare?

Stop press! We've just heard it was Dale
Who asked for the redhead on trial
Just for horizontal tutoring
That dance on the futon
Don't you feel that's beyond the pale?

Ron Wilson our Rally Director
Has become a new star we can hector
For what with the rally,
The speeches, and the telly
He seems to have won a trifecta.

After the dirt road leading to Barmah
Ron and his gang checked their Karma
There's so many imprecations
Re the "blank blank" corrugations
They are scared of the dire threats of harm-a.

"Look through keyholes?" said Bill,"Never more
I've been hit by a ladies' loo door
It was wielded by Kay
But I got in the way
And Rosemary wouldn't lift me off the floor."

I must say by their absence they're conspicuous
They made quite a few Alvis look ridiculous
Your luck's better, sir, than mine
If you spotted a road sign
Should we order some next Christmas from
St. Nicholas?

If you're talking to Barbara and Mick
Please don't search that furcoat for a tick
That's been done already
Tho' it looks more like a teddy
And besides Barbara's got a strong kick.

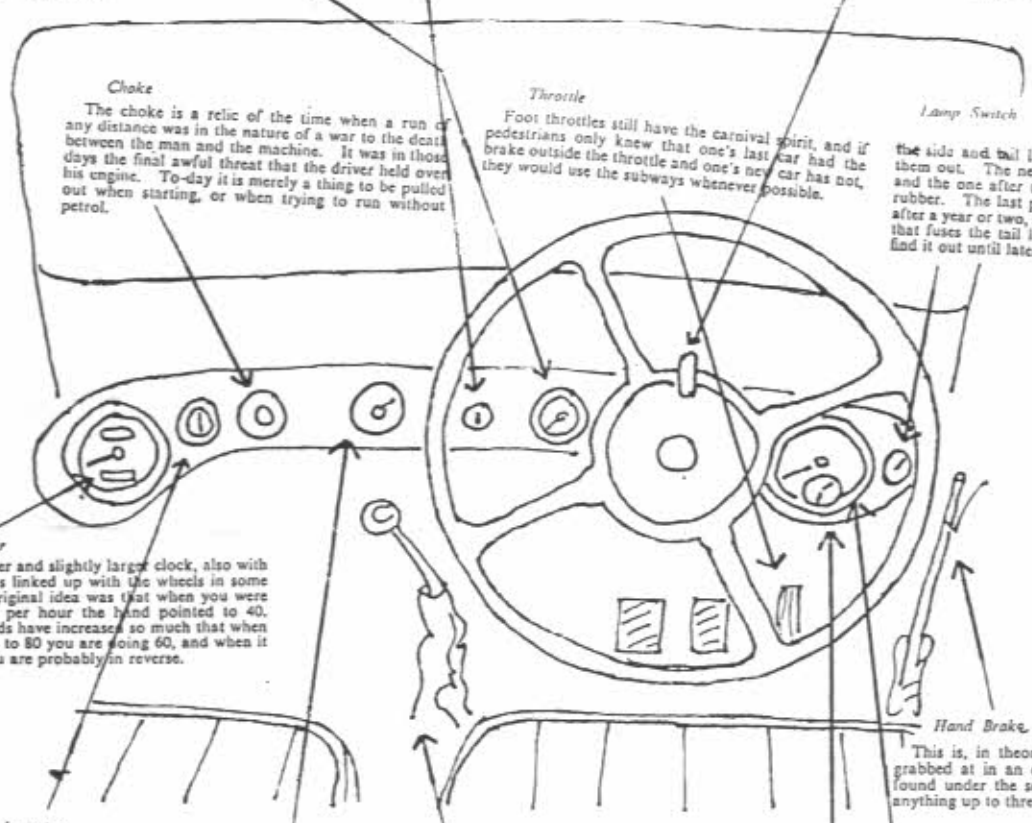
If you want to talk Alvis with Max
Please be sure that you know all your facts
But if it's for repair
He'll be sure to help you there
He's been Alvis long enough to learn the knack.

Now we've come to the end of our Rally
And forth to our homes we will sally
With memories of fun
And good things we have done
And new friends we can add to our tally.

-BONNIE YOUNG.

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE DASHBOARD.

(With apologies to "You Have Been Warned" by Fougass & McCullough. 1935.)



Oil Gauge

This is a little clock with "Pounds per square inch" on its face. It has only one hand, which moons vaguely about. A sudden return to zero can mean a hundred different things to the expert, but never more than one to the beginner, who won't have noticed anything anyway.

Ignition Switch

These vary tremendously. Some you pull out, some you slide, some you push in, and a great many you have to unlock. As keys are apt to be mislaid, a first-class car thief should be included in the tool-kit.

Traffic Indicators

The idea behind these gadgets is to tell people when you are turning, or have just turned, to the right or left. This is usually done by a little switch on the wheel or the dashboard. In earlier days they could be relied upon to make frequent and most dramatic contributions to the pageantry of the road. Nowadays, of course, they are all fool-proof, and many of them are small-boy-proof as well.

Choke

The choke is a relic of the time when a run of any distance was in the nature of a war to the death between the man and the machine. It was in those days the final awful threat that the driver held over his engine. To-day it is merely a thing to be pulled out when starting, or when trying to run without petrol.

Throttle

Foot throttles still have the carnival spirit, and if pedestrians only knew that one's last car had the brake outside the throttle and one's new car has not, they would use the subways whenever possible.

Lamp Switch

The first position puts on the side and tail lights and the next position puts them out. The next again turns on the headlights, and the one after that produces a smell of burning rubber. The last position dips the headlights, and after a year or two, starts up the horn. The position that fuses the tail light is not known, as you don't find it out until later.

Speedometer

This is another and slightly larger clock, also with one hand. It is linked up with the wheels in some way, and the original idea was that when you were doing 40 miles per hour the hand pointed to 40. Nowadays speeds have increased so much that when the hand points to 80 you are doing 60, and when it points to 10 you are probably in reverse.

Hand Brake

This is, in theory, a sort of safety device to be grabbed at in an emergency. Actually it is often found under the seat or the dashboard, and takes anything up to three quarters of an hour to grab at.

Ammeter

This is for measuring electricity and is easily recognized, being the only dial that has nought in the middle, and scores both above and below the line.

It is the most picturesque means of knowing if your battery is discharging—but not the most usual.

Gear Lever

A gear lever used to be an important part of the car. In a real man's car it was sometimes necessary to use both hands and one foot braced against a window to get it into position. Nowadays the gears have either little toy levers, like teaspoons, or else long and willowy levers, like bulrushes, that bend and quiver rather charmingly in the slightest breeze.

Rev. Counter

This, in spite of its name, is a purely secular instrument. It tells you how fast your engine is going, and, if you watch it carefully enough, you can change gear absolutely noiselessly—apart from the tinkling of glass as you drive through a shop window in the process.

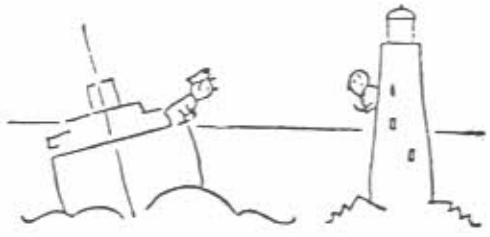
Radiator Temperature

A great many cars have got a little device which tells you if the water in your radiator is too hot. If it keeps on pointing to boiling, you need a new fan belt, or a new radiator, or a new engine, or else a new little device.

Clock

This is just the same as any ordinary clock, except that it always points to ten-past seven.

Courtesy Richard Unkles.



"Sorry, but I'm a stranger here."

8

FOR THOSE WHO ARE WEAK AT THE KNEES.

This explanation of the workings of the Dewandre Vacuum Assisted Braking System comes out of a handbook for the 1931 Hillman "Vortic", but may be of interest to those who have power brakes.

BRAKES.

Internal expanding brakes, operated by rod and cable linkage, are fitted, the pedal, assisted by a Dewandre Servo motor, operates on the four wheels, whilst the hand brake acts on the rear wheels only.

A simple means of adjustment is provided for the foot brake in a single hand adjuster situated under the floorboard in front of the driver's seat, which, turned clockwise, takes up all four brakes at the same time. This is the main adjustment and is used to compensate for general lining wear.

It is essential that the brakes be maintained in correct balance. For this purpose separate adjustments are provided at each brake camshaft, hand screws for the front wheels and nuts for the rear wheels.

To balance the brakes, jack up all four wheels clear of the ground. First take up the main adjustment and then separately adjust each wheel until it can just be turned by hand. When all wheels require the same effort to turn them, screw back the main adjustment until the wheels are just free. The adjustment is now complete and further adjustments are made to the main adjuster as required.

It is advisable to check the brakes for balance from time to time. A simple indication as to whether the brakes are correctly balanced is given by the heat of the drums after the brakes have been applied. When they are all approximately of equal temperature, it may be assumed that the brakes are correctly balanced, but if one or more drums are warmer than the others, it is probable that they are too closely adjusted.

If it is eventually found that all the main adjustment has been taken up, it should be screwed back, the front brake adjuster screwed up, and the rear cables be fitted to another hole, after which balance the brakes as previously explained.

To adjust the hand brake, the cable connections should be treated in the same way as those of the foot brakes.

Dewandre Vacuum Servo.—The Servo is fitted between the frame and the gearbox on the offside, and is a self-contained unit, comprising the suction cylinder and piston with valve gear and operating levers all enclosed in a dustproof case.

No adjustments of any kind are required to keep the Servo in working order, the only adjustment the braking system requires being ordinary adjustment to compensate for wear in the brake fibers, in exactly the same way as if the Servo were not fitted.

How it Operates.—The normal positions of the various parts when the brake is not in use are as illustrated (Fig. 6), the levers C and D resting against the stop M. When the brake pedal is depressed and a pull exerted on the rod E, the lever C is pulled forward, causing a push on the rod J and so opening through the rocking lever K the valve A, which puts the suction cylinder S into communication with the suction pipe of the engine. The suction acting on the piston P exerts a pull on the lower end of the lever C, which, using N as its fulcrum point, carries with it the lever D and augments or supplements the push on rod F in the ratio of 4 to 5 on the part of the Servo to 1 applied by the driver.

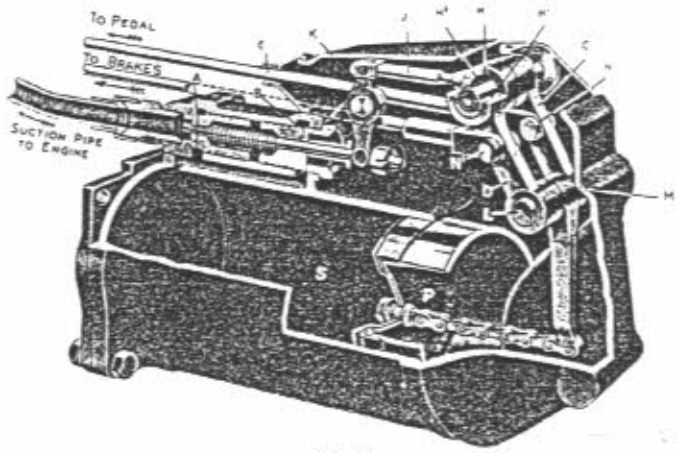


Fig. 6.

As soon as the fulcrum point N becomes stationary (that is, when no further movement of the brake pedal takes place), the pull of the piston will cause the lever C to turn on this fulcrum and so release the push on the rod J until the valve A closes and arrests any increase of the pull of the piston.

Any further forward movement of the pedal (carrying the fulcrum N with it) will immediately re-open the valve. When, however, the pressure on the brake pedal is released or relaxed, the top end of the lever C is carried back by the pull of the piston, this time exerting a pull on the rod J and so opening the atmospheric valve B and releasing the suction in the cylinder.

SEND IN PICTURES OF THE NATIONAL RALLY THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE PUBLISHED, TO REACH THE EDITOR BY WEDNESDAY 29TH MAY, 1991

"SPAREPERSONS".

Vintage.

Geoff Hood,
37, Thomas St.,
E. Doncaster.
Vic. 3109.
Tel. 03 842 2181.

P.V.T.

Austin Tope,
8, Wimba Ave.,
Kew. Vic. 3044.
Tel. 03 817 5163.

3 LITRE.

Kevin Bruce,
P.O. Box 187,
Maffra. Vic. 3860.
Tel. 051 47 3096.

TA 14.

Bob Graham,
15, Clarke Ave.,
Caulfield.
Vic. 3162.
Tel. 03 571 3886.

FOR SALE & WANTED.

National Alvis Spares offers this month:-

ENGINE MOUNTS.

3 Litre	Front	$30.00
	Rear	$30.00
TA 14	Front	$30.00
	Rear	$30.00
Speed 25	Rear (gearbox) 4 only	$30.00

The rubber section of the engine mount is replaced with a flexible synthetic resin. This is a little harder than rubber. They have been tested by the Club and give excellent service. It is requested that the old steel plates from the engine mounts be returned to the Club when ordering new mounts. This way, the supply can be kept up.

3 Litre Spares.

Water Inlet Pipe to head.	C7403	$30.00
Valve Collets.	C5825 (small quantity)	$4.00
	C6976 (inlet only)	$5.00
Manifold Gasket Sets		$15.00
Gudgeon Pins.	C4207	$15.00
Steering Drag Link with ball ends.	C5842	$75.00
Con-rod Slipper Bearings - 50 thou.	1 set.	$70.00

REPRINTS. Reprints of Instruction Manuals and Spare Parts Catalogues for most models of Alvis cars are now available. Prices of most of these professionally produced Reprints is $20.00 plus P & P.

LAPEL BADGES. New stock. $5.00

12/50 Head gaskets are available.

12/50 Gears are on the way. Pedal rubbers are not yet ready.

PRIVATEERS.

FOR SALE. TA 14 Chassis with front and rear axles and wheels. Whole motor in bits. $1,500.00. O.N.O. David Caldwell. Tel. 03 729 5821.

WANTED. Interest in remanufacturing Hartford Shock Absorbers for 12/50's. Contact Richard Unkles. Tel. 03 857 9417.

WANTED. For 12/50 (to save me having to make them) Manifold. Complete gear lever. Complete hand-brake lever. Brake drum. Front spring shackle N 2449. Front wing stay N 3038. Hand-brake shaft drop lever N 4538. Bob Anderson, 163 Wellington Rd., Dianella.6062 Tel.09 275 3494.

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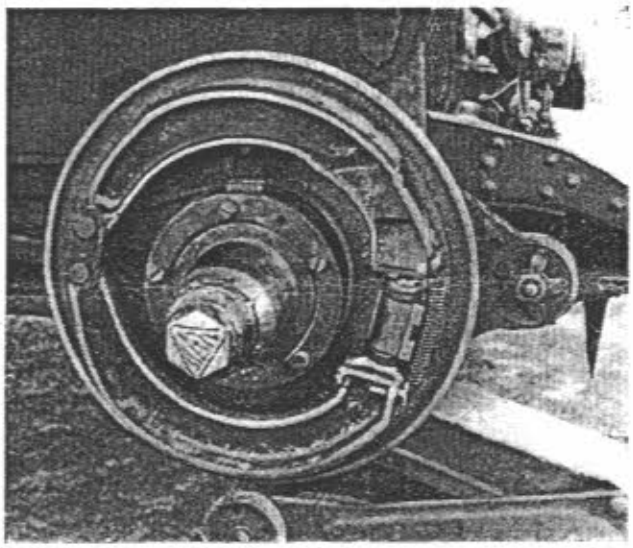

Arresting Developments at Winforton

◀ *Hydraulic brake conversion to an Alvis Speed Twenty as described in the text*

WHILE the Ministry of Transport seven-year test is stringent, it requires no more of a car than that its braking performance should approximate to what it was when the car was new. There is, however, a more responsible body of opinion which feels that it might be a good idea, especially with vintage sports cars, to bring stopping power nearer to modern standards.

This is the aim of work being done by Winforton Motors, near Hay-on-Wye, Brecknockshire, for owners of the old Alvis Speed 20 and its derivatives. As a result of considerable thought by Mr. E. M. H. Cairnes, the proprietor of Winforton Motors, the conversion is a simple one, involving very few new parts other than the hydraulic gear.

On a recent visit to Winforton we were able to compare the braking performance of a 1932 Speed 20 Alvis Tourer, fitted with this conversion, with that of a later, but unmodified, Alvis Speed 25 which belongs to Mr. Cairnes. The braking performance of the modified car is completely transformed. Although heavy pedal pressures are required, they are not out of keeping with the character of the car. To obtain the car's best retardation of 25ft per sec., 160lb pedal pressure was necessary. While this might be quite within the scope of the average male, it might be rather a lot for a woman. Pedal pressures of 100lb produced a retardation rate of 13ft per sec.

Next the test equipment was fitted to the Speed 25, which retained its original self-servo Bendix system. A 100lb pedal pressure gave almost the same results as with the conversion, namely, 11ft per sec., but pressure increases beyond this produced relatively little extra effect, the best result, at 180lb pressure, being a rate of 16ft per sec. This figure was taken when the brakes were cold, as it was felt that the self-servo system, with the type of lining normally fitted, could easily produce fade. At the end of the test, during which 15 applications were made, fade was already beginning to set in, and a further tentative attempt at the 180lb figure revealed a considerable reduction in braking power.

As we have said, the Winforton conversion is a simple one. At the front the main work consists of redrilling the brake back plates to take Girling wheel cylinders, shortening the original brake shoes and welding on end pads to take the wheel cylinder thrust. The master cylinder is also by Girling; it is fitted inside and parallel with the right-hand chassis member, and is operated from the existing brake cross-shaft. To obtain a more realistic braking balance—the original levers gave too much braking to the rear wheels—the length of the rear brake operating levers is modified.

The cost of this conversion is £35, fitted, which includes all the hydraulic gear and new rear-brake cables. It is emphasized that the conversion will not be offered as a kit, because a certain amount of skilled fitting is required. Winforton Motors feel that this is too much of a responsibility for amateurs. At an additional price, which so far has not been decided, a stiffened brake drum of the type fitted to servo-braked Alvis can be supplied; unfortunately stocks of these parts are extremely limited.

It was encouraging to see the enthusiasm at Winforton for these older Alvis. Apart from the cars tested, there were several more Speed 20s and Speed 25s, besides other examples of the marque. We were told that a reconditioned engine is always kept in stock along with many other spares. It is apposite to mention here that Alvis Ltd., are one of the few firms left who are prepared to supply spares for their earlier models, even manufacturing them if necessary. Enthusiasts for the breed seem to be in the happy position of being able to maintain their cherished models indefinitely.

1932 Alvis Speed 20 Winforton Conversion		Alvis Speed 25 Unmodified	
Pedal load in lb	Retardation	Pedal load in lb	Retardation
50	0·20g	50	0·19g
75	0·28g	75	0·20g
100	0·40g	100	0·34g
125	0·53g	150	0·43g
150	0·76g	180	0·50g