



VICTORIA
(INC.)

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 32

ISSUE NO. 6

JUNE 1993.

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 pm.

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

JUNE. FRIDAY 18TH. CLUB GENERAL MEETING. Guest speaker John Manns, of Nostalgic Wireless Company, will talk on the history and restoration of car radios.

JUNE. SUNDAY 20TH. V.S.C.C. EARLY MORNING RUN.

JULY. FRIDAY 16TH. CLUB GENERAL MEETING - FILM NIGHT.

AUGUST. SUNDAY 8TH. CLUB RUN TO RACV HEALESVILLE COUNTRY CLUB. See inside for details.

AUGUST. FRIDAY 20TH. CLUB GENERAL MEETING - AUCTION NIGHT.

AUGUST. SUNDAY 28TH. NATIONAL ALVIS RALLY starts in Queensland.

NOTE
CHANGE
OF ADDRESS

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J. LEMAN-BATES



J. LEMAN-BATES

A WINTER QUIZ.

Now that the nights are closing in and it is becoming too cold to go out into the garage after dinner a bit of mind stretching will help to while away the evenings. In our modern day motoring there are many things which we take for granted - but they weren't always there!

Can anybody define, elucidate, elaborate or proliferate on the first use, and where they were first used, of these traffic control measures?

- a) White lines.
- b) Double lines, broken double lines, the rules of no stopping, no crossing & no overtaking.
- c) Cats eyes to define the centre and the edge of the road.
- d) Traffic lights. Were they originally just red and green and did the amber come later?
- e) Zebra/Pedestrian crossings.
- f) One-way streets.
- g) Roundabouts.
- h) Parking meters.

BOB GRAHAM

Thank you, Bob. Answers to any and all of these questions are awaited with interest and will be published.

ED.

PUFFING BILLY.

The Olde Time Festival will be held again on the 10th of October 1993. In 1991 a splendid day was had by all, especially Alvis owners who were able to enjoy the Club parking spot arranged by Ron Wilson.

Again this year similar arrangements will prevail. Ron has organised the same paddock near Emerald Station with ready access to all the delights available up and down the track. Bring your Alvis if you can but bring yourself, lover, spouse, husband, wife, spouse support person, live-in lodger, lodger, neighbour, friend, acquaintance, man down the street, tenant, landlord, uncle, aunt, cousin or anyone you know. Just bring them and have a good day.

ED.

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NATIONAL RALLY 28.8.93. - 4.9.93. QUEENSLAND.

There are still some vacancies but contact Bruce Jorss (073 99 2928) soon. So far there are 40 entries which means about 80 people. So it's all looking good.

ALVIS AGNITIONS.

A big thank you to **JOHN BALL**, **KAY BALL** and Ros for producing the May Newsletter. It was fun to come back and read an A.C.C.V. Newsletter as an outsider. I reckon it is pretty good! Margaret and I had a good holiday, visiting U.K. briefly and the Eastern part of the U.S.A. more extensively. There was no Alvis contact in the U.K. but in Pennsylvania, U.S.A., we enjoyed a very pleasant lunch as the guests of **HUGH CLARKSON** and his wife **TOMMY**. Hugh is the North American representative of the A.O.C. Presently he has a Grey Lady DHC in U.S.A. and a TA 21 in England. Previously he has enjoyed running a 4.3 Vandenoop and a TD 21. They send greetings to the Victorian Club and I gave Hugh and Tommy mementos of our club activities. There are about twenty Alvises in the Eastern part of the U.S.A. whose owners are in contact with Hugh but, regrettably, few opportunities occur for get togethers and outings. It was interesting to hear about the way in which "old car" activities are arranged in the U.S.A. as distinct from U.K. and Australia. We tend to lump all things American as being "black iron" but the Americans make careful distinction between old cars and classic cars of old. **DAVID WISCHER** has a problem. From the U.S.A. I sent him a postcard of Niagara Falls. He has since written to thank me from my postcard from New Zealand. Perhaps it is not surprising that he parted with a splendid Speed 20! **BOB GRAHAM** is so used to dropping the roof of the TB 14 that he has removed the roof from his house. In typical Alvis fashion he waited until the rain started before making a move. He and **BEVERLEY** should feel at home amongst the drips! I am unable to report how many of any Alvises attended the Winton Historic Race meeting last weekend. We set off to go there but it was so wet that we got no further than a nice cosy pub lunch in Benalla. True pikers! Since we returned **RICHARD TONKIN** has been in touch and is planning the Healesville outing in August. Details elsewhere. As usual, **RON WILSON** is full of plans but was, I believe, unable to go on the Pub Run in May. **ALAN GRIFFIN** obviously enjoyed his Alvis orientated visit to U.K. Welcome back and thanks for the article. The Editor is sorry to have missed Alvis Day but it sounds as though it was a great success. Its great to find a new event taking its place on the modern calendar. There was a reminder in the last Newsletter to send your subscriptions to **JOHN TWOMEY**. I hope that ^{you do} because it was **JOHN BALL** making the request and he is a well known bouncer! Reports have reached this far South of a body-less 12/50 chassis doing blockies in suburban Brisbane. I suspect it is **GRAHAM SINGER'S** TF chassis which has reached the mobile stage. **GREG BERKMAN** has a TG 12/50 which he hopes to have ready for the Queensland Rally and **DALE HANLEY** is working hard on the Speed 25 with the same deadline in mind. **BRUCE JORSS** was experiencing trouble with engine "pinging". Just to enlarge the "Great Petrol Debate" he suggests that it was due to inferior fuel being imported to Brisbane from South East Asia. Anyway, the problem has been cured by "Octane Boost" which is available commercially and consists mainly of Toluene. I hope he doesn't blow himself up before the end of August! ED.

V.S.C.C. DAY TRIAL. - 2.5.93.

Ron Wilson and Bob Graham were in the Firefly and came in tenth. Alister Cannon and Santini were in the 12/50 and finished well. Congratulations to those who continue to fly the Red Triangle.

ARTHUR VARNEY.

Arthur Varney died on 5.1.93. He was an Alvis designer and engineer, particularly involved in the design of the pre-war Alvis synchromesh gearbox. Farewell, Arthur Varney.

Dear John,

They say all good things come to those who wait. Finally I am enclosing an account of our trip in the 12/50 to West Australia. I am sorry that it has taken so long but I have been very busy since our return, especially being a member of the organising committee for the successful and recently completed BMW/FIVA World Rally around Tasmania.

I always look forward to receiving the Newsletter and keeping up with A.C.C.V. activities. It pleases me to have the opportunity of contributing to the Newsletter and having something of interest to write about.

All the best in Alvis motoring.

Regards.

ANDREW McDOUGALL.

Thank you, Andrew. See elsewhere in this Newsletter for ~~the first instalment of~~ Andrew's interesting account. *ED.*

DAVID FLETCHER OF THE FABULOUS FLICKS.

I called in to David yesterday to find that he is recovering well from a mild stroke sustained whilst quaffing a quite ale at Lorne at Easter time. He tells me that he "came to" staring up at the publican's wife. (Tut, Tut!)

After a spell in hospital at Geelong he returned to Melbourne courtesy of a friend. The ambulance trip would have cost over \$900.00, so watch your insurance!

He hopes to be fit enough to put on our film show in July - but with the aid of some transport. He is not yet prepared to drive because of occasional double vision (over and under) which would be awkward if he was crossing creeks. He is also anxious to get back to his stint on Southern Regional Radio (FM 88.3 MH) 8 to 10 on Fridays where he plays jazz and talks a lot of bull.

I thought members who know David would be interested.

Cheers.

ROY BOY.

BLACK INDEX.

Ken Day's book "Story of the Red Triangle" is the definitive book about Alvis motor cars. However, it is not universally admired. Julien Collins pointed out several deficiencies in the book and made the interesting point that its existence, as well as being deficient, blocks the publication of an alternative. There isn't a lot of fun to be obtained from reading the book - at least not when you compare it with books about Bugatti, Ferrari, Riley, M.G., Bristol and even Morgan. There are books on those makes which evoke much more pleasure and fun as well as providing accurate data. Peter Black has done his best to improve "The Story of the Red Triangle" by compiling an index. Readers wanting a copy should join the Alvis club of France or at least write to Peter.

ED.

1993 PUB RUN.

We had an excellent day on Sunday. We went on the Pub Run which incorporated a mini trial complete with false clues and missing information. That made for much beating about the bush and several opened "panic envelopes", ours included.

Some did actually complete the course which shows what twisted minds some apparently normal people have. However, the finish was at the Robin Hood Hotel in Drouin where a raging log fire and cool ale soothed and warmed the jaded spirit. This, followed by an excellent lunch, more ale and more milling about soon put the day to rights.

We - the sensible - felt for them - the insensible - who came in open vehicles. The weather was, to put it mildly, fresh!

Message to the organisers: take no offence at the vicious and unwarranted thrusts and jibes heaped upon you by all and sundry. I have never yet known a trial where fisticuffs were not the order of the day. Remember, we luvs ya' both and wouldn't have it any other way.

ROY BOY.

PETROL CONSUMPTION.

When Australia "went metric" the most difficult conversion was from "M.P.G." to "Km/100l" Not only did the units change but the fraction inverted itself and that has caused major mind boggling mental arithmetic problems ever since. I am sure that those with a mathematical mind will have worked out a conversion factor but for those of us who are innumerate or semi innumerate I provide the following table:-

<u>M.P.G.</u>	<u>Km/100l</u>
10	3.5
11	3.9
12	4.2
13	4.6
14	5.0
15	5.3
20	7.1
25	8.8
30	10.6
35	12.4
40	14.2
45	15.9



Anybody in possession of an Alvis whose petrol consumption is better than 45 m.p.g. does not need a conversion table - they need a lie detector!

ED.

KALORAMA RALLY MARCH 14 1993

Sunday March 14 was one of those marvellous days we have in the Victorian autumn. The annual Kalorama was the usual success.

The entries looked to be down at first, but some last minute support on the day brought the numbers up to 83 cars. The car park was full of interesting pieces of historic and modern motoring.

One delightful model was a replica of the original Benz, circa 1886. The owner, and constructor, Jim very kindly agreed to display the car on the oval, and to give demonstration runs to the delight of the audience.

We were able to use the P.A. system because of some hard work done by our secretary, Russell Clough and committee member Ken Day. There had been some local objections to the P.A. the previous year but the diplomacy of the above gentlemen in talking to the local Shire won the day.

The events were run by the Alvis Car Club, and very efficiently, with some help from the Kalorama Committee. Some Rolls Royce members, plus other helpers manned the gate. This is an essential function, otherwise no income, no distribution to Yarra Me, and eventual demise of the Kalorama day.

This year we suffered a small financial loss. This was amply compensated by the interest from our trust account as will be seen from the accounts set out below.

The donation to Yarra Me was \$850.00. The \$50 came from St John Ambulance who considered they were not as well represented as they could have been. Their representative on the spot therefor contributed half their fee to the Yarra Me cause. The gesture was most appreciated.

I must thank the member Clubs for their support and congratulate the Kalorama Committee for yet another excellent rally. I must mention that Russel Clough, our hard working Secretary has asked to be relieved of his task, owing to other responsibilities. If one of our member Clubs could supply a secretary for Kalorama 1994, it would be most appreciated.

Financial Statement.

Receipts	Entries	\$ 455.00	Expenses	CAMS Ins	\$180
	Advertising	200.00		PA System	75
	Gate	1,929.00		Shire Bond	220
	Interest	915.70		Ground	150
	Total	3,499.70		St John	50
				Fire Brig	78
				Yarra Me	850
				Print Progs	380
				Printing	60
				Advertising	171
				Trophies	406
				Total	2,620.

D.Wischer, President and Treasurer.

THE STAR OF THE NEW HOPE SHOW

---John Robson's Account of his FWD Alvis

The 1928 front wheel drive, super-charged Alvis featured a four cylinder, overhead camshaft engine with independent suspension at all four wheels. From 1926 on, some of these cars were fitted with a 1 1/2 litre, supercharged, straight eight engine for racing and had several successes. One hundred and fifty-five front wheel drive cars were built. About half of them were supercharged for competition use. Twenty cars have survived. Miller and Cord based the L19 model Cord (produced in 1929) on the Alvis, but they lacked rear independent suspension.

The four cylinder cars were fast and reliable but difficult to control and many cars were destroyed in racing and highway accidents. They were successful in hill climbs, which is unusual for a front wheel drive vehicle, but their best performances were recorded in long distance (200 mile plus) events. They came in sixth and ninth in the 1928 24 hour Le Mans race and second in the Tourist Trophy race in 1928. Alvis declined an opportunity to protest the winning car which was probably illegal, no doubt because it too had some unorthodox modifications which broke the class rules.

This particular car, built in 1928, started life as a long wheel base saloon and is documented as having been raced in this form at Brooklands in June 1929. However, the saloon body proved to be too much of a handicap and at some later date, the chassis was shortened and the saloon replaced by a two seater T.T. style body. It was used solely for racing until 1952 after which it was registered for road use (License plate number LDF358), then subsequently dismantled and put in store. There have been two or more owners since that time but little, if anything, was done to the disassembled car with the exception of rebuilding the supercharger. It was purchased by the present owner in 1984. The original engine, gearbox and back axle have been completely rebuilt as well as the steering, suspension and brakes.

An exact replica of the T.T. style body was made to original specifications and exact replicas of the original "offset" Alvis wheels were fitted. All bright work was replated and the headlamps repaired and rechromed. Seats were refurbished and re-upholstered in black leather, new black carpeting installed as well as anchors for competition seat belts. A replica dashboard of Honduras mahogany was fitted and all instruments have been restored or remade and are functioning, including the two oil pressure gauges, one of which solely indicates No 1 main bearing pressure.

The Alvis has covered a total of 1200 miles since then and the usual FWD idiosyncrasies are still manifest, such as "blow by" at the cylinder head gasket until the engine is thoroughly warm, minor oil oozes from the supercharger and water pump driveshaft (designed to be fitted without seals) and juddering of the brakes on heavy application.

However, with a limit of 3500 rpm, the car put up a creditable performance at a recent vintage meeting on the Roebing racetrack at Savannah, Georgia.

Years ahead of its time, sophisticated and very complex, the FWD Alvis nevertheless enjoys the reliability, ruggedness and durability of all Alvis cars. Δ

F.W.D. ALVIS IN U.S.A. There is an annual Auto show at New Hope, Pennsylvania. John Robson gave this account of his car when he attended the show in 1991. (Reprinted from "North American Alvis Club Magazine" courtesy Hugh Clarkson) I hope to be able, soon, to reprint a "Classic & Sportscar" article on the F.W.D.....ED.

THE TALE OF A TRIP TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND BACK IN AN ALVIS 12/50

A couple of years ago a number of members of the Veteran Car Club of Australia (Tasmania) decided they would like to attend the National Veteran and Vintage Car Rally to be held in Busselton, W.A. during October 1992. The intention being to drive there and back, camping along the way.

Not having been to Western Australia before, Frances, my wife and I thought that this would provide a good excuse to see another part of Australia and a great way of travelling. The 1926 Alvis 12/50 tourer naturally was the ideal choice for tackling this trip, but first it was necessary to refurbish her.

Our T.E. 12/50 is basically a very original Cross and Ellis bodied narrow sports four seater. My grandfather bought her in 1957 when he heard that someone was proposing to cut her down into a ute. Since that time she has been used as regular transport for a number of years as well as being a regular participant in car club events. She was painted white in the late 50's. Much of my early driving prior to getting my licence was in the Alvis. On one rally when I had my L plates it was said that L must stand for lead foot due to the fairly spirited driving. My 17th birthday was memorable as this was the day I successfully went for my licence in the 12/50 and also the day that my grandfather handed over ownership of her to me.

In 1981 she received some mechanical refurbishment including new king pins and shackles, engine reconditioning, gearbox bearings and the fitting of a 4.3 to 1 crown wheel and pinion due to failure of the original. September and October 1982 were spent participating in a National Rally in southern Queensland, which was successfully completed without incident.

However I have digressed. By 1990 the white paint work, hood, side curtains and the nickel plating were looking very tired. The twelve months leading up to the W.A. Rally were spent attending to these items as well as a few mechanical matters such as a full brake reline, new rear wheel bearings, new wheel nuts, new front spring to replace a non standard incorrect length spring, generator recondition and numerous minor items. Quite a lot of consideration went into the selection of the new colour scheme. Finally the choice was a dark British Racing green for the body with black wheels, guards and top body moulding. I must say that the colour scheme suits her and is pleasing to the eye.

On October 4th, 1992 we headed to Devonport to catch the Abel Tasman ferry to Melbourne. The 12/50 was heavily laden with all our belongings and spare parts. We had removed the rear seat and squab to permit more room for our packs, air bed, sleeping bags, food, camping stools and table and Jerry cans for petrol and water. The tent and gas stove were strapped to the drivers side running board. The tool box contained 3 spare magnetos amongst other things. The battery box had room for the battery as well as hand tools - more about this later. Strapped beneath the rear of the car were two rear end axle half shafts and a main leaf for the front springs. In addition to the spare wheel we carried a second spare tyre and tube.

In Devonport we teamed up with the rest of our party - a 1929 Studebaker Sedan, 1928 A Model Ford Coupe, an Indian motor cycle aboard a car and trailer and a Nissan Camper van.

From Melbourne our trip to Perth took 9 days, staying at Nhill, Adelaide Port Augusta, Ceduna, Eucla, Caiguna, Coolgardie and Bruce Rock along the way. The longest daily run was around 570 km between Caiguna and Coolgardie.

Generally each day we stopped after 2 hours driving to have a break for a cuppa, lunch etc. This way it did not become at all tedious and it allowed us to swap drivers and passengers. We took many opportunities to divert to see points of interest along the way. The weather during the crossing was generally good except for one day between Port Augusta and Ceduna when it rained heavily and the wind was very strong. Having experienced head winds all the way over we looked forward to tail winds on our return trip, but as it happened this wasn't to be. It appeared which ever direction we travelled there was a head wind.

At Coolgardie we caught up with another group of Tasmanians who had left 3 days before us. Prior to catching them we had been kept informed of their progress through reports from travellers and the truckies on their two way radios. We learnt such things as one of the Tasmanians took out first prize at a Whyalla Rally and that a 1929 Austin 7 Chummy (which drove all the way there and back) was reduced to using 2nd gear for most of the time at an average speed of 25km/hr during the two days of very strong head winds.

At York, just short of Perth, we visited the comprehensive and interesting motor museum. Our three days prior to the start of the Rally, in Perth, were really appreciated. It gave us the opportunity to relax, wash clothes and take in the very pleasant environments of Perth and Fremantle.

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The Rally was a hub style based on scenic Busselton with approximately 150 veteran and vintage vehicles. Our Alvis was the only one entered although we did have the opportunity of meeting fellow 12/50 owner Bob Anderson. The morning runs were competitively based on a nominated average speed. We travelled to some very scenic spots via quiet back roads, ideal for vintage motoring. After excellent lunches we could return to Busselton in our own time and by a route of our choosing. Amazingly, considering our speedo was not working, at the end of rally we had accumulated very few penalty points.

At the conclusion of the week of rallying we reluctantly bid farewell to new friends but we were compensated by the fact that we were only half way through our trip. From Busselton we headed south east via Pemberton and the tall Karri trees and onto scenic Albany. A highlight at Albany was the visit to the Extravaganza Museum, seeing and sitting in Genevieve and actually seeing her out on the road.

Our return trip from Albany took us to Wave Rock, Kalgoorlie and then retracing our steps as far as Ceduna. From there we turned right and headed down the Eyre Peninsula to Streaky Bay, Port Lincoln and Whyalla. Our home run then took us via the Clare and Barossa Valleys, Mildura, Swan Hill and onto Bendigo in time for the Swap Meet.

Reluctantly we returned home on the 17th November and back with a thud to the real world and work the next day. Given half a chance we would have turned around and headed off on another trip. We had covered 10,500 kms in our Alvis 12/50 and she came through with flying colours and not one ounce of trouble. It is definitely the only way to travel!

Highlights of the trip that will long remain in our minds:-

- the sheer and majestic cliffs of the Great Australian Bight.
- the whales lazily cruising and spouting at the Head of the Bight.
- the jokes and stories at the end of each day.
- the ladies driving and the fellows relaxing (I think).
- the profusion of wild flowers (or was it "oh no, not another stop for more weeds!")
- the empty roads and polite truckies
- the all night trucks and generators humming on the Nullarbor.
- the ladies of Hay Street, Kalgoorlie.
- the comfort stops - why are there never any trees around when you need them and why was that video always going!
- the Caiguna 145km straight Gift.
- morning tea and hopscotch in the middle of an empty highway.
- finding your way during the Rally - when is a bridge not a bridge?
- the Kareoke Night - when unknown singing prowess was discovered - or was it?
- the beach at Meelup - the sand was so fine and the water crystal blue.
- the 83 metre ascent of the Gloucester Tree to the fire lookout platform - many times thinking why am I doing this?
- the honeyeaters at Caiguna sitting on your knee or hand, waiting to share your breakfast.
- the nights when the camping ground laundries were taken over for socialising and indoor football with an inflated wine cask bladder.
- the two way radio echoing to poetry and the strains of Strauss.
- how to be a child again at the Adults Playground in Monash, S.A.
- the side blown out of the Alvis battery when the insulating layer under the tools wore through.
- the two trees which stepped out behind Alvis whilst backing in camping grounds.
- Bendigo Swap Meet - "ah just what I need" or "just a load of old junk" depending on your point of view.

A few pertinent Alvis statistics are:-

- an average speed of 45 mph in compliance with the convoy requirements for petrol consumption and prevention of fuel vaporisation.
- an average of 25 mpg.
- 3.5 litres of Valvoline XLD 20W/50 consumed in 10,500 kms.
- no consumption of water even on the hotter days, aided by the use of a coolant/water mix.
- no punctures and no need of air for the entire trip.
- oil pressure generally 30 psi and better.
- minimal maintenance requirements and no involuntary stops - except for an electrical circuit short caused by the "nut" behind the wheel.
- Amazingly the battery continues to function well after patching the tennis ball size hole in the case.
- immediate starting with no hesitation.
- disturbing periodic engine vibrations which can be driven through and noisy timing gears.

ANDREW McDOUGALL.

Dear John,

In Alvis Agnitions, April 1993, in the second last sentence, the correct name is Eric Benfield. He is the owner of the 1924 12/50 Alvis 200 mile race car.

I have just returned from a hurriedly arranged eight weeks in England where I was able to see and talk to many Alvis owners. I spent most of a day at Red Triangle visiting both the Barford and Kenilworth establishments. I saw my first 108G Willowbrook sedan. It was for sale at £29,995.! There was also a brand new TF/TG 21 aluminium bodied sedan for approximately £60,000. We would all be a lot better off as regards spares, particularly post war spares, if Red Triangle knew what they have in stock.

At the Vintage Silverstone meeting I was colder than I have ever felt in my life. I was stationed at Silverstone, then 17 OTU, in the winter of 1944 and I do not remember it being as cold as it was on 3.4.93. There were lots of Alvis specials - I was particularly impressed with Mac Hulbert's G.P. Silver Eagle and Rod Jolley's 6 iron Alvis single seater. The Mac job was there on a trailer, now converted to a road car. It is only a shadow of its former self and is suffering from a mass of mechanical maladies.

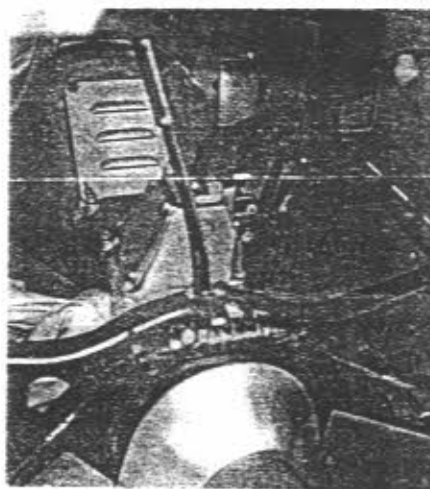
On the 24th of April 1993 I attended the V.S.C.C. Sprint meeting at Colerne and for the first time was able to look, see, hear and ride in Eric Benfield's 12/50 Alvis. It is really quite impressive and so technically different from the production cars. It is a little jewel and goes brilliantly. I hope you can reproduce the enclosed photos as they show many important features of the car. A run along the perimeter track at over 80 m.p.h. accounts for the look on my face!

Silver Eagles are, like here in Australia, becoming more of a force in competition. Sue Harcourt-Smith's example goes very well in beetle back form. Another excellent touring Silver Eagle beetle back is owned by Barry Edgerton.

I am looking forward to making a return visit and seeing and hearing more Alvis cars.

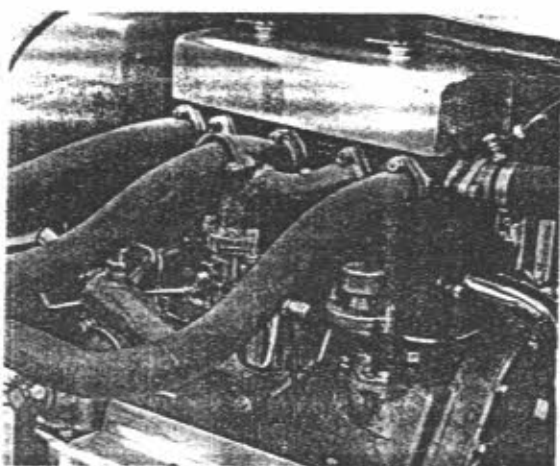
Kindest regards.

Pictures are of the 1924 200 mile race car.



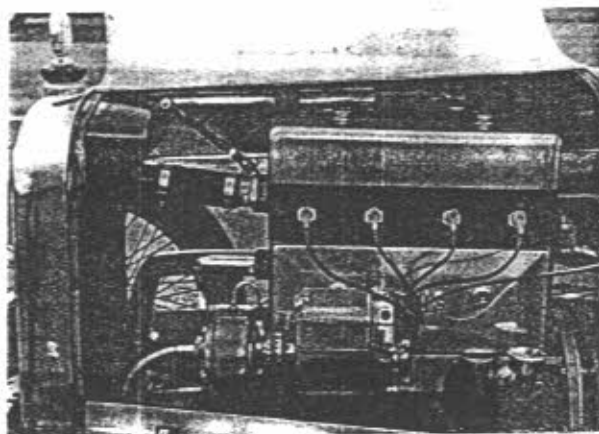
ALAN GRIFFIN

Bell housing
Central gear change
Transmission
Handbrake



Different crankcase, timing cover and breather on oil filler cap

Magneto mounting. Rev counter take off.
Oil filler cap is for dry sump. 2 gall. Oil tank is chassis mounted beside magneto.



In the March Newsletter David Caldwell asked about a Father Hartigan who, according to legend, had a very fast Alvis. The following notes may be of interest.

Father Patrick Hartigan was a parish priest for the district surrounding Narrandera in the Riverina area of NSW who had, it seems, become an established identity there from around the turn of the century. To get around the far-flung parish he used a variety of motor cars starting with a very early model Renault and, of necessity, drove in a hurry in order to tend to the needs of his flock. Thus he soon developed a taste for speed and so sought cars which could provide him with quick as well as reliable transport.

In addition to his work for the church Father Hartigan was interested in poetry and wrote pieces of verse which he had published in 1921 in a book titled "Around the Boree Log and Other Verses" under the nom de plume of "John O'Brien". This little volume became very popular as its folksy poems described life in the bush with a touch of moralising as well. It is believed this book has recently been reprinted so it must be still very popular. Boree Creek, incidentally, is a small railway town about 40kms south of Narrandera.

During the mid-1920s Father Hartigan decided the time had come to buy a really quick motor car and while on a visit to England he approached Alvis to see if they could supply him with a suitable car. An article was published in the "Catholic Weekly" newspaper just forty years ago which may give a clue to the origins of a certain mythology which surrounded the Hartigan Alvis. It should be explained that by this time Father Hartigan had been elevated to the position of Monsignor Hartigan in Sydney where he remained until his death a few years ago.

"There were many other cars after the Renault, but the one Monsignor Hartigan - and probably most of the south-west remembers best was an English Alvis sports model. Monsignor Hartigan took delivery of the Alvis in England. The makers assured him that it would 'do' a hundred miles an hour, a statement which he gravely doubted. When he expressed these doubts, he was invited to the famed Brooklands track to see Major Harvey driving an Alvis in a race against those world renowned record-breakers, Sir Malcolm Campbell, Major Segrave and George Eyston.

"But soon after the race began the Alvis developed engine trouble and withdrew. Then the representative of the company promised that Major Harvey would take Father Hartigan round the track in his own car and prove that the Alvis was good for 100 mph.

"Harvey, however, was bitterly disappointed by his failure and went home. A mechanic offered to take his place and with Father Hartigan beside him, put the Alvis through her paces.

"A stiff wind was blowing down the Brooklands 'straight'

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as they roared around the course. For four laps the 'revs' mounted; then the signal was given that the fifth lap would be electrically timed.

"But the head wind proved too much for the Alvis and the speed registered was only 95 miles an hour.

"'I told you it wouldn't do a hundred', Father Hartigan chided the company's representative.

"'I'll still prove it', he retorted. 'We'll take off the mudguards and strip her right down'.

"But Father Hartigan had had enough. The five flying-circuits of Brooklands had given him all the speed he wanted.

"Later he drove the Alvis as far as Birmingham, but it was too fast for English conditions, so he ordered the makers to ship it out to Australia.

"When the Alvis arrived at Narrandera it created an even greater sensation than the little Renault 'eight - nine' had when it was the first of its tribe in the Riverina".

The car which Father Hartigan had purchased was an SC series Ducksback, Chassis No.3494, fitted with Engine No.3855, and had a polished aluminium two-seater body built by Carbodies (No.3826). It was delivered from the Alvis factory on 22nd August, 1925.

When Car No.8930 arrived in Australia it was registered in NSW as 85006 and became the prized possession of the parish priest who relished driving his sporty Alvis around the countryside, its outside exhaust barking out a typical 12/50 song across the paddocks. It had a fixed starting handle and probably was fitted with 23-inch split-rim wheels. A leather strap helped hold down the polished aluminium bonnet; and he frequently carried a spare tyre over the spare wheel mounted beneath the duck-tail.

Father Hartigan is known to have met with other Alvis owners in the area and so was probably a good ambassador for Alvis in the process. In the early 1930s he sold the Alvis to a C.W. Roche in Narrandera. The next two owners lived in Grong Grong (Joe Rava and Perce Cronk). Afterwards the car moved over to Corowa where Ted Dwyer, Howard Johnson and C.O'Callaghan were owners.

The onset of the war with its problems of petrol rationing and tyre shortages probably caused the Alvis to suffer from neglect so that when peace returned and Les Williams of Wagga Wagga became the car's new owner it was regarded as a suitable candidate for rebuilding into a more modern looking sports/racing special.

The Carbodies coachwork was discarded and Williams built a new and somewhat bulbous aluminium body which had full under-shielding beneath the car. According to a detailed description which appeared in "Australian Motor Sports" (September 1948) the car had a theoretical top speed of 114 mph at 5000 rpm —

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FOR SALE. Pair of restored Lucas R67B headlights and restored Lucas K515 sidelights. Suit 14.75, 16.95 or late 12/50. \$500.00. Tel. Frank Italiano 03 857 7321

FOR SALE. Alvis TA 21 Saloon. Club Registration. In sound order. A good reliable vehicle. Roadworthy & Registered. \$11,500. George Pinches. Tel. 03 787 9559

FOR SALE. TA 14 1948 Two tone blue. Seen at the Echuca Alvis Rally. Car is in very good condition having been completely refurbished and resprayed, new tyres. Has attended several vintage rallies in Queensland and N.S.W. Priced to sell \$20,500. O.N.O. Tel. Peter Young 075 732 352.

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WANTED. Information re: 3 litre engine. The whereabouts of engine no. 24056 (or part thereof) from 1952 DHC. Please contact Tom Maltby as above.

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JULY NEWSLETTER
COPY DEADLINE
WEDNESDAY 23RD JUNE 1993

WONDERFUL WINTON.

If you haven't attended an Historic Winton Weekend then you have really missed something. The programme for Saturday 29 May had 16 races for both Motor Cycles and Cars while Sunday promised no fewer than 27 events. Where else could you see -- and hear --and smell -- racing bikes from 1929 to 1960 duelling in anger, and cars including the 250F Maserati, and the ex Nuvolari 2.3 L Alfa Romeo, not forgetting the homespun Nedlohs and Buchanan and the Hisso, the Thirsty and of course ALVIS.

Geoff Hood had the supercharged 12/50 special and Des Donnan down from the Sunshine State with the ex Paul Conrad 12/50. Only 2 Alvis cars but plenty of Alvis people - Murray Fitch, Rex Roberts, John Kent. Vic Elliott from S.A., Bill Boldiston from N.S.W. and others forming the Cheer Squad. But bits of Alvis were out on the track as well - the 12/40 engine in Robbie Rowe's Roadmaster Speed car still going well and the 12/50 gearbox in the frighteningly fast A.C.Amilcar of Richard Stanley. It surely says something for the strength of Alvis gearboxes when it can cope with the 250 bhp coming from the A.C.engine. The weather both days was foul to say the least. Saturday was gale force winds ... Sunday was rain and wind. But forget the adhesive clay underfoot that suddenly made one 6 inches higher and the soggy lower clothing that soaked up the run off from the rally jacket ... this was RACING at it's unforgettable best.

And what could be better than to see Geoff Hood carving his way through a 46 car field in the Regularity (sic) to take out First Place on the Saturday and then to repeat it on the Sunday in the wet with cars sliding all over the track for another First Place.

Driving home with the heater on and steam rising from the still sodden clothing ... nothing could dispell the excitement of 2 great days of real historic racing, and the smell of the alcohol fuel lingered on! An excellent weekend and ALVIS to the fore with 2 wins--- what more could anyone want? Congratulations Geoff.

RON WILSON.

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