



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 35

ISSUE NO.5

MAY 1996

CLUB ROOMS:- Rear of "ALVISTA", 21 EDGAR ST., GLEN IRIS. Melway p59 F 8.

MEETINGS:- THIRD FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH
(EXCEPT DEC./JAN.) AT 8 pm.



J. Linnell - BATES



COMING SOON



MAY, SUNDAY 5th, Club Run to pub at Clarkfield (been and gone by the time you get this) report inside but hopefully a less biased approach by the next NL.

May Saturday 4th -42 Silver Ghosts in GEMBROOK. Where will they park.
SORRY but you've missed it.

May Friday 17th, Club General Meeting

May 25/26 Historic Winton

June Sunday 16th VSCC Rob Roy

June Friday 21st, Club General Meeting

July Friday 19th Club General Meeting

July Sunday 21st Club Run to Queenscliffe and Point Lonsdale.

August Friday 16th Club General Meeting.

August 18 Frostbite Run I think Rex is organising this. (ed)

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NO SEX PLEASE, WE'RE ALVISTI.

Dear Dale and Maritta,

Thank-you for taking over the editing of the May N/L. I thought that I could proceed Northwards without a thought in the world about the Newsletter but a funny conversation occurred at Easter time just after I had put the April edition "to bed".

Shepparton was invaded by M.Gs. Seven hundred and fifty of them. People, that is; about half that number of cars. Kerb to kerb M.Gs it was! Everywhere you went, you tripped over half a dozen of them. Mostly Mobile Garbage Bins, but a few more exotic.

Obviously it wasn't long before I found myself in conversation with an owner and soon the subject of Rally Organisation came up. You can't talk for long on that subject without talking about Ron Wilson. I referred to Ron as our "ex-Rally Director" but it must have been my poor diction or a passing Kenworth or a nearby M.G. starting up that confused the poor M.G. bloke, because he thought that I had said that Ron Wilson is our "SEX RALLY DIRECTOR". Is that what you Alvis people get up to? Poor bloke was ready there and then to swap his TA for a TA 14!

I assured him that our's is a family orientated club and that I had said "EX" not "SEX". He calmed down eventually and I wandered off but got to thinking about a Sex Rally as a fund raiser for the Club. I wondered, now that he no longer organizes our Car Rallies, whether Ron would have the time and inclination. So I rang him up and put the proposition to him. He was interested, but Gwen said "No"! She thought he would cope alright with the rally itself but she was concerned with his ability and stamina to cope with the planning phase. We all know of Ron's meticulous attention to detail and how he used to retrace the route several times beforehand.....

These matters would have rested had it not occurred to me that the reason for Ron's refusal may have been that the suggestion was made in private. A public request is that much harder to refuse so I am repeating the request in public, via this Newsletter - and redirecting it to the 1997 National Rally organizers, John & June Twomey and David & Margaret Caldwell. It should be easy for them to "add on" the Sex Rally to the Alvis one and raise a fair amount of money. I reckon there would be a big market in Japan - and the M.G. car Club is sold on the idea already.

So, Guys, over to you.

JOHN HETHERINGTON.

THE NATIONAL RALLY TIMED FOR MARCH NEXT YEAR is progressing well.

The event is now **fully subscribed**, JOHN TWOMEY has compiled a waiting list, and has now moved to the waiting -waiting list. Anyone still interested should contact him. (contact address on the front page)



On the subject of the National Rally, we have a number of entrants from NZ. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that they will be able to bring cars. I am sure that attendees with the room in their cars will be more than happy to transport those without cars. However if there is anyone that has a car that will be unused during the event (for whatever reason) and they would like to see it participate, I am also sure that someone without transport would be willing to pilot the vehicle. Please keep this in mind whilst planning for the event (Again, contact John if you think you can help ED)

"THE VINTAGE ALVIS"**A Book Review**

Book reviews are rare occurrences in the pages of the Newsletter, mainly because there are so few Alvis books to review. In fact, there are only 3 major works which have been published in recent years, "Alvis - The Story of the Red Triangle" by Kenneth Day, "Alvis - The Post War Cars", by John Price-Williams and now, Peter Hull and Norman Johnson's "The Vintage Alvis".

This book is not just a reference volume for the vintage period that it covers, from 1920 to 1930, it is a very readable story. In fact, I started at the beginning and finished at the end, rather than just skimming through it and reading individual bits.

The book is not a small volume, running to 620 pages, with very comprehensive tables of the surviving cars, including separate sections for Australia and New Zealand, production records and type classification.

The first part of the book is divided into 12 chapters, covering the period from the start of Alvis car production in 1920, until 1930, which covers 334 pages. Those chapters deal with mechanical and body changes to the cars year by year, together with a detailed record of competition successes and failures. In fact, the competition part of each chapter tends to become tedious because of its minute detail and the fact that it deals with racing in the United Kingdom and the Continent. At first I thought I was not being "sporting" enough, but two Club members known for their Alvis racing prowess agreed with me (a rare event!).

There is a chapter devoted entirely to cars imported into, and raced in, Australia, with a similar chapter covering New Zealand. The Club's own Steve Denner's epic journey in his 12/50 from England to Australia in 1977 is well documented, as is New South Wales' Club member Rob Gunnell and his wife Ann's trip in their 12/50 from Bombay to England in 1960/61.

The book is full of wonderful anecdotes by contemporary Alvis employees and by drivers and racers of vintage Alvises and the writing style, unlike some motor books, is lively. For example, on page 299:

" in the London-Exeter Women's Trial, Miss P. McOstrich in her 12/50 (accompanied by several dogs) and Lady Iris Capell in her Silver Eagle both won first-class awards." - It could only happen in England in 1929!

The book contains a myriad of excellent black and white photographs, together with 31 pages in colour of Alvis advertisements during the vintage period.

I enjoyed reading the book and, as the owner of 2 post-war Alvises, it gave me a real insight into the joys of vintage motoring and whetted my appetite for acquiring a vintage Alvis (if only I could learn to change those damn gears!).

"The Vintage Alvis" is available from Tony Johns Motor Books, phone (03) 9899 9898 at \$120.00 (less a discount if you tell Tony that you are a Club member). There were no copies available at either the Technical Book Shop or McGills when I looked in April. John Ball recently returned from a trip to England with a copy which he bought for around \$80.00 (I am happy to fly to the U.K. to buy as many books as Club members want - just pay my fare!).

In summary, "The Vintage Alvis" is a very good read, virtually essential on the bookshelf of any vintage Alvis owner, but pricey, no doubt because of its appeal to a relatively small audience. However, as the fly leaf of the book says, the first edition, which sold for 6 guineas in 1967, is now changing hands for 100 pounds, so it may well be a good investment, as well as a great book.

RICHARD TONKIN.

CLUB RUN TO QUEENSCLIFF AND POINT LONSDALE

SUNDAY - 21ST OF JULY, 1996

This is an advance notice for yet another Alvis Extravaganza. The Tonkins and the Balls have combined their extraordinary talents to organise this trip which will give you a chance to stretch your Alvis' legs, enjoy some delightful scenery, an excellent lunch as well, of course, as the camaraderie of your fellow Club members. Full details in the June newsletter - "WATCH THIS SPACE"!

IT SEEMS THE SUBJECTS OF MASCOTS IS A HOT TOPIC THIS MONTH

{The secretary of the Alvis Owners Club, Mr Charles Mackonochie, 2 Sunny Bank Cottages, Colts Hill, Capel Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 6SW, has written to us with the following thoughts on mascots}

"The latest copy of the Vintage Alvis, incidentally a very good read, mentions that there was a different mould made for the Hare mascot each year up to 1929 and was supplied to all vintage Alvis. I suspect either that the moulds got easily damaged or the artist in Lejeune felt that a change was necessary.

I have only seen replica Firefly mascots and they all have metal eyes cast at the same time as the body. I have never seen one with coloured eyes but with all things Alvis doesn't mean to say that some didn't.

Now to the vexed question of Silver Eagles. The Eagle with the high wing, replicas of which are still available through the AOC, first appeared on the Silver Eagle in 1931, previous Eagles having the hare mascot. In 1932 the Speed Twenty SA is shown with the high winged Eagle, although by June of that year it is shown with "horizontal" wings which seems to have been used right through to the Speed 25's. It is similar to the one illustrated in February's Newsletter but differs in having a closed beak and a slightly hunched neck. I say seems to have been used as there is a 1935 photograph of a Speed 20 with an Eagle which has its wings curved halfway between the vertical and horizontal. Again is this the artists temperament coming to the fore?

The Crested Eagle model started with the high winged Eagle only to change to the Speed 20 type in the middle of 1935 unlike the Silver Eagle which seems stayed with the high winged eagle. In fact this high winged eagle was also used in the early photographs of the Silver Crest.

Most of my observations have come from contemporary articles and adverts, Alvis themselves seem to have been very cavalier over the question of mascots, pictures of cars with no mascots, illustrations of the same car with two different types of eagles. I wonder whether that, although a mascot features on every car parts list, they were an optional extra and often old stock was being used up and that in fact there is no such thing as a correct mascot unless you can prove it came with the car originally. Also if every car was supplied with a mascot, there must be an awful lot of mascots out there somewhere."

Regards

Charles Mackonochie

and from closer to home **Bob Graham**

EAGLES

Our Dear Editor, who is currently holiday in Western Australia, asks the question -- Should his 1935 model SC Speed 20 tourer have, on the radiator cap, a Lo-wing or Hi-wing Eagle?

I have conducted some research into this subject by reading Ken Day's book "The Story of the Red Triangle". Just to confuse the issue, a photo is shown therein of a 1932 SA model with a rabbit - sorry, bunny - oops, hare mascot.

Further confusion is added by the photos in the march Newsletter. One of these show clearly an early SA model (from the shape of the radiator surround) with a Hi-wing Eagle. But the headlights appear to be P 100's whereas the SA Speed 20 had P 80's as original equipment.

From my research, I believe that the official radiator cap mascot for a speed 20 is a Lo-wing Eagle for tourers, roadsters and saloons. At the same time, I am quite sure that Messrs. Alvis Ltd would supply any mascot that the customer demanded.

However, it is of no real concern to me which mascot beloved, puts on his car. I only care about completing my car (with a Lo-wing Eagle) and pointing, that lovely long bonnet down the highway as soon as possible.

SILLY ME

Oops: That should be Leaded petrol is no longer available in New Zealand. (See last month ED)

RG

WINGS AND WHEELS 20TH & 21ST APRIL

The Wings and Wheels weekend (WWW?) { "world wide web" for those uninitiated "ed" } was one of those really nice low key, no hassle events that live forever in the "I-wouldn't-be-dead-for-quids" side of the memory. The formula was a joint event by the VSCC and the Antique Aircraft Association of Australia, centred on Moonambel near Avoca, in the wine growing district of the Pyrenes.

Alvis were well represented, far outstripping the Luton lot, with an attendance of 212/40's (Roberts and Somers), 2 12/50's (Sands and Denner), 1 Silver Eagle(All and Maia Wilson), 1 Firefly (Parsell) and a Firebird saloon (Fleming/Polwarth).

Arriving at Moonambel about Midday on Saturday we were in time to watch 10 aircraft arrive, many of whom were obviously conscious of the high level of spectator knowledge (mum, is it easy to make it bounce 4 times like that?). However most achieved perfect three point touch downs, which I am told is difficult with a "tail dragger". Those pilots who had arrived in open cockpits were clearly distinguishable by the blue complexion, and jumping up and down and arm waving, going on.

The afternoon exercises involved cars teamed with aircraft, all of whom had to navigate themselves to a set of air strips around the countryside. Each branch of the team carried the instructions for the other branch (aircraft and cars) for the next leg of the navigation, so that if either failed to make the rendezvous the others were marooned all night! A sort of relay lay-by.

Dale and Maritta (Firefly) and the Denners(12/50), together with Graeme Bennet in his Morris Minor (oho), were teamed with the Boeng Stearman piloted by Ian Douglas and navigated by Bob West (vintage Lancia Fancia from Albury and known to many VSCC members). This team, by dint of superb teamwork, impeccable navigation and downright low cunning managed to win the team prize which was several bottles of the most excellent local Redbank avgas

Best team of wheels went to Somers and Sands team, and I can't remember who won the Best Wings, but as you can tell just about everybody won something to help them sleep that night.

Russell Meehan donated a 9 cylinder BTH magneto to the wings member of the winning team. Obviously he has abandoned his plan to build a V9 Lancia special and wants the space under his bed for something else. We all have that problem in the night as we get older. Ian Douglas was a bit puzzled by the donation as the Stearman has a 7 cylinder radial. One of the Luton types off a selection said that was no worries, yer jus' cut a couple o' wires off, which is a fair indication of the level of engineering sophistication to which they aspire.

The Alvis contingent were mostly camping on the airstrip as were a large number of air crews and the view from the tent of the grey dawn creeping over the hills was quite splendid. I know this, as do most of the other campers, because one of the Auster pilots set off for a dawn reconnaissance, returning at tree top height just in case anyone was still asleep. The Wilsons were reported to be among the early risers, and when quizzed about this claimed to have been out and picking grapes since before dawn, obviously an attempt to replenish the damage they had done to the local stocks of red the day before. If they stayed another couple of weeks they just might restore the status quo.

The rest of the morning saw some impromptu gallops by the cars up and down the grass air strip, and some joyriding in some of the aircraft, but as the weather was starting to clag up most people were keen to get away about midday. I scrounged a short circuit in the Stearman which was a real joy. It is an open cockpit biplane designed in the '30s as a trainer but subsequently adapted to a number of roles including crop dusting. It is powered by a most impressive looking 7 cylinder Continental radial developing 220 HP. They can be fitted with a 450HP Pratt & Whitney but apparently they don't go much faster and use a lot more fuel. As it is, it uses 45 gallons per hour which makes it suitable for deep pocketed ownership only.

SNIPPETS

- * Rex really got air minded even to the extent of trying out aircooling the 12/40 on the way home. Seemed to go really well for a while (60 mph plus from Ballarat to Bacchus Marsh but eventually had to put some water in
- * On the other hand Dale tried running with air in only three wheels but the experiment was not a success
- * One of the aircraft types was telling us about the Stinson he owns. Seems he had a slight accident while taxiing in some grass and ran into a stump. The undercarriage leg folded and he sat down in a rather untidy heap. Damage was quite severe including an unrepairable bend in the fuselage. Not to be put off by a little thing like that he was on the phone to a mate in the US who, within 48 hours, had located a fuselage, hitched his 4WD to a trailer, and driven 100miles to retrieve it.

STEVE DENNER/ REX ROBERTS

I here Steve did all the work (Ed)

WINGS AND WHEELS 20/21-4-96 Moonambel.

Although this was a VSCC event, the Alvis Car Club descended on MASS to provide quite a spectacle. Maritta and I assembled at Westgate Bridge to travel in convoy with Rex & Sue Roberts, Steve and Margaret Denner and Gordon Summers. (Karen and family joined us around Ballarat as they had decided to sleep in a little and let Gordon brave the early morning chill alone.

Arrival in Moonambel revealed that around 30 proper cars were present and 15 planes. Of these 7 were Alvii which is an excellent turn up

These were Rex Roberts (12/40) Gordon Somers (12/40) Dale Parsell (Firefly), Rob Sands (12/50) Alf Wilson (Silver Eagle) Steve Denner (12/50), Peter Fleming (Firebird). Another 12/50 (belonging to the granddaughter of Percy Hoskins I think) failed to reach its destination.

Alvii also faired very well in the competition event. The team made up of Parsells/Denner in Firefly, Denner in 12/50, Graeme Bennet & son in Morris Minor and Ian Douglas in a Stearman (a plane for those who don't know, like me) managed to come in first overall

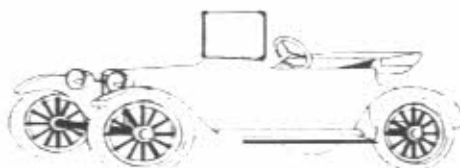
The Stearman won best plane, and the team of Sands (12/50), Somers (12/40) and Trevor Leach (Singer Le Mans) won best car team.

The 12/50 that failed to appear unfortunately got the disaster award, and an Auster that failed to make the runway just out of Adelaide (fuel vaporisation), and then solved the problem pressed on and broke some rocker studs near Moonambel and decided to go to St Arnaud because there were more flat paddocks that way {gutsy people the aeroplane guys and gals} got the disaster award for planes {I think they should have got a bravery award, especially as they were planning on flying home again}

The object of the exercise was to find a secret airfield, and then exchange the next set of instructions with your'e respective plane. Everyone had a great time, and the VSCC should be congratulated for organising a different, and very enjoyable, event.

I'm sure it will be run again, the aircraft people are very keen and we will certainly be there next time.

Dale Parsell.



CLUB RUN TO CLAPKEFIELD 5 May

8 Alvii made it to this excellent event (+ 4 moderns), ~ 20 people including a visitor from New Zealand out here to check on us before the National Rally. A great time was had by all and a much more eloquent report will be forthcoming for next month. ED

COUNTRY MEETING 21/22 September.

This event will be held in Euroa, more details next month.

Talk to John & Kay Ball if you can't wait for this magnificent event

THE TEMPORARY EDITOR would like to thank all those that contributed articles for this month. It is a little short but I don't pretend to compete with our usual Editor.

Dale Parsell

EDDINGTON A very laid back 1/4 mile sprint meeting

I thought I better write on the recent run to Eddington as the number of Alvis present was not huge.

Although this was actually a VSCC event, it was listed as an Alvis event as well.

Two Alvis competed, myself in the Firefly, and Des Donnan in his 12/50. He tells me he came down to collect it before Tony sold it with the house (I said that I would have looked after it for him but didn't get very far) so thought he may as well go to Eddington on the way home to QLD.

Steve Denner was also there as a spectator (with proper car) but didn't compete, and Rex Roberts (organising), and Gordon Somers. {I apologise if I missed anyone}.

The weather was good, although we did get a few drops of rain around 2pm. We had to put the hood up in Kyneton on the way home (we didn't stay for the after meeting celebrations although I'm told it can be a wild affair).

I managed to acquit myself well by beating Steino's Lancia at this event after letting him win at Geelong. I didn't win the class as someone had entered a cut down and cleverly disguised Fiat 508, however we considered he had an unfair advantage so excluded him from our little battle.

A great day was had by all with a good collection of cars competing. It really is a very laid back event which is well worth attending for both competitors and spectators. The crowd is much smaller and this makes the day a lot more relaxed than Geelong (Although you don't get quite as many cars as Geelong you still get a wide variety).

This is an event which I think we should make every effort to attend, and as it is open to cars up to around 1960 nearly all our cars are eligible. Although a Cams license is required, I'm sure we can organise something if those members with later cars would like to compete. Keep it in mind for next year.

Dale

MAY 4th

Sleepy, and extremely foggy, Gembrook (high in the Dandenong Ranges east of Melbourne) awoke to find that the "Wholly Ghost" tour was about to descend upon them. Although advertising was very low key, the Alvis people managed to find out (Dale & Maritta in Firefly, Rex and Cameron in 12/40 and Peter Fleming in Firebird) and attended to see what the fuss was about. A few VSCC, VDC and Classic people were also in attendance.

The Silver Ghosts then started to arrive, about 30 in all although 40 are touring the country. The oldest car was 1907 and the youngest in the late 20's (quite a few from the USA and UK). It was said to be the largest ever collection of Silver Ghosts, and they certainly woke Gembrook up.

These cars had started from Sydney, would travel via a circuitous route through the Snowies, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Alice Springs, Broken Hill, and then back to Sydney taking about a month in all.

Whether or not you are a Rolls fan, you have to admire a group travelling over those roads in cars averaging 70 years old, especially when at least half of them had probably never been to Australia before and had no idea what they were letting themselves in for. A great morning was had by all.

PS, the morning tea in Gembrook was held at the new museum being set up with the theme of Early Australian Motoring in mind. Called THE MOTORIST, the proprietor is John Hazeldene, and he tells me he is planning a small motorhouse with an ever changing display, sounds good.

Dale.

CARS & PARTS FOR SALE AND WANTED

JUNE NEWSLETTER

COPY DEADLINE
WEDNESDAY
22th May 1996
TO John H (I hope)

THE CLUB CARRIES A LARGE SELECTION OF SPARE PARTS WHICH ARE AVAILABLE TO FINANCIAL MEMBERS OF THE CLUB AND TO MEMBERS OF THE ALVIS CAR CLUB OF NEW SOUTH WALES. ONLY REPRODUCTION PARTS CAN BE SUPPLIED TO NON MEMBERS AND A SURCHARGE WILL BE APPLIED. MEMBERS CONTEMPLATING THE MANUFACTURE OF SPARES ARE ASKED TO CONTACT THE CLUB TO SEE IF OTHERS NEED SUCH A PART OR IF IT IS FEASIBLE TO ORDER SOME FOR CLUB SPARES.

To enquire about spares please contact the appropriate SPAREPERSON listed below:-

VINTAGE

Geoff Hood
37 Thomas St.,
E. Doncaster
Vic 3109
03 9642 2181

PVT

Austin Tope
8 Wimba Ave.,
Kew
Vic 3101
03 9817 5163

TA14

Bob Graham
15 Clarke Ave.,
Caulfield
Vic 3162
03 9571 3886

3 LITRE

John Ball
P O Box 26
Murchison
Vic 3610
058 262518

CLUB

TA 21 Specification Sheets. As published recently in the N/L. \$5.00 plus p&p. ROYBOY. Tel. 03 9704 7549.

PRIVATEERS

FOR SALE TA21 Three litre engine. Twin carb model. New rings & valves. Tel Tom Maltby 052 22 3901.

FOR SALE Engine bearings. Big end and main for a 0.020" undersize shaft. Supplied to me by Red Triangle for £191.50.

TA 21 oil pump. Rebuilt not many kms. ago. \$100.00.

Brian Rowell, P.O. Box 834, Batemans Bay 2536. Tel. 044 727474

FOR SALE TA 14 DHC 1948. Owned by me since 1964. Dismantled, with some restoration carried out. Lovely Carbodies Drophead.

TA 14 Saloon. Major restoration required.

TA/TC Spares

\$9,900. the lot. Geoff Ross. Tel. 060 21 3777

FOR SALE TA 14 Rolling Chassis. Needs engine rebuild and new body. \$950. John White, 30 Lyndhurst Cres. Box Hill. Vic 3129. Tel. 03 9890 7066.

WANTED

Illustration of Firebird mascot. Dale Parsell. Tel. 059 685170

INFORMATION PLEASE

I am currently assisting J.N.B. Collins in Singapore with a little project, given the working title of "Alvis Aero Engines" and I am looking for anything related to Alvis "Leonide's" Aero Engines and the aircraft which used Alvis power plants. I am particularly seeking magazine and newspaper reports of 1935-36 in which the plan to expand Britain's defence capabilities by having motor car manufacturers build "shadow factories" in which aircraft and aero engines were to be build quickly to bring the RAF up to a strength comparable with Hitler's threatening Luftwaffe. Anything at all could be useful (photocopies are sufficient - or even suggestions as to what books to read) and I invite such material to be sent to the undersigned at P.O. Box 105N, Campbelltown North, NSW. 2560.

ERIC CUNNINGHAM.

Eric, I believe "shadow factories" was a term used to describe make believe factories - cardboard cutouts, if you like - to deceive Luftwaffe pilots into dropping their bombs where it didn't matter. The factories to which you refer were just that - extra factories and/or extensions put up in a big hurry, often extensions of existing car factories. This led to Rolls Royce Merlins being built by Alvis etc. I believe that Bristol aero engines were only ever built at Filton, Bristol but I am not sure of the provenence of that information

ED.

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