

February 2007

# Alvic

*The Newsletter of the Alvis Car Club of Victoria*



## Reports

**2 more cars back on the road!**

# 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.  
POSTAL: ACCV P.O.Box 634, EMERALD, VIC 3782  
www.alvis.org.au

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## PRESIDENT

**Chester McKaige,**  
129 Tucker Rd, Bentleigh, Vic 3204  
Tel (03) 9557 1134 [mckaige1@bigpond.com.au](mailto:mckaige1@bigpond.com.au)

## VICE PRESIDENT & Spares Registrar

**Bob Northey,** 2 Orrong Rd, Elsternwick, Vic 3185  
Tel 03 9528 6767 [bob.northey@qenos.com](mailto:bob.northey@qenos.com)

## SECRETARY

**Dale Parsell** 14 Symons Rd, Avonsleigh, Vic 3782  
Tel 03 5968 5170 [dparsell@ozemail.com.au](mailto:dparsell@ozemail.com.au)

## TREASURER & PUBLIC OFFICER & 3 Litre Spares

**Ian Parkinson,** 38 Nobelius St, Emerald, Vic 3782  
Tel/fax 03 5968 2927 [parky@alphalink.com.au](mailto:parky@alphalink.com.au)

## CLUB CAPTAIN

**Alan McKinnon,** 195 Lower Heidelberg Rd, Ivanhoe, Vic 3079  
Tel 03 9497 3414 [alan@antiquetyres.com.au](mailto:alan@antiquetyres.com.au)

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR & DISTRIBUTION

**John Lang** P.O.Box 129, Gisborne, Vic 3437  
Tel/fax 03 5426 2256 [jdmelang@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jdmelang@bigpond.net.au)

## PVT SPARES & Committee Person

**Eric Nicholl,** 17 Ternes Rd, Upwey, Vic 3158  
Tel 03 9754 5412

## LIBRARIAN

**Frances McDougall,** 424 Wellington St, Clifton Hill, Vic 3068  
Tel 03 9486 4221 [macily@tenex.com.au](mailto:macily@tenex.com.au)

## COMMITTEE PERSONS

**Richard Tonkin,** P.O.Box 280, Greensborough, Vic 3088  
Tel 03 9710 1465 [rtonkin@austarmetro.com.au](mailto:rtonkin@austarmetro.com.au)

**Andrew McDougall,** 424 Wellington St, Clifton Hill, Vic 3068  
Tel 03 9486 4221 [macily@tenex.com.au](mailto:macily@tenex.com.au)

**John Hetherington,** 71 Hawkins St, Shepparton, Vic 3630  
Tel 03 58216 422 Fax 03 5831 1586 [jfh@mcmmedia.com.au](mailto:jfh@mcmmedia.com.au)

**Darrell Horton,** 24 Johnson St, Balnarring, Vic 3926  
Tel 03 5983 2016

## VINTAGE SPARES

**Geoff Hood,** 37 Thomas St, E.Doncaster Vic 3109  
Tel 03 9842 2181

## TA14 & 3 Litre SPARES

**John White** 30 Lyndhurst Cres, Box Hill, Vic 3129  
Tel 03 9890 7066

*Front page: Eric Nicholl's 1928 14/75  
Back on the road after a full restoration*

## *Alvilocity*

I wish to talk this month on the subject of rod operated braking systems, so those of you who have hydraulics, can turn the page.

I recently had some experience of working on a car fitted with rod operated brakes and was amazed at the amount of wear that had taken place and the neglect that these brakes had suffered.

The car had done little mileage since the mid 1980's when it was subjected to an "engine restoration" and the brake linings were replaced at the same time.

Driving the car found that the brakes were totally ineffectual and needed further looking into.

The list of items found would be enough to please any RWC garage worth their weight in gold, and as this vehicle was on red plates, it has changed my view dramatically of leaving maintenance to the owner. This vehicle in the brake department was one accident waiting to happen.

The first problem was in the threaded rods themselves. Apart from being bent, the threads had been cut with a blunt die and the die had gone off centre a number of times resulting in a thread that looked like a snake. Also there were no lock nuts fitted to the turnbuckle adjusters or at the ends of the forks. God knows what the tensile strength of the rods were!

The next problem was clevis pins. The main rod that goes from the brake compensator to the pedal had a clevis pin in it that resembled a two cylinder crankshaft. About 2 mm in diameter was holding the brake pedal to the rod! The clevis pin at the other end was about the same. If this pin had broken, then the brake pedal would have gone to the floor with obvious results.

All clevis pins in the car had to be replaced and not with the ones you buy from the local hardware store!

The next problem is to do with split pins. There are a number of ways a split pin should be set up. In the case of clevis pins, the legs of the split pin should be bent backwards so there is no way that the pin could work loose. In this case, the split pins had been inserted and opened up just with a screw-driver and could be removed quite easily by hand. Also in some cases the clevis pin was longer than necessary and instead of being shortened or a washer fitted to take up the distance between split pin hole and fitting, it was left to rattle around on its own and do absolutely nothing. Split pins come in various sizes, and are made this way to suit a particular size hole.

Once these problems were rectified, the braking system returned to how it should have been in the first place and it reminded me of the conversation with a chap who owned a 23/60 Vauxhall. As many of you know they have always been regarded as a car devoid of good stopping ability. My chap told me this was rather unfair because if one set the brakes up properly in the first place from stem to stern, then the brakes could be made to work quite satisfactorily. He proved this to me on a VSCC rally years ago and I must say, they did work exceptionally well.

I write this more as a warning to check not only brake linings, but also all the other bits and pieces that go to providing your braking mechanism.

Having now got that of my chest, I must wish you all a very Happy New Year and happy Alvis motoring.

This year promises to be a big one with the National this year in South Australia and plenty of other activities planned throughout the year.

Look forward to catching up with you all at our next meeting and of course on our upcoming run to Gordon.

Chester

A

*Very warm welcome to Richard Wallach who has joined our ranks. Richard we look forward to seeing you at a meeting very soon*

**PLEASE NOTE 2007 MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE AND PAYABLE.  
IN FACT OVERDUE & PAYABLE**

**A FURTHER REMINDER**

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR ALVIS CENSUS FORMS TO THE SECRETARY  
(Please include details of the number of people overnighing at your place on the 31  
December outlining why they were incapable of driving home following New Years Eve)**

## COMING EVENTS

FEB 17	General Meeting
18	Pub Run to Gordon (near Ballarat) - <i>see inside for details</i>
MAR 16	General Meeting
25	Kalorama - <i>see flyer with December 06 newsletter</i>
APR 20	General Meeting
APR 22—27	“ALVIS in the Outback” 2007 National Rally

### GOS

*Mark Burns came second in the recent VSCC Two Wheel Brake Rally and Andrew McDougall fourth.*

*Alan Willingham won the 4 wheel brake section of the Two Wheel Brake Rally.*

*Antonio's Restaurant, where we have spent many a happy hour before a meeting is no longer. The business has changed hands and this Friday we will see what the new owners have done.*

*The Macedon Ranges Grand Tour has been and gone for another year—Frank Mornane was the only Alvis represented on the Tour in what was reportedly the best ever. The Links were also to be involved, however other matters intervened.*

*With the Grand Tour complete the Langs lives can get back to normal.*

### ERIC NICHOLL'S NEW BABY

In late January, I had a call from Bob Northey who said he was on Mt Macedon in an “old car” and would we like to put the kettle on. The term old car immediately suggested he was driving other than the 12/50 or the SP20.

Patience was rewarded when an Alvis I had never seen before came up the driveway with a smiling front seat passenger who looked much like Eric Nicholl - the penny dropped—a shake down run for the National Rally. The newsletter front cover sets the scene.

Eric, Bob and Lesley are off to the National Rally in the car and over the weekend had notched up several hundred kilometers and Mt Macedon was on the agenda to see how well it climbed—Bob was smiling even though his tall frame was compromised by the vintage driving position. It sounded very sweet.

The day's run didn't end happily as the diff failed going up the Bulla Hill near Melbourne Airport and it went home on a flat top truck. Eric's luck changed dramatically when he was able to purchase a brand new one from Automotive Surplus for \$135.

Eric's restoration is a credit to him and for a man in his 80's and as fit as he is, there will be many more.

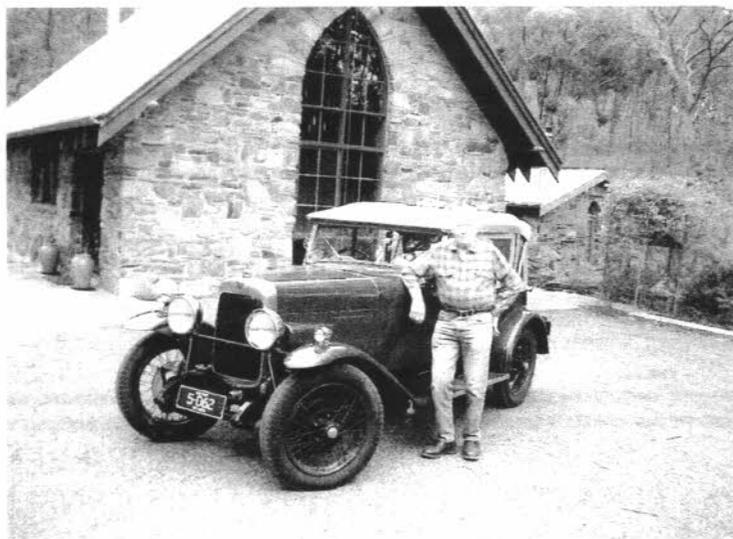
The car was previously owned by the late Laurie Buckland and was last on the road in 1985. It was dismantled and much work had to be done.

Other than the body and chassis restoration, a set of close ratios were fitted to the gearbox, new shockers, re-upholstered, and new hood.

The car came to Australia in may 1928 and its original registration was 40811 and was a previous owner was Gunter Brom from Glenrowan Victoria.

**1928 ALVIS 14/75**  
Engine # 6712  
Chassis # 5937

**WELL DONE ERIC**



*Richard Tonkin recently acquired an owner's handbook for his Crested Eagle and copied the following page.*

*Written at a time when car ownership was special and people enjoyed the art of doing simple things in life like lighting a pipe or taking a walk through the gardens and when car makers made an art form out of creating their owner's handbooks.*

*Today's society considers owning a car as about as much fun as owning a pair of sox and the youth's devil may care attitude when a pleasant drive consists of burnouts and doughnuts in suburban streets.*

*Ah! Take me back to the "thirties."*

*JL*

## On being "CAR PROUD"

### A Message to the New Owner

WHEN you visit a friend's house for the first time you notice, though perhaps unconsciously, that it is spotlessly clean, that there are flowers in the rooms, and that much care and thought have obviously been spent on choosing the carpets and curtains. The owner of the house shows you round with pride, speaking enthusiastically of this or that attraction of the place, or of various labour-saving devices that have been installed. In a word, your friend is "house-proud."

The keen, knowledgable motorist should be "car proud," taking a real pride in the brilliant design and beautiful workmanship of the car he drives and in its "Alvivacity," a word coined to epitomise the speed and power and liveliness, the charm and controllability of this wonderful vehicle.

To be "car proud" there is no need to talk boastfully of high speeds attained or to take every possible opportunity of "putting it across" the owners of other cars. The driver of a "Crested Eagle" *knows* what his car can do, and can afford to sit back while others "cut-in" in their desperate attempts to gain a few yards, for he knows that on the next hill, without fuss or bother, simply by depressing the accelerator, he will leave them all standing.

It is impossible to be proud of a car for which one must always apologise. Keep the engine at concert pitch, have the car washed and polished whenever you have time. See to it that those who watch you pass exclaim "There goes a fine car!"

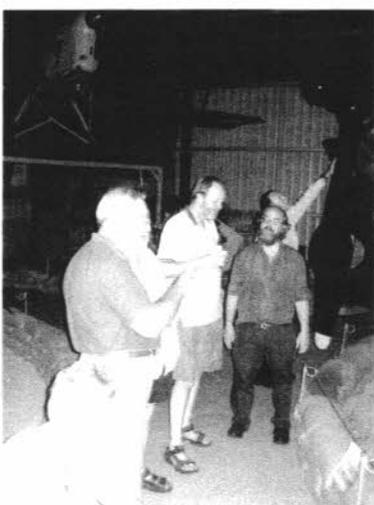
# JANUARY BARBECUE

*Myth or fact* - repeat use of what previously was a very successful venue for an outing, does not work the next time. **Myth!**

Two years ago our very successful opening barbecue was held at the Moorabbin Airport Museum. This year we did the same and it was even more successful in terms of numbers, food and enjoyment factor.

Chester took a punt and with Sally's help put together another very enjoyable event.

Instead of a Merlin running, this year we had a Liberty mounted on the back of a very old fully restored truck, purring away and beating the air with its truncated wooden prop.



*Above: the Beaufighter makes a perfect backdrop for some of those who enjoyed the evening.*

*Far left: Keith Williams, John Hetherington, Thorpe Remfrey, Andrew McDougall, Dale Parsell and Bob Northey looking at one of the displays.*

*Left: Keith and Frank Mornane swap stories while Chris Higgins Dale & Thorpe discuss other important matters.*

Dear John

You may be interested to know that my TA14 is now on the road. I registered it 3 days before the deadline of my son's wedding day at which it had the honour of conveying the bride and her father to the venue at Home Hill winery about 30km south of Hobart (and over three very solid climbs). The car ran perfectly and the event went off wonderfully.

I've owned the car since Boxing Day 1966 when I bought it from a car yard in Adelaide for £125. It's been off the road since 1976! In its time it got around a bit – Leigh Creek/Wilpena Pound in 1969, Tassie in 68, to the National Rally in Narrandera ('71 as I recall) where it dropped a valve on the way home, etc.

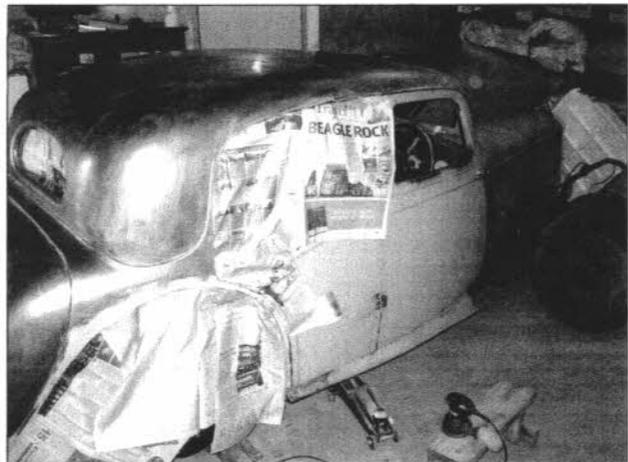
I rebuilt the motor and put a new clutch in it in the late '60s and haven't touched them since (except for repairing the damage caused by the dropped valve. It still runs beautifully aside from some timing chain rattle (it was never fitted with a tensioner although you can see where it was supposed to be). It also has no vents in the bonnet sides and appears never to have had any although otherwise it seems to be a standard Mulliner body (M1067).

A couple of photos are attached for your amusement.

- The TA14 (Chassis 21534) now alongside the 12/50
- In Adelaide (with a youthful yours truly) in about 1970
- Under reconstruction.

All the best

Mike



# The Lunch



# & Hat Run

*(aka "Run to Gordon")*

SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY

*(see over for details) ....*

## Gordon Pub Run another Lang and McKaige Event Directions

Start is situated at Calder Park Raceway carpark. Starting time 9.00am for a 9.30 start.  
All distances approximate and intended as a guide only.

- 0km Turn **left** out of Calder Park onto freeway signposted M79 to Bendigo.
- 7.1km Take C706 Diggers Rest/Sunbury exit. At roundabout turn **left** on C706 to Diggers Rest. Continue towards Toolern Vale.
- 9.4km At roundabout turn **right** to Toolern Vale on C706  
Continue to Toolern Vale.
- 21.0km At roundabout continue on C706 to Bacchus Marsh.
- 34.4km At C704 turn **left** to Bacchus Marsh.
- 37.5km Just after 60km sign into Bacchus Marsh turn **right** into Lerderderg Gorge Road (small sign saying Lerderderg Gorge State Park)
- 40.2km veer **left** along Lerderderg Gorge Road.
- 42.8km Lerderderg Gorge Park

### Stop for morning tea. BYO thermos and sustenance

Retrace Steps

- 48.1km Turn **right** towards Bacchus Marsh on C704.
- 49.3km At roundabout continue towards Bacchus Marsh.  
Cross over freeway and continue on C704. (watch speed limit of 50km through Bacchus Marsh)  
At roundabout continue on C704 to Werribee and Geelong and do the same at next roundabout.  
Cross over Werribee River.
- 52.6km At roundabout before railway line, turn **right** into Griffith Street (High School on corner) and continue along this road (under railway line, over Parwan Creek)
- 60.6km At crossroads (caution), continue to Balliang.
- 72.3km Turn **right** towards Anakie  
Drive through Balliang  
Continue straight ahead at crossroads  
Cross over Little River  
Go through Staughton Vale
- 86.0km Turn **right** onto C141 to Ballan (caution at intersection)
- (95.8km) Toilets at Stony Creek Reservoir if pee stop required.
- 106.2km Turn **left** at crossroads (Brisbane Ranges Road to Ballark)
- 112.2km Turn **left** at T intersection (to Meredith)
- 113.9km Turn **right** (signposted Mt.Egerton and Gordon)
- 131.2km At T intersection turn **right** to Mt.Egerton  
Drive through Mt.Egerton and on to Gordon
- 137.9km At T intersection at Gordon, turn **left**. Gordon Pub is on the RHS.

Anticipate arrival at 12.15pm for a 12.30pm lunch.

After lunch you may like to visit the hat shop across the road and purchase a driving hat totally different to the one owned by your Newsletter Editor.

*Newsletter editors note: **driving hats are for posers! Sun hats are for keeping the sun off! One is decorative the other purposeful!***

# MOTORING - TRANSPORT EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS

## McDOUGALL'S OVERSEAS TRIP 2006

In our 3 months away we had a variety of motoring and transport experiences in diverse locations that I thought could be of interest. It is easiest if I list them as a series of dot points, roughly in the order in which they occurred.

- First stop Santiago Chile – a city of 60,000 black and yellow taxis which are small to medium size and get you a long way for the cost of our flag fall. A city shrouded in “contamination” due to the surrounding Andes mountains, industry and lots of cars and older belching diesel buses – whilst there we generally saw the sun when it rose and set but not in between. A wonderful new underground metro system running silently on rubber tyres.
- Our next stop was at Easter Island after a 5 hour Lan Chile flight to the remotest place on earth. The airstrip comes as a surprise as it stretches right across the island and is larger than any jumbo needs – this is because the Americans enlarged it in case the shuttle had to use it for an emergency landing. So far this hasn't been necessary. Talking of transport it is amazing to see the efforts of a much earlier civilisation which felt the need to carve huge rock statues (moai) and then transport them by means not known (maybe by wooden sled before all the trees were harvested) to the remote perimeter locations around the island. Many moai weighed 80 tons or more and the largest partially completed moai, still not fully carved out of the quarry, weighs around 300tons. The somewhat delicate tufa top knots that are placed like hats on top of the statues are carved in another quarry and again had to be transported to the statue sites and then placed on the statues after the statues themselves had been erected – an interesting logistical conundrum.



The mainly Polynesian population lives in one town at the end of the runway. Cars did not play a significant role in transport until a decade or so ago. Now you see a relatively large number of small Japanese and Korean cars and 4WDs. The older ones suffer heavily from the demon rust and in some cases not much of the body remains. However as long it goes that is all that is necessary – no such thing as a roadworthy check. I saw one very sad Peugeot 305 which had all its wheels splayed at crazy angles, no exhaust, lots of holes in the body and windows missing, crawling crabwise up the street. The taxis ranged from good to poor (*see above*) and one we rode in had no rear window (only polythene, hardly any exhaust, doors that wouldn't open, etc). However they are cheap to hire and the driving speed is 40kph. Some of the local authorities are lamenting the fact that many of the local population now get the taxi drivers to collect their provisions, rather than walking to the shops themselves. As a consequence the population is tending to put on weight through lack of exercise. The logistics of getting cars to the island is quite an exercise, as ships only call in a few times a year and there is no port, so that the cargo has to come ashore by barge. Or else the cars come in as air cargo – all quite expensive and so it helps to explain why the vehicles are kept going beyond their use by date.

- Generally when we travel overseas we play spot the 2CV Citroen: we were quick to score a hit by seeing our first one in rustic village at the foot of the Andean mountains. This was followed by 2 more sedans and a van in Santiago. Other 2CV hits were: a blue one driving in Paris, a dark blue car in Versailles, 2 plus a Mehari near Strasbourg, one at a German border town, Heidelberg, a yellow and a green one in Czech Republic villages and the 2 we didn't see in Krakow Poland as we visited the Citroen dealer who services them. Related to 2 CV's we visited the wonderful restored glass roofed 19<sup>th</sup> C Grand Palais in Paris in which there was an amazing exhibition of mechanised film props. Amongst the exhibits was a 2 x 2CV engine powered drum playing machine and also the oddest Solex friction driven 2 stroke powered bicycle converted into a tricycle complete with porcelain toilet bowl and overhead cistern – one of the actors proceeded to ride it around the hall seated on the “throne”.



• We collected our leased, brand new Citroen Picasso in Paris and then proceeded to cover 8,800km over the next 51 days that it was in our possession. Whilst not being the best handling drivers car it was excellent in that it has lots of space for up to 5 adults, has a cavernous luggage carrying capacity, is very comfortable with compliant suspension, easy access for young and old and excellent sit up and see visibility. It was powered by a 1.6L turbo diesel with exhaust particle arrester. It did lack a bit of low down lugging torque and would not make a good tow vehicle, but having driven it under all conditions: choked city, country roads, mountain climbing and high speed motorway we were impressed with the economy, averaging a miserly 5.97 litres per 100km (47.6 MPG). In fact the economy more than offset the higher cost of fuel. The Australian governments should be insisting that Australians demand and purchase space efficient cars with the highly efficient European diesel technology as it would be a way of significantly cutting green house gas emissions.

- In Prague we visited the excellent Science and Technology Museum(National Technical Museum) which has a wonderful collection of very early cars, bicycles, motorcycles, planes and trains. We were fortunate in our visit timing



as the museum has since closed for 2 years of reservations. It is surprising how many vehicles of Czech origin there were at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> C including a 1900 NW 12HP 2 cylinder racing car capable of 90kph (*see right*)



- Driving in Poland is an experience not to be missed! Many drive like there is no tomorrow with drivers on a two lane highway creating a centre suicide lane to pass, whilst making those being passed and the oncoming traffic hug the edge of the road. After a day of this, Frances announced that I had passed my Polish driving test as I was now emulating them – it is a case of when in Rome do as the Romans. To add to the experience the Polish economy is booming which has resulted in a huge increase in truck traffic on an inadequate road system – a consequence of this is that the roads aren't designed to take the wheel loadings and as a result there are two deep furrows in each lane which in turn make moving over to the edge of the road “interesting” as you are approached by a speeding suicide lane driver. There are many signs at the road side, showing in cartoon form, the depiction of cars being thrown off the road by the deep furrows and rough edges – it certainly isn't a place to drive my Model T Ford. I was impressed with the progress that Poland has made since my last visit in 1986 and it will continue to move apace once the new road network, that is under construction, is completed.



- As we entered the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia & Estonia) we felt that we were entering the unknown. Even though their gross national product per head of population is only around 50% of the EU average, we were surprised to find an abundance of new vehicles in the major centres and generally good road networks without the frenetic Polish driving conditions. When I say new vehicles, a significant proportion of them were what we would regard as luxury – BMWs, Mercedes, lots of black Audis, Porsche, including Cayennes, large 4WDs etc. Even in the country areas we didn't see many of the old Eastern Block cars. There is a surprising number of wealthy people in

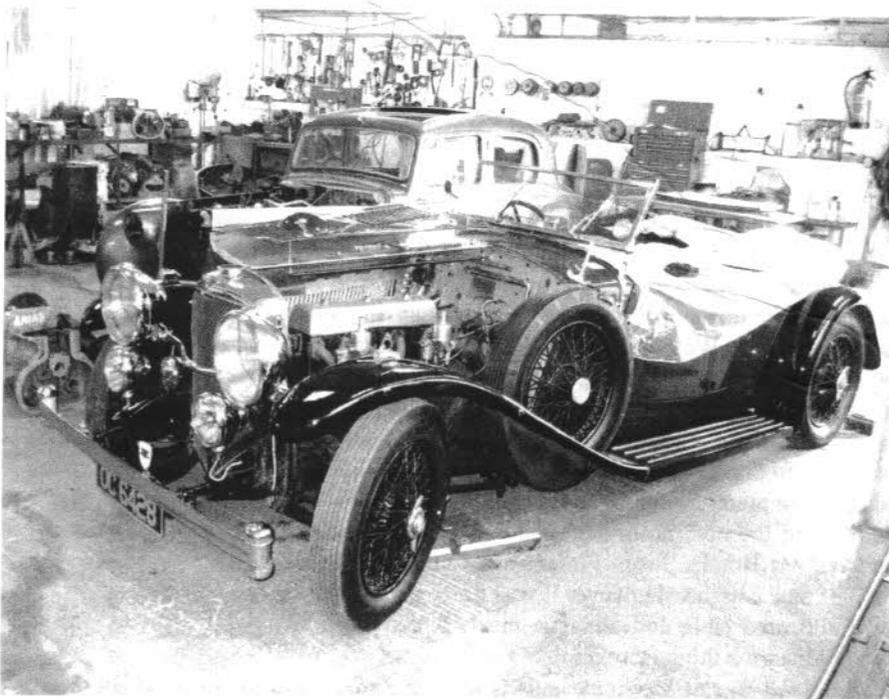
these countries although the general populous has some catching up to do. In Estonia on the Eastern border by a large lake, (the border with Russia passes along the centre of the lake) we entered rustic villages where some Russian Orthodox “Old Believers” live – a bit how I imagine the Amish live in the USA. Whilst feeling like intruders we were slowly driving down the street when I saw a very decrepit moped lying against a house fence – the exhaust didn't connect to the cylinder, there was wire holding various parts together and the cover on the ignition points was missing and the chamber was full of water – it was raining at the time. I stopped to take a photo, but just at this moment a burly young man comes wandering out of the house and to my amazement climbs onto the machine and pedals off – after about a dozen pedals the machine fires up and heads off up the road and around a corner in a cloud of smoke. I only managed to get a photo as it disappeared into the distance – how it ran with water covered points is beyond me. In Riga the capital of Latvia, they have a good and well patronised public transport system – trams and buses. The buses are particularly good: new, modern, articulated and running on gas powered diesels. The other good feature is that you can go a long way for little money. I took a ride to an outskirts forested area and visited another good car and motorcycle museum. From Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, we caught a fast sea cat car ferry to Helsinki.



- Driving in Helsinki proved to be a little challenging as there was a G8 conference (or something similar). The road network and the public transport systems were awry, which makes the recent Melbourne experience appear like a picnic. We headed out of Helsinki quickly and decided to visit elsewhere, coming back to Helsinki later. However on the excellent Finnish roads we were amazed at the huge density of speed cameras. You are constantly on the lookout for them. They have warning signs up saying that there are speed cameras in the next so many kms – sometimes you see them and sometimes you don't. You appear to be no sooner out of one speed camera zone when you are warned that you are entering another. This is just like Britain which is bristling with speed cameras on most of the non motorway roads. We hadn't realised how lucky we are in Victoria – just don't tell Mr Bracks. From Finland we caught a ferry to northern Germany. This took a day and a half and 2 nights. However it was more like a cruise, with very comfortable facilities, your own allocated table and fantastic meals which were all part of the package – the Tasmanian ferry could learn a thing or two.
- Once in Germany we dashed off to the Jutland area of Denmark and visited some of the coastal areas where there are long sandy beaches on which cars, land yachts and other wind powered vehicles were allowed – the weather was beautiful and everyone was having a great time. We then headed back to Hamburg and in doing so we passed over the enormous North East (Kiel) canal which was built in the late 19thC – a huge earth moving and construction exercise done at a time when they didn't have the powered equipment that we have now. The canal saves shipping from northern Germany having to go all the way around Denmark in order to get to the Atlantic. On peering over the side of a bridge we saw a small yacht going in one direction whilst a couple of tugs and then some huge sea going container vessels were heading in the other direction.
- It was then off to Utrecht in Holland to pick up our boat for a 2 week cruise on the canals. On the way, in Germany in particular and also in Holland to a lesser extent we passed forests of wind generators. We looked to see if there were large piles of dead orange bellied parrots beneath them but we could not see any dead birds of any description, even

though lots of migrating birds pass this way. We did see however, quite a number of contented cows and sheep sleeping and grazing directly beneath the blades. I find the turbines quite attractive as they lazily rotate and so feel that some Victorians are a bit precious when they mount their protests against them. If you are content, as we and our friends from Chile are, to move fairly slowly whilst enjoying the countryside and beautiful towns and cafes, then I can thoroughly recommend hiring a canal boat. In the 2 weeks we covered around 350km, passing under many lift bridges, but in flat Holland, not many locks. At times we had to mix it with the big boys on the main commercial canals and this was like being on a bucking bronco as their wash buffeted us – it adds a bit of excitement. We moored in Amsterdam on a couple of occasions in our figure of 8 circuit and stayed for 4 nights. Mooring is an interesting exercise in a tightly packed marina, however it is made easier when the boat has bow thrusters installed, as ours did. Navigating our way on foot around the cities, especially Amsterdam, is a hazardous exercise as the enormous number of bicycle riders are a law unto themselves. You may well have a green light on a car pedestrian crossing, but heaven help you if you then step out onto the adjacent, parallel bike path as there is no way the bike riders are going to slow or stop. The bike riders have the car drivers bluffed. We moored and stayed the night in Edam and whilst we were sitting in an outside courtyard of a canal side café drinking a large beer, a man drove by in his partially restored 1915 T Ford. I quickly placed the beer on the table, jumped up and chased down the street after him, shouting stop. This he did and I introduced myself and then hopped on board and he drove me to his home and then kindly brought me back to my beer. It turns out that he is preparing the car for the 2007 (genuine 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary re-enactment) of the Peking to Paris. He has his car well sorted and he gave me his web site so that I will be able to follow his progress. We visited the Aalsmeer flower market, where 22 million cut flowers and plants are auctioned each day. The undercover floor area is 1 million sq. m and it employs 2,000 people. The blooms and plants are transported on multi level wheeled trolleys hooked up train like and towed along by little motorised tugs (there are lots of these trains like aircraft luggage tugs and trolleys but on a thousand fold scale curving around all over the place). It is a form of organised mayhem with flowers going everywhere, through the auction rooms and then onto the distribution bays. And just to complicate things, messengers thread their way through the trains of flowers on their bicycles – besides the sight of wonderful bright fresh cut flowers, the whole exercise is mesmerising. Later we were sitting on our boat in Gouda when we found we had a free Wifi broadband connection for our little laptop computer that we had with us. Our niece had sung with a choir in a national competition and we were able to log onto the ABC and listen to the choir on an ABC pod cast recording – perfect reception and at no cost.

- We had 10 days in the UK and hired a Renault Scenic which is very similar in concept to the Citroen Picasso. This was a long wheelbase seven seater model and had better road holding drivability than the Picasso. However it only had a 1.6L petrol engine which was quite inadequate. You really had to rev it out to make it go and it had no lugging performance. It made the 1.6L turbo Diesel Picasso seem powerful. Also for a similar range of driving conditions it



only returned about 9L per 100Km (about 50% more fuel consumption). Driving in the UK generally is a pain as you are all the time slowing for towns and villages or trying to find your way around cities which now have restricted access and bus lanes only to the place you want to go. Also they still use miles which seem to take for ever and when you want to get on a bit of spurt there is another wretched speed camera sign. At least in England the drivers are courteous when you wish to blend and our Australian drivers could learn a thing or two. We drove into Wales and visited the Simpsons at Earley Engineering and saw a wonderful collection of Alvis cars – some in resplendent condition and others in need of work - major in some cases. We just missed seeing the Tonkins, but texted them on their phone whilst they were driving in Cornwall in their mystery acquisition Alvis. Also drove to Kenilworth near Coventry to Red Triangle to purchase a few small Alvis parts, for the Speed 25 restoration, at

extortionate English prices. As we were on the outskirts of Coventry we decided to pay a visit and show my mother the historic cathedral remains. This is the most diabolical city to drive around where you can see where you want to go but can never get there due to continual circular roads, pedestrian malls and bus lanes. In the end we gave up and didn't get to see the cathedral.

- Our final country was China – it is a wonderful place and the people are fantastic, in that that they have respect for their elders and have tolerance for others. Our first stop was Beijing which is fairly typical of other cities that we visited. With the advent of some prosperity and the adoption of Western consumerism there is a significant car ownership (car club membership in China is high, for those that have cars and also for those that aspire to own a car – many of the clubs are one make clubs based on the current models of cars) interfacing with the traditional bicycle and rudimentary

motorised vehicles. The cars and motorcycles are all modern (it is no use going there to look for veteran cars) and are mostly of Japanese and European design. However whilst you are seeing Hondas, Volkswagons, Peugeots, Citroens, Mercedes, and Fords, which appear to be the latest Japanese and European imports, this is not the case as 95% of China's vehicles are manufactured under licence in the country. The roads and streets are well delineated, with white lined lanes, controlled intersections and lane separation between cars and bicycles. However when it comes to intersections it is amazing to watch the interaction between the cars, bicycles and pedestrians. The pedestrians may have the green walking man sign but this doesn't stop the cars and bicycles coming through the line of pedestrians. You just have to get used to the fact that you keep walking, knowing that the cars and bicycles won't hit you and that they will weave their way around you. Also you see some incredible bicycle manoeuvres as they thread their way through and around the cars, trucks and buses. Also it is common place to see cars on a 3 or 4 lane road, drivers deciding that they are in the wrong lane and then immediately move across lanes, with indication, to the lane that they want to be in. This is all achieved, without drama or accident because the Chinese people are generally tolerant and courteous. Their driving habits would not work in Australia, as generally Australians are intolerant and do not know how to blend and give way to others. The road systems in China are generally very good and up to date, but in the cities struggle to cope due to the volume of traffic. It is going to be difficult for them to keep ahead of the expansion of vehicle ownership. Whilst Beijing is well advanced with the preparation of the Olympics venues, traffic congestion is going to be a major issue. Beijing, like other cities has a good taxi network (very reasonably priced and easy to use if you have your destination written in Chinese script) and also a good underground metro system, however the infrastructure supporting the metro is lacking as there is little in the way of automated access via escalators etc and if you are disabled then it would prove very difficult to get around. We travelled from major centre to major centre by domestic airlines. These are all equipped with late model planes, supported by modern airport facilities. The only problem I had with the planes is that the Chinese people are generally of smaller stature than me and so the seats are close together and leg room is a problem. The buses we travelled on were all modern and of high standard. We travelled a 600km length of 4 lane highway from one airport to the Yangtze River on a bus and it was interesting to note that the highway was divided by armour rail for its entire length – great for BHP I assume. Also there were regular signage advising drivers to maintain their distance from the vehicle in front and also to ensure that seat belts were worn. In some of the cities and towns I was fascinated with the rudimentary 3 wheeled bicycles that had a small engine buried in the frame to assist the rider. The load that these vehicles carried was incredible. There were also other 3 and 4 wheel truck type workhorses powered by single cylinder diesel engines which were water cooled, but in the manner of the old stationary engines which had a cast iron water reservoir around the cylinder – no radiator or circulating system, only steam rising from the surface of the water. We saw some incredible loads of new tractors/machinery being transported on trucks/semis – they seemed to get away with it but our OHS and laws wouldn't allow it. The Yangtze and other major rivers are main transport routes, with constant shipping traffic conveying raw products, such as coal from mines in the walls of the Yangtze valley through to manufactured goods from inland manufacturing cities. The new dam on the Yangtze has incorporated a huge dual lock system which will allow each lock system to pass 50 million tonnes per annum. In addition there is a 3,000 tonne ship lift system which can pass the smaller ships across the dam without them having to clog up the lock system. All this large scale shipping contrasts with what we saw on the Li River when we were on one of the 100 + tourist boats per day navigating the river. We saw traders and water taxis using rafts made from 5 to 10 bamboo logs lashed together. These are very effective and glide with little freeboard on the surface of the river. The bamboo logs are about 150mm in diameter and have naturally occurring diaphragms located periodically along their length to maintain buoyancy. Bamboo is a fantastic material as it can be used for boat building, scaffolding, structural members, for decorative purposes and for nourishment (eating). In China's largest city, Chong Qing, (32 million people) traffic flow is generally good as it is hilly and hence no bicycles and also they have built a lot of motorways and flyovers whilst eliminating intersections and traffic lights. The last significant transport highlight for us was in Shanghai when we caught the Maglev train from the eastern side of the river to the international airport. This train is run by computers and is driverless. The 32km trip took 8 minutes and within a few minutes from departure we reached the maximum speed of 431kph. As you can imagine the curves are heavily banked to compensate for the side thrust. However it is very smooth and it is remarkable how clear the scenery is even when travelling at this speed. We were only at 431kph for 30 seconds and then the train starts to decelerate. It is a strange feeling because when it has slowed to around 300kph you felt as though it was crawling and you could step out. The most dramatic occurrence was when the returning train on the parallel line passed us. There was a tremendous jolt and whoosh as the air was compressed between the 2 trains. As the closing speed between the trains was in the order of 700kph the jolt effect was only momentary.

Well I hope this transport theme of our recent trip has been of interest . It certainly proved to be a fascinating aspect for us.

- Andrew McDougall

## No. 40: 1939 Alvis Speed Twenty-five Saloon

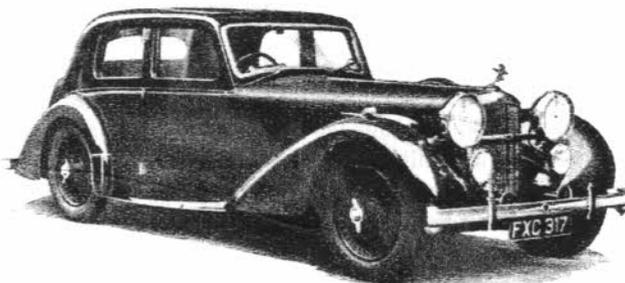
Price, new : £885	Acceleration data : (see text).	Petrol consumption : 15-18 m.p.g.	Speedometer reading : 62,891.
Secondhand : £795		Oil consumption negligible.	Car first registered April, 1939.

**N**OSTALGIA for the "real cars" of pre-war days reaches a new height after as little as a few yards' motoring in a car like the Alvis Speed Twenty-five, because it embodies nearly all the important pleasures that were enjoyed by the vintage motorist without letting driver or passengers feel that they are doing without modern improvements. True, this big, powerful car normally seats four instead of five or six, but it does it in very luxurious comfort.

When reflecting on the merits of the best pre-war designs it is necessary to picture older cars as they were when new, but with this car the overall condition was so outstandingly good that comparison was made very easily. (Additionally, the model has always been acknowledged as one of Alvis's finest.) The car, supplied for test by Guy Salmon Automobiles, Ltd., Portsmouth Road, Thames Ditton, Surrey, had well polished black cellulose, good chromium plating, a long bonnet and massive P100 head lamps. The interior, finished in brown, had excellent appointments and very comfortable air cushion seating.

The 3½-litre three-carburettor engine always started instantly and even when cold would quickly pull powerfully and smoothly. The clean and beautifully made engine was remarkably free from mechanical noise, and the synchromesh (on all four gears) remained "unbeatable." Although the car would pick up well from low speeds on top gear the performance became really exhilarating when the gears were used. Indeed, the number of cars built today that can better this Alvis in sheer performance is very limited, and this is despite the considerable weight of the coach-built body.

The steering, lower-g geared than might be guessed from experience of handling the car, was quite reasonably light and was certainly accurate. The suspension, despite the passenger comfort already mentioned, combined with the accurate steering to



make the car safely capable of high speed work on winding roads ; and all the time the power of the servo-assisted brakes gave complete confidence.

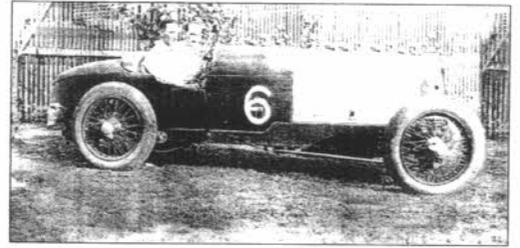
Sole mechanical fault was in the clutch. This did not affect normal, open road driving, but, accentuated by the weight of the car, slip occurred when starting from rest with maximum acceleration. For this reason accurate acceleration figures were not taken, but as a guide it may be said that the model when tested in 1938 climbed to 30 m.p.h. in 4.7 sec, 50 in 11.1 sec, 60 in 15 sec and 70 in 21.9 sec.

Accessories and instruments were comprehensive, and controls included a hand throttle and over-riding advance and retard. The one-shot lubrication system appeared to be working perfectly. To sum up this Alvis it must be recorded as one of the most outstanding cars, in the way it had been maintained, yet to be included in this series, and the driver's view of the classic bonnet, with wings and lamps carving their way along the miles, is bound to thrill the enthusiast and provide an enviable feeling of well-being and security.

# SWAP, BEG, BORROW or STEAL

## FOR SALE

1928 FA FWD. Engine # 7598 Chassis # 7035  
Licence to build a serious car for serious money.  
Ring Geoff Hood (03) 9842 2181



## WANTED

Required for 1934 Silver Eagle SF 16.95  
Coil type Rotax Q.12. Also used on Firefly type SA and SB  
6 cylinder distributor type Rotax DF.6A. Also used on the Silver Eagle SG  
Contact: David Head) 52 76 1223

## FOR SALE

Having moved on from 14HP models, I have some bits and pieces that are surplus to my requirements and may be of assistance to another member.

**TA14**  
Radiator badge—rechromed and re-enamelled—excellent condition suits 3-litre also. Best offer over \$100  
Gearbox Complete with housing, remote gear shift, all gears, shafts, etc in good condition, Dismantled and requires new bearings. Inards are the same as 3-litre  
Best offer over \$200. Bargain  
Door locks 2 One brand new. Window winder handle 1. Door Handle Exterior—non locking, want replating 5. Striker Plate for door locks 4, 2 want repairs, all want plating. Escutcheon for interior handles 7 suits 3 litre also. Handle for sunshine roof includes screw.  
All offers considered for the last 5 items.  
Robert Graham 03 9571 3886

## WANTED

BTH CED6 magneto. Please contact  
Joe Marsden,  
11 Kotuku Place,  
Matua,  
Tauranga 3110, N.Z.  
Member ACCV  
Phone 00 64 75769416, e-mail janemar@e3.net.nz

## WANTED

Wanted, Tall 12/50 or Silver Eagle radiator, core condition not important. Shell (measured at the back), 425mm wide x 675 high (core 370 x 548mm). Can swap for a standard 12/50 radiator if required (~25mm shorter).  
Contact Dale on 03 5968 5170 or 0428 832 126

## FOR SALE

1936 3½ litre 25.63 Pillarless Sedan - rare Bertelli body

Car # 17827 Chassis # 13115 Engine # 13566

Price A\$200,000

Contact: David Caldwell

Phone: 9729 5821



## FOR SALE

Good home needed for chassis and body tub including doors from TA21 saloon serial no 24236. The chassis is in excellent order having been stripped, derusted and repainted. I am unlikely to ever get around to restoring the car due to the sheer economics, so if there is someone out there who can use these items, please contact Mike Osborne on 08 88373158 (Ardrossan, SA),  
email: [ozbornes@internode.on.net](mailto:ozbornes@internode.on.net)

### ALVIS SPARES CONSORTIUM

### FOR SALE

Several hundred spares for various ALVIS models are offered for sale to Australian owners. Most items have been used and their serviceability and price is listed in 5 catalogues.

Electronic catalogues by email are free.

Printed copies will be posted at cost.

Email requests to [jdmelang@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jdmelang@bigpond.net.au)

Phone : John Lang (03) 5426 2256 for printed copy

*(The ASC is a consortium of ACCV members who have secured these spares as a job lot with the intention of selling them at fair price, initially and briefly to Australian Alvis owners and then to the wider car community.)*

### 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 ( [northeys@westnet.com.au](mailto:northeys@westnet.com.au), or 2 Orrong Rd, Elsterwick, Vic 3185).

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