

### 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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#### AUGUST 2007



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Front page: Carol Remfrey stands beside the 12/70 Special

## Presidents Report:

Late last month we had a run organized by Darryl and Joc Horton which took in the Mornington Peninsula and environs ending at Sorrento where we enjoyed a very good lunch at the Sorrento Pub. It has changed a lot since John White used to attend veteran car club rallies to Sorrento where one could actually stay the night and I can still recall the swinging soap dispensers that were affixed to the wall in front of the hand basins in the Gents bathroom, amazing the things one keeps locked away in one's brain all these years!

Getting back to Darryl and Joc, It was their first go at organizing a run, and what a great job they both did. If this run is anything to go on, I can certainly recommend going on any others they choose to organize. Where are we

It does amaze me that with the numbers of members we have in and around Melbourne, that we can only entice the so called "regulars" on our events. Of course if we didn't have them, then we would indeed be in trouble but looking through the membership list there are indeed some very well known names and faces who have not appeared on a club run for many years. I know most of them fairly well, two of which are architects and another I employ occasionally to steer my racing car. No names no pack drill. "How are you Steve?"

Last weekend I spent cleaning out my garage. This is a regular occurrence but every so often I have a major clean out. This was the result of loosing three circuit testing devices. Most people own one, or at the most two. I own three which means that at some stage I lost one, bought another and then lost it and then after a past major clean up found them again. This time all three went missing and half way through my clean up found all three in the toolbox of

Having three old cars means I try hard to have three separate tool kits, one for each car but sometimes the rules of mice and men goes astray and I get totally out of control. I have been known to have three toolboxes in the one car on at least one occasion which was quite embarrassing although I didn't need to use them.

I could do a Frank Mornane and take four sizes of adjustable spanners, small, medium, bit bigger than medium and large for all applications. This would certainly solve a space problem.

One of the best marketing ploys was the company that provided a set of Allen keys that swiveled off a large ring. This made things a lot easier to operate and one wasn't continually losing them to the bottom of the toolbox or

Look forward to seeing you at Rob-Roy in August, you may even get to see some Alvic members you haven't seen in years, Mr.Burns and Sands "are you there?"

CM

## This Friday PRESENTATION NIGHT ROUGH RED & PIE NIGHT

\$5 per head

#### THE GRAPEVINE

Our South Australian correspondent advises that the TA14 DHC that was for sale at Rainsford Classic Cars has been sold and is on its way to Marble Bar. Let's hope it is one of the colonial models with a huge radiator! Marble Bar is supposedly the hottest place in Australia! (if not the world)

APOLOGIES FOR THE POOR STANDARD OF PRINTING ON THE COVER OF THE JULY NEWSLETTER. THE ORIGINAL OBVIOUSLY SUFFERED SOME REPRODUCTION PROBLEMS. THIS COVER WILL BE BETTER OR I

#### REMINDER

## "BENDIGO BOOGIE"

22-23 September

11 units have been booked at the Goldfields Motor Inn for the night of 22 September.

You will need to ring them on 5441 7797 before 1st September to put your name against a room, as any remaining rooms will become available to the public from that date.

The run will depart to the North of Melbourne and finish up in Bendigo after some interesting country driving through beautiful Victoria

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Have just been reading Ray McKenzie's account of the marathon rebuild of his Firefly. He is to be commended for this on a number of grounds which should serve as encouragement to us all.

First for his persistence and constancy. It must have been very tempting at a number of stages during his ownership to have given up all thought of returning it to a functioning roadworthy vehicle, and to have put all those boxes out on the nature strip for the next hard rubbish collection. We should also tip our lids to his family who had to put up with Dad's dreams while these boxes disappeared deeper into the cobwebs and darkness under the house. No doubt they thought that if it made the Ol' Man happy then at least it was a harmless fantasy and they wouldn't insist on him getting rid of all that junk. And as each new depressing discovery was made (bent chassis, rotten timber, missing and broken bits) he never lost sight of his goal, searching, fettling, repairing, and fabricating until it was complete.

Secondly, the decision to retain the Martin & King saloon coachwork is highly laudable. When he examined it closely it must have been very tempting to think of scrapping the whole, and constructing a simple lightweight racy 2 seater with some steel tube, an alloy body, and aero screens. The time and effort in restoring a saloon is orders of magnitude greater than this, and Ray deserves abundant praise again for his persistence. My personal view is that it is unconscionable to destroy original saloon coachwork without exploring every option for retaining its integrity. I feel that as a club we should strongly encourage fellow members faced with this decision to resist the destruction of original coachwork where it is at all possible. And thirdly we have in our midst a renowned world expert (witch doctor?) on the ENV 75, and that is a

Congratulations Ray, and may you enjoy many happy miles in a proud and noble motor car.

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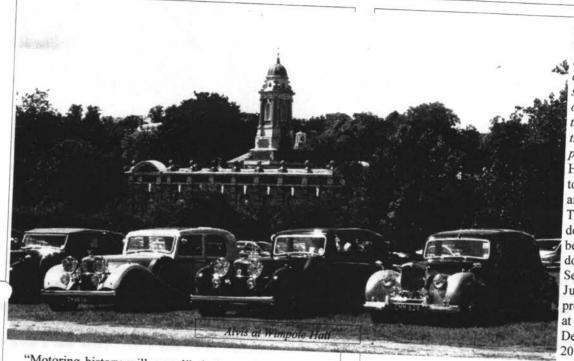
#### Dear All,

from this photos include with some to quick email Just Sunday. We had the display on on cars about 150 and there great Bentleys expensive work very of lots who Wood & A good Tony Cox on by talk was great there Also Rolls we of display on them of 6 there were and Racing Alvis straight his projects restorations Tony's were Also these. get to see them when will wheel drives - photos of these as well. You Fireflys 183 20's Speed 182 photos and display day main Sunday was have Anniversary. 75th their makes featured for were These be to Library. It was the go will into which programme the copy he Storrar Chris Alvis owners. UK number of the meet able you send going his is and event the article on writing will be The car. Badge on Alvic his Chris has put Also Alvic. John about the excited very be to seem Australia all to coming ones trip.

The McDougalls

### INTERNATIONAL DISPLAY, WIMPOLE HALL Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> JULY 2007

## 75 YEARS of the SPEED TWENTY and FIREFLY



"Motoring history will very likely be made by the latest Alvis design, the Speed Twenty, for many people will consider it to be the most attractive all-round car yet produced by the sound British engineers who are responsible for the activities of the company." So announced "The Autocar" as the introduction to its review of the new car in their January 15<sup>th</sup> 1932 edition.

There are those, including good friends, who may be inclined to disagree. However, I write as one of the fully converted. For beauty of looks and sheer driving pleasure, there can be few cars to compare. Allied to the sound robust engineering of all Alvis products, a truly great car had arrived. The new long low look was a landmark in Alvis history.

The story of the introduction of the Speed Twenty has been chronicled well in Nick Walker's "Alvis Speed Models in Detail" to which I give acknowledgement for much of the below and elsewhere. Everybody should have a copy of Nick's book in their party bag. However, it is such an interesting story that a brief resume may be of interest, particularly in terms of the speed of the car's introduction and of the great things which followed. These days, even with all the "Japanese Concurrent Engineering" techniques we practise, the introduction of a new car model takes years. The Speed Twenty took weeks.

Alvis had just weathered the turn of the decade depression which had killed off so many rival car manufacturers, by the revival of the trusty 12/50 and the development of the Six into the Silver Eagle, with a 20 HP model proving satisfactory on test.

Charles Follett had recently been appointed London distributor, with strong views on what a modern sporting car should look like. Arthur Varney produced some drawings as a "home job" with a double dropped frame, while Captain Smith-Clarke was away ill. The Captain's response on his return was "It looks like a cheap Rolls-Royce, we'll never

make thing like that!" (Alan Stote informs me that this isn't quite what the Captain said, but we don't want esteemed Editor taken away and shot by the political correctness police, do we?) However, Varney stuck to his guns, perhaps aided by being related to T.G. John. Smith-Clarke does not appear to have been a man who backed down very easily.

Serious work started in July 1931. The prototype was registered at Coventry Motor Tax Dept as VC 9605, "Alvis 20 HP tourer," chassis no. 9184, with engine

number EXP 1-6, on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1931, a mere three months later. The body was by Cross & Ellis, an updated version of the 12/60 four door sports tourer. Even a name had yet to be chosen. Most interestingly, across the front headlamp tie bar, the prototype car bore the legend "Silver Eagle." The prototype was exhibited outside, but not inside, the October London Olympia show, there not having been sufficient time to give notice to the organisers, and on the Scott-Brown stand at Kelvin Hall, Glasgow, in November, where it was referred to as the "Silver Dart."

Referral was made elsewhere to "the new 20HP Sports Alvis," and it was not until Board Minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> December that the name "Speed Twenty" is referred to. Interestingly, the Van den Plas Order Book continued to refer to "Alvis 20 HP 4-seater sports for Chas Follett" or similar, up to chassis 9803 in May 1932, which they finally acknowledged as a Speed Twenty (Saloon straight backed). By then they had bodied ten previous "Speed Twenty" cars, (and one lone 12/50), beginning with chassis 9335 in Jan. 1932, and including 9801 and 2. These comprised six 4-seater Sports, two Saloons, one special Sports Saloon, and one Sports Coupe.

The rest is history. 26 cars, with chassis numbers between 9184 and 9455 were produced, with flat radiators, before the first series production of 100, chassis 9801-9900 appeared in 1932, with the familiar pointed radiator. The launch was in a difficult business climate, but thanks to Follett's enthusiasm and the obvious merit of the car, increased production numbers per annum were achieved.

The car was advertised as "An entirely new sports car. A genuine 100 M.P.H. Chassis, (which may have been a little generous for standard cars), a car – made by enthusiasts, sold by enthusiasts - to enthusiasts." Although the factory had withdrawn from racing, notable Brooklands performances were put up by Gerald Dunham and Charles Follett. Dunham had a particularly lengthy Brooklands and elsewhere

career in his 2511cc Speed Twenty, lapping at 112.93 mph in 1938, with an estimated 117 mph down the Railway Straight, before moving to his new 12/70 racer in 1939 (with acknowledgement to the recent Bulletin articles of the much missed Julian Collins. The 12/70 car, now with the Speed Twenty engine, and still in the Dunham family hands, was included in the Tony Cox/Red Triangle racing cars display during International weekend).

Catalogued bodies by Cross & Ellis and Charlesworth were selected, with Charles Follett buying chassis to be bodied by his choice of coachbuilder, Van den Plas. Price was £695 for the Cross & Ellis four seater sports rising to £865 for the Van den Plas drophead and saloon. Independent front suspension, synchromesh gearboxes and larger engines appeared later, with four variants SA and SB (2,511cc, the latter with ifs and synchro) and SC and SD (2,762cc).

The synchromesh gearbox was possibly a world first on all four gears on a production car. The last car was despatched in April 1937. In all, 1,164 were built, the last chassis no. being 13325.

Owning an SA, but having driven later cars, the most recent being John Hetherington's SC tourer in Shepparton, Victoria, Australia in November last year (thanks, John, for trusting me with your pride and joy), it has impressed me how much development took place and how much the character of the car changed during its production. The SA still has a definite raw vintage character in noise, feel and manners, if not in looks. The later cars seem much quieter and smoother, with a definite post vintage feel. Less sporting to my mind, but more luxurious, aimed at a slightly different clientele perhaps when new. This is reflected in the higher proportion of tourers in the earlier cars.

The total range of coachwork was diverse, although 1,021 of the 1,164 cars made carried one of six types of catalogued coachwork, albeit with great differences between individual cars. A table follows (again courtesy of Alvis Speed Models in Detail).

I was delighted we were able to field examples of each of the six types of catalogued coachwork, plus one "bespoke" car.

We were fortunate in having one of the very first cars,



Chris Davis' Cross & Ellis flat radiator tourer chassis no. 9431, complete with motoring dog, together with one of the very last, Steve Horne's Charlesworth DHC chassis no. 13318. There was one "non catalogued" car, Peter Lakin's unique Carlton DHC 10190, which was particularly welcome. Peter entered two cars in the display, the other being his Firefly, driven down from Cheshire by Chris Taylor.

By coincidence, the day turned out to be the exact 75th birthday of Tony Cropper's car chassis 9886, this having a factory despatch date of 8th July 1932! There was a good selection of both Van den Plas and Cross & Ellis tourers, including our former Chairman and author Nick Walker's car. To begin with, the display did have a rather SA and Van den Plas biase to it. By late February, I had 13 cars offered, of which no less than 7 were SA, and 10 Van den Plas. Fortunately, by the time the day arrived, the balance had improved somewhat! Whether this is because we Van den Plas /SA boys are more exuberant exhibitionists than the later more refined Cross & Ellis - Charlesworth owner is a point of conjecture!

I was however particularly keen to include a Charlesworth saloon and disappointingly this was still lacking by late April, despite appealing in The Club Calender from March onwards. 461 of these were produced across all years, representing no

less than 40% of Speed a 1 1 In Display TOTAL SD<u>SB</u> SA Twenties sold (and over 50% of cars). SC/D461 137 131 96 Charlesworth Saloon compared to a of 271 total 9 64 23 32 Charlesworth DHC tourers from VDP C & E a n d 12 144 27 41 Cross & Ellis Tourer 64 combined. Surely a few of these 2 125 13 33 51 28 Van den Plas Saloon elegant cars must have survived in 100 5 36 15 44 Van den Plas DHC caring hands and avoided being 8 (incl 3 Replicas) 127 21 6 58 42 Van den Plas Tourer into made tourers? The last 143 7 45 30 61 Other time I had seen one was 1,164 375 289 149 351 TOTAL Angouleme couple of years back, and how 27 6 In Display



well it looked. It is only in recent years that they seem to have "disappeared." This is more than just regrettable.

However, a tip off from David Pearce and a phone call eventually resulted in a successful outcome. Michael Harrison, who last year displayed his rare Silver Crest, had recently bought one, chassis 12115. It was not ready, having had carburetion problems and having the steering box checked. However, there it was on the day. Some time afterwards, an e mail from our main weekend sponsor Nick Simpson of Earley Engineering, resulted in Tarrant Green's 13313, this car having recently passed through Earley Engineering's hands. Then three weeks before the event, a telephone call from Andre Hillebrand in Holland resulted in 13066 joining the party from across the North Sea. This car has been brought back from the USA and repainted and trimmed back in the original colours of blue and grey. On the actual day, we were able to welcome no less than six. For me

these were the Belles of the Ball, the Stars of the Show. And John Ratcliffe's recently acquired Van den Plas saloon was magnificent.

Just as this was settled, a similar situation arose with Van den Plas Drop head Coupes. Having hoped to have Peter Sanders' car, John Martin came to the rescue with 10611 after Peter confirmed his car would not be ready to join us. I am grateful to him, and more about both of these cars later!

The A.O.C marquee featured some interesting displays. Steve Horne had enterprisingly reconstructed a section of the Van den Plas stand of the 1932 Olympia Show. On this stand was featured the exact same car, Robin Bendall's tourer 10029, together with Dick Wenley's Talbot, which is a twin of the actual Olympia car.

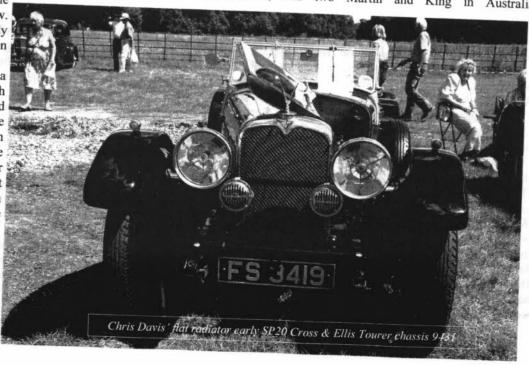
On the other side of the marquee was reconstruction of the Alvis stand at the same show, featuring Derek Tourle's and David Webster's Firefly saloon 9997 and tourer 10565 respectively. (We did have two of the actual Motor Show cars with us on the Sunday, Jack Clover's tourer 9902, and Martin Stonard's DHC 9904).

As if this was not enough, Earley Engineering brought along two Charlesworth saloons, 13075 in as found unrestored condition, and Peter Barrett's

13067 beautifully restored. Nick Simpson tells me that the condition of this car was even worse than 13075 before restoration. Earley Engineering also brought along Nick's own SA Van den Plas tourer, 9802, the second car of the first series production batch, together with Mrs Whitehead's Firefly DHC, 10210 and John Ratcliffe's unique and original "Fire-Eagle" Sixteen saloon 10301, both of which look for new custodians.

I have written in the Bulletin before about the importance of valuing original coachwork, and recommended we adopt a similar policy to the Alvis Register regarding replicas and conservation, before it is too late. Only three SA Speed Twenty saloons remain in UK, one Charlesworth, one Mayfair and one Van den Plas (which was in the display). Charlesworth alone made 96.

There are another three overseas, a second Mayfair in Scandinavia, and two Martin and King in Australia



(confirmed by SA Speed Twenty Model Secretary Nick Simpson).

As Simon Fisher notes later on, the survival of Firefly saloons is even poorer. I hope that the three East Anglia International Displays and my subsequent write ups may have raised awareness somewhat. It seems the horse has bolted far enough!! It was therefore a welcome postbag just before the event to receive Nick Simpson's Policy Statement on behalf of The Club, which has obviously been carefully considered. It has been such a long while coming. Some people may nit pick at the detail, but the message is clear. As I wrote two years ago, why do we continue to welcome those who destroy our cars?

One car in the display I will make special mention of is John Martin's SA Speed Twenty chassis 10611, carries Van den Plas DHC coachwork, which has had a very full restoration, I understand by the previous owner Chris Banham, from a condition many would consider beyond reclaim, including a new ash frame.

There are two further SA Speed Twenty DHCs in the Club which I came across in the course of assembling the display, although unfortunately not available on the day, which warrant our attention. Richard Booth's 10186 and Peter Sanders' 10057. Both started life as Van den Plas DHCs. Richard's car once carried replica tourer coachwork, whereas Peter's has been off the road a long while and the body apparently gone beyond reclaim.

I admire the way that both owners have painstakingly reconstructed a copy of the original, rather than the easier option of retaining or building another replica tourer. Peter tells me he has used the discarded ash frame of John's car as a template. I have met Peter on several occasions recently and Peter has crawled all over my car in an effort to get details right. When we met in January, Peter was still at it and not far off completion and it will be a welcome sight to see the car for the first time on the road.

As mentioned above, I had earlier hoped to have this car in the International display, particularly as up to the end of May it was the only car of this body type offered, but we all know the time these projects take and Peter admitted it would not be ready.

During my searches, I came across a further notable example of coachwork reclaimation, David Duffy's SB Van den Plas saloon, 11910. This has had the roof chopped off, (yes, I can believe it!), but David is going to the trouble, and no doubt not inconsiderable time and expense, of restoring the car as it should be. In addition Helen, Elspeth, Andrew and I had the pleasure of meeting Andrew and Frances McDougall, attending International from Melbourne, Australia. Andrew has recently rescued a rough late Speed 25 from Queensland and intends to restore it keeping the Charlesworth saloon body intact. Three cheers for all these owners.

I have very much enjoyed planning and managing the three EA Region International displays, Saloons at Euston Hall in 2005, Rare Coachwork at Houghton Hall last year, aided by John Fox on Grabers, followed by this year at Wimpole Hall with Derek Tourle on Fireflies. Last year's was the most work in preparation and the worst weather on the day, very wet, which I will never forget, but all have been fun. Helen declared that it has been "an obsession". However, as Grandma would say "At least you know where he is, My Dear!" when Dad used to disappear for yet another weekend afternoon fettling the family Riley Nine.

East Region passes the baton on to Scotland next year,

with all good wishes. Thanks to all who have helped, particularly Carl and Wynne Heinlein for help laying out the arena each year, one of those time consuming but vital tasks out of the limelight, and for the public address system and DVD. And thank you to each of this year's owners, whether "six" or "four," some of whom travelled considerable distances to show their car, Derek Tourle, Dave Culshaw for his advice on car details. Nick and Alex Simpson, of Earley Engineering, our 2007 International sponsors, Tony Harding for help with display marshalling, and Steve Horne and the EA team. Simon Fisher in Kenya was particularly helpful, writing to every Firefly owner "expecting them to do their duty" in grand Lord Nelson style, and helping with a write up on Fireflies for the programme. A true International effort

Even the sun made an overdue and welcome visit, and someone must have got his anti-rain dance right. It was also a great pleasure to meet so many friends old and new, including from the Continent, Australia and New Zealand. Helen joined me for the dinners on Friday and Saturday, as well as at Wimpole Hall on Sunday, and I very much enjoyed Nick Simpson's "workshop afternoon" and Tony Cox's racing cars lecture.

I still have my copy of the programme for the 13th National (as it was then) Alvis Day at Crystal Palace, London, on 19th May 1968, entitled Speed Twenty Year. It is sobering to think the cars are over twice as old now as they were then. The organisers included some notable names. Stewards were J. Brownridge and K.R. Day. Clerk of the Course J.C. Stephen. Secretary K.B. Brettell. Chief Marshall B. Ledwith. Concourse Judges D. Michie, P. Moss, R. Simmons (a much missed friend to many), B. Ambler and R.E. Whittindale. Press N. D. Purday, and Speed Twenty write up by G.A. Stickland. At that time, a Speed Twenty was my only car, an SB Van den Plas saloon (Listed as "with special front" in the VDP Order Book). Happily this car chassis 11154 has been well restored in New Zealand by Joe Marsden, including the original body. It was a pleasure to meet Joe and Norma when they visited UK in July 2004, to know the car is in good hands ,and to see photographs as it is now after so many years - I sold it in 1971.

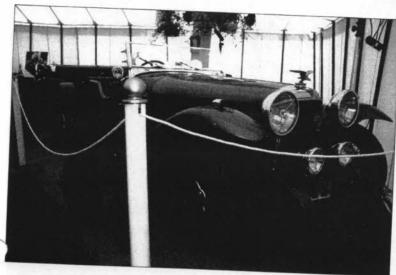
I conclude with a story I have repeated before, but at which John Burnell and I will still be laughing at for many years to come.

My Speed Twenty had been off the road, AWOL in Army terms, for the best part of thirty years, to begin with in a Tyneside lock-up in Rob Ratcliffe's, the previous owner's hands, followed by in my garage, after my purchase in 1987 (In fact three garages. The rebuild encompassed two house moves). This perhaps explains both why it has remained unspoilt and why it was such a protracted lengthy recommissioning. Finally, it was on the road, and I took it round to John's house to show it off. John had also recently got his rare 1927 TG 12/50 six light saloon, of which he is (justly) proud, back on the road after a similarly long absence. Full of the joys, I pointed to the Speed Twenty and declared "John, it's almost as good as a 12/50." To which John replied "Yes, Chris. And almost as fast!!" I should have known better . But what better accolade to the Speed Twenty, a truly great car!!!

Derek Tourle has reminded me that the four cylinder cars are just as interesting. With three in the family, I will not argue. Fireflies were a bit shy coming forward to begin with. We were fortunate in fielding no less than 14 on the day, some unique, and again with examples of each type of coachwork; 3 saloons (all different), 2 DHCs, 1 2/3 seater and

8 tourers, with one of the very first cars, Jack Clover's 9902 (second production chassis), through to one of the last, Michael Woodhouse's 11572. Simon Fisher continues the story in the September ALVIC

Chris Storrar





Above: an FE FWD tourer

Left: Robin Bendall's SA Speed 20 VDP Tourer

## MOTORING MOMENTS

Rob Graham

I think it was 1946 when I passed a fairly rudimentary driving test and received my driving license. In the past 61 years I guess that I have driven more than half a million miles. I am sure that there are many drivers who have exceeded that total but that figure is still a lot of miles. I still think in miles and gallons, not that new-fang-led metric stuff. In all those miles I have had a few motoring moments and this is an account of just three of them.

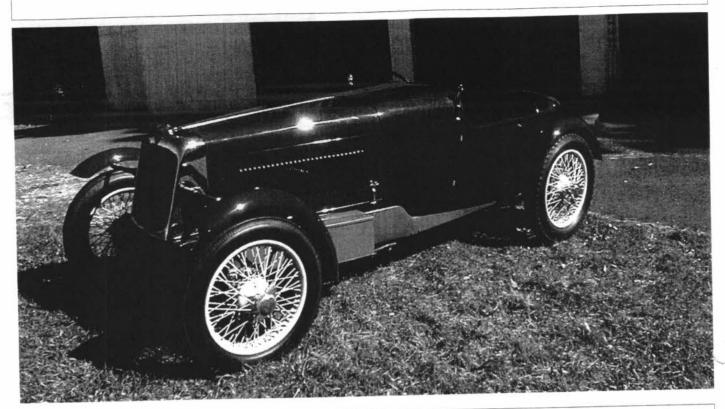
About 1950 a friend and I drove to Mildura, all 356 miles. We had completed our courses at RMIT and had been "gainfully employed" for only ayear or so, hadn't saved any money yet. Don't laugh at this but the car we went in was a 1935 Ford 10 HP Y type saloon cars were still scarce and expensive in those days. In any case, I was driving at the time, it was night-time and dark and there was one brilliant headlight coming towards me, I was flicking the headlights on the Ford up and down, but it didn't make any difference to that blinding light coming towards me. I slowed right down, sea.rching for the invisible left hand side of the road when, at last, this monster headlight passed me. It was a steam locomotive pulling a goods train. The railway line went down the middle of the main street of Wycheproof in those days.

The Calder Highway past Bendigo was either sand or corrugations in those days corrugations like you have never seen. It was daylight now and somewhere near Ouyen ... the right hand rear of the

Ford gave a lurch and we knew something was wrong. We jacked up the back axle, I took my shirt off (to keen it clean) lay on my back in the sand under the car to check the damage when I felt something crawl over my bare arm. Glancing down I saw it was a five inch long centipede) It is amazing how Quickly I got out from under the Ford. We walked to the corner of the paddock where there is always a coil or two of fencing wire, cut off a few feet, went back to the Ford and jury-rigged the back spring shackle which had broken. We crawled into Mildura where the damage was repaired in a garage.

When Bev and I were motoring in the west coast of Scotland near Loch Linnhe, we were early at our destination but not quite sure where to go. I pulled up to ask some youngsters where was this place, the name of which I pronounced as written on the map. I wasn't confident as in the U.K. Bicester is called Bister and. Towcester is Toaster, and this was Scotland. Those young kids cracked up with laughter, though two of them hid their titters behind their hands, the others had to hold on to their push-bikes to stop falling over with laughter. They told me, in their delightful Scottish accents, it was called "Balahulis" and only a couple of miles further ahead. To cap it off, that evening we dined on real Scotch Salmon in a sort of a pie - and that was a meal to remember!

## **PROJECT NEWS**



Des Donnan is a real news editor's friend and sends me regular updates on how his FWD restoration is progressing. This is the latest on what will be a very pretty car on completion.



Back on the road!

Stuart Paton sent me a photograph of his recently completed Speed 20 restoration. 1935 SC model, car # 17075, chassis 13447, engine # 12460. Charlesworth Saloon. Acquired in a very sad state 4 years ago, it has been returned to its former glory.

## **COMING EVENTS**

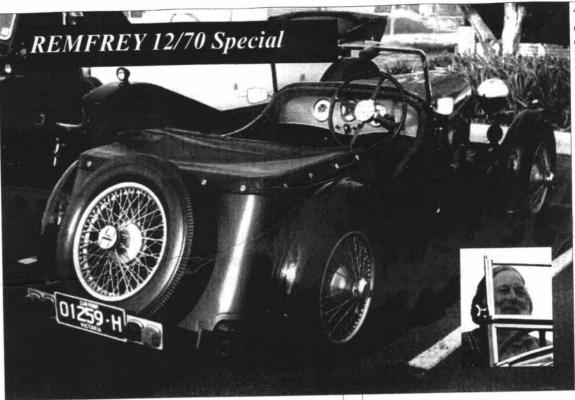
AUG 17 26	General Meeting & Trophy Presentation "Rough Red & Pie Night"  Day Run to take in Rob Roy Hill Climb (organised by the Tonkins)
SEP 21	General Meeting The "BENDIGO BOOGIE" (organised by the McKinnons) See page 3 for details
OCT 19	General Meeting
NOV 2-4	The "BELLARINE BETTER RIPPER FUN RUN" You will stay in downtown Point Lonsdale and experience the wonderful Bellarine Peninsula. (organised by the McKeiger 8.1)
16	Bellarine Peninsula. (organised by the McKaiges & the Langs)  General Meeting
DEC 2	Christmas Party at the Tonkins, Smiths Gully
APRIL 25-MA	AY 4 VDC 50th Anniversary Hub rolly based a 5

APRIL 25—MAY 4 VDC 50th Anniversary. Hub rally based on Ballarat. Vehicle display on Sunday 27th. Invitation to the ACCV to participate in all or some of the events.

#### The JULIAN COLLINS MEMORIAL TOUR 7 Oct - 25 October 2008

Planning for the JNBC Memorial Tour is continuing and it is expected that total and stage costs will be finalised towards the end of the year. What we need now are your Expressions of Interest so that we have adequate accommodation and venue bookings. The closing date for EOI's is 30th September 2007. You are not obligated by the EOI. A deposit will be required in the future and will be refundable until the accommodation suppliers deadline later in 2008. There will of course be a degree of flexibility in regard to late bookings, however we will be unable to guarantee accommodation for you at planned venues. If you need a copy of the EOI please email or ring John Lang (see page 2).





I first became acquainted with this car about eighteen months ago when I was given a very spirited ride by its then owner Bob Blacket around the roads of the National Park that backs onto his property.

Not long after, Bob sold the car to fellow NSW member Ken Swinbourne who used the car sparingly before it was readvertised in Alvibatics in May 2007.

Having had to put up with a Riley 12/4 on Alvis runs, I suggested to Thorpe Remfrey that if he was serious about purchasing an Alvis, then this 12/70 would be the ideal car and that we should at least go and see it.

This was duly organized and just prior to our overseas trip, both he and I flew to Sydney to view the car. After a quick splat around the block, Thorpe decided that this was the car for him and a deal was struck over a cup of coffee.

For those of you not in the NSW club, I will give a brief resume on the history of the car with thanks to Eric Cunningham.

The car dates from 1938 and was fitted with a Mulliner 4 door saloon body. Much of its early life was spent in Victoria and after an accident in 1950, it was rebuilt by Sid Ward (Alvic member at the time) who had a body building business in Castlemaine. Ward built a number of bodies for Alvis cars including the one on my car and one for the ex Alister Cannon 12/50 amongst others. The one body that he will be remembered for is that fitted to the ex Lex Davison Blower Bentley that now resides in Queensland. This body I believe was the last one he made before his death.

David Wischer was the next owner after Ward's death followed by Michael Creagh, the car sporting un-finished bodywork and no doors.

Further owners included Harold Welsh and George Luk before the car went to Sydney to be further fettled by the very competent Norman Webster. It was during Norman's ownership that the body was finally finished, the engine rebuilt and doors fitted.

Norman sold the car to Bob Blacket who breathed even more life into it but with a Front Wheel Drive project on the go as well as maintaining the 12/50, the 12/70 had to find a new owner and the car was subsequently sold to Ken Swinbourne from whom Thorpe acquired it in May.

The 12/70 in Thorpe's hands made its debut at the Hortons "Penninsula Ramble" held on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July.

Deciding to accompany Thorpe, I left my two cars at home and took my position as passenger whilst Carol and Sally went by modern conveyance.

It soon brought back memories of that drive I had with

"Fangio" Blacket that day in Sydney. This is one hell of a motorcar. Below are some of my findings.

I thought after a few miles I would end up numb bum and with sore back due to the height and width of the seats, but this proved incorrect as the seats wrap around giving one of lumbar plenty support and protection. The driving position with the seat back for me was like sitting in a lounge chair. The car has plenty of torque low down and will rev out quite happily. (It should be noted that the 12/70 engine was designed by George Lanchester, the 12/70 manufactured to compete with the likes

of Rover and other medium sized cars of the day.) In "special" form one could have quite a potent car as can be testified by 12/70 actively campaigned at Brooklands by the Dunham family along with their Speed 20.

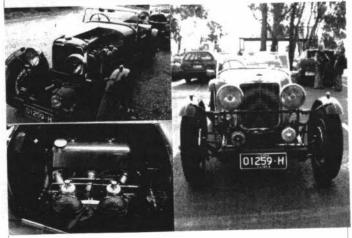
The gearbox is a joy to use and the car will quite happily start off in second gear from a standing start. The dashboard contains original 12/70 instrumentation and isn't cluttered.

The thing that one notices straight away is the effortless steering. Having been accustomed to 12/50 steering which is akin to that of a 3 litre Bentley and the wandering characteristics of a Speed 25, the 12/70 is positive and a delight to use.

Being light, around corners one can easily produce a perfect four wheel drift (as demonstrated previously to me by "Fangio" Blackett) and this was demonstrated equally so by its new owner on more than one occasion.

It was also nice to be able to drive a vintage car without having the top of the windscreen frame forever in one's view, this being a car that you really sit in rather than on.

The brakes are good although could be better, one of the minor jobs on Thorpe's small list but apart from that they work well as does the handbrake.



The suspension is firm but not like the kidney thumping experiences of a TC MG the car riding potholes and various road deficiencies well.

Summing up, this car is what a special should be, a car that has torque, is comfortable and performs well and can be used either for road use, hillclimbs and circuit work if required.

It is a credit to those responsible for putting it together in the first place and I'm sure Thorpe will have many years of enjoyment wearing it out.

Chester McKaige

## Peninsula Ramble

The July run was organized by the Hortons and what a good run it was. Sally and Carol Remfrey decided to go modern leaving Thorpe and I to travel together in the 12/70.

We arrived at the start in Hastings and after a nice cup of coffee at the Pelican Pantry, others began to arrive, the Hortons in their TA21 drop head, and Chris Higgins in the 12/50 tourer. Also aboard a modern were the Hetheringtons along with "the troops" (dogs) and later Frank Mornane in Speed 25. At the morning tea stop we were joined by the Northeys who had set out with Eric Nicholls in his Alvis only to suffer from fuel and oil pressure problems. This was the sum total but it didn't detract from the glorious route that was provided for us. We traveled through coastal resorts that hadn't been visited for years along great Alvis roads many of which were devoid of traffic.

Morning tea was had at Seawinds, originally a privately owned garden now owned by the State Government with

superb views across the Peninsula.

The next part of the journey took us through Flinders and down around Portsea to Sorrento where we had lunch at the Sorrento Hotel. It has changed considerably since I was last there aged two not that I can remember much about it although it was for many years the venue for the two day rally of the Veteran Car Club back in the late 1950s.

Sixteen of us sat down to lunch which was very enjoyable and at around 3.00pm, it was time to head for home with me given the task of driving back the 12/70 which is another story (see elsewhere).

To Darrell and Joc, a great big thanks for putting together their first run and I'm sure it won't be the last because this one will certainly be remembered for just how well it was organized.

## The Peninsula Ramble July 29th 2007

On a morning that was threatened more by the weather forecast than the weather itself, a small crowd of enthusiastic Club folk assembled at the "Pelican Pantry" on the Hastings waterfront to "fly the flag" and blow away the cobwebs.

Those members who arrived not in the know about the most recent addition to the club fleet, came upon a most attractive open car which proudly bore the right name in the right place, quietly relaxing after a not too arduous journey from its new domicile in the great metropolis.

Of course, much interest was shown and discussion entered into before its new keeper secured his magic wandwhich looked awfully like a wooden walking stick to those about-and gently bid those who by then looked like

comprising the assembly, to proceed.

And proceed they did, by way of Somers, Balnarring, Merricks, Shoreham-where they were joined by a certain "black beauty" who had done her best to misguide her occupants from the official start and elected to instead lie in wait for the party to come upon her-and on to Seawinds and Arthurs Seat, where edibles and hot libations were partaken of while waiting for yet more participants who had belatedly decided that the whole affair looked like being a good idea anyway.

It was all downhill from there to Flinders to check on Phillip Island, before ambling along a delightful stretch of coast to Cape Schank and thence on a course which was ultimately to see them engage with the nether regions of the Mornington Peninsula at Sorrento and Portsea, prior to arrival and disembarkation at Hotel Sorrento for luncheon.

The hospitality at that establishment surpassed anything described in Hanne Rayson's novel of the same name and maitre d' hotel THUS lived up to his promise to make Alvis guests welcome.

Those who ate of the shanks were later heard to declare that the organiser of the 'Ramble" would be held responsible for increases in avoirdupois with claims likely to be lodged to offset the cost of the new outfits.

Whatever by hometime everyone was declaring the day most pleasant and the return to its fold of the latest acquisition without being dampened by the elements was assured.

For those who missed out, don't despair—the organiser was heard to say a rerun was a distinct possibility at a time of the year perhaps when the gods do not have to be placated.

"one who was there"



## JUST TOURING AROUND

As you know (by now), Sal and I went to the UK during the month of June to partake in the Brooklands festivities along with the Hetheringtons, Hortons and McDougalls and a good time was had by all.

Our trip started in Paris and after spending four nights there, seeing the sights and sampling the food, we flew to Edinburgh, picked up the hire car and headed to Kelso on the Scottish Borders where we staved near some friends of ours who used to own a 3 litre Bentley. About twenty years ago. John Weatheritt as a project decided to recreate what would have been if David Brown had decided to turn a 2.5 Lagonda into a sports racing car that would have been eligible at Le Mans in Much research work went into the 1949 development of this car and it is truly a wonderful machine. Along with John and his wife Jean we went to The Borders Car Clubs' festival held at Thirlestone Castle situated on the Scottish Borders at Lauder.

We were led to believe that a lot of Alvises would be in attendance but the inclement weather had other ideas keeping many cars away. Having said that, there were ten or so cars to drool over and we were fortunate to meet number of people who had shown interest in our "Tour" next year.

Bentleys were well represented so I was kept busy with the camera, meeting new people and yacking away as one does at these events.

Leaving the Borders behind, our next port of call was to the home of Alvis 12/50 spares guru Mike Hirst and his charming wife Ruth. First things first and we were soon ensconced in the Hirst 12/50 for a magnificent drive around his local area, a trip I will never forget. His car is fitted with all the go faster bits, big port head, twin carburetors and aluminium clutch housing etc and it certainly had hill climbing ability akin to a mountain goat.

Whilst there, we were joined by their friends Phil and Janet Diffey who also own a 12/50.

It was rather sad as a couple of days prior to our arrival they had just buried their son James who was a leading light in VSCC activities campaigning amongst other things a Brescia Bugatti and a MK 1 Lola. Five hundred and eighty people attended his funeral a real testament to this young forty year old who still had much to offer in historical racing.

It was good to examine what's available in the way of spares including the new steering bits for the Speed 20 and new cylinder heads being manufactured for 12/50's.

After two nights with the Hirsts, we bade farewell and headed down to see Nick Simpson at Earley Engineering situated at Abergavenny in

Wales.

Nick made us most welcome and showed us around his workshop and we joined him for lunch with his wife Pat at their local watering hole. It was during lunch that they both insisted we stay the night with them and what a great night it was with much wine consumed and many tales told.

Nick has a huge collection of Alvis material which I was let loose on and I only wished I had more time to digest it all rather than one night with numerous bottles of wine!

Our next Alvis doing was to wend our way to Somerset to stay with Iain and Jane Galloway who are looking after the UK end of the JNBC Tour.

We had only corresponded by email and so it was great to put a face to all the hundreds of emails that had been sent between us in the last twelve months. We all got on like a house on fire and certainly enjoyed their company.

Whilst we were there, lain had organized a two day rally for his section of the AOC and we were fortunate to join in on the dinner on the Saturday night and also the run the following day.

Also staying the night was Martin Boothman, the Chairman of the AOC along with his wide bodied 12/50 so it was great to catch up with him as well.

The next day we set forth to Thirlstone House



in Somerset for the Alvis bash which attracted twenty plus cars including a number of 12/50 saloons, tourers and more modern machinery. It was a great day and again we had the opportunity of meeting some more people interested in coming over here in 2008.

The next day, lain took me to view the



Bovington
Tank Museum
which he has a
passion for
since he spent
many years
cramped like a
sardine in

many various examples doing his bit for Queen and country. My personal guided tour was most rewarding.

As I have a habit of collecting books whilst overseas and then wondering how to get them home, I broke my cardinal rule and bought two books on tanks that came highly recommended by lain. This then led to others I hasten to report.

That night, Iain and Jane entertained four of their neighbors, one of whom was a retired Shakespearean actor who owned amongst other things in a younger life a collection of Delahayes with bodies by Figoni and Sachatouk. Photographs were passed around and one can only boggle at the prices these cars would be worth today and yet back in the early 70s could be bought for a song as indeed they were.

A trip to view the Donnington Collection was also undertaken but as I had been there not so long ago, there were only a few things that I wanted to look at in particular the V16 BRM and the Thinwall Special both cars featuring in my latest tome.

We met up with the Hetheringtons at their abode in Chobham and spent a day visiting Bletchley Park which was the headquarters of the secret intelligence network established during WW2. It became famous after the war as the place where all the secret codes were broken and it was great to see that Alvis was associated with code breaking machinery one of which was on display.

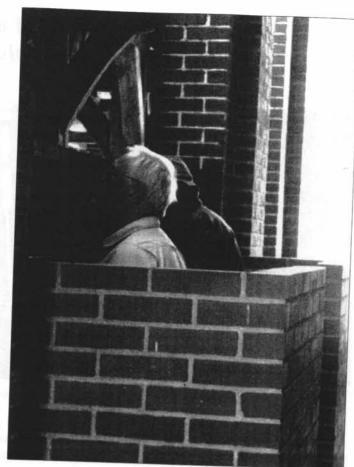


An Alvis code breaker

Our Brooklands caper has been well recorded and I'm not going to ramble on about that suffice to say that a great time was had by all and we left with plenty of great memories and lots of pictures.

The Hetherington and us then went to France and spent five days touring around Normandy visiting the D Day beaches and various museums entwined with eating and drinking.

Thus ended nearly six weeks of indulgence. Good to be home, but if anyone wants to go to Goodwood or Retromobile in 2009, please raise your right hand now.



For those of you who have not been to France - La Pisserie is not a French Restaurant.

(editor's note: my school boy French tells me this should have been Le Pisserie)



Darrell Horton, Jocelyn Coates & Frances McDougall sample some of the local hospitality

# The Story of Millicent Pt 2 Aka Thoroughly Modern Millie

.....Bruce Sharman



Over the years I have restored a number of cars and I have always stripped them down completely and then restored components as I rebuilt them. This time, with the Alvis I have decided to restore the parts as I dismantle them.

So where to start, not an easy decision when faced with a whole car......For some reason I decided to start at the back.

So.....the light box was taken off, back bumper off, and fuel tank out. The boot lid was next and proved to be a mammoth effort to get off. It is held on by 3 hinges. On the boot side the hinges are attached by wood screws into the timber frame. These were corroded to the hinge and much of the slot in them was corroded away, not budging for me. The other part of the hinge was attached to the chassis with 12 long bolts, again all corroded with most of them only being able to be turned a 1/4 of a turn at a time. So with patience and the vision of Millicent "all done" I edged my way through each micro turn and with plenty of WD40 and not a few skinned knuckles the boot lid was off. Now the real fun begins dismantling it!

Did I say fun??? What a pig of a thing it proved to be (no disrespect to piggies intended). Layer upon layer, hardboard, plywood, ash frame, steel skin, steel trim around the edge, rubber seal, all held together with well and truly corroded wood screws. It could have been an onion for the tears it brought to my eyes at each peel!

Now of course it is never your average anything with an Alvis and this boot lid was no exception.

On the TA14 the spare wheel is in the boot lid as well! So first all the mounts for that have had to come out. The boot lid skin, around top and sides, is then folded around a flat steel section which in turn is screwed to the ash frame. All inter related and holding the whole thing together.

So painstakingly I unpeel the layers like an archaeologist – careful and watchful. Finally the ash frame is revealed......it has rotted around the edges......arghhhh too hard. That was the moment when my heart sank just a tad too low.......So the boot lid has been left until I feel braver to face it. Does anyone have any have any tips for peeling the folded metal skin from the inner flat steel bar, without it splitting?? Is there any tool that may help????

Next was the light box. The light box was less of a challenge, revealing itself with the ease of Salome shedding her seven veils. As with all steel parts that I restore each part of it was immersed into my caustic soda bath overnight

which strips all rust, paint and grease off leaving a good surface for painting. (If anyone is thinking of cleaning/stripping parts, this is the way to do it. No messy chemicals, no metal is removed, parts come up like new and ready to paint!!

Beware do not use this for non ferrous metals as it dissolves them).

Once all the old was gone I etch primed it, a filler primer applied to cover any rust pitting, acrylic primed and then sprayed black acrylic outside and white inside. New rubber seals were than made for it from flat rubber strips (ex Clark Rubber) and a piece of new glass was cut. A good second hand red D lens was obtained from Chris Prince in the UK as one was missing. A length of piano wire was obtained from a local hobby supplier to bend into a new lens spring as one of these was also missing. The D lamp surrounds were re-chromed and finally reassembled ready to go back on the car. The light box looks like a new one now, much better than the bent and battered thing it was originally.

Next "cab off the rank" is the petrol tank and its straps were treated in much the same way. The sender unit is still working, but the reserve tank solenoid wasn't, so once again Chris Prince to the rescue with a suitable replacement. The bumper supports and stays were stripped and repainted. The chromed bumpers have been re-chromed. Like most of the chrome on the car they were in reasonable condition. but not quite good enough. I have decided that I will re-chrome all the chrome on the car as it comes apart.

As more parts are taken away the next stage emerges. Time now to strip out the seats and floors of the car. This was reasonably easy apart from the plywood between the backseat and the boot. Once again corrosion caused most of the headaches as this board is held in place by slot headed bolts with

captive nuts. Oh dear more skinned knuckles

hot bath reveals the scrapes of the day and we recall what we got up to!



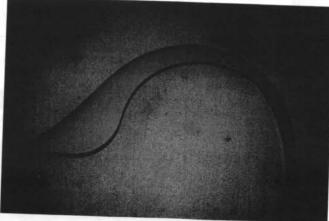
Time to stand back, apply some and aids and plan the next leg of the journey.....

Once the wing was off it was straight into the caustic soda bath to strip the paint and rust to discover the extent of any corrosion, bit like when we were kids after a day out playing and a

The wing had a big dent in it which had been filled in with plastic filler. I

got that filler out quick smart and straightened the wing with hammer and dolly. A few small patches were welded in as needed on the area were the wing is joined to the inner wing. The inner wing itself is going to need a patch welding in along the whole top edge, which will be a couple of inches wide, to replace the corroded top edge and at the same time

installing new captive nuts. Again like being a kid some scrapes just need more than a salve and a band aid.



All the time I have been dismantling I have been looking over the car trying to identify what I would need

in the way of replacement parts and tracking them down on the internet. I want to make the car totally original in every detail. I have found an excellent distributor re-builder in the USA (Jeff Schlemmer. If anyone needs a distributor rebuilt I can't recommend him highly enough. Contact me for his details). He has rebuilt the distributor to as new specification even with a N.O.S. solder type condenser which was mounted on a NOS baseplate. I have managed to track down a N.O.S Lucas B12 distributor, from Cyprus of all places, via Ebay. New internal window frames from the UK via Ebay. An excellent Radiator badge was obtained via the Alvic as the old one was ok but had lost some of the red enamel. I even got an original sales brochure and owner's handbook that surprisingly appeared on Ebay. They had to be mine no matter the cost, so there I was up at 4.00am to ensure I had the best bid at the end of the auction. These now take pride of place in my library.

A new wiring harness has been obtained from the UK (Not Red Triangle) however great disappointment upon receipt as it is only the main harness and dashboard harness. None of the ancillary wiring or connectors were included. To my mind these ancillary wiring bits make or break the final result. Luckily, a local guy here in Perth who does make Lucas wiring harness's to original specifications (not Alvis ones unfortunately) has agreed to make up the extra bits for me. I have laid

out this British made harness but somehow it doesn't look right.....time will tell when I eventually get to fitting it on the car.

As I work through the car I am creating a wonderful array of r e s t o r e d components. The transformation delights me and

even Linda comments that some of the components of the Alvis could stand alone as art pieces. I now have the problem of where to store all these beautifully restored parts without damaging them whilst the rest of the car is made ready. It never ceases to amaze me how much space you need for storing the components of a stripped down car.

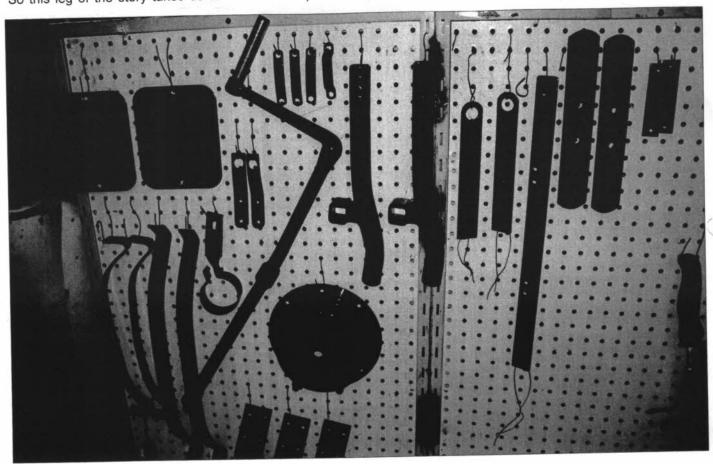
So this leg of the story takes us to

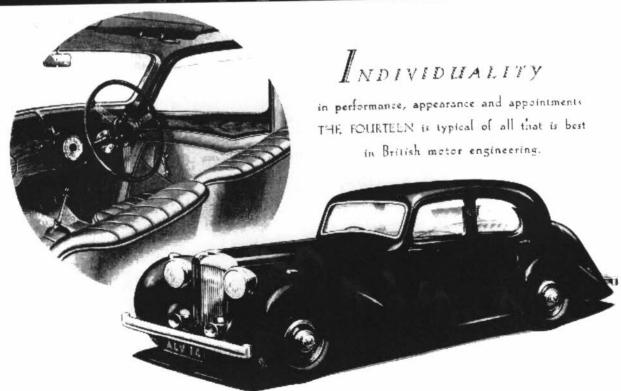
about Christmas 2006.

So much is happening around this time......my 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday in early January, my Father is ill in the UK. so a hurried trip back home in January as well (including a visit to Red Triangle and an exclusive crawl through the BBMF Avro Lancaster)......then plans for a new

business venture starting a car restoration business in Toodyay.....does work on Milly stop???

All this and more in the next exciting episode of Millicent's story!!!!!!!!





# SWAP, BEG, BORROW or STEAL

### FOR SALE

FOR SALE

1951 ALVIS TA21 partly restored.

Original 3 litre engine. Body newly sprayed silver. Red seats and interior lining. Gearbox, radiator etc. Car located in Maiden Gully, engine in Queanbeyan awaiting head gasket for completion of total rebuild.

Clive Buckland, 9 Patricia Court, MAIDEN GULLY 3551 Victoria, Australia.

Ph: +61 (0) 354496127 Mobile: 0421344527

#### WANTED

Wanted for 1926 Alvis 12/50-----Rear Gearbox Cover part G6 or N3675. I am restoring a 12/50 DB replica and am short of many pieces. This for the moment. Brendon Neilson Phone 64 9 2364506[NZ] or e/mail fiddlersgreen@paradise.net.nz Thanking you Both Brendon Neilson

#### WANTED

## BTH JD6 Magneto

Please contact Stuart Paton 07 5441 5437

## FOR SALE

After nearly 50 years ownership. 1927 12/50 SD. Big Port Beetleback About 10,000miles since full rebuild with replica aluminiun body by Wilkinsons, Connolly hide seats including dickey. Hood, sidescreens, tonneau. Chassis overhauled, Engine has new tailor made one piece crankshaft ,new rods,pistons,timing gears,valves etc.40MOV Solex carby. Chassis No 5563 Engine 5904.



Car No 10918. \$62,500 Reason for selling - back and hands will no longer cope with working on her. Contact Mike Menzies on phone 02 4872 4046 or fmg.menzies@gmail.com

### 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

1925 TE 12/50 ALVIS DUCKSBACK.

The car has been built from a ground up restoration over the past 4 years. The following work has been completed.

New Radiator core, all Alloy pipes and housings are new, mag. overhauled, motor has been fully reconditioned including the head. full flow oil filter . new clutch components flexible joints all new bearings and close ratio gears in the gearbox, fully balanced driveshaft new bearing in the diff and new crown wheel and pinion high ratio, all new wheel bearings and new wheels

(centres and rims) new wooden body and skin. New upholstery. and windscreen.

This car was on the ALVIS NATIONAL RALLY IN APRIL in Sth. Australia and went well, the car has travelled 1350 miles since being restored. I am selling the car as I have bought another 12/50

Price: \$70,000

Contact Derek Dixon on (07) 5443-4320 or on email d\_g\_dixon@bigpond.com



Wanted, generator for flange frame 12/50 engine. Frank Corbett, 07 3378 7280.

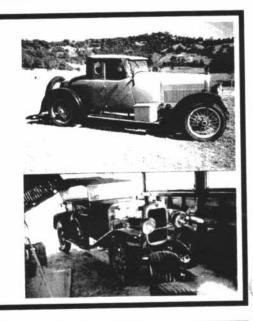
#### FOR SALE

#### 2 SILVER EAGLES

**1928 Silver Eagle**, rough fabric tourer body, part mechanically restored, complete car. Engine # 7940

**Silver Eagle Beetleback**. Has travelled 9,300miles since restoration. Registered VN0973. Engine # 7409, chassis # 7046. Both cars \$70,000 including some spares.

Stuart Paton (07) 5441 5437 Fax (07) 5441 4292



#### WANTED

SMITHS 0-80 mph speedo, black face, white figures, to use in my 1928 FWD Alvis. It would have to match my Rev counter which is shown in the photo. I have for sale (or swap) a 0-80 mph JAEGER speedo, beezel face, excellent condition. Cheers Des Donnan 07-5445 9981



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