

The Newsletter of the Alvis Car Club of Victoria (Inc)

August 2008

Alvis



JNBC
TOUR

*Martin Boothman's 12/50,
one of our UK visitors*

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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Front page: Martin Boothman's 1927 12/50 Cross & Ellis wide bodied 2 seater

Back page: Chris Storrar and David Little on the docks at Southhampton with David's Grey Lady, having just delivered their cars for loading.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Things have been rather busy this month at "Castle Crud" in Benteigh.

We now have a new bathroom and laundry, polished floors and two new bookcases one now filled with cooking books, the other with motoring books and my collection of car sales brochures. When sorting through my collection of motor racing programmes I found a copy of the very first Templestowe Hill Climb that was held on March 12th 1951. Thumbing through it, I noticed that of the forty-three entrants that competed on that day, four I can recall are still alive. They are Maurie Monk, Dianna Davison (Gaze), Ted Hyder-Smith and Harry Firth. (A bit of useless information for you all).

Our run to view the remains of Templestowe also included four members who actually competed there and it was great to hear some of the stories they told. Well done to Darrell & Jocelyn for putting on a great day with three Alvis cars in attendance. They were the 12/50 of Allan Willingham, the Graber of Richard and Pauline Tonkin and the Speed 20 of Bob and Lesley Northey. Incidentally no one owned up to the well stained underpants we found in the bushes!

With only six weeks to go until the start of the JNBC Tour, there is no going back! By the time you read this, the English cars will be on the ship making their way to Melbourne. and still we have plenty to do. The route book has been completed the last part of it being a very expensive exercise. Police Sergeant Ritchie now knows that Honda Legends can sit quite comfortably on 124kph. As I pointed out, this is a quite comfortable cruising speed for 12/50 Alvises and we were merely working out averages. That bit didn't go down too well!

Whilst at Corowa we presented Allan Bratt with his trophy (awarded last month) which was a greatly appreciated. I hope we can see the car again in action on the JNBC Tour.

The Xmas Party that you don't want to miss this year will be held at the Lang establishment where there is plenty of parking for all Alvis cars including trailers for FWDs. Santa will have a new mode of transport in the form of MK1 Traction Engine so rather than clogging up the Lang's pool filter system with his beard, he can now have it scorched by cinders.

With madam now happy with the new bathroom and laundry, I treated myself to a new lathe. Oh joy, a lathe with a gap bed and imperial lead screw. What bliss! A new mill will follow shortly and I can get stuck into all the things that have eluded me in the past. Andrew McDougall is also looking forward to using my mill as well.

Speaking of McDougall, a couple of weeks ago I took him on a run in the Bentley only to have the car returned home on a flat top truck, the engine covered in oil due to something that shouldn't have happened and something that I should have checked ten years ago when I rebuilt the engine. McDougall has had many experiences with oil related leakage problems on his Speed 20 Special so I of course blamed him for my problem. He told me (changing the topic) that Model T Fords never suffer these sorts of problems and I should trade the Bentley in for a Model T. (wash your mouth out). The following weekend was the Veteran Car Club Icicle Rally and a few days afterwards, I rang McDougall to see how it went. A bit sheepish the reply came back that the trusty Ford came back home on a flat top truck with differential problems, so I'm convinced he is jinxed and so missed out on the opportunity of driving a proper car.

That is all from me.

Chester McKaige

NEW MEMBERS

Don & Jill Bosanquet

Good to see Geoff Shepherd along to his first meeting

SUPPER

The McKinnons

EVENT CALENDAR

AUG	15	General Meeting - John Hetherington will exercise the new DVD and TV with a talk entitled "Elephant on Ice."
	24	Rob Roy Hill Climb—VSCC Event—we're Invited!
SEP	19	NO General Meeting due early October meeting
OCT	3	General Meeting
	7-23	JNBC Memorial Tour
NOV	21	AGM
DEC	7	Christmas Party at the Langs - <i>details nearer the event</i>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear John

It was a pleasure to see the TB14 on the front of ALVIC June issue and made my heart sing.

Alan Bratt has certainly maintained "the Little White Car" to a degree of perfection, much better than I achieved.

The Pass lights, I think are Notek, are of the right era and enhance the car. I like the wire wheels, but draw the line at white wall tyres.

Alan Bratt is to be congratulated (and I wish I had never sold the car).

Bob Graham

Dear John

What a wonderful photograph it was of Mark Burns and passenger in his 12/50 Ducksback! The car that came to symbolise what? A lifestyle? An attitude? An ego accessory? Or a work of art? A Poke in the eye at a conservative society, a freedom machine or an expression of individuality? A marvellous combination of inspired design and excellence in engineering, a victory of form over function or a personalised car? Or indeed all of the above? (acknowledgement to Tod Rafferty.)

Brian Hemmings



EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Your newsletter editor is in need of your contributions to maintain and raise the standard of the newsletter. Members are keen to read about what you are doing with your car, the problems you are running into and how you are fixing them. Or if you are working on a project, what progress you are making.

For many members, their only contact is through the newsletter and we don't want to lose them

John Lang

When the Newsletter Editor has to start writing about his own car, it might be suggested that member's contributions are not forthcoming!

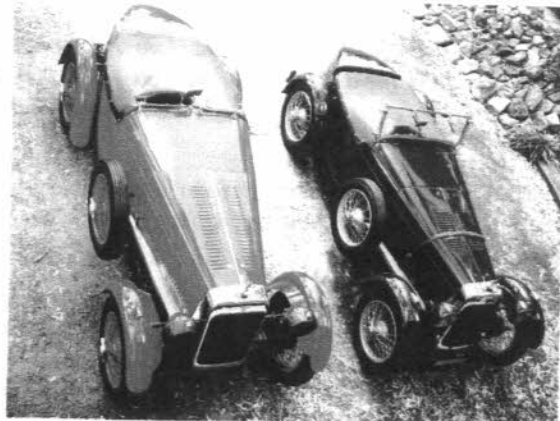
A Tale of Two FWDs

Having spent more than a decade collecting mechanical lamps, (What, you might ask is a mechanical lamp. It is one that needs the assistance of a mechanism, clockwork in some, spring with rack and pinion drive in others and other variations, to pump heavy oil up to the burner) Marg and I turned our interests toward old motor cars.

1996 was at a time when one could wade through the pages of the "Unique Cars" magazine and still find the occasional gem. So one thing led to another and by 1997 we had a Delage in need of total restoration and a 23/60 Vauxhall that provided as much excitement with its limited rear braking, as one could take in a day's drive.

That same magazine, listed an Alvis FWD that sounded interesting. More interesting was that the phone number indicated that it didn't live far from our home, in Macedon. "Greetings, I am just a tyre kicker who doesn't need another old car, but could I come to see your Alvis."

How hollow those words seem now!!



The Alvis was sitting outside John Ham's garage and had this strange affect on both Marg and I.

Following a quick ride up and down the gravel road, we drove home silently not wanting to open a conversation that may suffer a total rebuke from the other. However the subject eventually got an airing and escalated into another visit. Once more up and down the gravel road in the Alvis.

This time, serious talk with the owner and the awareness that he had another one hidden in the shed. "We don't need two more old cars!"

At this stage I had not driven the car for no other reason than the registration had not been renewed, but was retrievable without a full re-registration catastrophe.

Once again the Alvis appeared from the house garage and we set forth, unregistered, to drive around the heavily treed local Macedon streets. If I had any doubts about buying the car they now screamed at me - **I couldn't handle the gearbox!**

Fortunately there was no traffic, just a few bemused locals who left their gardening to see what was shattering their rural peace.

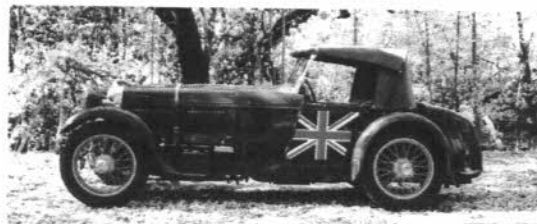
At this stage all sanity left me and I started to enquire about the other car in the shed. Dare I acknowledge my absolute insanity at this time, and confess that negotiations with the owner were for the purchase of both cars.

The unfinished project in the shed was of great interest in that it would allow me to do some work on a car that I was lead to believe was mechanically restored, but in need of painting, upholstery and a variety of things like brake cables and wiring etc etc.

The purchase of both would give me a complete car (chassis 7231) for patterns on which to fabricate the missing parts for Chassis 7257.

oo

7257 was an FE and left the factory on 24 January 1929. It was furnished by Carbodies as a 4 seater with Weyman style body. Its first owner was Q.L.W. Little of Penrith, Cumberland, UK, with a registration number of WK 8052. In July 1929 it was sold to Edward Kinnear of the Kinnear Rope Company in Melbourne.



Chassis 7231 at Clare in 1999

Several owners later, and now in the 1960s, it was purchased as a wreck with a shortened chassis, by Glen Birchby of South Australia. Birchby set about building it a body from resources limited to the local hardware store and it was by no means a professional build, but it reflected a shape that was suitable for the chassis and the circumstance.

The next owner was probably responsible for the drilling of the front hubs to allow the fitting of bolt on Vauxhall wheels as a fix for badly worn hub splines.

Birchby said that his last sighting of the car was some time later, of it stripped and without mudguards racing up and down Rundell St, now the City of Adelaide's main street.

John Cole, a former Victorian FWD owner inspected the car when it was offered for sale and was so concerned about his safety when taken for a ride that he decided against its purchase.

The car was eventually sold to Evan Muir who also owned chassis 7231. Evan and another brave soul drove the car from Adelaide to Melbourne with petrol leaking onto a bare wire that from time to time would spark and threaten to ignite a fire.

John Ham, the next owner, spoke about pursuing Muir who was driving chassis 7231 wanting to look at the car. The pair became good friends.

Prior to going overseas, Muir gave Ham the custodianship of 7231 and subsequently sold 7257 to Ham for \$1500. Ham had the intention of creating a copy of 7231, as Muir indicated that he would not sell the car.

Ham used 7231 as his own and set about the mechanical restoration of 7257 and the replication of the Martin and King body on 7231.

The project continued until 1984, until Muir who was now in residence in Scotland found to his dismay that if he imported 7231 it would be subject to steep import duties due to concessions granted on its original export to Australia as a chassis only, in 1928-29.



Chassis 7257 with the home made body in the 1960s

Ham was offered the car to purchase and eventually became the owner of the two cars.

During the restoration of 7257, Ham had the engine reconditioned in NSW and had the good fortune to purchase five FWD wheels that had been saved from the breaking up of one of the twelve FWDs that came to Australia. The wheels were advertised in a club magazine that Ham chanced to see in someone's home. The description made no mention of Alvis, nor did it list a phone contact. A phone call determined the owner's number, apparently deleted due to some antagonism between the owner and the newsletter editor.

A further phone call established that the wheels were Alvis FWD and the owner who was going away the following morning, was available for the next 30 minutes only, before bedding down for the night. Ham being some distance away, broke speed limits in an endeavour to make the deadline. He had to rouse the owner out of bed so that the wheels could be purchased. The owner said that he had sold parts of the car and the rest went to the tip.

(It is interesting to note at this time, that 12 FWDs came to Australia and 11 are either on the road, or under or awaiting restoration.)

Ham was then able to repair the front hubs on his project and replace the lost wheels.

The replica body was a faithful recreation of the Martin and King body and Ham had reduced the chassis length further to the standard short wheel base specification. However the project had stalled and little if any work continued.

Due to other interests Ham now offered chassis 7231 for sale and had the intent to dispose of 7257.

Now the Langs came into the picture just to kick tyres!

When we took delivery of 7231, Marg followed me in a modern for about 300 metres to the main Mt Macedon Road, while I did battle with the gearbox that was still not giving me any joy. Arriving at the intersection, anxious not to run into anybody or stall in the middle of the road, suddenly the lady behind blew the horn loudly. In disgust I shook a fist at her and noticed she was pointing. On the other side of the road a hare was hopping along. My immediate thoughts were "The Gods are Smiling." It was some years before I came to the realisation that they were probably laughing!



Chassis 7257 when it arrived at the Langs

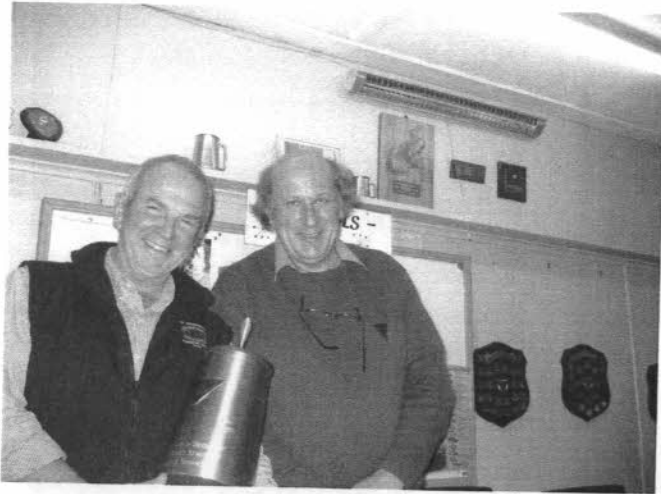
Chassis 7257 came home on the trailer and took up residence with 7231.

A further episode in the life of 7257 will appear in September's Alvic as the story of its further restoration unfolds

The Club Award Night July Meeting

This year the annual club award night was held in July and followed the normal general meeting.

*The Andy Hannam trophy for the member who has driven his Alvis on the most Alvis events was a very surprised and worthy recipient—
Chris Higgins*



For several consecutive years, Mark Burns was awarded the Basil Bowes competition trophy.

Alan Bratt took off the McDougall restoration trophy with his TB14



Andrew Green who unfortunately was not present, the Simon Ramsay Mt Tarrengower trophy for the fastest Alvis up the hill



Darrell Horton was the proud winner of the Bill Barber Literary prize seen here being presented by Marcia Barber

Marg & John Lang receiving the David Muirden Club persons award.

David Muirden is one of our foundation members and was on hand to make the presentation.



The evening finished with some not so rough red and cheese ,biscuits and fruit.

NOTE: The nominated event for the 2009 McDougall Restoration Award will be the Alvis National Rally "Alvis on the Downs." in Queensland

RED TRIANGLE SERVICES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Chris Storrar, one of our English friends who is joining us on the JNBC Tour sent me the photographs below of the Red Triangle Services 40th birthday.

As a single marque we are certainly fortunate to have the service provided by RTS.

Certainly there are times when we reclaim or fabricate a part, however I think if we were all truthful we would have to admit that it is reassuring to know that contact with RTS can often have an item in our workshop within five days in time ready for the next outing.

The RTS photographs of the celebration, show the Davis Urquhart-Dykes Le Mans FWD and the Barson Special and the Duller 8 cylinder FWD, presently undergoing an incredible rebuild at RTS.

I had never heard of the Barson Special, however the internet provided the following interesting information.

The Barson Special No.11 started life in England in 1937 as Barson Special No 8 which utilized a frame made from Talbot-Darrcaq side members and was the brainchild of E. Chanelor Barson who built a number of interesting specials. In 1940 and while in South Africa, the power plant was up-rated using one of the factory Alvis experimental 4.4 litre 8 cylinder engines (based upon a Speed 20 SD 2,762cc with two extra cylinders) along with Lancia Series 8 vertical-coil independent front suspension and a top speed of 120mph was claimed. Other notable features by this time included an Armstrong Siddeley pre-selector gearbox, Bugatti rear springs and a Ford V8 rear axle. At the 1940 Table Mountain Hill Climb the car unofficially broke the course record in practice and in the event was 3/5 sec slower than a blown 2.5 litre Maserati. In the post war period the Alvis Special returned to England where it appears to have remained throughout the 1950s and was used as both general road transport as well as in motor club Rallies and occasionally seen out at Silverstone.

By the 1960s the car had found its way to Pennsylvania in the USA where it has lived ever since. In the late 1990s the Barson Special underwent a major and expensive refurbishment by well known and respected pre-war car specialist David George of DL Coachworks.



Above: on the left, the Davis / Urquhart-Dykes FWD and on the right the Barson Special

Photos courtesy Red Triangle Services

Below: the Duller 8 cylinder FWD



TEMPLESTOWE REVISITED

The day was not at all promising as the organisers left the shores of Westernport Bay for muster at Doncaster and steady rain lead to thoughts of a verbal account of hill climb meetings past being delivered over luncheon for the benefit of the younger members and those unfamiliar with the venue.

However, concern steadily dissipated as northern progress was made and upon arrival at McDonalds at Doncaster one wondered yet again at how different the weather can be within the space of a couple of hours travel. By the appointed hour no fewer than fifteen members had arrived eager for a days frolic, and Golden Arches patrons had the pleasure of hearing and seeing the arrival of a proper car in the form of a pretty ducksback with, of course, the hood in its proper place snug in its cover.

Arrival at the venue saw the party joined by no fewer than three more Alvis and five more members so that, by the time we left the vehicles for a leisurely amble along the track, one realised that all those years ago no way would so many people have been on the hallowed bitumen at once and we might therefore take some consolation in the knowledge that we were setting a new record, of sorts.

All showed an interest in the course of the track and particularly "The Wall" with its gradient of 1 in 2.5 and one member in particular was moved to the point of elegantly de-verticalising herself at this point as if to kiss the blessed surface - a very moving moment.

After almost two hours of looking at and discussing, the party returned to the cars via the encroaching residential development in what by now was quite pleasant weather and upon starting of engines the cavalcade proceeded on a brief ramble through the delightful Yarra Valley and Yarra Glen to Kangaroo Ground and Wellers restaurant for the fortification of bodies and minds.

Altogether a most pleasant day spent in the company of friends with a shared interest and, certainly, not one to provide a deterrent for future mid-winter functions.

The Organisers



Get a load of the hats! From the left, front row, Richard & Pauline Tonkin, Marg Hetherington, Chester & Sally McKaige, Jocelyn Coates & David Caldwell. The back row Jill & Don Bosanquet, Alan Willingham, Thorpe & Carol Remfrey, John White & John Hetherington.



Hitting the Wall

*David Caldwell sends this photograph of him driving his 3½ litre up Templestowe Hill Climb's "The Wall."
(circa 1970)*

THE ALVIS CAR CLUB of VICTORIA

This story begins in 1959 after I had bought my first Alvis TA 14 saloon. I was in Little Bourke Street doing some business (what it was I have totally forgotten) and when I returned to the Alvis, I found a card tucked under the windscreen wiper. This card invited me to join the Club and also to attend meetings on the third Friday of each month, held at the same address as at present.

I was very pleased to receive this invitation and availed myself of the first opportunity to attend. The clubrooms of today were not there, only the garage. The car park was there only as a vacant piece of land with a few Alvis cars parked on it. The doors of the garage were open and the first thing I saw was a 44-gallon drum, liberally pierced on the sides with a fire going and the garage was filled with smoke. A few figures could be made out of the gloom, one of them was Basil Bowes seated in a much-worn but comfortable chair.

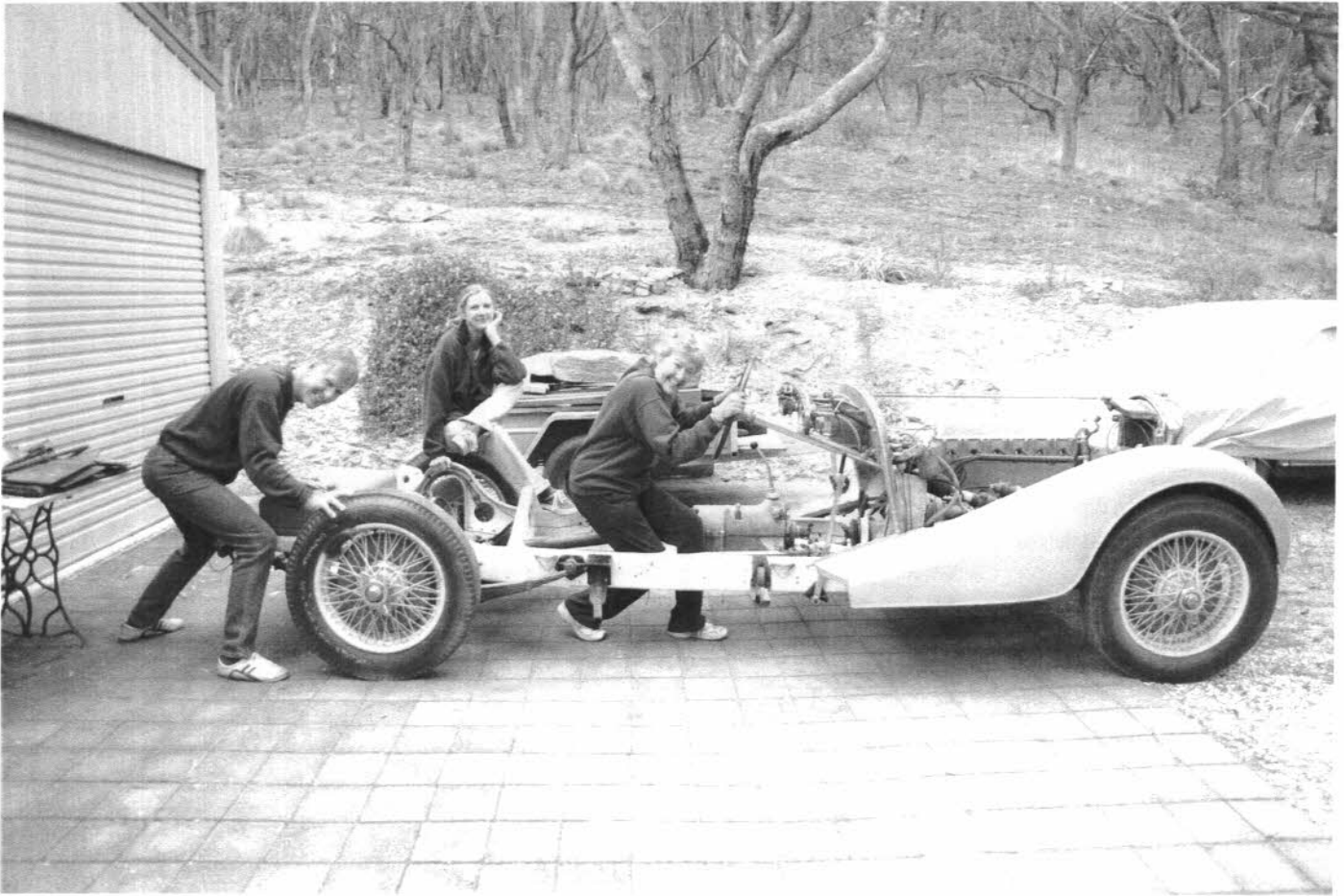
Other chairs consisted of upturned fruit boxes, old seats from cars and bits of cars to lean against. It was a happy group of young blokes (no girls that I remember), very friendly, plenty of beer being drunk but not a very businesslike meeting. I went to a couple of meetings before being transferred to Sydney.

In 1967, Bev and I returned to Melbourne and I had my second TA14 saloon (I had given the first one to Alan Griffin and Charley Whitehead, both of the ACC NSW. when I left Sydney). The clubrooms had been built alongside the garage from a shipping crate, the floor was laid with bricks, the benches along two walls were there, the theatre seats had been obtained and there was a table for the Treasurer, President and Secretary. Harold and Keith Welsh had done the electric wiring and we had lights and a small kitchen (which doubled as the Spare Parts Department) with an up-and-down hatch (still the same) with a sink and running water and an urn to make a cup of tea. The walls were lined with soft-board (and the ceiling) with photographs of Alvis cars hung on the walls.

The Clubrooms were now very posh compared with the facilities of 1958. There had obviously been a great deal of effort and work and organisation going on during the eight years of my absence. I won't name all the contributors as it wouldn't be fair to those whose names I can't recall, except to say, I do know that Roy Henderson had a very big hand in it. To all those original members who carried out that prodigious task - I dips me lid.

Rob Graham

Alvis people behaving badly!



Some people never grow up!

*John & Marg Lang play on the bones of the Miller's Speed 25, while a bemused Edie Miller looks on.
(It is interesting to note that four other Alvis cars live within about 300 metres of Millers)*

VSCC Historic Rob Roy Hill Climb ***Sunday 24th August***

The Alvis Car Club of Victoria has been invited to attend the VSCC Historic Rob Roy Hill Climb on Sunday 24th August.

Last year we had 13 cars present.

This year there is a prize for the best turnout of cars from a club.

There will also be a spectator's choice award.

On site catering will be available and include hearty soup, spit roast, hamburgers, tea and coffee.

Competition commences at 11.30 am, we need to be there no later than 12.00 noon. We will establish a site for the cars so they will be altogether in the one area.

Lets show the VSCC what a single marque club can do.

CM

MORE MEMORIES OF THE 2007 NATIONAL RALLY

Actually it's the new Ford Falcon on outback test!



Derek Dixon preparing the Ducksback for the long trip back to Queensland



ALVIS ON THE DOWNS

Saturday 2nd May to 9th May 2009

2009 National ALVIS Rally

Contact:

Graeme Singer gsinger@bigpond.net.au or (07) 3378 5970

SWAP, BEG, BORROW or STEAL

WANTED

A one piece, 4 branch, cast iron exhaust manifold to suit a Silver Crest engine. It is believed that an SC and SD Speed 20 manifold is the same.

A Marles steering box to suit a Speed 25 Alvis. It is believed that the same steering box is used in SC and SD Speed20s, 3 1/2 Litre and 4.3 Litre cars.

Andrew McDougall, Phone: 03 9486 4221, Mobile: 0427 220 249, Email: amfi@dunollie.com.au

FOR SALE

1926 Alvis 12/50 TF Tourer
Chassis 4553, engine # 5884

In good running order

Recent new radiator core, reground camshaft, new valve springs, pistons and rings.

Alternator fitted, running off the jack-shaft between clutch and gearbox.

RWC provided to a Victorian buyer.

Registration : DV 1926

\$65,000AUD

Ring Si Ramsay (03) 5472 4321 or fax (03) 5472 4081



WANTED bronze bodied 1 3/8 SU carburettors, any condition. Contact Dale 03 5968 5170 or dparsell@ozemail.com.au.

AVAILABLE; Silver Crest Hypoid crown wheel carrier (the alloy part) includes crown wheel & pinion, swap for speed 20 one or something else useful.

Contact Paul Chaley 03 9877 0666 or historic@historicvintagerestorations.com

FOR SALE,

AS IS, WHERE IS:

3.5 Litre Alvis 25.63 Pillarless Sedan, Car No. 17827, Chassis No.13115, Engine No.13566.

Chassis and engine particulars all as the factory 1936 build sheet.

Body by Bertelli Ltd., Feltham, Middlesex, Sussex, England.

This car is very rare, being one of the only two SA.25.63 3.5 Litre Alvis cars to have been fitted with a Bertelli body. The other was

purchased by the late Henk

Widengren, a Swedish racing driver

of the era, and is, I believe, currently being restored in that country. However, Widengren had his car upgraded to 4.3 Litre specification pre-W.W.II., so strictly speaking it is no longer a 3.5 Litre?

History as far as is known:

The factory build sheet shows that the car left the works on the 2nd. of January, 1936 as a chassis consigned to Messrs. G. Hartwell, Bournemouth, U.K. The Alvis service card for the car, dated the 25th. of March, 1936, identified the owner as Mrs. F.E.Wells-Melbourne, 'Silverdale' Fair Oak Lane, Oxshot, Surrey. Nothing is known of the car from then until 1959 when the log book was issued to David Wood, landlord of a pub in Litton Cheney, Dorset, who used it daily until the magneto drive sheared around 1964, after which it stood in his shed for a year or so till the son of a Dorset farmer, Mr. Allan N.W.Percival, bought it around 1965 and from whom I bought it in 1971.

The car was shipped out to Penang, Malaysia in 1971, where I began its initial restoration. It was shipped to Australia in mid-72 and completed in 1978. Its second bare-metal restoration was begun in 1990 on my retirement and completed this year. The process is described in an illustrated article prompted by the late Julian Collins, editor, and serialised by him in the Alvis Owner Club Bulletins Nos. 491, 492, & 493.

The Price: \$100,000

David Caldwell 6, The Outlook, Heathmont, Victoria 3135, Australia. Ph.0011 61 3 9729 5821 e-



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 has had a total rebuild.

\$12500 or offer

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

Ph: +61 (0) 354496127 Mobile: 0421344527

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

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