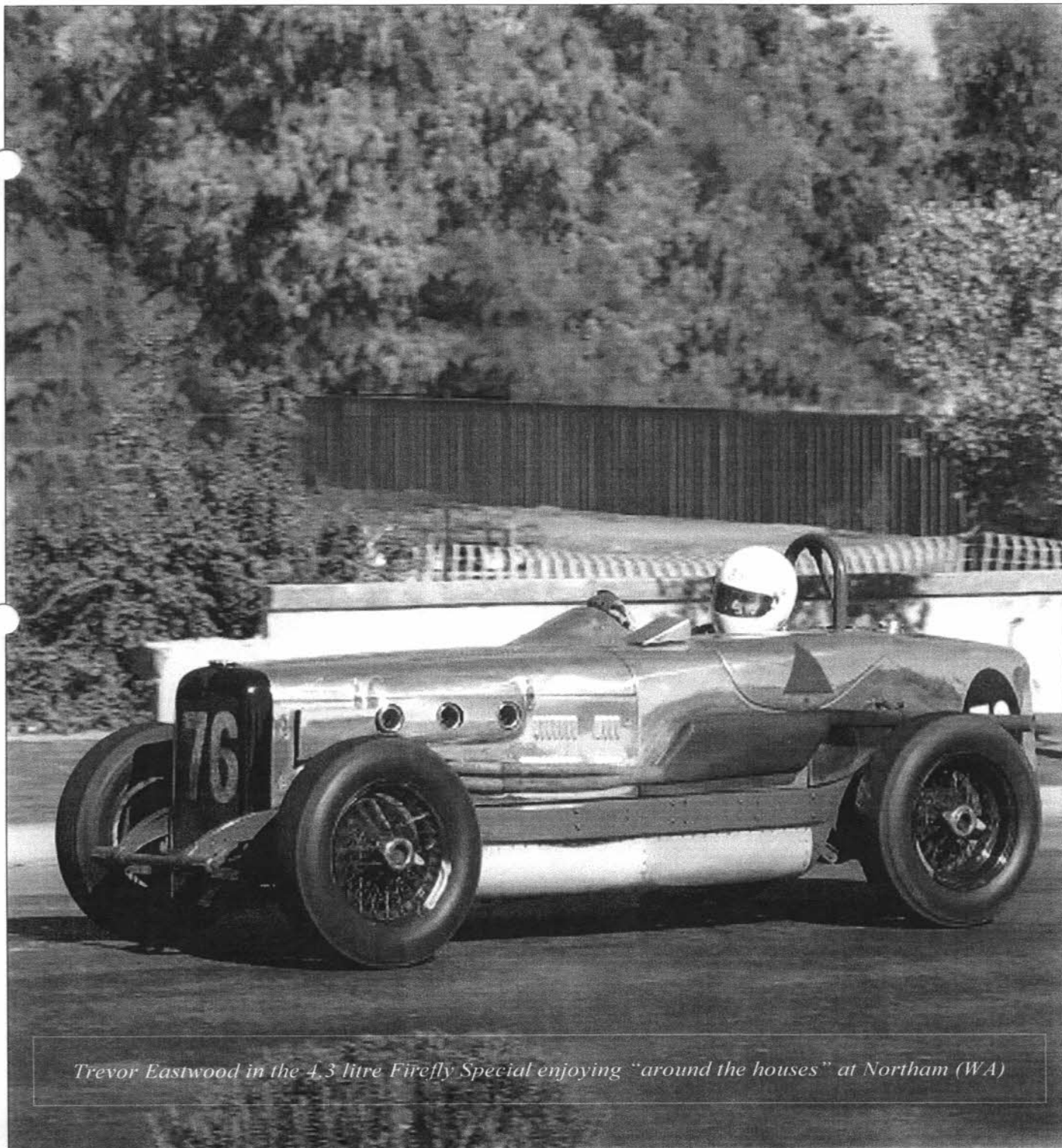




Alvic

JUNE 2005

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALVIS CAR CLUB OF VICTORIA (Inc)



Trevor Eastwood in the 4.3 litre Firefly Special enjoying "around the houses" at Northam (WA)

The Alvis Car Club of Victoria (Inc)

A0017202F

CLUB ROOMS: - rear of 'ALVISTA' 21 Edgar St, Glen Iris (MELWAYS 59 F8)
Meetings—third Friday of each month [except DEC/JAN] at 8.00pm. Newsletter Deadline—first Friday of month.
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JUNE 2005

www.alvis.org.au

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ALVIVACIOUS

The Alvis Car Club of Victoria was invited to a meeting of the Riley Car Club recently. They asked us to tell them about our cars, our club and matters Alvis in general. It was a very pleasant evening socialising with like minded folk who drive cars of the same "type." Minutes of our club's activities in years gone by show that this is not the first time this has happened and that there have been several combined meetings with other one make clubs, either in club-rooms or on the road. Perhaps we should do more of this sort of thing. In recent years there was the Bocce (or was it Petanque?) competition with the Bristolians, Daimler Lancastrians and Armstrong Tiddlers but even that has fallen by the wayside. When I looked around the Riley room I was struck by the average age of members. If anything, their lot are older than our lot! But the difference is not great and the point is that we are all ageing – probably faster than our cars! I doubt that I will be as nimble as my 12/50 when aged 80..... Our activities are coming under greater and greater legislated scrutiny. With age our cars become more difficult and more expensive to maintain while increasing traffic density makes them increasingly difficult to drive safely. But it is not just the ACCV that is faced with these problems; they beset all the other clubs mentioned above and many others as well. All the more reason, then to share activities with other like minded people who just happen to have pinned their enthusiasm to lesser makes of motor car. We should not hold that against them and your committee will be looking seriously at more combined meetings. We are always looking for new venues of interest; it makes sense that the point of interest could be another make of car and another bunch of motoring folk. If any members have particular friendships with members of other clubs and would like share an outing, please let your committee know.

JOHN HETHERINGTON

VALE LYN WEBSTER

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of Norm Webster's wife Lyn.
Lyn and Norm were regulars at National Rallies and were missed at the recent Summit to Sea Rally in Victoria
To Norm and his immediate family we offer our sincere sympathies.

SUPPER

THE NEWELLS

EVENT CALENDAR

June 10-12	Weekend Away at Inverloch
June 17	General Meeting
July 15	General Meeting
July 16-17	24 Hour Team Trial— <i>see details inside</i>
Aug 14	Frostbite run with the VSCC
Aug 19	General Meeting
Sep 16	General Meeting
Oct 1—2	Essay run. Commemorates the first car journey from Bairnsdale to Ensay. ACCV have intimated that 6 cars will attend. <i>Contact John Hetherington for details</i>
Oct 21	General Meeting
Oct 29-31	Camperdown
Nov 18	General Meeting
Dec 11	Christmas party at the Langs

The Missing Edinburgh Police Car

By Frank Mornane Part 2

(continued from Alvis Car Club (Vic) Newsletter Nov 04
and AOC Bulletin No.492 Mar/April 05)

I commenced restoration of this car in 2001. My aim was to maintain originality wherever possible.

I tackled the engine first and built an engine stand which turned over end to end to accommodate it. Having two engines to work with meant I could use the best components from each to put into the original crankcase, No.14950. To this end I took the original engine parts plus the spare engine to Orger Engineering, and engine reconditioner in suburban Melbourne. They cleaned the rust from the original (oversize) crankshaft and line-bored the white metal bearings from the spare engine to accommodate it. I had a new camshaft made because the oil pump drive was badly worn. The camshaft bushes were also replaced.

Orger Engineering honed the cylinder block and checked the rods and pistons. These were OK, the pistons only requiring a new set of rings. A Jaguar harmonic balancer was adapted to fit the end of the crankshaft.

Unfortunately, the cylinder head was full of cracks so I took it to Rob Baker, a cylinder head specialist, who said he would try and repair it.

While the head was receiving attention I bolted the crankcase onto the engine stand and fitted the crankshaft with its main bearings, new oil seals and the flywheel. A friend of mine Greg Smith, welded up a few worn teeth on the ring gear and I spent a couple of hours filing the welds into shape.

After the crankshaft was bolted down I was surprised at how easily it spun around. With the crankshaft bolted in and torqued down I then bolted the block onto the crankcase and fitted the rods and pistons complete with their new rings. The camshaft was fitted next along with a re-machined set of cam followers.

Greg helped me fit the timing chain and chain tensioner and we timed the engine. I painted the inside of the sump and fitted the reconditioned oil pump. With the completion of this work I then fitted the clutch and clutch housing.

The cylinder head repair was taking a while so while Rob was busy chasing cracks I commenced work on the chassis. I removed the body and the firewall from the chassis and was amazed at how much area the body parts took up when dismantled. I didn't have enough room for them in the garage and had to store some in the roof and the rest wherever I could find space.

During this time, on a trip to Sydney, I was fortunate enough to locate a spare wheel cover which I purchased.

I sent the chassis to be sandblasted and it was found to be in very good condition underneath the old grease. I had it painted black and upon its return I set it on saw stools for reassembly. I pulled the transverse front spring apart, removed the rust and greased it, then reassembled it with all the other front-end components.

Andrew Hepner, from Geelong, did up the steering box, adapting some tapered roller bearings to fit as the originals were badly worn.

The rear springs were replaced and fitted onto the chassis. When placing the differential and axle housings onto the springs I was surprised to discover the number 14488 stamped on the top of the differential housing which was one number off the chassis number on the rest of the car (14487). The driver side backing plate had been fabricated from steel, indicating that the original must have been damaged at some stage.

Ron McCallum, a local engineer, checked the differential and adjusted it and replaced the bearings. I had new brake linings fitted and the brake cables replaced and I fitted new wheel bearings.

At this stage I took five wheels to Alan McKinnon of Antique Tyres. Three required new rims. He replaced some broken spokes, balanced and painted the wheels and fitted new tyres.

After almost twelve months and several pressure tests later, the cylinder head was deemed to be OK. Rob fitted modern valves and springs and then returned the head to me. I made new engine studs and fitted the cylinder head after obtaining a gasket and rocker box cover from Alvis Club spares.

I spent Christmas 2003 putting the engine into the chassis. I fitted both inlet and exhaust manifolds and had a new exhaust system made.

The fuel tank was full of rubbish and took ages to clean up. I treated the inside with a special product to clean and seal it. I made new fuel lines and put new kits into the original S.U fuel pumps.

I didn't possess the original fan or assembly so I fitted an electric fan and wired it temporarily with an on/off switch. I connected up a battery and temporary starter switch. The original engine was missing the coil-magneto combination and the spare engine only had a magneto which was not the correct one for my car.

One Saturday afternoon, with a few friends, I decided to attempt to start the car. We temporarily wired the fuel pumps and started the engine from the starter motor with a screwdriver. It burst into life but was too retarded so we adjusted the ignition timing and it then ran smoothly.

The car was running hot so I was advised to have the radiator checked. I was using the original radiator which I had previously thought was OK as I ran water through it without any restriction. I took it to a radiator service where it was found to be 30% blocked so they took off the top and bottom tanks and cleaned it out.

Having no seats, I fitted a garden chair to the chassis and used the car as a running chassis for approximately 12 months driving up and down the street for testing purposes. After one of these sessions I was horrified to discover water in No.1 cylinder. I removed the cylinder head and returned it to Rob Baker who repaired another crack.

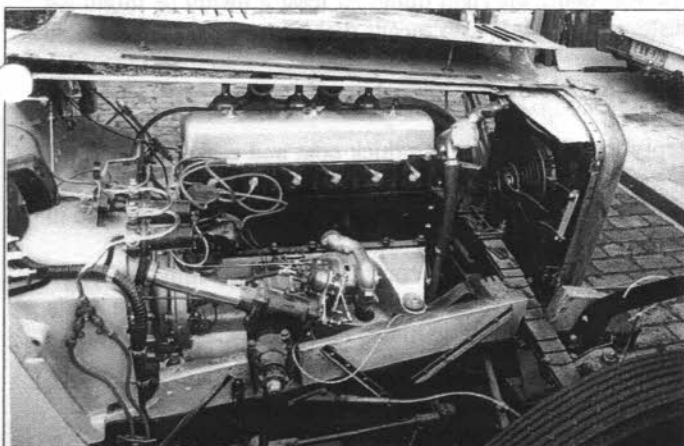
On another occasion I discovered water in the oil so the head went back for further repairs. By this stage the club's supply of Speed 25 gaskets was becoming depleted!

During one of these head removal episodes I stupidly dropped a nut while removing the rear water transfer plate. I couldn't find it so gave up the search. With the head back on, upon cranking the engine I heard a terrible grinding noise and I subsequently discovered that the nut had fallen through the inspection opening in the clutch housing. I managed to retrieve the nut through a hole at the base of the flywheel. The lesson I have learnt from this is in future tape over the opening.

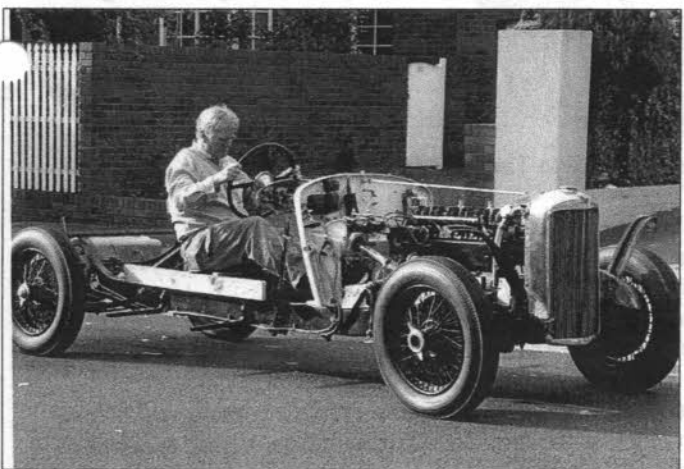
The head was once again declared to be OK so I put it back on the car. By this stage I was becoming something of an expert in head removal and replacement, and not by choice!

While the car was still a running chassis I ordered a wiring loom with added wires for the indicators from Vintage Wiring Harness in Bellingen N.S.W. I also made an aluminium heat shield mounted off the manifold nuts with a slot cut for the accelerator arm. The cold start device was missing from my carburettors and I managed to pick one up at an auction in Sydney.

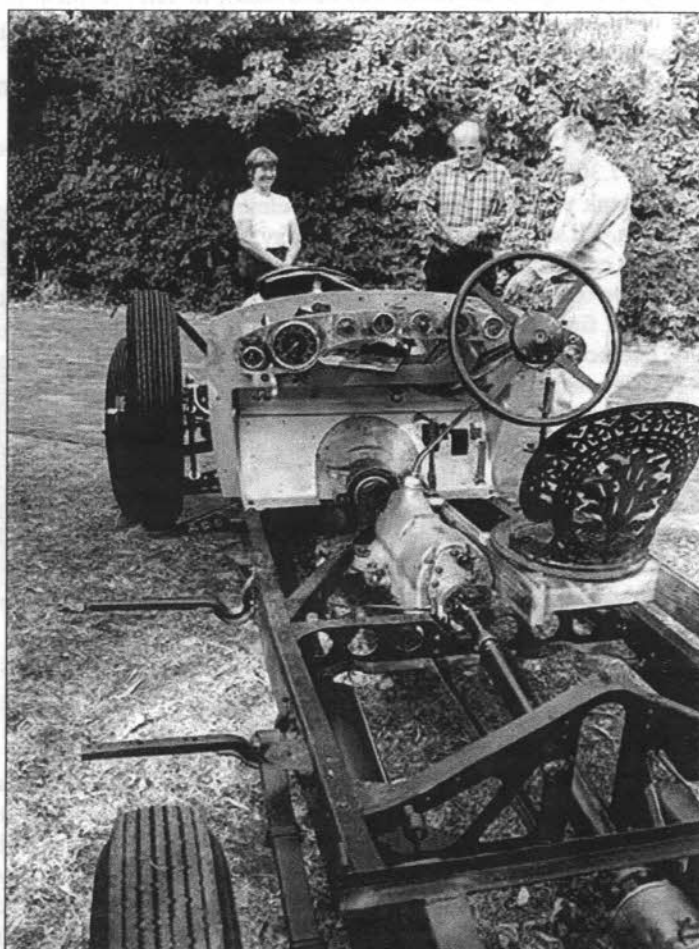
With less than 12 months until the National Alvis Rally in March 2005, I made the announcement at a club meeting that I would be driving the car on that rally. This statement was met with skepticism, even derision, as I had yet to do the body.



above: the distributor side of the engine
"Thermo fan replaces original pedestal type that was missing.
Standard practice in Australia is to move fuel pumps to other side to alleviate heat from exhaust manifold."



above: I return from a satisfactory drive up the street



The vertical chassis detail.
(Photo taken by Andrew Robeson on his visit to Australia. Note garden chair used as a driver's seat)

A Short Novel part 3

by Chester McKaige

"He also mentioned that you want to join the Alvis Car Club. Whilst I don't know anything about Alvises, I'm quite prepared to take you along to the first couple of meetings to see what you think. I believe there is a meeting next Friday night."

Tim sat there absolutely dumbfounded. The thought of eating lunch had completely vanished as he tried to take in what his father had just told him.

I don't know what to say said Tim, his brain now full of things Alvis, an apprenticeship and the thoughts of working at long last with old cars.

"Well you think about it" said Marge eating the last piece of lettuce on her plate and placing her knife and fork both together on the plate. "We'll discuss it again later in the mean time I have a couple of jobs for you to do outside so finish your lunch and change into your old clothes."

The rest of the afternoon was spent helping Allan in the garden and collecting the prunings from the apple tree and placing them on the front nature strip for the council to collect the following week.

It wasn't until he was tucked up in bed that night that his mind came to grips with the lunchtime conversation. He was going to become a motor mechanic.

Bill had driven the Nash home and was pleased that after three years of inactivity the car had gone well. He parked it in the garage and went inside for a well earned beer.

It was only whilst he had the opportunity to sit down and relax that he was able to ponder the morning's activities and although a few quick decisions had been made, he felt confident that he was doing the right thing. At least it meant he might get some of his own cars on the road rather than being burdened with customer's cars. It also meant that all being well, he would have someone to eventually hand the business on to.

On the Wednesday of the following week, Tim got a phone call from John Northly asking if he wanted a lift to the meeting.

"I think I'll take the Alvis" said John already anticipating the reply from Tim. "Bring a thick coat and a hat and I'll pick you up at 7.30pm".

"Thank you very much" said Tim almost jumping out of his skin with enthusiasm, "much better than being by my dad in the Falcon. I'll see you at 7.30pm on Friday."

Tim could hardly wait for Friday night to come around. His week at school had been a constant blur as his mind was well and truly on other things. Rather than doing his homework, he had spent most of his time gleaning as much information on Alvis as he could find. He re-read his Ken Day book from cover to cover and had found all the articles in Classic Car Magazine on Alvis, photocopying each one and putting them into a folder entitled "Alvis Cars". When Friday came around, he was ready to mix his knowledge with those of other club members.

At exactly 7.30 pm, the un-mistaken sound of a 12/50 Alvis pulled up outside Tim's house. John got out after straddling the outside exhaust and dropped both feet onto the ground, straightened his back and removed his peaked hat.

Just as John was about to ring the door bell, the front door opened to reveal Tim dressed in navy blue parka with a matching blue beanie and holding a black pair of woolen gloves that obviously some one had made for him. "Those should keep you warm" said John looking at the gloves.

Allan stood behind Tim, and extended a hand out to John, "I'm Allan, Tim's father".

"John Northly, pleased to meet you, I hope you don't mind me taking your son to the meeting and I'll try and bring him home again in one piece."

"Well I think he will find it better going with you than having to have me take him who knows nothing about old cars and in a Ford to boot."

"You all set then" said Allan to Tim.

"Think so", said Tim making sure he had everything.

Allan reached into his pocket and produced a fifty dollar note and handed it to Tim.

"Here, you might need this, your first year's membership on me".

Tim thanked his dad and put the money in his wallet. He put his beanie on and zipped up his coat.

John opened the passenger door and Tim climbed in after negotiating the high running board. His feet could only just reach the toe board so John adjusted the bucket seat for him, and clambered in from the driver's seat.

"Nice and cosy isn't it?" said John as he retarded the spark, turned on the ignition, pulled out the strangler and pressed the starter motor. Tim nodded, his eyes glued to every movement of John's hands. The car burst into life and John pushed in the strangler, the car producing a nice even rhythmic beat.

"All set" said John, as he engaged first gear and released the handbrake. Looking behind to see that nothing was behind him he pulled out and did a U turn changing into second gear after completing the turn. He straightened the wheel, accelerated and changed into third before a quick change into top, the engine taking it all in its stride.

Tim put his gloves on and sat there enjoying the experience. He watched with interest the way the gears were changed and John's footwork on the clutch. The instruments also fascinated him, the clock sitting in front of him, the oil pressure gauge to its right and the speedometer mounted almost centrally in its polished timber dashboard.

Half an hour later they arrived at their destination, the club rooms of the Alvis Car Club (Vic). John drove into the car park and reversed the Alvis into a spot next to a Speed 20 Saloon. He gave the engine a blip on the throttle, retarded the spark and turned the magneto switch to the right, the engine shutting down immediately. He applied the handbrake, put the gear lever in neutral and sat there for a second or two running both hands through his hair as he surveyed the scene around him.

Six Alvis cars were in attendance, with a number of modern cars parked to one side allowing the six real cars to be parked

in a line. Small groups of members stood talking to each other some of which Tim recognized from his previous encounter although he didn't know their names.

"Come and I'll introduce you to some of these blokes" said John gesticulating to Tim to open the passenger door and get out so that he wouldn't have to clamber over the driver's side and do battle with a hot exhaust pipe.

Tim got out of the car and removed his jacket, hat and gloves at the same time making room for John to clamber over to the passenger seat and get out of the car. "Rule one" said John, "don't use the windscreen as a means of 'hauling yourself out of a vintage car. My wife does that and it drives me mad". What you did is the correct way, use your bum".

Tim put his coat and hat back on the seat and helped John fasten down the tonneau cover.

Two 12/50's were parked in the lineup along with a Speed 20 Saloon and three later cars that Tim was not familiar with. "The red car is a Silver Eagle, and the other two are referred to as Noddy cars" said John as they both moved along the line. They are called Noddy cars because they look like the car that Noddy owned in the Enid Blyton books".

Tim tried to remember what Noddy's car actually looked like and came to his own conclusion that the two cars looked nothing like Noddy's car but said nothing in case it might get him into trouble.

"Over there is the President talking to the Treasurer so we will start with them first" said John as they walked towards one of the smaller groups near the entrance to the club rooms.

The two men were in deep discussion about club matters when John and Tim approached but quickly stopped, the taller of the two extending a hand to John and giving Tim a welcoming smile.

"Goodbye" said John shaking the President's hand, "this is Tim Jones, a friend of mine who wants to join the club and one day own a 12/50".

Welcome aboard said the President, my name is Robert Tonkinson and this is Peter Parker, the Treasurer.

Robert Tonkinson was a tall chap of over six feet, balding but with a long chiseled face and a warm smile. He extended his hand to Tim and grasped Tim's with a firm grip keeping eye contact on him at the same time.

"We could do with a few more younger members, good to have you along said Robert.

I'm sure Peter will no doubt be keen to sign you up, won't you Pete?"

Peter Parker was a smaller man of roundish proportions with a thick crop of brown hair and a cheeky grin. The first thing Tim noticed about Peter was that never seemed to stand still, a bit like a puppy on a lead although having noticed that, he warmed to Peter immediately.

"So you want a 12/50 one day" asked Peter after that had finished shaking hands. "What you really want is a Noddy car like the one over there" motioning to a two tone Alvis sedan parked next to the Eagle. Much better than one of those funny things gesticulating to the 12/50."

"Wash your mouth out" said John, "Alvis only made two things, 12/50's and Saracen Tanks. Keep Tim's interests pure and wholesome".

Come on said Robert, "time to get this show on the road.

To get to the clubrooms, the four walked through what Tim believed to be a garage before turning left into a room that comprised four walls three lined with club memorabilia in the form of pictures, badges and club trophies, with one wall displaying a huge blackboard with a comprehensive list of events and a supper roster. A glass fronted bookcase opposite housed the club's library.

The flooring consisted of a motley carpet, threadbare in spots whilst the seating arrangements comprised four rows of old picture theatre seats, with further seating around the walls. A small kitchen was situated at one end, a number of women grouped together chatting away earnestly.

A long table was positioned at the front where another bod was sitting writing furiously in a rather large overgrown minute book. He stopped writing as Peter and Robert joined him at the table.

How are things Dean said Robert pulling up a chair alongside him and sitting down whilst Peter pulled up another chair on the end of the table and immediately started to shuffle papers around, at the same time talking constantly to members slowly trickling into the meeting.

"Not bad" said Dean fiddling with his pen and lowering his glasses on the end of his nose. Time we started the meeting, we have a lot to cover."

Tim sat next to John in the second row realizing that Dean was probably the secretary. As he glanced around the room now almost full, he noticed that all the women sat at the back whilst the men all sat together. A bit odd he thought, maybe a club ritual thing, his thoughts interrupted by a heavy bang of a hammer hitting the table.

And so the monthly meeting of the Alvis Club was in session.

When the time came for visitors to be introduced, John stood up and introduced Tim.

Tim stood up, butterflies swirling around in his stomach.

"My name is Tim Jones, and I'm interested in joining and owning a 12/50 one day. I have been interested in Alvis cars since I was five and next year I'm starting an apprenticeship with Bill Smythe at his garage. Bill introduced me to John and he has very kindly brought me here tonight."

When he mentioned the name Bill Smythe, he could distinguish a few murmurs coming from three members sitting directly to one side of him. He glanced across to them but could not hear what they were talking about although he heard the name Smythe mentioned more than once in their three way conversation.

The President thanked Tim for his few words and the rest of the club gave a clap of appreciation including the three on Tim's right.

The rest of the meeting was a mixture of club business which was interrupted every so often by a joke of some kind either by Peter or another chap sitting on the other side of Tim.

WINTON 2005

Rain would be a welcome sight in central Victoria, however, for the first time in many years, the weekend of Winton Historic Race Meeting was perfect. A little chilly and overcast on Saturday, sunny on Sunday.

This brought out an enormous display of cars for both the racing and the spectator area.

Five Alvis competed. Geoff Hood, S/C 12/50 in the serious racing and Mark Burns, 12/50; Steve Denner, 12/50; Bob Blackett; 12/70 and Paul Chaley, Firefly/Spd25 special, vying for the team prize in the regularity (Alvis member Graeme Jackson had his MG J out as well). I'm not sure how they went as results are not to hand, however everyone had a great time.

A huge collection of Australian Specials were on display and out on the track, and the historic motorcycles added variety to the whole show. Racing was fairly serious, especially in the Group N and open wheeler classes

A number of Alvis people were wandering around taking in the atmosphere.

This is an event that should not be missed by the Historic Motoring enthusiast.

Dale



Steve Denner disappears into the distance

VSCC 24 HOUR TEAM TRIAL – 16th and 17th July 2005

Every two years the Vintage Sports Car Club run a 24 Hour Team event in the traditions of the types of trials conducted in the 1920's and 30's. Unlike the events of the past, the current events require a team of at least 4 cars so that drivers can have a rest between outings. The competition comprises of the major VSCC runs, Night and Day Navigation, Economy and Treasure Hunt. Some novelty events are also included to add some spice, Gatehouse Gaieties (based on the fundraising events held in the VSCC clubrooms in the 70's), and this year a bicycle relay race will be held.

The Alvis Car Club has been well represented at all the Team Trials held recently, both as organisers and competitors, and it is hoped that this year will be no exception and maybe we will win (the best we have done in the past has been 2nd twice and 3rd once). At least one team will be organised by Mark Burns and if we get enough interested members we might be able to field two teams.

The event will be centred at the Derby Hill Blue Light Youth Camp, Pheonix St. Maldon, and for those not competing, you will be more than welcome to drop in and look at the cars (or even help with marshalling, I'm sure Peter will appreciate the help). For a real laugh, the Bicycle Relay Race will take place around 8am on Sunday.

If you would like to compete, form a team or help contact either:

Peter Fleming 9729 3440
Mark Burns 9735 0940
Dale Parsell 5968 5170

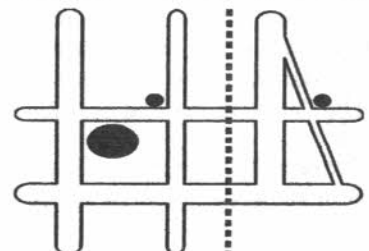
Don't get Chester to navigate for you.

He left home with express instructions on how to get to Parkies to tune the SP20.

After his expected arrival time, a call came from Olinda asking for directions.

Following another call, Parky provided a follow me service.

I wonder if he got home!



SMEETON

Seven cars managed to make the 9.30am departure from the Calder Park Raceway heading to New Gisborne via Toolern Vale and Gisborne.

At the Barringo Picnic Grounds six cars arrived to where the Langs had morning tea under control with drop scones and jam and boiled fruitcake. John White was navigating and driving alone and fortunately driving took the priority over navigation. Getting lost was by far better than running off the road.

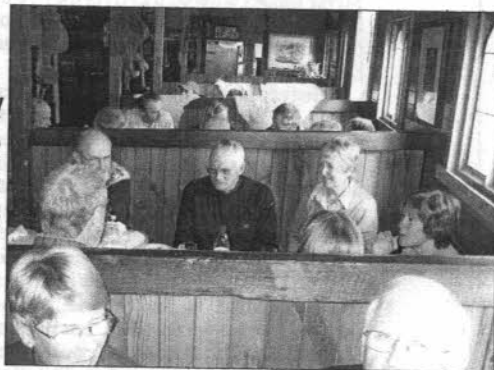


The route to Smeeton was via the back roads of Macedon to the Black Forrest Drive to Woodend thence via Ashborne, Trentham, Daylesford and Blampied.

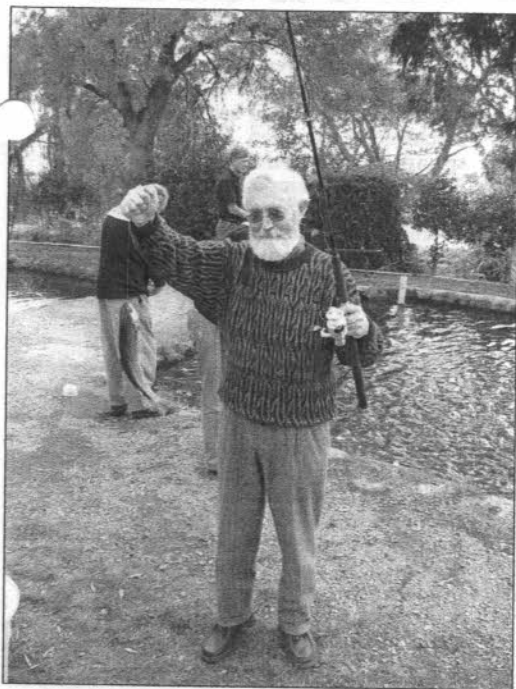
The roads were fine until we entered the trout farm boundary where we were met with about five or six hundred metres of appalling gravel road. On arrival there was John White whose trip had taken him via places not listed on the official directions but none the less effective.



If we were going to eat, we had to catch lunch. Daryl Stanisich showed how it was done while the gallery looked on with wine glasses in hand.



Fortunately we didn't have to catch the lamb that was also on the menu and the venue was most conducive to drinking a red and sharing a story or two.



All in all a very pleasant day's outing with good driving and good weather.

The trip home was just as enjoyable as the one out.

Thanks to the McKaiges for their organisation of the outing.



Spring of the Riviera - 1933

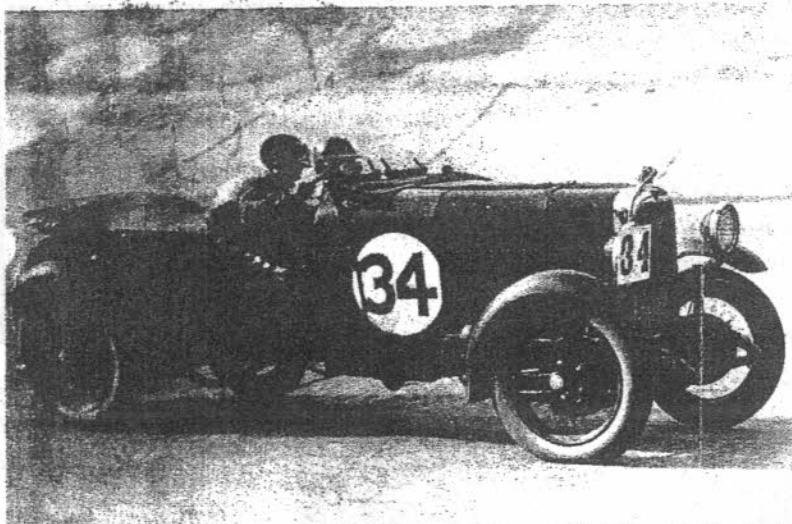
by Greg Wrabson

Among the period photographs accompanying David Venables' account in Bulletin 240 of the colourful motoring life of Robert Beaver, was one of his Alvis Silver Eagle at La Turbie on the French Riviera in 1933, being inspected with keen interest by an elegantly dressed lady, said to be 'the mother of a laddy friend'. The lady will reappear later, but first our thoughts need to be directed towards the team of three 2-litre Silver Eagles entered by Alvis for two of the most significant sports car races of the 1930 season, the Double Twelve and Le Mans.

Beaver's car, originally owned and raced by Phillip Fotheringham-Parker, was afterwards developed and raced with great success by Michael May, in whose ownership it became known as the 'Green Car'. It is still extremely active in events of all kinds, in the appreciative and skilful hands of Chris Podger. Over the years, the car has often been identified as being one of the Double Twelve works team, but neither Michael May's own notes nor other surviving records support this. Detailed information about the works cars has been largely lost in the mists of time, but the recent discovery of the accompanying photograph of one of the cars competing in the Double Twelve, together with a study of a number of other photographs of the Beaver car, kindly loaned by David Venables, provided the spur to try to bring some order to the known facts.

The 1930 season was the first in which Alvis entered 6-cylinder cars in competition, the company having previously achieved its numerous competition successes with 4-cylinder 12/50 type and 4- and 8-cylinder front wheel drive cars. By 1930, it had become clear that the market was not yet ready to embrace the front wheel drive concept in sufficient numbers to ensure the future of the Company. Alvis therefore decided to develop the 6-cylinder range to combine the virtues of speed and comfort, a decision vindicated by the later success of the Speed 20 range and its derivatives.

The original objective of the 14.75hp Alvis Six, introduced for the 1928 season, was not increased performance, but enhanced smoothness,



The Hon. Mrs Victor Bruce in full flight in the 2-litre Alvis Silver Eagle, in the Double Twelve at Brooklands, May 1930. (Greg Wrabson)

quietness and flexibility. Although a few of the early 6-cylinder cars were fitted with sporting bodies, the majority were closed cars. There was a twin-carburettor 'super-sports' option, but it seems to have been a half-hearted effort, and had a somewhat strangulated manifold arrangement. It offered little or no improvement in performance at the cost of increased fuel consumption, and few were made. This was remedied with the announcement in August 1929 of a sports version of the Silver Eagle. This reverted to the 9ft 4½in wheelbase 12/50-type chassis (the standard 6-cylinder chassis being six inches longer), and the 2148cc 16.95hp engine, of 67.5mm x 100mm bore and stroke, was fitted with three SU carburettors. The other main changes were a close ratio gearbox and a raised rear axle ratio, from 5.2 to 4.77:1. Much was made in contemporary advertising of the performance of the new model. To quote from one example: *Speeds of 90 mph, Acceleration from standing start to 30 mph in 4 seconds - and 80 in 34 seconds...*

The model was an instant hit with a number of prominent sporting motorists of the day. W Budd (whose car was later raced by Antony Powys-Lybbe), A G Gripper and R T Horton, amongst others, ran examples with success in trials, and several were bought by the wealthy young men whom Alvis clearly hoped to attract. The sports tourer driven by Henlys' salesman E J P Eugster to beat the Blue Train from Cannes to Calais in February 1930 was afterwards sold to Lord Acton, while he was still at Cambridge. Another was sold to Viscount Castlereagh, heir to

the Marquis of Londonderry. Whitney Straight was eighteen when he bought his sports tourer, and a cycle-winged Clubman's coupe was sold to the Swedish racing driver Henken Widengren. Both Ivan Waller and Philip Fotheringham-Parker acquired their sports tourers while they were in their early twenties (and both cars were soon to be much modified).

It was against this background that Alvis made plans for their entries for the Double Twelve, organised by the Junior Car Club at Brooklands on May 9 and 10 1930. The rules required that the cars entered must be examples of a type fully described in a catalogue published by the manufacturers prior to the date of entry, and properly in production. This did not preclude some degree of mechanical alteration from standard specification, and Alvis took advantage of this. The major change was that they decided that it was preferable to be among the largest engined-cars in the 2-litre class rather than the smallest in the 3-litre class. A 65mm bore block was therefore fitted (probably a bored-out 14.75hp unit), to give 1991cc and an RAC rating of 15.7hp.

The cylinder head was redesigned to give a compression ratio of 7:1, and the inlet and exhaust ports were enlarged, with improved manifold and exhaust system to match. A larger sump was fitted, with quick-release oil filler reached through a hole cut in the bonnet side. A pressure-type oil filter was also fitted, and an AC fuel pump driven from the camshaft replaced the standard Autovac. Chassis details largely followed those of the standard car, but

there was also a means whereby the driver could adjust the brakes from the cockpit.

Three team cars were built, the first to be completed being chassis no 8164, registered VC 3856 in Coventry on April 6 1930. The other two, chassis nos 8165 and 8166, were registered VC 3857 and VC 3858 respectively, both on 29 April 1930. The green close-coupled 4-seater sports bodies and 25-gallon rear fuel tanks were manufactured by Cross & Ellis to accord with the international regulations issued by the RAC. All cars in the race were required to have hoods, lamps, wings, full electrical equipment and windscreens. The Alvises were fitted with Marchal headlamps in place of the standard Lucas, presumably to save weight. Ready to race, the cars weighed in at around 21cwt. The drivers in the Alvis team were Maurice Harvey with Leon Cushman, Cyril Paul with Harold Purdy, and the Hon. Victor Bruce with his wife, Mary. The latter were brought in for the first time, after the retirement of Bill and Ruth Urquhart Dykes from racing at the end of 1929. The race itself, an excellent account of which can be found in Anthony Blight's splendid book *Georges Roesch and the Invincible Talbot*, was marred by tragedy when, towards the end of the first 12 hours, two of the impressive new works Talbot 90s collided, with disastrous results. One of the riding mechanics and a spectator were killed, and the driver Rabagliati and a number of spectators were seriously injured. The third Talbot was withdrawn as a mark of respect, but it was decided not to cancel the following day's session.

So far as Alvis were concerned, the race did not go well, although *Motor Sport* commented that at the start, the

Talbots and the Alvises were setting an astonishing pace for their size. Cushman's Alvis came into the pits only 17 minutes into the race to retire with a run big-end. Purdy and Paul's car suffered valve trouble, which necessitated a change of cylinder head and much loss of time.

The only members of the team who had any cause for satisfaction were the Bruces, and particularly Mary Bruce, who drew praise from *Motor Sport* for being *among the very fastest at the corner*. After one hour, she was leading the 2-litre class, and during the third hour, she moved up into fourth place overall, behind the Speed Six Bentleys of Barnato/Clement and Davis/Dunfee, and the Blower 4½ of Birkin and Chassagne. *The Autocar* reported that, *Unobtrusive as the green car was, it had yet averaged 80.5 mph, and was only seventeen miles behind the leading Bentley*. Mechanical gremlins intervened shortly afterwards, however, when a valve broke, holing a piston. It was later discovered that one of the duralumin connecting rods had also broken in two places, but, incredibly, in such a way that the engine would still run on five cylinders. Lapping at reduced speed, the Bruces managed to complete the race, finishing in 13th place, and third in the 2-litre class, having covered 1616.68 miles at a speed of 67.54 mph. Paul and Purdy brought their car home in 16th place, having covered 1574.83 miles at a speed of 65.81 mph. The winning Speed Six of Barnato and Clement covered 2080.34 miles at a speed of 86.68 mph.

Perhaps spurred on by the adverse publicity that racing received following the accident, or perhaps because of the relatively poor showing of the cars, back at Holyhead Road the Alvis Board seem

to have decided very rapidly to cancel the racing programme, and their entry for Le Mans was withdrawn. Only three weeks after the race, on May 30, an advert appeared in *The Autocar* offering for sale the 'Three Actual Alvis Sports Cars' used in the Double Twelve.

The records indicate that only one of the cars, chassis number 8166, was sold complete, and it is possible that this car had a different engine fitted before it was despatched on June 6 1930 via Wessex Motors of Salisbury to E A Minchin of Okehampton. Its last recorded licence expired on December 31 1938, when it was owned by J V Hooper of Redruth, and nothing has been heard of it since.

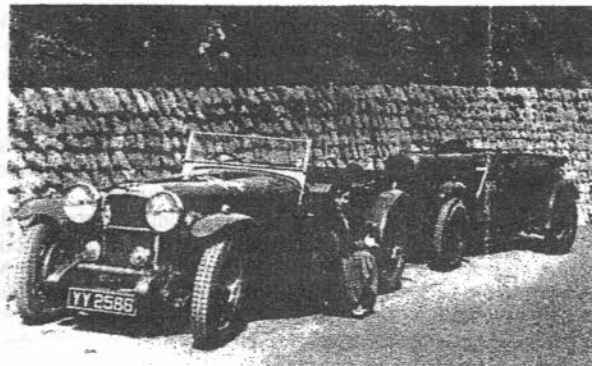
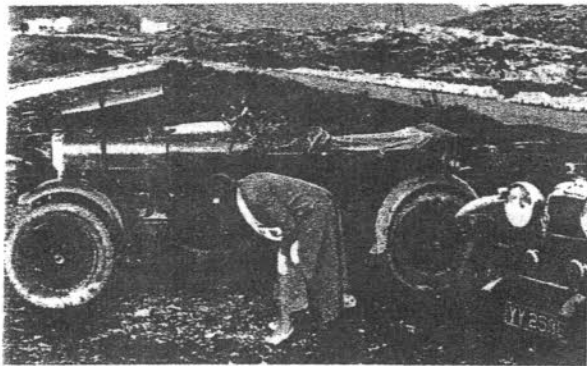
The other two team cars appear to have been dismantled, and the chassis frames incorporated in the prototypes for the 12/50 range which Alvis had decided to revive to meet the worsening economic climate, and which was announced early in September 1930. No doubt following much needed rebuilds, two of the engines also appear to have been reused in 16-95 hp form in later chassis. On the face of it, therefore, neither of the other two team cars could have escaped from the factory as complete entities, but this still left many components from the team cars kicking around at the factory, and it is here that we can return to Robert Beaver's car.

On March 17 1930, an SA 16.95 Silver Eagle sports tourer in duo brown fabric was despatched to Henlys. It was registered GC 5151, and sold to Philip Fotheringham-Parker. The Car Record has an entry dated May 27 1930, recording that it was fitted with a 'Special cylinder block 65 bore HC'. Fotheringham-Parker raced the car in this form at the last Henlys Alvis Rally at Brooklands, held at the end of June, 1930. Thereafter, the likelihood is that he decided to make the car more suitable for sports car racing by converting it into a replica of the Double Twelve cars, and negotiated with Alvis for the parts he needed. The photographs from the Beaver albums confirm that these included a complete engine, exhaust system, bodywork and fuel tank from one or other of the team cars.

In this form, he raced the car with some success at Brooklands, until, in the Senior Mountain Handicap held on August Bank Holiday 1932, following a delay caused by torrential rain, he cornered too fast and ran over the top of the banking, just after passing the Members' Bridge. Mercifully, the car did not overturn, and the driver escaped with some minor injuries to his mouth.



Lord Waleran poses with the Beaver Silver Eagle, in the hills above Nice. (David Venables)

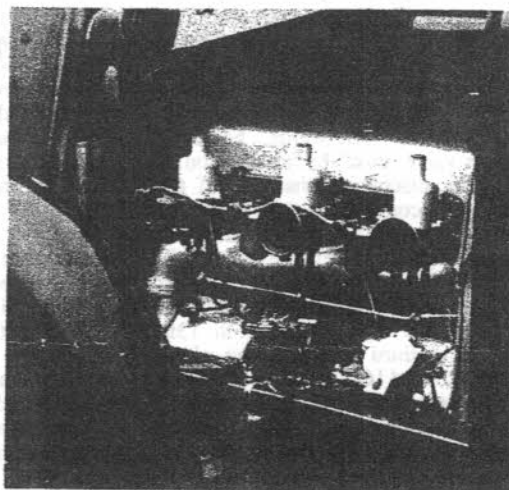


Above left – the Beaver Silver Eagle under close scrutiny: above right – Patricia Lady Waleran rests on the running board of her husband's Vanden Plas Speed 20. The Beaver Silver Eagle is to the rear; below – the only known photograph of a 2-litre Double Twelve Silver Eagle Alvis engine, here installed at a later date in Robert Beaver's car. (all David Venables)

'Casque' of *The Autocar* recorded that Fotheringham-Parker was seen some time later, nonchalantly photographing his car resting against the railings. *The Times* rather sniffily commented: *This accident was entirely due to an error of judgement. 'Round the Mountain' races need careful attention as well as a fair degree of skill.*

The car, although a little bent, was not severely damaged and soon was rebuilt. Philip Fotheringham-Parker seems to have decided that he had pushed his guardian angel far enough, and soon afterwards the Alvis was sold to Robert Beaver. In the spring of 1933, Beaver took his car to the south of France, where his stepfather was the British Consul in Nice. It is believed that he competed in the hillclimb on April 6 at La Turbie, a 6.3 km climb into the hills above Nice, which was won by Wimille in a 2.3 Alfa in a time of 3min 53.6s. Apart from revealing many previously unknown details about the Silver Eagle, the accompanying photographs also pose the obvious question of whose was the SA Speed 20 Alvis which clearly also was competing?

The registration number YY 2586 was one of a series issued to Charles Follett in July 1932. Inevitably it was the only one which could not be related to a specific car. After considerable searching, the records revealed that the most likely possibility – was chassis no 10031, despatched to Follett on 16 September 1932. The car was sent to Vanden Plas to be fitted with one of the first swept-wing sports tourer bodies. It was painted grey, and it was sold to Lord Waleran. Bill Waleran was a keen motorist, who was for some years



personal assistant to Billy Rootes, and later joined the firm of Kevill-Davies and March. He took a Gold in the 1927 Land's End trial in a Frazer Nash, and he competed in a number of major rallies, including the Monte Carlo Rallies of 1938 and 1939. His most outstanding achievement, however, was his fourth place at Le Mans in 1939 with Lord Selsdon, in a V12 Lagonda.

Thanks to Donald Cowbourne's indispensable book *British Rally Drivers*, we learn that Lady Patricia Waleran (who was then aged 19) was entered to drive a Speed 20 in the RAC Rally in March 1933, although she was a non-starter. Confirmation that YY 2586 was the Waleran car proved elusive, until it was possible to compare the photographs of the lady adorning the running board of the Speed 20 and of the gentleman wearing the beret and the Oxford bags with Lord and Lady Waleran's wedding photograph, which appeared in the *Devon & Exeter Gazette* on June 10 1932. They were indeed the

very same. Regrettably, the marriage did not prosper, and the Walerans were divorced in May 1934. Lord Waleran died in April 1966, and his former wife died in Nassau in May 2002. It seems probable that the older lady in the photographs showing such keen interest in the Beaver car was Lord Waleran's mother.

Following his return from the continent, Robert Beaver ran the Silver Eagle at the meeting at Shelsley Walsh in June 1933. He then decided to sell the car, which was bought by Michael May. Its history from then on is rather better known.

It is a matter for regret that Alvis did not continue with the development of the six-cylinder cars for racing, as the early performance of the cars in the Double Twelve had shown their potential. It has fallen to Mac Hulbert to show in recent times just what could have been achieved. As it was, Alvis, persuaded and possibly part-financed by Charles Follett, who was about to become the London Alvis distributor in place of Henlys, entered only one more international race, the Ulster TT in August 1930, with a team of four specially-built 1491cc supercharged straight-8 front wheel drive cars. Three of the cars finished in fourth, sixth and seventh places, but against a stiff handicap, could make no impression on the flying 1750cc supercharged Alfas of Nuvolari, Campari and Varzi which finished first, second and third. This race was the swansong of the long and successful career of Alvis works teams in competition, and also the last race for Alvis of Maurice Harvey, who had made such a distinguished personal contribution to its success.

OUR MEETING WITH THE RILEY CLUB

On the third of June we visited the Riley Club, at their invitation, to meet socially with their members and provide a half hour talk about Alvis.

Under the guidance of Bob Northey, whose expertise in Power Point presentations was invaluable, four speakers each provided a snap shot of a segment of Alvis history and 50 years of the Alvis Car Club of Victoria. John Hetherington introduced the presentation and commented on the number of similarities that there were between the two marques and now with the disappearance of the Alvis name from physical production our stories were even more alike.

Chester McKaige covered the history of the club. Bob Northey the pre-war years and Richard Tonkin the post war era.

Judging by the questions at the end there was considerable interest from the Riley members and talk of a return invitation to an ACCV meeting. Prior to that happening we will need to do some serious thinking about our accommodation for that night as we have had some recent club nights where we ran out of chairs and coffee mugs.

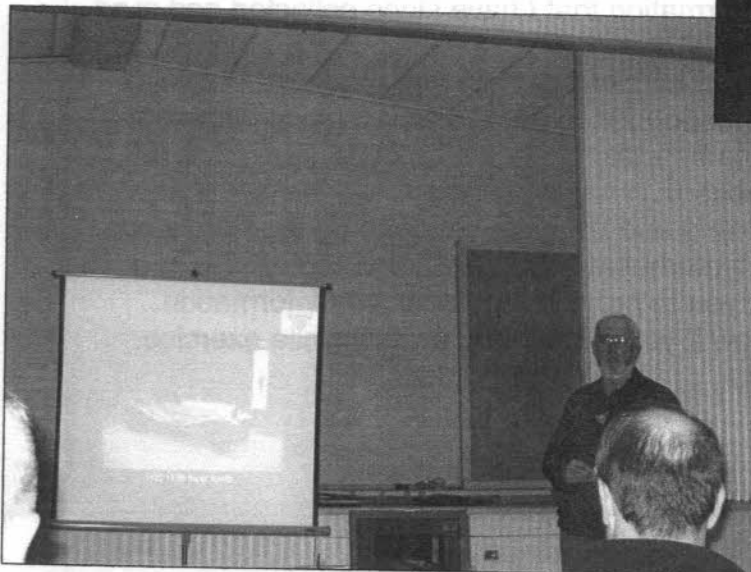
This type of cross pollination can only be good for the old car movement and the marque and must be promoted.

Many thanks to the four speakers.

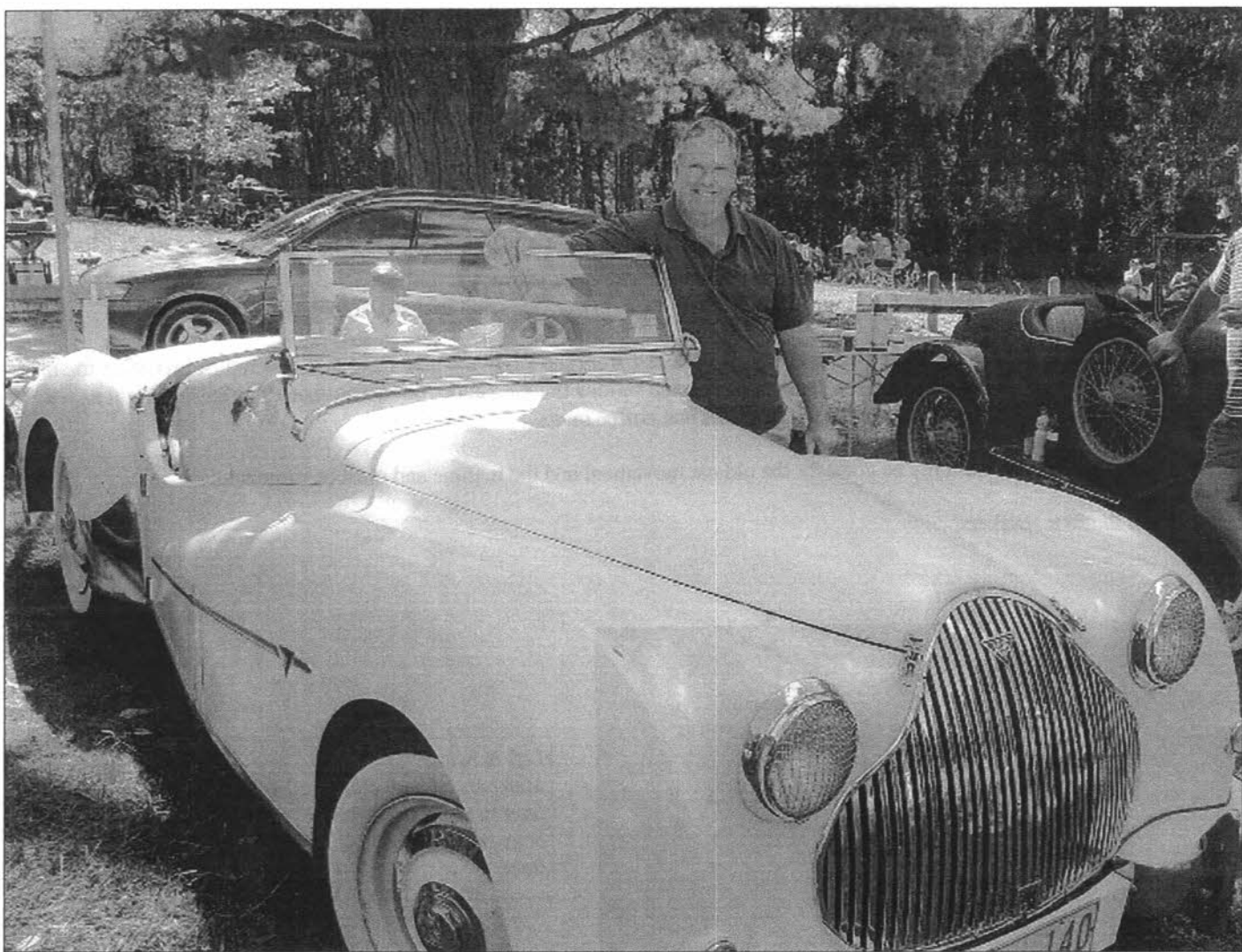
JL



*Left & below:
Members of both clubs gather in the car park prior to the meeting. Flood lights had been set up to provide both security and light.*



*Left:
John Hetherington starts the ball rolling with a stunning photo of the Northey's car at the Costume Museum*



Seen recently at Kalorama—Alan Bratt came down from Corowa for the day. The TB14 has recently undergone some major engine works and Alan's comments some months ago indicated that it was now running well.

Alvis Cars in Australia

Over the years, much has been written and discussed about the possibility of producing a book on Alvis Cars in Australia.

Whilst researching the history of the ACCV, I came upon a number of articles in our newsletter referring to such a book.

At that stage, Bob Graham had gathered a lot of information that I have since collected and read through. From then it died a natural death.

In 1976, Darian Cassidy produced a register of known cars in Australia and recently I obtained from Dale Parsell, Cassidy's original notes and correspondence. He did an excellent job although there were a few small errors and I believe such an undertaking should be done again that will then form the basis of producing a hard backed book.

I believe now is the time to review such an undertaking and I'm quite happy to do the hard slog. First of all, I would like some feedback from you the members as to whether you think this is a good idea because, if it is, I will be relying on all of you to provide the necessary information. Please feel free to contact me on the numbers below if you think this is a worthwhile exercise. If I get some good support, I'll go to the next stage.

Kind regards

Chester McKaige

Phone Home 03 95571134

Office 03 95278423

Mobile 0407 113516

email mckaige1@bigpond.com.au

ALVIS PARTS AND REPAIRS DATABASE

The last two ACCV newsletters have carried a note to the effect that your committee has offered to create a database of useful parts information, to capture those useful parts equivalents that most of us hear by word of mouth or discover ourselves.

To date the response from the membership has been underwhelming.

If no significant responses are received over the next few months then this initiative will be abandoned.

To recap the intention, we are seeking to record;

- Equivalent parts for specific Alvis models (examples might include alternate magnetos, radiator hoses, valve springs, pistons etc etc)
- Sources for various general items (door hinges, period mirrors, wiring etc)
- Parts repair hints or techniques

It will be assumed that members will have access to parts lists from the various formal sources of supply of Alvis parts (Red Triangle, 12/50 Register) so this information will not be duplicated. But there may well be parts on these lists, which can be readily and legitimately substituted – perhaps with Holden (or even Toyota) parts?! These we are trying to prise out of the collective Alvis enthusiast memory.

If you have the intention of responding in the future then please indicate as such to Bob Northey (bnorthey@melbpc.org.au, or 2 Orrong Rd, Elsternwick, Vic 3185).

SWAP, BEG, BORROW or STEAL

FOR SALE

1949 TA14 Drop Head by Carbodies

\$20,500

Ring John White 03 9890 7066

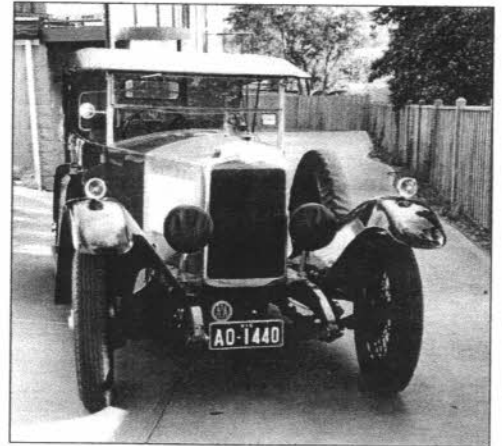


FOR SALE

1926 Vauxhall 14/40 Princeton
Tourer.

Excellent condition with matching engine & chassis numbers. 12 months registration. Excellent tyres, an Auster screen, full set of tonneau covers, hood & side curtains. \$35,000

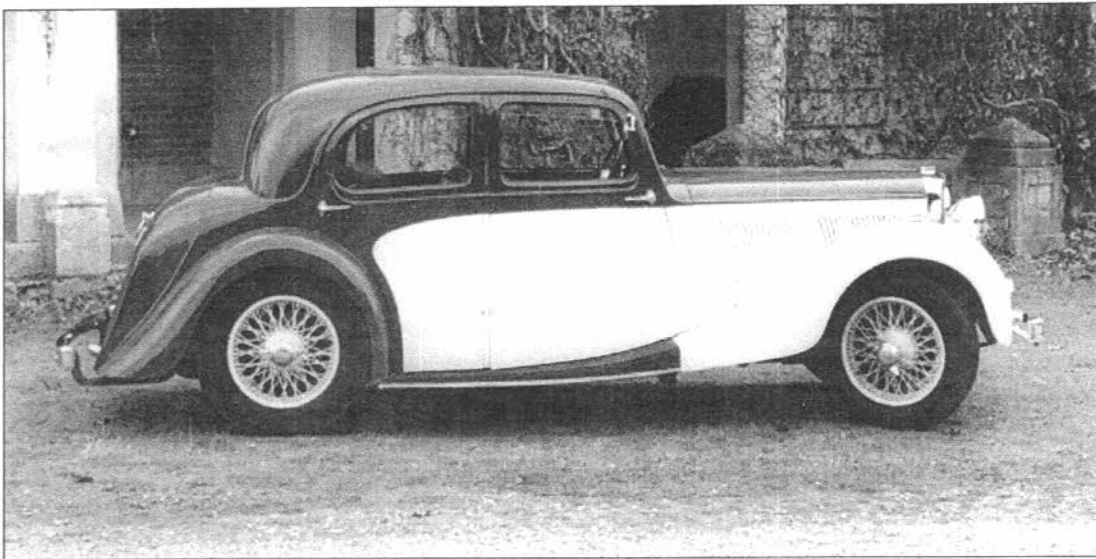
Ring Darrell Horton (03) 5983 2016



FOR SALE 1924 Alvis 12/50 SA, originally a Ducksback but now bodyless. It has a braked front axle instead of original unbraked one. It has been mechanically restored with exception of a few minor items (fuel pipes etc). Engine has new crankshaft, rods, pistons and valves. The new crank allows the use of shell bearings and should be very strong. The clutch has been re-lined, gearbox has new bearings and a new tailshaft fitted (original tailshaft included). Magneto, generator, starter motor have all been overhauled. Brakes have been re-lined. Radiator has been re-cored. Wheels have been re-spoked (some with new rims) and new tyres 4.50/21 inch fitted. Spare wheel ditto. Complete set of original instruments (0-100 mph speedo, 0-5000 rev counter, switches etc all included). Headlights, sidelights included.

Sale due to purchase of another project. Price \$26,000

Contact Des Donnan 07-5445 9981 or email donnan1@powerup.com.au



FOR SALE:

1937 12/70 Alvis Sedan.
 Grey and white. Mechanically checked over & in good order.
 New rings fitted. Fully registered, completely re-trimmed, re-painted and re-chromed. Under 1000 miles since work carried out. 12 months full Victorian registration
 \$33,000 ONO
 and
 Good petrol tank for a 12/50 \$150
 Contact Eric Nicholl (03) 9754 5412

WANTED:

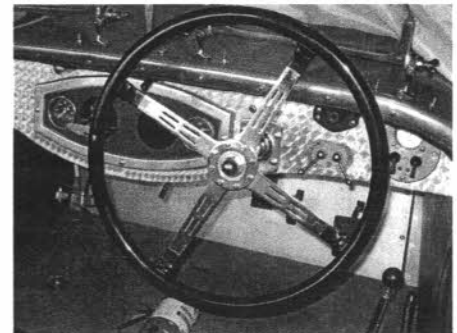
Rear brake cross shaft for a late 12/50.
 Can swap for an early two wheel brake car.
 Dale Parsell Tel (03) 5968 5170
 or dparsell@ozemail.com.au

WANTED:

SP 25 Hand Brake lever arm
 Generator louvred band to cover brushes
 2 x 1/2 Ball and wing nut as located on threaded brake rods
 Pass light Glass--2 of
 Gear Box mounting brackets--offside, nearside and rear
 Likely, models other than the SP25 will share the componentry.
 Michael Lavender, NZ Alvis Club
 Call Collect 0064 33255704 (New Zealand)

WANTED

For FWD—Steering wheel- 4 blade- without central hand controls- not sure of diameter but reasonably large. (see photo)
 also Solex 40 MOHD carby
 Des Donnan 07-5445 9981



WANTED:

ALVIS radiator badge for 12/50.
 Bob Blackett

WANTED:

Pair Bosch 10 inch diameter Headlamps JG 240 or JG280 and a pair of Bosch side lamps J120.
 Ring Geoff Hood (03) 9842 2181

WANTED:

Bonnet catches for 14/75
 Eric Nicholl 03 9754 5412

*If your advertisement appears on this page and is no longer relevant, please notify the newsletter editor.
 John Langed*

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