

The Newsletter of the Alvis Car Club of Victoria

Alvic

March 2006



The Seville Run
*The joint Alvis, Bristol & Daimler Lanchester
Clubs outing*

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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Front page (top): over the bonnet of Frank Mornane's SP25 Tourer.
(below): some of the Alvises present—Parky's 3 litre, McKaige SP25 Saloon, Higgins 12/50 roadster.

ALVATICINATION

Reflect, for a moment. In the time of vintage cars rear view mirrors were commonly fixed to the off-side windscreen pillar. Later there was perhaps a mirror fixed to the top rail in the midline and this pattern remained throughout the thirties and forties. Either or both mirrors were easily adjusted by the driver and there was no need for a mirror on the near side because there was never a lane on the near side of the car except during overtaking. Then came "wing mirrors" positioned approximately on the crown of the front wing. Early wing mirrors were simply door pillar jobbies on the end of stalks bolted through the top of the wing. Later they became more sophisticated when the stalk became spring loaded, permitting the mirror to be turned parallel to the car when parked, without disturbing its adjustment. In that position it was less likely to be nudged by a passing pedestrian. This was useful because the great disadvantage of wing mirrors is that they cannot be adjusted by the driver and persuading one's partner to persist with "up a bit, left, down a little bit, in a lot, out a fraction" times two during a snowstorm has led to several divorces. In the fifties a variation – the "racing mirror" became a hot accessory item. It was better than its cousin-on-a-stalk because it was more compact, therefore less prone to being nudged by pedestrians and the mirror itself was held rigidly in position as the base of the streamlining cone through whose point the retaining screw passed. So it needed adjustment less often. Unfortunately the screw head was in the air and rain-flow which encouraged corrosion and caused the mechanism to seize up with the mirror glass inevitably fixed skyward or kerbward. Why put up with these foibles when it would be easier and cheaper to screw a mirror on to each door pillar, much as is done today? The answer is the ease of use which the wing mirror allows. To look into your wing mirror you shift your gaze very little from the straight ahead. To shift from straight ahead to pillar or inside mirror involves significant movement of the eyeball and a change of accommodation as well. Properly adjusted wing mirrors are a delight to use once you train yourself to "know where they are" in your field of view. Modern mirrors are, of course, powered and very easy to adjust without bad language or recourse to legal-aid. But they are on the door pillar and far removed from your point of focus whilst driving. For the price of a slight re-design and a metre of electric cable they could be repositioned to the wing. If that happened we would have efficiency both optical and manual. To repeat; reflect for a moment.....

JOHN HETHERINGTON

SUPPER—THE HETHERINGTONS

**PLEASE NOTE
MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE & PAYABLE**

2006 EVENT CALENDAR

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 17 Mar | General Meeting |
| 26 | Kalorama, 50th Anniversary event— <i>please note: we have offered to provide assistance on the gate, if you are prepared to help please ring Andrew McDougall on (03) 9486 4221</i> |
| 21 Apr | General Meeting |
| 8 - 1/5 | Weekend Away, Echuca. |
| 19 May | General Meeting |
| 21 | Lunch at the Pig & Whistle— <i>Chris Higgins organiser—details to follow</i> |
| 16 June | General Meeting |
| 18 | Point Cook RAAF Museum— <i>Chester McKaige</i> |
| 21 July | General Meeting - Rough Red & Pie Night. Club Trophy Presentations |
| 23 | Lunch at the Clematis Hotel |
| 18 Aug | General Meeting |
| 20 | Tram Museum & Lunch at the Old Kilmore PO— <i>Richard Tonkin & JFH</i> |
| 15 Sep | General Meeting |
| 20 Oct | General Meeting |
| 17 Nov | General Meeting |
| 3 Dec | Christmas Party |

EDITORIAL

It irks me to have to apologise yet again for a newsletter problem, however—last month's Newsletter was not a test of your ability to read the fine print but an error on my part with instructions to the printer—obviously A5 is not an option for people like me who are visually challenged.

While on the subject of the newsletter—there are significant savings to be made if members were to receive an electronic newsletter. Some have already elected to do so. Would you please consider this option and let me know. All the pics will be in living colour and you can choose whether to print or not.

Some months ago the committee agreed to compiling a National Alvis Register. The issue is being progressed and a deadline set to publish in July. You will note your membership renewal had a tick box if you did not want to be included.

Max Houston has recently advertised a significant number of Alvis Parts for sale and your committee is investigating the bulk purchase of these. Our Club Captain, Alan McKinnon is assessing the parts and will report back to the committee on his findings. Expect more information at the March meeting and in the April newsletter.

.....JL

Very many thanks to the photographers who provide me with material for the newsletter month after month. Your efforts do not go unnoticed, but sometimes unacknowledged!

.....ed

If anyone is able to help, Alan would be happy to hear from you. JFH has answered the letter and has suggested a contact with John Link.

.....ed

Alan & Shirley Wills
84A Dyers Pass Road
Cashmere
Christchurch

Mr John Hetherington,
Alvis Car Club of Victoria

Dear John,

Recently we have acquired a hitherto unknown (in NZ) 1934/35 Silver Eagle 16/95. It was brought into NZ in maybe 1987? In part exchange for the purchase of a Lagonda from Christchurch man Jim Phillips by an Australian member, Mr John Ould of Melbourne.

I realise that Mr Ould died some time ago but I would like to correspond with anyone who knew either the vehicle or Mr Ould.

The running chassis complete on its wheels was minus any Alvis parts except the bonnet, but had the beginnings of a steel tube open car body with it.

We would like very much to contact any previous owners of the vehicle. Your name came from Michael Lavender a fellow club member of mine who assured me you would consider making my request public through your newsletter.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Alan J. Wills

Chassis # 12208
Car # 16913
Date 27-11-34
SG 16/95

PS We would like to obtain a set of 4 guards of the era 1933—37 Alvis from either a saloon or open car. We fully realise that there are only 37 known examples of the SG out of only 137 Silver Eagles, but if you don't enquire you don't get anywhere. The vehicle was fitted with a new diff. Prior to export to NZ and the drum and linings have been reconditioned. This suggests to me that the late Mr Ould was in contact with the Alvis fraternity at the time. I think that the Alvis was part of a deal to purchase a Lagonda similar to the one John Ould rallied in NZ in 1986?

NOT AN ALVIS IN SIGHT

During the first decade of the twentieth century, in what is somewhat of an extraordinary coincidence, three young men left Switzerland to become the foremost automotive engineers of the day.

The first of the trio was Ernst Henri. He, possibly with the help of the "Charlatans" (the name for the three Peugeot racing car drivers, Goux, Boillot and Zucarelli) designed the twin overhead cam inclined-valve racing car engines. His first engine, the L76 of 7.6 litres capacity, was a giant killer. In the 1912 GP de l'ACF, the 18 litre Fiats were the favourites to win, but Boillot won by 12 minutes in his (by Fiat standards) pigmy 7.6 litre racing Peugeot. The last GP before the First World War was won by the Mercedes team in flashing style taking 1st 2nd & 3rd places. It is little known that Boillot in his Peugeot was leading until his rear axle gave up the ghost on the last lap.

The second man of this triumvirate was Marc Birkigt. He was responsible for the design of those marvellous gentlemen's carriages, the Hispano-Suizas. With multi-litres and requiring multi-dollars to purchase, these cars were popular among the wealthy and the movers and shakers in the period up to the Second World War. If not the best car in the world, the Hispano-Suiza was right up there amongst the best.

The third man of the group was Georges Roesch and his task was quite different to that of the other two. Louis Coatalen of Sunbeam had formed the Sunbeam, Talbot, Darracq combine in the early 1920's but it wasn't combining as a group. Coatalen was using Sunbeam as the vehicle to satisfy his racing car aspirations, Darracq was going off on its own and Talbot was in trouble. The glory days of Percy Lambert driving the 4½ litre side valve Talbot with its streamlined body to be the first ever car to cover over 100 miles in an hour were long gone. Its cars weren't selling, no company in the STD combine was making money and it was all doomed to fail if something wasn't done quickly!

Roesch had spent some time under that great designer Barbaroux at Delaunay Belleville in Paris and also at Renault where he spent time in the drawing office, then in the factory perfecting his skills on all the machines and in the foundry learning casting techniques. In 1926 he finally took over as Chief Engineer of Talbot with a small factory capable of producing a maximum of 1000 cars a year. He knew the new Talbot had to be revolutionary and at the same time, stay with Talbot tradition, to be able to be made on the out-of-date machinery in the factory and yet be an instant success.

The Talbot 14/45 was just that, though the motor was too small and the body too heavy it was a delight to drive and fulfilled its promise to be a top gear car as were the imported American cars, its stated aim was "Six miles an hour to sixty in top gear" and it achieved that and more.

To start at the front of the motor, Roesch positioned a Gen-O-Dyne (a starter motor and generator combined in one) directly on the front of the crankshaft. To start the car, the starter button was pressed, there was a gentle whirr and the motor burst into life. There was no jangling of Bendix pinions meshing with ring gears on the flywheel, just a civilised whirr. Next in line was a vibration damper, remember this was 1926. The crankshaft was turned from a solid billet of steel leaving cylindrical webs although there

were only four main bearings. At the back end of the crankshaft was the fully-enclosed single plate clutch with a cast body which carried fan blades on the periphery. There were no louvres in the bonnet and the fan created a draught through the radiator and also what became known as the Talbot hum.

Georges Roesch drove the oil pump directly from the crankshaft via skew gears, not the camshaft as was common practise, thus doubling the speed and doubling the oil flow. The camshaft was driven by a "Fabroil" gear -- silence reigned supreme. The overhead valve operating mechanism is where Roesch showed his genius for getting lightness and absence of friction. The pushrods were actually made by a knitting needle manufacturer and they resembled knitting needles being about 4mm diameter and made in 100 ton Vibrax steel, they were light and were strong. The rockers pivoted on a vertically adjustable knife-edge, the vertical movement was to obtain the correct tappet clearance, but you can see because of the knife-edge, there was no friction.

In the cast iron cylinder head there were simple bath-tub shaped combustion chambers and there was no fan or water pump. The circulation was by thermosiphon via a huge water manifold nick-named by the Talbot staff as "the Sewer." The gear box was mounted directly on the back of the motor, it was a crash type box with a right hand gate change -- such as used on a gentleman's conveyance and was a delight to use.

The differential was carried on the rear of the torque tube and the ratio was 5.875 to 1 to be able to cope with the saloon body weight of 27 cwt. Coach-builders couldn't extend the body past the length allowed by Roesch as he put a luggage rack at the rear of the chassis. On this rack was placed the tail light and red turn signalling arrows. There were no flashers at that time but lamps were lit behind transparent arrows to show a turn was intended, this was controlled by a switch on the steering column.

The brakes were magnificent and were capable of being adjusted without having to get under the car. The correct adjustment could be simply determined by tapping the drum with a spanner, if the drum rang like a bell the shoes were clear, but if it gave a dull sound then the shoes were binding. The steering was also magnificent with a delightful springiness.

Hoesch tested his new car by driving it through the Alps, driving it with some verve it must be said. The only fault found was that the stays for the front mudguards needed strengthening.

Roesch had created a winner! The new 14/45 Talbot was well received by the public and was selling well. The factory was in full production, even having to run overtime to keep up with the demand.

But in the motor car world nothing stands still. Roesch knew he had to progress from the 14/45 and build a car with more performance.

In 1928/29 Talbot introduced the new 18/70 Talbot of 2360cc capacity. The new motor was the same length as the 14/45 but now had 7 main bearings as Roesch knew a good engine must have a robust bottom end. Everything was strengthened and enlarged while the basic design was unchanged. The familiar bi-metal pistons were continued with an aluminium crown

for lightness and heat dissipation with a cast-iron skirt for "slipperiness" in the cylinder bore, the two parts being dowelled together by a larger diameter gudgeon pin. The radiator was enlarged to cope with the extra power developed and a water pump and a fan were fitted to make sure the Talbot was maybe over-cooled this never happened as the radiator had thermostatically vertical slats to modulate the flow of air. The engine was modified with a 10:1 compression ratio, the chassis shortened by 8 inches and so a potent sporting machine, called the "90" was available to the public.

Roesch developed the car even further over the coming years with the 3 litre 105 model and then a 3.3 litre motor in the 110. These figures, 90, 105 & 110 represent the estimated top speed of the cars in sporting coachwork.

These "Invincible Talbots" ended in 1936 when The Rootes Group took over Talbot. Sadly, Roesch's work of ten years came to an end and any new Talbot was really a Humber in disguise.

R G

Alvis Car Club of Victoria Echuca Rally Friday 28 April - 1st May 2006

1. Accommodation: 30 rooms have been booked at Nirebo Motel, Echuca. It is up to you to book your own accommodation and state any requirements that you may have. There are upstairs and downstairs rooms available.

Tariff is \$120.00 per room with extra for breakfast.

Phone number is 54822033 or fax 54825322

Please advise staff at Motel that you are attending the Alvis Rally.

2. Meals: There are three main meals that we need to know numbers attending.

They are:- 1. Saturday night dinner which is a catered barbeque situated in Echuca.

2. Sunday lunch at Morrison's Winery at Moama.

3. Sunday dinner which is a carvery on board the paddle steamer Canberra.

Cost of **meal 1**, is \$34.00 per head + drinks, **meal 2**, \$27.50 per head + drinks, **meal 3** \$28.00 per head
BYO drinks.

The rally will begin with a Happy Hour on the Friday night between 6.00 - 7.00 pm followed by dinner which will be up to you to organize. A list of restaurants and description will be forwarded to those who enter the rally.

Saturday will include a morning run along some good Alvis roads and the opportunity to view a number of attractions that Echuca has to offer. Another run is proposed in the afternoon followed by BBQ dinner at the Bridge Hotel.

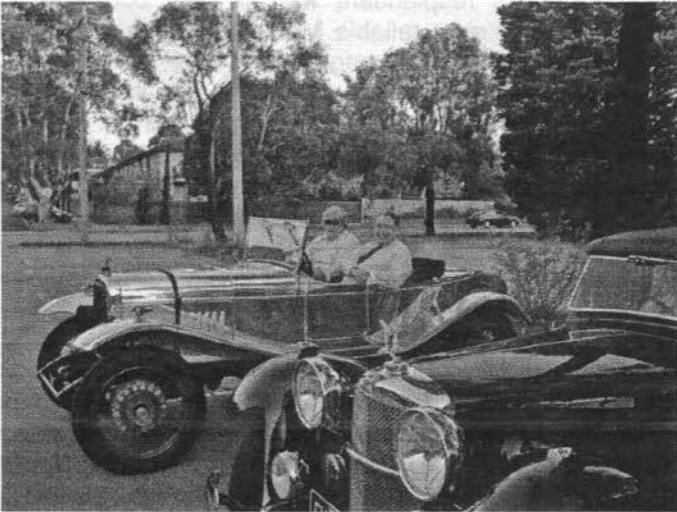
Sunday will see us in Moama where we will tour a military museum followed by lunch at Morrison's Winery situated on the banks of the Murray. Dinner will be on board P.S. Canberra where we have booked a two hour cruise up and down the Murray.

Chester McKaige, 129 Tucker Road, Bentleigh, Vic 3204 . 0407-113516

Entry form in last months newsletter

JULIAN COLLIN'S VISIT

Chester McKaige



The last time I saw Julian Collins was when I gave him a ride in the 12/50 in the dark on his visit to these shores in 2002.

I had forgotten what he looked like and after he sent me a email with a description that could quite easily have been me, I set out to the airport to look for a gentleman wearing a blue jacket, Alvis club tie and brown pants.

Whilst standing around at the airport waiting for this apparition in the form of Julian to appear, I happened to notice that single women travel with every form of baggage ever invented whilst single men seem to travel exceptionally light.

In Julian's case it was exceptionally light with a large suitcase of not much weight. On pondering his case, I asked why it was so light, the reply "I hope to fill it full of books". A good idea I thought to myself.

I had thought of picking Julian up in the Speed 25, but Mr. Charlesworth hadn't considered large suitcases when he designed his body for the Speed 25 chassis so I had to resort to the boot of Mr. Honda.

We spotted each other at the same time, so I didn't need to stand there as Sally suggested with a placard saying "Julian Collins" or "Welcome Julian Collins to Melbourne" or wear a Alvis cap or some such thing.

When Sal and I went to Bruny Island to stay with you know who, we were confronted with a sign saying "Welcome to Bruny Chester and Sally the Honeymoon couple" which was rather embarrassing so Julian in this instance was lucky.

It was around 9.45pm when we got home and after a quick sandwich and two bottles of red wine, we went to bed at 1.30am with the words ringing through my ears that Julian would often be in bed by 9.30pm and would read for an hour or so before turning off the light. If nights of 1.30am were to be the case, I would be knackered after the first two nights!

Tuesday morning saw us all up and about by 8.30am and after breakfast and with the second cup of coffee in hand, we went and visited the shed where Julian inspected my fleet of conveyances particularly the Speed 25 which he hadn't seen before.

After another coffee, we departed in the Honda to visit the establishment of Dale and Paul where Julian had the opportunity of looking at Paul's Speed 20 special, the 4.3 saloon and the magnificent black Speed 20 that still awaits a owner.

All engine numbers and chassis numbers were recorded in the little notebook, Julian commenting that he "isn't really interested in numbers, but someone had better do it" or words to that effect.

Dale produced a couple of coffee cups complete with coffee and a good yack and yarn got under way whilst I went off to search for the little room to get rid of the previous three cups!

After leaving Dale and Paul, we went to the book emporium of Tony Johns whose bookshop resembled the day after the D day landings.

Tony had recently returned from Phillip Island and was in the throws of un-packing boxes of books. If it wasn't on the shelf, it was in a box, the question being asked "which box"?

Tony being Tony was running around at 100mph showing Julian all manner of things in break neck speed whilst I found solitude in a nice comfortable chair with a copy of the latest "Motor Sport" magazine.

I had been well warned that Julian has a habit of buying up large quantities of books although I was disappointed when only two books exchanged hands, but I was assured that "one doesn't buy madly on one's first day".

A somewhat late lunch was partaken at a nice little sandwich shop in Balwyn and we dropped Tony back to continue his sort out whilst we headed for home via the Motoring Bookshop in Camberwell and the model toy shop also in Camberwell.

The Motoring Bookshop offered up a couple of finds and at the end of the day the score was Julian 5 me 0 although I was tempted to buy a model car but thought better of it.

Wednesday saw another bright and early start with a drive into the city to meet up with John Hetherington at the Motor Show.

We caught up with one another adjacent to the Alvis 12/50 that was going to be auctioned by Shannons the following week. Standing in front of the car, the three of us had it stripped, repainted, de chromed, re-nickel plated and the correct wheels fitted all in five minutes flat, if only restorations were that simple!

We visited the motor show and apart from a couple of nice Ferraris and a pretty Maserati, nothing there attracted us to pull out the cheque books or at least John's cheque book so we jumped in the Honda and re morphed ourselves at the R.A.C.V. Club where we enjoyed a nice lunch and the chance for John to catch up on Alvis news from near and far.

After lunch John headed back to the metropolis of Shepparton whilst Julian and I went to the Military Bookshop and the sad remains of what was once Technical Bookshop.

The Military Bookshop (Hylands) is situated in Flinders Lane and is Mecca for anyone interested in not only military books, but all sorts of other things and

usually takes a good hour to walk around and study what's available before making one's purchases. I cannot remember a time when I haven't come away with something and at the end of the day it was Julian 4, self 2.

That night we went for dinner to the Mornane abode in Brighton where Frank showed off his culinary capabilities with a salmon cooked on the barbeque accompanied with potatoes and salad.

I decided it was time for Julian to sample the McKaige Morris Minor (the ex Lyndon Duckett car fitted with a 1,100 Coventry Climax engine) so with Sal in the back armed with a salad and a couple of bottles of wine, we headed for Brighton along South Road with the view of being able to at least get the Morrie up to 5,000rpm rather than doodling around at 1,500rpm with the car very much off cam. I think that Julian was suitably impressed although the look I got from Sal was her "your showing off again frown".

We were joined at Frank's by Warrick Hansted and Francis McDougall who was on holidays from Andrew (he spending money at Retromobile in Paris) and after a quick drive around the block in the Mornane Speed 25, a very pleasant night was spent looking at all of Frank's antique treasures which Julian found most interesting. I feel sure that Julian could have gone home with a clock or two if he had had the room in his case.

On Thursday we fired up the Speed 25 and went to Gisborne to look at the new addition to the Lang's garage in the shape of the Vanden Plas bodied Speed 20.

It proved embarrassing when we filled up with petrol prior to our departure, Julian having to pay because I had left my wallet at home. I assured him that I don't usually do this sort of thing particularly with a car with a almost empty tank, but he took it in good grace and we were once more on our way after having to go back home and retrieve said wallet.

John Lang has done quite a bit to the car since he purchased it a couple of months ago so it was good see that progress had been made considering the massive amount of work that he put into the recent Macedon Ranges Grand Tour. The notebook was produced and the numbers taken not to mention almost a full roll of film. No doubt this car will be featured in a forthcoming AOC Bulletin.

After lunch, a photo session featuring the two Speed 25s was organized in the back blocks of Gisborne incorporating a post and rail fence and a gum tree to give it a somewhat Australian flavour.

The return trip was spent discussing the finer points of Speed 20 and Speed 25 cars with the emphasis of what would be the three ultimate Alvis cars that one could have in one's garage? The end result was that in John Lang's case, he would have to get a 12/50 whilst I needed a FWD. I fear this may lead to something but not quite sure what!

Thursday night saw us in Heidelberg having dinner with the McKinnons at a nice little Italian joint that also attracts the likes of Peter and Bev Briese who happened to be walk through the door shortly after us. After dinner we returned to the McKinnon mansions to sample the delights of Alan's garage and Noeline's cooking although I think the chocolate cake was bought!

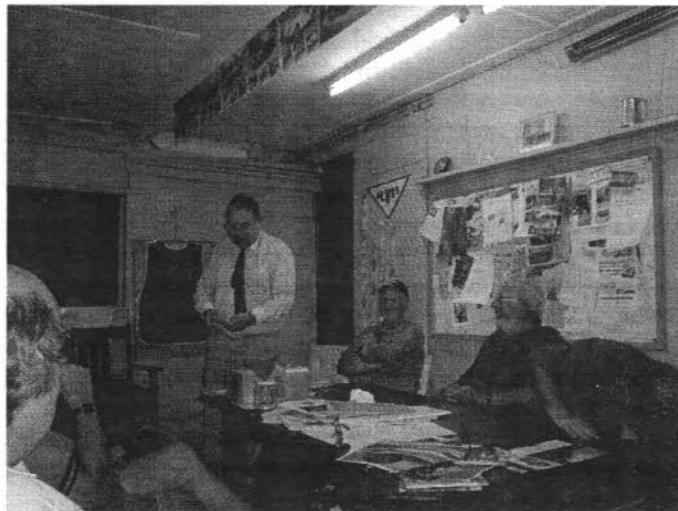
The thought of the perfect trio of Alvis cars came

to fore once more in regard to Alan's three 12/50s all of which are different and very desirable. The polished aluminium bodied tourer is taking shape and should be on the road soon whilst the re-bodied 12/40/50 Ducksback looks resplendent with its new bodywork and guards. The ever reliable Martin and King bodied tourer looks good from all angles, and must be one of the prettiest bodies ever produced by that firm testament to the fact that both Mr Martin and Mr King were away on holidays when the body was built!

Friday for me was a day of rest whilst Julian caught the train into the city. Not converse with Melbourne train travel, I went to the office and caught up with some paperwork leaving Sal to organise a train ticket for Julian who left with a pile of instructions and a suitable pick up point for collection on his return.

Friday night was club night, so we took off in the 12/50 leaving Sal to ride with Frank Mornane in the Speed 25. Dinner was consumed at our usual eating house in Malvern prior to club meetings and the table was well represented with Alvis folk all looking forward to meeting Julian and to catch up on all the goings on in the U.K.

Prior to the meeting, I had word that Mac Hulbert was over from the U.K attending Phillip Island and celebrating wedding anniversaries, so after a number of hit and miss phone calls, Mac was able to join us for the meeting, little did he know prior to the meeting that he would be called upon to say a few words.



Julian (above) who gave a talk on Sri Lanka and Mac (below) who spoke about his recent trip to the



Arctic Circle by Silver Eagle, both speakers afterwards being presented with club badges as a token of appreciation. To have one interesting guest speaker is one thing, to have two in one night was exceptional and I think that everyone that attended that night certainly had a most enjoyable time.

Saturday after a bit of a sleep-in saw the Bentley fired up and a trip to Brighton to view a bookshop where a couple of purchases were made, Julian three self two, followed by yet another book shop in Carnegie; Julian one, self 2 bottles of red wine!

A quick trip was made to drop off a Alvis 50 year book to Mac Hulbert who was staying with a mate in Malvern after which we returned home for lunch before jumping into the Honda for a trip to view the 4.3 litre engined Speed 25 of Andrew and Francis McDougall.

Andrew was still away on leave in Belgium, but Francis was able to show us over the working "McDougall Museum of Transport" as well as providing a cup of tea. The Speed 25 has been disemboweled with various components away being certified whilst others are labeled and stored away for future reference.

This car is definitely in the right hands and will one day emerge with its restored original Charlesworth body complete with 4.3 litre engine, a car that will be the envy of us all.

Julian was very impressed with the Speed 20 special and took a number of shots of this car gracing the garage as well as the 12/50 with its new dent free radiator and recently refurbished engine.

Julian spent Sunday coming to grips with an Alvis Club committee meeting, reclining in a lounge chair listening to us waffle on about club matters etc. This was followed by a barbeque lunch and although it had been my intention to invite Warrick around so that he and Julian could cook lunch and then do the washing up, this idea backfired dramatically.

Monday saw us shooting over to visit the FWD of Paul Bamford, a car that I have read about but never seen. Paul has done a fantastic job on rebuilding the car, and when finished will be a real head turner.

The colour scheme chosen is a deep green that blends in well particularly with the German silver plated radiator shell. The engine and transmission still requires assembly, but all the machining work on these parts has been completed. Another twelve months should see the car back on the road.

Paul showed us his collection of castings and we were both impressed with the way Paul had fabricated the shock absorbers and bracketry not to mention all the other bits and pieces that he has had cast for the car.

After a good hour at Paul's and another roll of film, the three of us jumped in the Honda to visit Geoff Hood.

I had not been to Geoff's place before but had heard from others that to get from the front of the garage to the rear, it was a case of single file when more than one person was entering and this proved to be the case.

Most things in the garage were perched on top of other things, stacked against larger things with even bigger things propped up against the legs of the workbench or the milling machine.

There was the Vauxhall chassis under a cover,

but I don't think even Pomeroy would have noticed it as it had become a sort of a work bench or a storage facility for other such things lying on, around and under.

Geoff appeared when called and the three of us had a conversation still standing in single file. Where I was standing, I had a Alvis Eagle crankshaft on one side and a Brescia Bugatti rear axle on the other with enough space to turn a full 360 degrees if required.

Geoff provided much needed refreshments and after a brief guided tour around the house, we departed to return Paul home and for me to show Julian the model car shop a few streets away from Paul's place.

Lunch was had at the Chocolate Box in Camberwell, a cheese and pineapple toasted sandwich that had more pineapple than cheese and two coffees.

We then did two secondhand bookshops, Julian two, self zero, before heading home for a much needed snooze.

Tuesday saw the three of us doing a bookshop crawl after Sal had made a list of around ten bookshops to visit. We started off in Elsternwick and progressed to Prahran where we ended up having lunch. This was followed by a trip to Carlton before heading for home. The results were Julian eight, myself four, with Sally exceeding all expectations with eleven.

Wednesday morning saw John Hetherington arrive in order to view a couple of hydraulic car hoists, he getting to an age in life that a hoist would be better than crawling about on a cold garage floor.

With the viewing completed we set sail to the Dandenongs for Julian to see the Speed 20 of Ian and Pat Parkinson. Another roll of film was used and it was a pity that the car was not going, Ian in the process of having the water pump attended to.

Pat provided lunch and it was nice to sit outside on the decking munching away and talking the finer points of Speed 20 and Noddy cars.

It was Thursday morning that the problem became apparent.

Having thought that Julian was a bit slow in the book collecting stakes, it transpired that he had collected rather more books than could be accommodated in the large suitcase. As his interests are far wider than mine, I suggested he should leave behind the books that appeal to me, which I would read, evaluate and then re-sell but this idea seemed to fall on deaf ears, the outcome being that I have a box with twenty books sitting that will have to wait for Julian's next trip!

With everything packed and the Honda down on its rear springs, I drove Julian to Williamstown where he would spend his last night with John and Annie Link.

And so ended Julian's stay.

Thanks to all those involved.

Chester

The ongoing debate about cooling in Alvises goes on and will continue to provide newsletter editors material for years to come. Ron Wilson continues the debate.

"Albert on Heat" by Ron Wilson

Soon after purchasing my 12/50 "Albert" in 1968 I was confronted with overheating problems as soon as any road speed in excess of a canter was attained. I listened to all the advice and tried out all the recommended recipes without much improvement. But I did find some of the many leaks that had happened through previous ownerships had been plugged with a variety of products and were blocking off a lot of the airflow.

So I visited a Radiator company in Richmond who said it needed a new modern core. They did a great job using the original top and bottom tanks, charged me \$40 and guaranteed the work! The overheating problems had improved a lot but was still causing concern. So it was back to Richmond and after much deliberation the top tank was cut open and a piece of copper 6" x 2" was hard soldered in to form a baffle placed just in front of the top hose connection piece.

This was a complete cure and in all the years ahead - no matter how hard and fast and in all temperatures - the car never boiled or even looked like it. So it's a cure I can recommend - and it may work for models with water pumps - it may be worth trying for next summer.

Ron Wilson

MACEDON RANGES GRAND TOUR

For the fourth consecutive year, the RACV sponsored Macedon Ranges Grand Tour has been run and won.

While on the club calendar, it only attracted two starters this year in the Hetheringtons (SP20) and the Tonkins (Crested Eagle), with the McKaiges and the Peels deserting the Alvis camp to join Bentley as the featured marque. Bob & Leslie Northey provided expert assistance to the organisers, in supervising parking at Cricket Willow outside Daylesford and their efforts were much appreciated.

The Tonkins & the McKaiges hosted an American who was in Australia for 3 days and certainly made his day with Australian hospitality. He couldn't stop talking about it.

The event aims to showcase the Macedon Region and provide something different for the longtime supporters. Nearly 50% of the 128 participants were on the tour for the first time. Certainly not an event for everyone, but for those wanting a pleasant drive on good roads and being fed like there is no tomorrow, it satisfies many.



Left & below: Flag off for the Hetheringtons & Tonkins



Engine Number 4783 – Where are you?

from Steve Denner



Prompted to action by Bob's reminiscences in the October NL, and Frank's article in the November NL, I thought I would bore the editorial socks off with a couple of stories from my own long term ownership of an Alvis, this being a 1926 TE 12/50, Car No 9756. I confess that I have an ulterior motive in doing this, in so far as in the 30 years that I have owned it I have never pursued the car's history prior to my ownership. It might just be that these notes will prompt some reminiscences and even photographs from some of the longer term (carefully avoids saying "old") members of the ACCV.

I bought the car in 1973 from Andre Chaley. Strictly speaking it was bought by another visiting Pom who was really a Frazer Nash man, but he went back to England at short notice, before actually taking delivery of the car and I stepped into the gap and have never regretted doing so. The car was (is) a Beetleback and was (is) rather tired in the coach work department. When Andre acquired it and his daughter saw it parked in the driveway with its rather dilapidated hood draped over the tail she immediately christened it "Mother Goose," and so it remains today.

The car was a non runner although complete, and I think Andre was keen to get it off his block because they had their hands full with at least one of the Speed 20/25 specials at the time. In fact talking with Paul recently he is not sure why Andre bought it except that it was parked in the street in South Yarra near David Muirden's place and perhaps he rendered a kindness by giving it a dry shed for a while.

Anyway, ownership was one thing but registration was another. I didn't have facilities for working on the car although later I did a deal in the house I was sharing and took over the attached single car garage. In the meanwhile Mother Goose was taken to Max Dupont who was asked to do enough to get the car a roadworthy. This included finding a horn, cutout and starter, getting enough wiring to carry the electricity from the battery to lights at front and rear, and to stop Mr Lucas' smoke escaping. The three brush generator was pronounced a lost cause and simply bypassed. It is a testament to the simplicity of the vintage Alvis design and because of its magneto ignition and gravity fuel feed that I didn't seriously feel the lack of a generator until it was reliably rewound 8 years later.

The first proper event for me was the VSCC Two Day Rally which that year went to Lorne. Much of it passed in a haze but I remember getting seriously lost as well as generating a "to do" list that even then I could see was 20 years work. Funny thing is I can still generate a job list with 20 years work, and some of the items would be the same as those on that first list!

I did my first engine rebuild about then. I can't remember why but I think I wanted better oil pressure or perhaps I was just curious to look inside having just bought a copy of Micky Radford's first publication on the 12/50 engine. The most sensible thing I did was to take the crankshaft to Paul England who used the same short arc welding process as they used on engines to and then nitrided the bearing surfaces. The crank has required no further attention and apart from some very light marking of one big end was still perfect when the engine was apart a couple of years back. What was not so sensible was re-using the rods by reboring the journals to suit the built up crank instead of having them remetalled. Years later one big end failed north of Coober Pedy on the Darwin to Canberra Bi-Centennial rally in 1988. The white metal did not "run"; it simply fatigued and broke up, the bearing falling apart in large pieces.

The radiator had an incontinence problem and I had this rebuilt in Sydney by a firm that was recommended to me. A spare radiator shell, in better condition than the one Mother Goose was wearing, had come with the car and I sent this to Sydney with instructions to make the best out of all the bits. Unfortunately I never got the spare bits back and my phone calls about it were met with indifference so presumably another nickel silver shell ended up as scrap.

I was spending money on it but mechanically the car was starting to be a reasonable proposition, even if the body was a curious mixture of unpainted aluminium where previous owners had patched and replaced the worst panels, and dull green paint and primer covering the remaining original steel panels and mudguards. At a distance it was rather like a military camouflage pattern. And then at short notice my then employer sent me to New Guinea, so I loaned the car to Dick Marston on condition that he would organise a few maintenance jobs like getting the wheels trued and tightened for which I would send money when asked. This worked well and Dick and Jim Earl took the car on a few events including a booze cruise to South Australia, so that by the time I got back from New Guinea it was well run-in. Incidentally the wheels and front axle she was wearing at this time were from a TJ or later 12/50, being the closed hub centres and the axle having the extra one inch of drop. This gave the car a "down in the mouth" sort of look.

My employer decided I had been gallivanting around the world for long enough and at the end of 1974 I got instructions to return to England and report for duty somewhere in the north Midlands. So a quick trip from New Guinea and some hasty arrangements with Dick Marston saw Mother Goose consigned to the

wharf for shipment to the UK as "personal effects." There were some raised eyebrows at the "head shed" in London about the cost of this, but they paid up without quibbling.

I already had a Silver Eagle (1930 TB 16.95 VC5607) in England so was able to use that while I was doing more essential work on Mother Goose. I had a stroke of luck in that I bought the remains of another 12/50 which yielded up lots of good bits so that progress was both economical and rapid. It was only at this point that I appreciated that the front axle Mother Goose was wearing, apart from being bent which was obvious to anyone except the wholly blotto, was in fact a later deep crank axle, as noted above. The spares kit yielded a good early axle and Mike Tomlin did a lovely job with new king pins, bushes and carefully fettled hubs and bearings, a job which has lasted 30 years without noticeable wear. Other bits from the kit included the straight steering arms required for the early axle, a less worn clutch plate (the one that came out had bits broken off, but still worked well enough), a proper cwp nose piece (the one with the car was either late '30s Alvis or possibly not Alvis at all, being a steel forging).

I bought quite a lot of stuff via the Alvis 12/50 Register spares scheme, some of it because I needed it immediately (rocker shaft and reconditioned rockers), and put other stuff away in the belief that I was going to need it one day. By now an important attitude change had occurred; I had begun to think in terms of long term ownership. It dawned on me that whereas I could part with the Silver Eagle and the ex Charles Follett Brooklands 12/50 without looking backwards, I was much more attached to this rather down at heel Beetleback. Incidentally the front axle under Trevor Eastwood's 4.3 special came from the Follett car so he can probably claim a Brooklands history for it! How it got there is a diversion for another time.

The next bit was all Harold Wilson's fault (Britain's prime minister at the time). This was the late 1970's. Swinging London was a faded memory, and the "loony left" were in charge (pre Margaret Thatcher). This was the time of workers cooperatives (remember Triumph motorcycles at Meriden?), and electricity generating strikes and go-slows, with a government response which was to roster 3 days out of 5 in which industry could have power to work. I clearly recall the moment that I spat the dummy while shaving by the light of a candle at 7:00am one frozen February morning. I was done with this, and Mother Goose and I were going back to Australia.

For a while things moved quickly and all the transit visas were applied for and obtained (except for Afghanistan which I confess I forgot, and had some difficulty crossing from Iran). I took the car to Wilkinson's in Derby and got them to make a proper dickey hatch to replace the tattered bit of Rexene that it wore hitherto. This gave me a lockable compartment and some security. The remains from the other 12/50 furnished the spares kit, and I probably overdid it, taking a spare cwp, two halfshafts, and front hub and stub axle, as well as smaller things like valve and spring, rocker, push rod, oil pump skew gear, and of course a magneto. All of this added considerably to the all up weight of the car and I put a couple of extra leaves in the rear springs. In the end I think the only thing I used

was the spare push rod and the magneto.

At the end of the journey some ACCV folk including Ron Wilson and Paul Bamford came out to Ballarat to meet us for the last few miles to Melbourne. Paul drove with me and looking around the cockpit he realised that the door was his own handiwork and it dawned on him this was the car he had owned briefly as an apprentice.

And so Mother Goose returned to Australia having originally left Holyhead Rd on 18th June 1926. Having found a job, I'd some cash to do a number of things that continued to improve the car. Without the dead weight of all the spares I had carried I found that a 4.5:1 cwp suited the car better than the 4.77. Geoff Hopkins had made a small batch of alloy clutch housings which reduced the rotating mass substantially, without appearing to lose any smoothness in the engine (or rather without it appearing to be any rougher!). This was an Alvis "factory approved" modification and the Follett car had exactly the same arrangement when delivered by Alvis.

I carefully selected the best connecting rods I had and made sure the pinch bolt splits at the little end were in good order. It was surprising how careless Alvis had been in the manufacture of some of them. There is a little hole at the end of the saw cut which is supposed to prevent the saw cut developing into a stress crack and proceeding southwards towards the big end. I had a number of rods where the stopping hole had been drilled part way along the saw cut, which made it as useful as an umbrella on a warship. I made all of the holes slightly larger in diameter and using a miniature grindstone blended all the edges round the hole and the length of the saw cut. I discussed with David Rapley the Alvis ritual of tightening the little end pinch bolts to "two flats past finger tight, then split pin" or some such, to which he replied nonsense (actually he didn't say nonsense, but this is a family publication), and to use Unbrako cap screws done up as tight as possible. So far it seems to be working.

I found that pistons from the Mazda "Bongo" van (remember them?) fitted very well with the crown protruding a mm or so above the deck, so that some increased compression was achieved. My rough calculation (without having a burette) is that the CR is now a heroic 6.1:1, against the standard 5.4:1. Heady stuff! Unfortunately these pistons seem no longer to be available. What are people using these days? The centre main bearing was considerably strengthened with a new high duty alloy bearing cap that extends across the whole width of the crankcase, is notched into the face to provide positive lateral support and has six studs into the crankcase web to hold the whole thing together. The oil pump was carefully fettled to get the axial clearance to 0.0015 and oil pressure correspondingly improved. There was a fashion for fitting double capacity pumps to 12/50s for a while, but my own view is that what is required is a double capacity sump. The 1 gallon in the sump gets too hot when run continuously at 100 kph for a couple of hours, and as an indication of this the pressure reading falls. If the oil is absorbing heat from the engine and not giving it up to the atmosphere it really doesn't matter if you are pumping it round twice as fast with a double capacity pump. Moreover when the oil is cold it places

unnecessary torque load on the oil pump skew gears. And when Alvis built a car for serious work at Brooklands the first modification they installed was dry sump lubrication with a scavenge pump in tandem with the feed pump. The Follett car had a 4 gallon oil tank in the scuttle and never moved off 40lbs all day.

Other new bits included new front springs (and Henderson's managed to lose the originals which I had given them for a pattern), and new timing gears which when fitted were as quiet as a timing chain. In fact Graeme Quinn demanded to see under the bonnet, claiming no 12/50 engine could be that quiet unless the magneto was in the "Off" position!

And then the big one! Ron Wilson announced his plans for Tour de Tassie to take place in 1982, and everyone started feverishly on major work in preparation. In my case it was time to do something about the bodywork which apart from the dickey seat lid made by Wilkinson's had had no attention other than several coats of green paint to weatherproof it before I left England. By this time the general state was such that when putting the car away it was best to lean it on the garage wall to stop it falling over. The scuttle tank hangs on the firewall, and this plywood base had delaminated long since. When full the tank holds 7 gallons and if you have tried to lift 7 gallons of fuel you will understand why at this time I was not filling up with more than 3 at a time! Even so I don't understand how the tank didn't simply detach and fall onto the steering column. So the plan was to rebuild the front of the body from scuttle to rear of front seats which I reckoned I could do before the rally, and then to complete the job after returning from Tassie. I successfully did the first part. That was March 1982. Just last week I bought a bandsaw and have made a start on the second part of the plan. Some projects are longer in gestation than others!! But I am getting ahead of the story again.

Mother Goose has had regular use since then with VSCC competition, and we particularly enjoy the longer ones – Two Day Rallies, Alpines like the one to Tasmania that Graeme and Jenny Jackson organised. We have enjoyed some other long trips including Bugatti Rallies to Collingrove in the Barossa Valley, and Merimbula, achieved in one day, each way, in company with Neil and Annie Barter in their Type 40. Incidentally, Iarg and I just did the same trip in a Subaru Forester (600k) and were quite knackered at the end of it. We must be getting older! In 1988 we did the Darwin – Canberra leg of the Castrol Bi-Centennial rally, although as related earlier, our hitherto excellent record of reliability was spoilt by a big end failure which was addressed with partial engine strip and big end white metalling in Adelaide. The last 20 years has seen continuous small improvements. Each engine rebuild is better than the last in that something that is worn always gets revived, with corresponding reward in smoothness and/or noise reduction. The crankshaft done all those years ago looks good for another 20 years (unless the dreaded harmonic vibration stresses it beyond tolerance).

In recent years Mother Goose and I have taken to Regularity events at VHRR Philip Island and Austin 7/ Hartwell MCC Winton. These are fantastic fun for a car like Mother Goose, which is not fast enough to be dangerous, but provides the best platform for watching

historic cars in action. There is nothing like being flat out in a 12/50 past the pits at Philip Island and being passed by Peter Giddings in the ex-Whitney Straight Maserati. The noise and smell are intoxicating. Actually the intoxication is probably from the alcohol brew it runs on; I've seen the size of the main jet and I tell no lie when I say you could stick your little finger through the hole! In my view, and contrary to what most people believe, the Regularity is quite a gentle form of exercise for an 80 year old car with sporting pretensions. You can adjust your level of testosterone to balance between that blistering ten tenths lap and the nagging thought that you have to be able to drive the thing home in one piece at the end of the day. In fact I have proved conclusively that at Winton at least we do the fastest lap by staying in top gear. In a 12/50 all that gear changing and wild engine revs just slows you down! Just concentrate on navigating quickly through the curvy bits (it drifts very nicely), resist using the brakes, and let the bottom end torque pull you round in top gear. As a result I probably use lower revs on the track at Winton than driving to and from the event.

As an aside, if you have an inclination to the kind of fun provided by regularities, I recommend you do it soon. The auguries are not good. My prediction is that Phillip Island will change now that Fox owns it. It will become less accessible to amateur (not for profit) clubs and members like us, and directed to more high profile events and associated with new developments on the ocean frontage of the land. I enjoy driving to the event, competing in the car for the weekend and driving home after. The numbers of people who do this are decreasing, even for regularity events, so that new construction and safety regulations framed by CAMS are predominantly framed for cars dedicated to track work. By omission or design CAMS take less account of silly old buggers like me who want to use the same car both on the road and the track. The effect is diminishing numbers of entrants with road registered cars in pre-war regularity events. Before long organisers will cease to offer regularity events. So if you want to do it, do it now! (Political rant over).

If you have got this far then that brings us up to date. Currently Mother Goose is having the extensive body "make-over" referred to earlier. I have carefully removed all the decaying coach work to the rear of the scuttle and dash. I am doing the timber frame myself but recognise that paneling is way outside my zone of competence. Nevertheless it is very interesting and I am learning new skills all the way. Even the choice of timber was an interesting research exercise. It was easy to tell the original timber from the various and extensive replacement bits that had been introduced over the car's life. Identifying the species was harder but eventually the weight of expert opinion came down on the side of Queensland Kauri; *Agathis Robusta*. Alas this once prolific timber is no longer commercially available, but in the 1920s there were extensive forests of it in Qld and northern NSW. It was used for building, flooring, furniture, and yes, motor vehicle body construction. It was light, strong, easily milled, close and straight grained, knot free, and cheap. So it was logged until it was exhausted. There is one solitary example in the Botanical Gardens, and a proud and lonely tree it is, with a trunk about 4 feet diameter reaching majestically

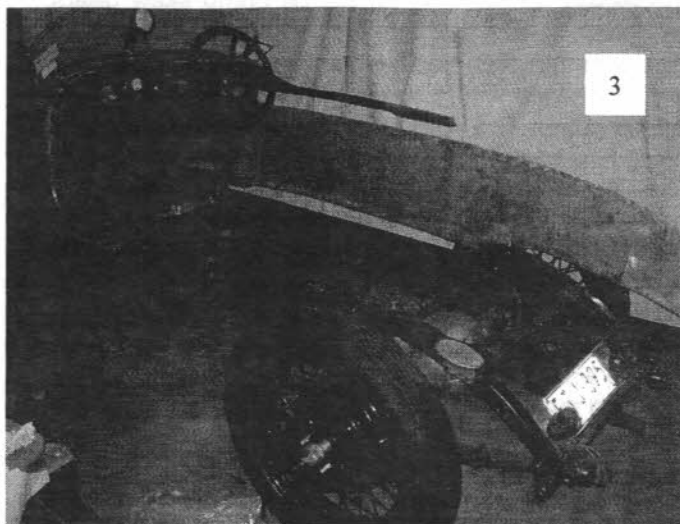
for more than a 100 feet into the sky. I talk to it.

I have settled on American ash for the work. This is about 35% heavier than kauri. Kauri is 31 lbs/cu ft, American ash 41 lbs/cu ft, and Tasmanian oak 50 lbs/cu ft. It's harder to work, and blunts tools more rapidly, but is strong and springy with good grain character meaning it can be screwed end grain as well as cross grain. I am on a steep learning curve with this project and golden rule number one is "Estimate the length of time to construct the timber framework, and multiply by 5 to get a realistic view." Golden rule number two is "Having spent 2 days fashioning a complex shape, be prepared to throw it away and start again." Anyway we press on and hope to see the light of day before the year is out!

And now some questions for the reader. Has anyone got any knowledge of this car before 1972? Who were previous owners? Ashley Tracey recently printed in the VSCC NL a photo of it from his archives with Gary Rigg driving. Did Gary ever own it? I met a bloke at Winton some years ago as we were both filling up with petrol. He said he thought he recognised the car and that it used to run around Adelaide with no side panels to the body. This is consistent with how I first found the car in that the side paneling was relatively new and aluminium, whereas the scuttle top and rear deck were steel and clearly *ab initio*. Unfortunately it was raining and we agreed to cut short our discussion and meet up the following day at the circuit to continue the chat but somehow missed each other. Does anyone have any knowledge of this car ever being in Adelaide?

Paul Bamford told me that for some considerable time it "rested" on the grass outside Basil Bowes' house on the area which is now the car park, and that it was a sort of pool car for the Alvis Car Club until Paul needed some transport when he was an apprentice and needed something to get to work. As related earlier it was Paul who remanufactured the (single, passenger side) door, and a sturdy piece of work it is too, although in the early days of my ownership it had a tendency to fly open at speed which alarmed the passengers not a little.

Which brings me to the title of this piece. I got a copy of the build sheet for the car from the 12/50 Register, and at some point in its life the original engine 4783 was replaced by 4121. So it would be interesting to hear if 4783 is still around, and perhaps still powering a 12/50 with another story that is worth recording.



1. *Camperdown 2003. Does the body seem to be leaning a little further than the rest of the car. All the wood worm are holding hands!*

2. *The only original timber that I could salvage from the body. Note the dry rot clearly visible in some members. nevertheless, handled with care good enough for patterns.*

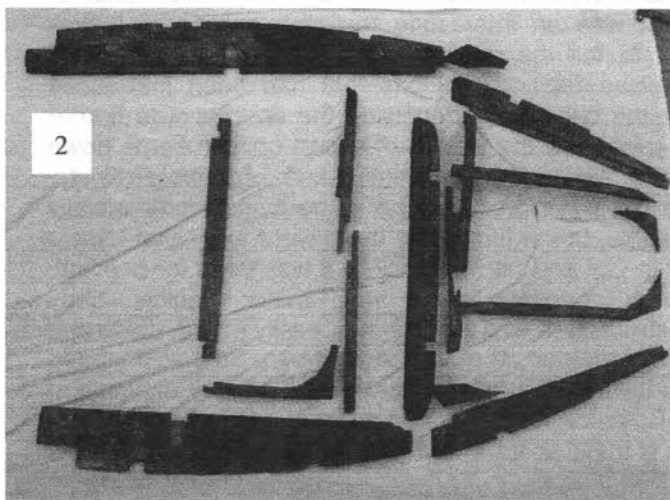
3. *Bare chassis from scuttle backwards, ready for a fresh start.*

4. *Setting up to determine the fall of the rear top panel. No original timber exists to help with this and it is aesthetically very critical. Needs lots of standing back and squinting and sucking air through clenched teeth to get this right.*



Steve, many thanks for the article. This is what members really enjoy reading.

JL



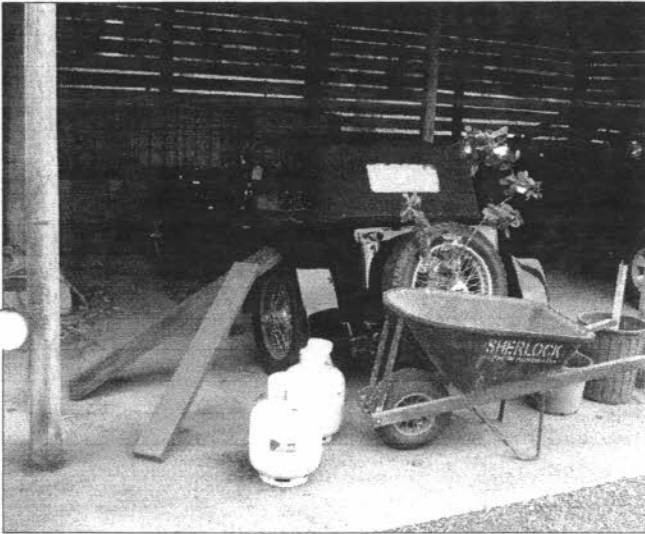
THE SEVILLE RUN

About 25 cars from various English thoroughbred stables, departed the Brandon Park business complex and set sail for what is one of the showcase areas around Melbourne - the Dandenong Ranges - *even the traffic was light!*

Dale Parsell was tour director and the route had us leaving Melbourne via the Burwood Highway and the Mountain Highway to pass through the townships of Ferny Creek, Kallista, Olinda and Monbulk.

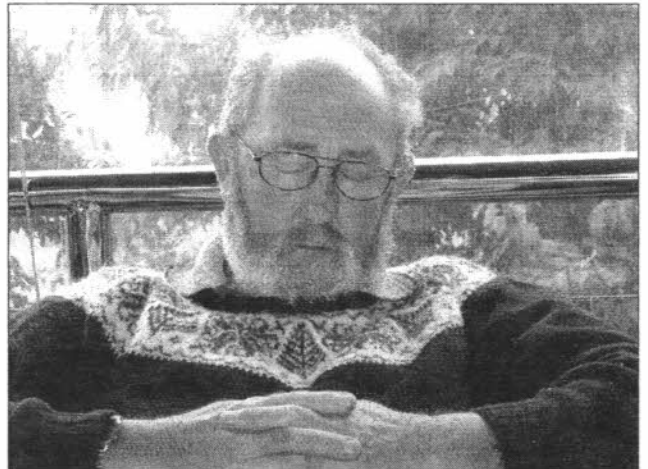
We had a morning tea stop at the Johns Hill Trig Point that has been used for many years as a navigation reference point. On through Menzies Creek, Emerald, Cockatoo, Avonsleigh to the Ainsley Estate Winery at Seville where a very pleasant lunch was had.

Many thanks to Dale and to Chester for their organisation and the good company of the Bristol and Daimler Lanchester Clubs.



*Left: What! Another McDougall barn find?
No, another Parky practical joke.
Andrew accepted the offer of undercover
parking without checking the downside.*

*Chris Higgins thought the meal was a bit
slow coming!*

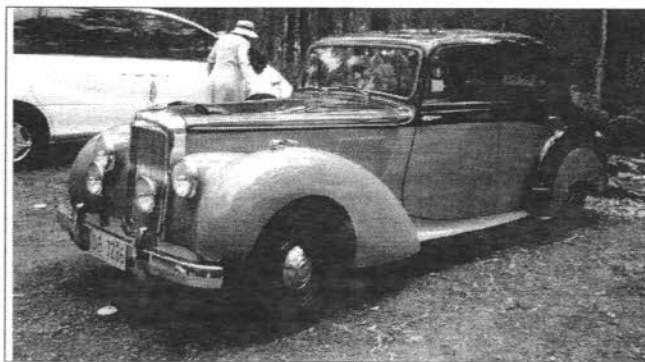


The feeding of the 5000!

SWAP, BEG, BORROW or STEAL

FOR SALE

Alvis Grey Lady TC21-100, 1954, Car # 25638.
Fully registered (Tas DB7286) & going beautifully.
Bare metal respray in 2 tone scheme. New leather upholstery, carpet & hood lining. Needs window rubbers & the heater needs attention. Eventually will need a set of new tyres. Selling price \$24,000.
Contact Willy Schneider, Box 380 Margate PO Tasmania 7054 or ring (03) 6267 2740



FOR SALE

Sadly, all good things come to an end! Need to make way for the SP20 project.

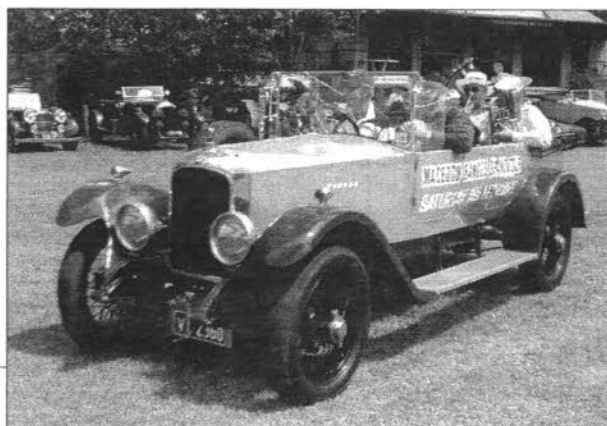
1923 Vauxhall 23/60 (OD568)

Very original car. Full Vic registration VX2360.

RWC for Victorian buyer

\$50,000

Contact John Lang (03) 5426 2256



WANTED:

Cross & Ellis or Charlesworth Tourer or Charlesworth saloon body to cutdown to tourer to suit SP25 chassis.

Ring David Caldwell (03) 9729 5821 or email caldwell08@optusnet.com.au

WANTED:

Old copies of the Automobile or similar magazines.

Keith Williams
(03) 5426 4178

ALVIS PARTS AND REPAIRS DATABASE

Newsletters over the past year 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. With the notable exception of a lot of 12/70 & TA14 items from Bob Graham the response to date has been modest, but continues to trickle in.

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

· Parts repair hints or techniques

If and when this database starts to reach a critical mass it will be published on the internet – for now however there is not enough information to warrant it. Please think hard and see if you can contribute one or two gems...

Information please, to Bob Northey (northneys@westnet.com.au, or 2 Orrong Rd, Elsternwick, Vic 3185).

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