

SPRING



2000

Incorporating The Newsletter Volume 39 Issue No. 8 September 2000

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THE NEWSLETTER is published separately in February, April, May, July, August, October and November



IN THIS ISSUE:

12/50 Restored in New Zealand.

Towards Better Braking.

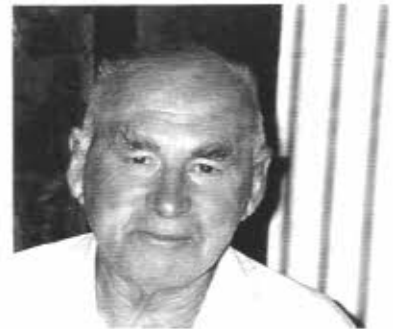
A crop of "new" cars in Melbourne.

Join the AOC



(L) Patricia Bren's 12/50 restored in Napier, NZ. See letter and article reprint inside.

(R) John White. Club Captain



Frances McDougall. Librarian



President for Life. (General) Richard (Galtieri) Tonkin



Alan & Noeline McKinnon's 12/50. Lancefield. 1999.

TORQUE

of tonkin

Sorry about the heading, but some people have expressed concerns about the possible development of a leadership personality cult – thus the de-emphasis on the surname of your **PRESIDENT**. Actually, all this means is that I have found out what some of those little symbols on the computer screen mean.

Now that you are paying attention I wanted to talk (and possibly get a dialogue going ?), about that other Alvis club. No, not our friends north of the Murray, the Alvis Owner Club (AOC) in the United Kingdom. Next year they celebrate their Golden Jubilee (the NSW Club pipped them by a year !), and I hope that at least a couple of Alvisisti from the Antipodes can get over there for the festivities, which will centre on the International Alvis Weekend, to be held at Blenheim Palace on the 7th and 8th of July..

The AOC is approaching a membership of 2,000, worldwide. They have 6 sections in the UK, and other sections in North America, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany. As well, there are model secretaries for every post-vintage car model and for military vehicles. There are technical advisers for most of the post-vintage models. The AOC publishes a bi-monthly magazine, The Bulletin, and a monthly newsletter, The Calendar (also known as The Pink 'Un, because of it's paper colour). The Calendar lists coming events (admittedly, of little interest over here), cars for sale and other items of interest.

The Bulletin is a quite superb publication, on glossy paper, running to some 95 pages, and filled with a wonderful variety of news, technical articles, stories from around the world of members' adventures in their Alvises, and an interesting letters section. The Bulletin is edited by Julian Collins, who visited us last November and who is resident in Singapore (no mean feat!), and it has won awards for excellence.

What, I hear you asking, is he leading up to ? Well, the fact is that, of the 200 or so members of the NSW and Victorian Clubs, only some 18 are members of the AOC. While our clubs provide an excellent service through our Newsletter, Alvic and Alvicatics, the breadth of news and information available from the AOC, with that many members, and that many cars around the world, really should not be missed. The latest Bulletin features a spectacular colour photo of John and Margaret Lang's FWD on the front cover, an article by me on the NSW Golden Jubilee Rally at Jambaroo earlier this year and a story from New Zealand, so the coverage is truly international.

Unfortunately, until now, being a member of the AOC in Australia has not been easy. To send one's subscription, you have to go to your bank, pay the subs, pay \$15 for a bank draft and mail it to the UK. The AOC then get slugged a similar (probably worse), amount over there, for the privilege of putting your money into their bank. However, our worthy editor, John Hetherington, now has plans afoot (remember the Goons' line, "What's afoot ?" To which the answer is, of course, "About 12 inches"....sorry), to streamline this cumbersome process, by collecting AOC subs here and forwarding them, in one lot, to the UK, and to speed up distribution of The Bulletin and The Calendar by having them sent here in bulk and then mailing them out to Oz AOC members. I applaud John's initiative in doing this, and I sincerely hope that it will lead to a significant increase in Australian AOC membership, which will be to the advantage of our Club and it's members. There will be more details in coming months, including the chance for our members to view samples of The Bulletin and The Calendar.

Richard Tonkin
President.

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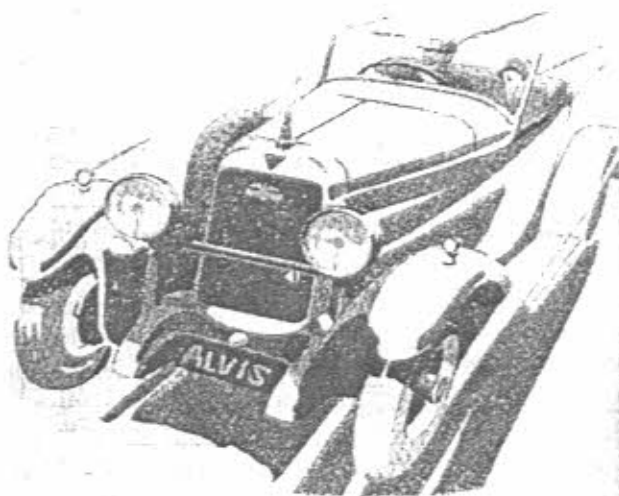
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SPARES REGISTRAR & THREE LITRE SPARES

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(As Above)

TA 14 SPARES

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COMING SOON

SEPTEMBER Sat/Sun 9/10th VSCC Two Day Rally

Friday 15th Monthly General Meeting

GARAGE CRAWL

SATURDAY 16th SEPTEMBER 2000

First to Eric Nicholl, 17 Ternes Road, Upwey 3158.

Melways ref: p 74 9H..

We will view the work on the 1937 12/70 & the 1928 14.75 hp.

Morning tea provided 9.00 - 9.30 am.

Then we go in convoy to Nick Langford, 17 Cottage Street, Blackburn.

Melways ref: p 48 A9

Nick will give us a talk on the history & show us work on approximately 12 cars. If you miss it you'll be sorry!

Nick will also provide a sausage sizzle and tea & coffee.

RSVP Eric Nicholl 9754 5412. BY MONDAY 11th September

OCTOBER Friday 20th Club General Meeting
& AGM. Have a go on the
committee and steer the
club in the direction YOU
would like it to go.
OCTOBER 27th - 29th WEEKEND AWAY.



In the last Alvis I raised the futile suggestion that the Alvis name might be resurrected in car production. On consideration I wonder if we should even hope for this because it would simply retain our nostalgic appreciation of past glories while the memory would be sullied if we saw an Alvis badge on a mediocre vehicle.

I may have seemed a little harsh in criticizing Alvis after the war for lacking forward vision. Somehow, I mislaid the section commenting on the Issigonis prototype which would have led the industry at that time. It was forward-looking but it was simply too expensive and production costs would have been enormous so the Alvis board would not proceed. They had made one try and after that let car production take a back set and languish. Such is commercial reality.

I recently discovered an article in a Newsletter of 30 years ago by Bill Barber which I had missed when first published, it has a similar tale to tell and I feel his comments could bear repetition, so an abridged version follows:

"It is interesting to ponder over the changes in outlook that have swept through Holy head Road Coventry since 1919.

When Mr. T.G. John first set up in business he had no particular idea of what he wanted to make. This in itself is remarkable as every other man who entered the motor industry was prompted by a burning ambition to build his own ideal car. The decision to make motor cars came only after John met de Freville. In fact, it is possible that the best thing de Freville did was to bring with him the name 'Alvis' as the 10/30 had to be just about re-designed before it became a successful production model.

At this stage, the image of the Alvis would have been of a light car of unusually high quality of design and construction and with a quite sprightly performance. In modern terms one could say that it would have appealed to the sort of customer who would buy, say, a Rover 2000 in 1970.

Following Harvey's successes in the 200-Miles Race, the 12/50 came to be regarded as a premier light sports car. The hypothetical customer for the duck's back would probably be driving a Porsche today.

With the introduction of the production FWD cars the firm decided to pursue the sporting market exclusively but this appealed to too restricted a clientele. Certainly the hasty reintroduction of the 12/50 kept the official receiver at bay and the introduction of the six-cylinder engine into what was virtually the same chassis had the same effect as fitting the V8 into the Rover P5.

The firm was to undergo yet another change. The Silver Eagle was not what the wealthy buyer of the 30s wanted, but Charles Follett's ideas bore fruit in the Speed 20 and its successors. Thus, the Alvis image in the thirties was that of, say, an Alfa-Romeo today: a beautiful-looking car of considerable performance, great refinement and with a racing pedigree.

The post-war era saw diversification. The TA 14 and Three Litre carried on the old tradition but life's escalator had gone up. The Issigonis-designed car would have remedied this but politics ensured this was not to be.

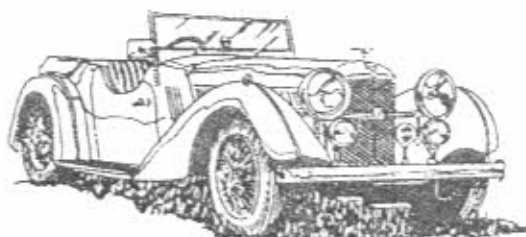
With the virtual death of the piston engine in aeroplanes the Alvis radials will disappear from the sky. It is also a sobering thought that the swan song of a firm originally famous for a sporting luxury light car should be the Saracen armoured car.

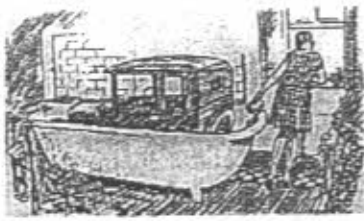
Thus it can be seen that over the years the Alvis image had changed quite a lot: from a quality light car to a sports car, to a very hairy competition car, to a quality medium-sized car, to a glamorous car of outstanding design, to a resting-on-its-laurels car, (despite this the TA14 was the best seller of all Alvis models) and on to a car fit for a Prince Consort with aero engines and armoured vehicles on the side.

When Leyland took over the merged Rover-Alvis group, Lord Stokes wanted to keep the Alvis marque alive as the prestige car in the range and had the mid-engined sports coupe with the Rover V8 gone into production, it would been called an Alvis.

Perhaps we who have red-triangle eyes are fortunate that the name was allowed to die and we have thus been spared the travesties of badge-engineering that marked the bastardisation of the Riley. The writer feels that one of the interests of vintage-type motoring is in seeing how one's own mount fitted into the contemporary scene."

Bill, I see no reason to alter a word of the above in the year 2000. But, again bent on idle musing, I wonder what might be done if I had even one hundredth of the resources of a Bill Gates and could indulge an Alvi-passion by hand building a few select and superb vehicles (rather after the fashion of Bristol or Morgan) and of classic appearance with cues from a glorious past. Maybe for legal reasons I couldn't call such cars Alvises, but I certainly would include a red triangle in the badge.



<p>LUNCH AT "MARYLANDS."</p> <p>Six Alvises were present. The Presidential DHC, Maureen Adnam and friend (TA 14 Tourer) and David Caldwell (TA 14) came "up the hill"; John & Kay Ball (TA 21 DHC), Ron Allen (TE 21) and ED & Mrs ED (Speed 20) came cross country from various points in northern Victoria. There were two Bristols present. Bill Franzke's 401 with its recently restored engine and Ian Tonkin's ever beautiful Zagato - bodied 400. There were about half a dozen "Jaguar" Daimlers including one owned by Tony Dixon and one SP 250. there were no pre-war or post war "pre-selector" cars. David and Moira Wischer were there - the only people present to have owned Alvis, Bristol and Daimler cars. On this occasion they were in a Rover 3 litre. Michael Vaughan was in a modern Suzuki 4WD, wishing it was a Land Rover. We had a very enjoyable drive there and back, though we did get a bit wet just as we arrived home. The company was good and our Prez. entertained the gathering with a speech in which he thanked the wrong Club for their hospitality earlier in the year. No-one minded and he talked his way out of it very nicely. The only downside was the food which was most disappointing, especially in an establishment which advertises itself as providing epicurean experiences. David Caldwell was the only person to claim a good meal. Half his luck. We will have to have some words with the other clubs and management before 2001.</p>	<p>ALVIS AGNITIONS</p> <p>GENERAL MEETING - AUG.</p> <p>Twenty six people attended what was a very lively meeting. Claire and Stuart Macdonald travelled all the way from South Australia to be with us. I think they enjoyed themselves; they seemed to laugh a lot. Stuart told me that it is 29 years since he was last in the Club rooms. Ron Wilson was welcomed back from his sick bed and proved that he has not lost his sense of humour. He was soon suspecting that Bob Graham might be seeking "<i>Social Bondage</i>." Crikey. How a club can change during a short absence.....! The green Bob machine is shortly to have its cylinder head put back after a failed welsch plug turned the contents of the sump into mayonnaise. Hopefully all will be back to normal in time for the VSCC Two Day Rally in early September, for which Geoff Hood is navigating. As this is written it is not known how many other Alvises have entered.</p>	<p>BY THE FIRESIDE:</p> <p>"Lucky All My Life", the Biography of Harry Weslake, (1897-1978).</p> <p>Alister Cannon reviewed this book in last month's Newsletter. Just a note from RoyBoy to say that it is in the Club library.</p>
<p>CAR OF THE MONTH</p> <p>at the August Meeting was the Presidential TA 21 DHC. Richard explained what he knows of its history and recounted the improvements which have accrued during his ownership. Thanks for bringing out the car.</p>	<p>CLUB ROOMS RENT</p> <p>After 11 years with no increase, the rent payable to Mrs. Bowes has been raised.</p>	 <p>Don't forget the 2001 NATIONAL ALVIS RALLY to be held in Queensland. 26th August - 1st September. Details and an entry form were included with last month's Newsletter. Further information from: Bruce Jorss, 19 Cawmore Road, Galloway's Hill, Qld. 4171. Tel (07) 3399 2928. There is some talk around the traps in Melbourne, of a car transporter being chartered for a load (how-ever many that may be) of Alvises. If you are interested in that possibility please contact the Prez.</p>
<p>VIDEO-PLAYER & TV</p> <p>Thanks to Kevin Bruce's efforts in acquiring a VCR and TV set, the Club was treated to a video filmed by Ian Parkinson of Club personnel enjoying themselves during recent weeks. If you thought your privacy may have been at risk in the presence of an Editor with big ears, wait until you meet an enthusiastic video-er with big eyes! Beware!</p>	<p>NEWLY ACQUIRED CARS.</p> <p>There have been several in the Club just recently and each owner has told us what they have got, where it came from and what they will have to do to it to put it back on the road. Chester Mckaige 12/50. Frank Mornane Speed 25. Rod Amos Silver Eagle. Bob Northey 12/50 and Dale Parsell Crested Eagle. That is a pretty eclectic bunch. Some of the projects sound as though there is a lot of hard work involved but its very good for such a small club as ours. Watch this space!</p>	<p>CALENDAR 2001</p> <p>John Lang intends to publish a calendar again - but he needs photographs! Please send your favourite picture of your car to John. It must be in the form of a 6" x 8" print. Regrettably there has been some delay and trouble in collecting money for all of last year's calendar so it will be money up front this time around! But they make a useful gift as well as being the basis for future Alvis memorabilia.</p>  <p>"I can't come out yet, dear. I'm washing the baby."</p>



Line up of cars at Mitchelton Winery in May. From L: Ron Allen's TE 21, David Vaughan's TA 21, David Caldwell's TA 14, John Link's TA 21 Special, John Ball's TA 21 DHC, The Presidential Crested Eagle, Simon Ramsay's Speed 25 and Janet Seath's TB14.



The Editor

*(R) Close up of the Speed 25 & TB 14.
Below: Ron Allen's TE 21.
Bottom: Chris Thevathasan's TD 21 DHC Photographed at Geelong.*



*Above: Eric Nicholl.
Committee Member
Below: Dale Parsell.
Secretary*





*John Lang. Vice
President.*

Bob Anderson's 12/50

*Ian Parkinson.
Treasurer*



*(Below): Andrew McDougall's immaculate tool rack. Now I
know why I can never find what I want in my shed!*



*(Above): Stuart & Claire
Macdonald who came all the
way from South Australia to
the Club General Meeting in
August.*



*(L): Who can provide details
about the TARF
"Catamaran" Racing Car -
photographed in the York
Motor Museum in West
Australia?*

FROM PATRICIA BREN, NAPIER, NEW ZEALAND.

Dear John,

It has been very interesting to receive your Newsletters and information. It is a shame privacy laws don't allow you to give out lists of members or even 12/50 owners. The 12/50 Register in UK and Alvis CC in NZ both manage to do this. They include only members who agree to have information included in the list. As well, new members have their details published so why can't they have access to information about existing members? (*The information Pat seeks is available in hard copy form in the Club library; it takes the form of two volumes totalling 120 pages. The logistics and cost of running off another copy and sending it to NZ have never been considered – probably because the Club has never been asked before. But it does exist and as a member of ACCV, you are entitled to view it. Electronic transmission is the obvious answer but what about your end? – ED*)

About myself: I teach secondary school science. My partner and I also have a 1908 Daimler, 1930 Austin and 1925 and 1928 Chevrolets in various states of restoration. Michael also has a 1952 Morris Oxford which we motor in sometimes.

The enclosed article was originally published in "Beaded Wheels"- New Zealand's Veteran & Vintage Motoring Magazine in 1992. Since then the car has travelled over 20,000 miles in both islands of NZ, all very reliably and economically. Since the article was written the hood frame has been built out of stainless steel bar and laminated wooden bows. It is covered with dark blue wigan cloth which is fawn on the inside. (*The photos illustrating the magazine article will not reproduce but Pat has sent in a picture of the car which appears elsewhere in this "Alvic". – ED*)

The car was originally shipped new by TKM to Australia but I've been unable to trace any of its history from then until Michael Curry brought it into NZ in the '70s or '80s. Even Eric Cunningham was uncertain. Evidently the original motor (No. 4437) is in a car somewhere in Australia. If anyone can help me with more details I would be most grateful.

Regards,

PATRICIA BREN

(*Great to have news from across the Tasman and to read some of the details of the very extensive restoration. Thanks, Patricia. – ED.*)

I bought the Alvis as a very dismantled pile of parts from Michael Curry in Wellington in April 1987. It came home in the back of a CF Bedford van, with the chassis on the roof. The chassis and the axles Michael Curry had brought over with quite a lot of other parts from Australia in the 1960's or 1970's. The rest of it was from his stock of parts.

The pile of parts consisted of chassis, front axle, rear axle housing, gearbox, engine (in bits), parts of a radiator, steering box (not Alvis), wheel centres, two springs, a foot board, a new fuel tank and the loan of wooden patterns for the Sports Tourer body.

THE CHASSIS was sandblasted, a new front cross member made and fitted. The whole thing was straightened and repaired, as it had been damaged. At a later stage, the rear cross tube and bar were also completely replaced.

THE BODY was framed up on the chassis, which was set up level. I used the

wood frame patterns that Michael Curry had loaned me, plus photos and measurements of the rear part of the body, as this was missing. I copied all the frame work in tanalised white pine, and laminated the main curved frames in a jig that was loaned as well. It was glued with marine glue and screwed together, then after fairing up, was coated with a marine timber preservative. I did all of this, with some help from my father. The body was skinned in aluminium by a local tradesman, helped by me.

THE FRONT AXLE beam was quite bent at one end and this was straightened. I made new king pins and bushes, fitted them and all new hub bearings, etc. The axle had a non-original king pin arrangement with thrust bearings instead of bronze thrust washers. I was able to get new bearings, I continued with this arrangement and a BMC part for the lock tab washers that were required. The steering joints all had new balls and cups fitted and rubber boots added.

THE STEERING BOX is thought to be a Chrysler product but fits quite well, and as no Alvis one has come to hand, I have used it. It

was cleaned and checked out OK. It had bearings (not bushes) and seemed quite unworn, and is supposed to have been with this chassis for a long time. A new drop arm was made by modifying one with a square fitting onto the shaft and the original tapered hole onto the drag-link ball. I managed to obtain an original Alvis steering wheel which came apart into two pieces in our hands. So small steel sleeves were MIG welded to the rim while slipped over the ends of the aluminium spokes. Then it was all recoated black and fitted to the column. Most of the control tubes were there, but I had to make up new knobs for the lever ends, and find and modify a horn button to suit. The knobs were turned out of brass and nickel plated, as was the control plate.

THE RADIATOR was a new shell ex the United Kingdom and some old tanks which had been modified to suit a V8 engine. I repaired the tanks and bought a new core of the original type made locally, and had the whole radiator assembled by a local radiator repair firm. I had bought all the fittings from the United Kingdom, including a radiator

cap, but later made two more caps from scrap brass bushing, and had them nickel plated so I can fit a hare mascot to one and a calorimeter on the other.

THE GEARBOX was one that Michael Curry had had in his car and was quite worn, but we stripped it and I hand stoned all the gear teeth. I purchased speedo drive gears from the Alvis Register, and a friend re-assembled it with all new bearings and seals where possible. I made a new reverse detent rod for the gear lever, as well as a new knob which was off a piece of machinery.

THE DIFFERENTIAL was semi-dismantled with no crown wheel and pinion in it, and the carrier was separate. The whole assembly got new bearings right through, and seals, and a Willys 77 crown wheel and pinion were ground and redrilled at the local gear cutting firm to fit, rather than altering the carrier. This was all assembled and set up by a friend.

THE SPRINGS. I had only two springs (one front and one rear), so another set of leaves was made up from second hand spring leaves, which were set up and assembled with new top leaves by the local spring makers. I

made up all new shackle pins from 4340 steel, and used synthetic bushes wherever possible. A friend fabricated all new rear spring shackles.

THE BRAKES. The handbrake lever had to have the whole detent/ratchet mechanism made from the parts book picture, and Michael Curry provided a casting of the brass release lever, and the handle was re-covered using black electrical air shrink tubing. The front brake backing plates were very unusual in that they were in one piece, not having the detachable cover for the pulley cable. Lou Wickham has not come across any others like this. So the whole front axle assembly was taken to the local brake cable makers, who made the cables, threaded them through the pulley housings, and pressed the front threaded fittings on. I made all new brake rods, with new clevises and clevis pins, relined all the brake shoes with a soft bonded lining, fitted new shoe return springs ex the Alvis Register, had the brake drums ground, and put it all together again carefully. The brake cross shafts were all checked and repaired as necessary.

THE DRIVESHAFT was made from a Triumph 2000 shaft shortened about five inches, and I made an adaptor for the gearbox, and got a flange that fitted straight onto the new pinion shaft so I was able to use Hardy Spicer universal joints on both ends. The drive shaft was balanced.

THE ENGINE was totally dismantled with parts from several engines in the pile. The crankcase had cracked around the centre main studs, and on one of the side webs these were welded. The block was descaled and surfaced both sides. It, along with the crankcase, was sent to Denco Engineering in Christchurch where a new, stronger crankshaft, conrods, bearings, and pistons were made and fitted. These are all of modern design, thus shell main and big end bearings and aluminium pistons. The block was bored out to 69mm, and is the short stroke engine of 1496 cc. The whole engine was balanced. The timing gears were missing, so these were replaced with Ford 1937/38 timing gears, as had been used by another 12/50 owner in New Zealand. These consisted of two steel and one fibre gears, which had new

head had new valve guides fitted and new valves made from some other bigger ones, one valve seat was inserted, and new valve springs were fitted (these were locally made). The rockers were cleaned up and honed to fit a new rocker shaft which I turned up in three pieces from 4340 steel, from instructions in the Register manual. The water outlets, from head and block to the radiator, were fabricated from steel, and a new casting fitted at the rear. The old oil pump drive got a new gear, and was shortened slightly to fit on to the BMC Mini oil pump, which fits neatly onto the sump with an adaptor plate. (Initially I had no oil pump - another 12/50 owner gave me a very worn one which I did not use). I made a new oil pickup tube and gauze. The oil relief valve had a new spring and was shortened to take the fittings from the BMC 100 oil filter that was fitted to be full flow on that side of the engine. The side cover and rocker cover were repaired and polished, and new gaskets made. The flywheel had a new ring gear fitted, and the clutch relined. The steel clutch plate shaft was badly worn in the splined section, so this part had a new section welded on to it and a new collar fitted into the spider, ex BMC Mini driveshaft. It has a lot more splines and should last longer. The fabric joints were replaced with new ones from the Register, the clutch brake and thrust finger bolts were relined with a Ferodo composition material. The clutch thrust bearing was replaced with a sealed bearing, and all the other clutch parts checked and overhauled.

THE PETROL TANK was a new one made from galvanised sheet, but I could not get a filler cap to fit the fine threaded neck, so I bought a piece of threaded brass tube as

has a rubber seal fitted.

THE FOOTBOARD could not be welded, so it was repaired with Loctite alloy metal set, a two pot epoxy. Then all the grooves were refilled, and the underside painted satin black.

ACCESSORIES. The starter motor, generator, cut-out, and magneto were all overhauled. The linkages and rods were made from drawings and castings provided by Michael Curry. The inlet and exhaust manifold was cracked, so this was welded. A new alloy bodied Solex FX carburettor was fitted instead of the earlier bronze ones which were all very worn. All the instruments were collected up from various places and renicked, overhauled, and new faces fitted. The dashboard was made up and covered with black acrylic sheet and with an aluminium edge mould, to be as close to original as possible. The lights, windscreen frame, and all those fiddley bits were gradually collected up and restored or made. I had brackets fabricated for running boards, body, and mudguards. I made the running boards out of wood and covered them with ribbed aluminium sheet and angled mouldings. The front floorboards were also covered with this sheet to match the footboard.

THE WHEELS. I got five blank undrilled centres with the kitset, made in the United Kingdom some years ago. The rims I used were 21 inch flat based with locking rings. I collected some up, and made some from Dodge disc wheels with the centre removed. All the rims were repaired and trued up. I got one second hand wheel centre, which the local engineers used as a pattern to drill my blank centres. I used an old borrowed wheel to mark out the rims. I then pressed the spoke

when the stainless steel centre plates were fitted the Austin 12/4 wheel nuts I wanted to use did not have enough thread to hold. So I got some Mini mag wheel nuts and drilled and retreaded them to 7/16 BSF, and with a small bit of drilling in the wheel centres these nuts gave a lot more hold, and look like the originals. The locking rings had pins fitted in their ends, and clips made, so they are secured when fitted.

PANELS. I made the bonnet and mudguards from patterns and drawings at night class, with help from a friend.

ASSEMBLY. The chassis and running gear were all put together, the body trial fitted, then taken off to the painters and upholsterers. When it was finally fitted, I did all the electrical wiring, we fitted the engine and radiator, etc.

SUMMARY. After starting up, final adjustments were made, and we completed about 1200 miles in the Second New Zealand Pan Pacific Rally in Palmerston North in February 1992, all virtually trouble free. The whole restoration took about four years. The rear screen, hood, sidescreens, and carrier have still to be made and fitted to finish it off. The car is painted in two tone light and dark blue, with dark blue leather and carpet interior, and black duck tonneau covers. All bright work is nickel plated.

In May 1992 the Alvis won the Barry Newman Memorial Trophy awarded for the Most Meritorious Restoration of a Vintage Vehicle in the Hawkes Bay Branch Annual Club Captains award. Since this the carrier and rear screen have been completed, now only the hood and side screens are left to be made and fitted. The car has now done 3,000 miles.

By the time the Editorial Speed 20 arrived at the bottom of the Jamberoo Valley all four of its brake drums were emitting clouds of pungent blue smoke. If the arrival at the resort had been after dark there would have been four cherry-red beacons to light the night sky. Time passed, things cooled and some retardation returned but if the truth be known all was not well in the anchor locker all the way home. The Owner's Handbook provides some information about adjusting the brakes but follow it to the letter and you are left realizing that something is lacking. The ED grumbled to David Head about this state of affairs and the capital elephantine memory was brought to bear. The result of that bearing was two articles printed some years ago in the AOC "Bulletin":

The Technical Editor's Corner

1) Poor braking seems to be a fairly common grumble among owners of pre-war models. On buying my first Alvis - a Firebird - this was the first problem which cropped up. In fact, I was very alarmed to find the car doing less than 8 m.p.g. with no apparent mechanical faults. The smell of roast Ferodo soon became overpowering, and the fuel consumption was restored to a more reasonable figure. As soon as I stopped the brakes from binding they disappeared into thin air, unless I stood on the brake and swung on the hand lever at the same time - all very acrobatic. A number of members have written to describe braking systems which behave exactly like that - mainly because of one or more of the following reasons:-

- (a) Cables not properly lubricated. Oil brushed on to the exposed part of the cable frequently will work wonders when it runs down into the enclosed part. Once this has freed the cables they need only be oiled about once in six months. All moving brake parts should also be oiled thoroughly and frequently (not those in the drum of course). (It is not sufficient to rely on the car's one-shot system - even if it works).
- (b) Frayed cables - a very common cause.
- (c) Frequent adjustment by the adjuster in the car. This does not work if the brakes are incorrectly balanced, and personally I've found it better to screw it off and leave it alone. One can achieve better results by adjusting each cable at intervals of about 3000 miles.
- (d) The adjuster on the back of the brake drum is ignored too frequently. Four out of five of the cars on which I have worked have had these adjusters rusted up solid - it's well worth the trouble of freeing them, and adjusting them about every 5-6000 miles. First slacken off the cable nut two or three turns then turn the adjuster so that the shoe is as near to the drum as possible without rubbing on it.
- (e) Front brakes must come on appreciably in advance of the rear ones, otherwise one reverts to the 1920's and has rear wheel braking only.
- (f) Try to adjust the system so that the levers on the cross-shaft (certain models only) are in a position to exert the most leverage with a minimum effort.

Assuming all the above points have been checked, the adjustment of the cables is fairly simple.

(a) First jack up both front wheels and tighten the cables as much as possible without the shoes rubbing. Pull the handbrake back one notch at a time until both wheels are locked. Make sure that they both lock "on the same notch". Note the exact position of the handbrake at this point.

(b) Jack up the rear wheels, and adjust so that the rear brakes lock the wheels when the handbrake is pulled three notches further on than for the front. Experiment with this as it may work better with "two notches" difference. I find that with two notches difference the rear brakes bind with passengers at the rear of the car. This will probably vary from car to car according to the setting and condition of the springs.

If the above instructions are carried out (incidentally the oil treatment takes two or three weeks to have any marked effect), the brakes can be made as efficient as one could wish. All four wheels can be firmly locked without undue pedal pressure. Applied to the larger cars this treatment must certainly reduce the pedal pressure considerably and improve the brakes to a reasonable standard.

(In case anyone thinks pre-war models had poor brakes which cannot be improved, the figures taken from road tests show the brake systems to be well up to the necessary standards of safety, and an overhaul of the complete system will ensure the same results as when the car was new. All Alvis models were capable of being stopped in 30-35 ft. from 30 m.p.h. (most of them in 30 ft) and the early Speed 20 tourer recorded 26 ft. Where it is desired to modify the system the fitting of a servo is probably the cheapest, and most efficient method to adopt. Regarding the lubrication of cables, Speedy Cables Ltd., when renewing cables use outer covers with an oiling nipple situated in the middle).

2) Brake Adjustment. By the Technical Editor

Members who have recently purchased any of the 1932-1939 models (excluding the 12/70 and Silver Crest) may not be entirely conversant with brake adjustments nor, quite possibly, will their local garage. The first object, assuming linings, cables, cross shafts and pins to be in good condition and properly lubricated, is to adjust the brake shoes to fit as closely to the drum as possible. First, therefore, slacken off the central foot and hand brake adjusters to their full extent. Secondly, taking each wheel at a time, move the eccentric cam adjuster until, with the maximum amount of slack taken up on each cable, a further slight movement of the cam will result in the shoes rubbing the drums (slight movement = approximately 3°).

The next step is to apply the hand-brake one notch, having screwed up the central adjuster as necessary, until the front wheels need some effort to turn them. With the hand-brake on three notches, the back wheels will be much harder to turn than the front and the cables should be slackened to the point where equal effort, front and rear, is necessary. The task is not done in five minutes, but with care and trouble you will have good brakes with equal stopping power and the appropriate percentage between front and rear.

On cars fitted with these brakes pre-war road tests gave stopping distances from 30 m.p.h. of between 28' and 34' according to the weight of the particular model under test. The latter figure is sometimes worse on post-war vehicles weighing considerably less according to road test figures.

It should be noted that the procedure given in the Instruction Manuals for adjusting brakes can result in the shoes being left in a position where they are fractionally further away from the drums and this will result in a very considerable loss of braking power.

These two articles differ in detail but seem to agree with each other and both offer more useful detail than does the handbook. The Ed is used to surgical precision but found it difficult to accept that such a simple and crude device as the "recentering eccentric" should offer a choice of full on or full off within about one degree of arc - never mind the three degrees talked of in the article! My thanks to David Head and the AOC Bulletin/Julian Collins.



A DAY IN THE B.A.L.D. HILLS

The Bristol, Alvis and Lanchester/Daimler (thus, BALD), clubs converged again this year on the Marylands Guest House at Marysville, on Sunday, the 13th of August for what is hoped will become a regular outing for Alvisi.

The red triangle was well represented by Maureen Adnam and friend Pam (TA 14 tourer), Ron Allen (TE 21 saloon), John and Kay Ball (TA 21 DHC), David Caldwell (TA 14 saloon), John and Margaret Hetherington (Speed 20 tourer) and the Prez, Mrs. Prez and friend Stephen Mayer (TA 21 DHC).

The Adnams, Caldwells and Tonkins met at Healesville, where we had a pleasant morning tea at a plant nursery on the outskirts of the town, before climbing the Black Spur and then through Narbethong and the picturesque run into Marysville, where your Prez, leading from the front (as always!), managed to get us lost in the middle of the town, requiring the First Lady to ask a local how to get to Marylands. We had decided against the more adventurous route via the Acheron Way, which still has some 20 kilometres of unsealed road - OK for the VSCC press-on types, but not for us refined Alvisi.

The Guest House is a lovely old affair, now refurbished as a conference centre and a nice place to stay for a weekend. There we met the country contingent, Ron Allen, the Balls and the Hetheringtons, who had motored through a good portion of Vic. to get there, as well as the Bristol and Daimler/Lanchester contingents. David and Moira Wischer, who have the distinction of previously owning Alvises, a Bristol and a Daimler, asked to be remembered to their red triangle friends.

After lunch, a natter and the usual looking into bonnets and up exhaust pipes, we wended (?), our respective ways home. It was a good gathering and the Wischers invited the three clubs to their new home at Balnarring early in the New Year, for a barby and so that the other two clubs can try to wrest the Bocce Perpetual Trophy off us. Intermingling with like-minded car clubs can only be a positive thing and thank you to John Hetherington for arranging the meeting and to the Bristol and Daimler/Lanchester Clubs for their hospitality.

Richard Tonkin.

CARS & PARTS FOR SALE AND WANTED

THE CLUB CARRIES A 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.

Enquire about spares to the appropriate SPAREPERSON listed on p.3

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER
COPY DEADLINE:

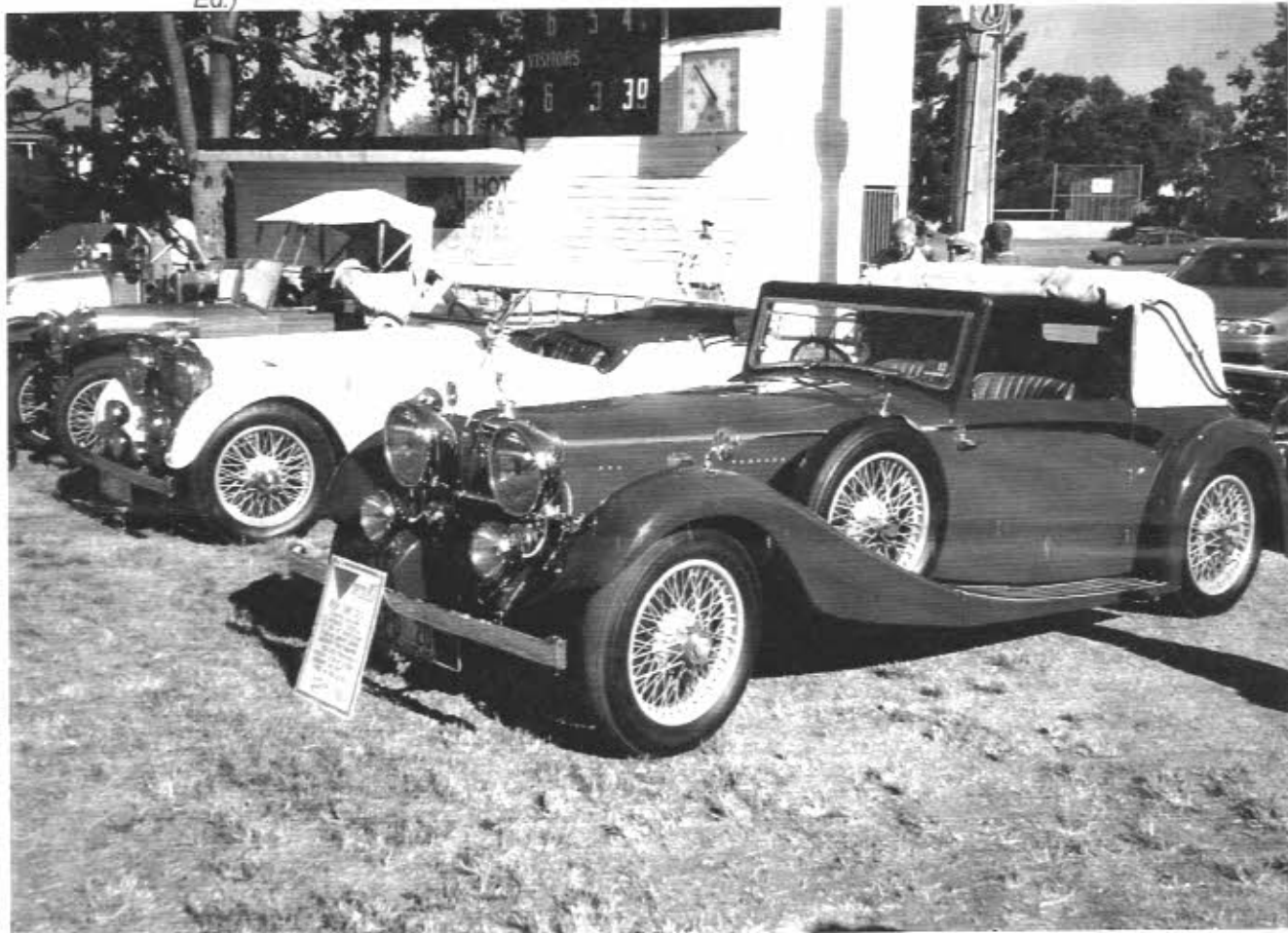
WEDNESDAY
27th SEPTEMBER 2000

CLUB Head Gaskets for Three litre cars are in stock. Contact John Ball 03 5826 2518.
Set of four "Twist and Click" bonnet catches for Speed 20 etc. Need replating.
One "Four in One" instrument complete with Alvis logo and water temp capillary – ex TA 14.
For Sale for club funds – donated by John Hetherington.

PRIVATEERS (*Ads. for cars For Sale must include the price and Reg. or Engine No.*)
All Club Alvises in Australia are running perfectly this month. None require spare parts. Nobody wants to sell a car or buy one.

WANTED Alvis 12/50 Cylinder Block, timing gear cover and rocker cover. Patricia Bren, "Woodhurst", 29 Poraiti Road, RD2 Napier, Hawkes Bay. N.Z. Tel 64 6 8442971 Fax 64 6 8444265.

DID YOU SEE IT? The August Newsletter included a flyer about the Queensland National Rally next year, from Bruce Jorss. On the back was a 1950 advertisement for an ALVIS TB 14. It made my heart sing! How about you? Rob Graham. (*Well, no, Rob but this issue should spring your heart into a Chorus, Ed.*)



Dean Prangley's Speed 20 with Bill Ewing's Speed 25 on its right.