

2010

Alvic

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

February



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 the month.
POSTAL: ACCV P.O.Box 634, EMERALD, VIC 3782
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At the October AGM, the committee was re-elected unopposed. The position of Club Captain was not filled.

Front page: the Northey's Ducksback at the Kevin Bartlett Reserve, Jan BBQ

Photography by Frances McDougall

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings and a rather belated Happy New Year to you all. It's already February and I still don't know what became of January!

Our first event for the year was our annual barbeque night that was very well attended. It was great to see Mac Hulbert and Steve and Marg Denner present.

The committee met in January to plan the calendar for 2010 and other such matters. This year will be a fairly full year with plenty of activities in store. I urge you to dust off the "old girl" and come along and support the planned events. The more the merrier!

It is also my happy duty to report that ALVIC will stage the 2013 Alvis National Rally in Tasmania. The dates are still to be advised but envisage it will be in the last two weeks of April.

We will be encouraging our friends from Europe, America and New-Zealand to attend, giving it an International flavour. Planning for this event needs to start fairly soon, so please give this some thought and an "expressions of interest" form will be forwarded to you in due course.

I urge you to attend the Feb meeting as Mac Hulbert will be giving a talk on ERA R4D complete with pictures and sound!!!

Also important is the British and European Showcase at Flemington on Sunday 28th February. This is a cold radiator day and we are out to win an award for best club stand so I urge you to let John Lang know that you will be attending.

I also would like to take this opportunity of thanking both Andrew McDougall and Dale Parsell for the good work done on our submission to Vic Roads re the 90 day permit scheme. By now all submissions from Clubs should be in the hands of Minister Pallas and we await his response. It is expected that it will be later in the year.

As I write this, Andrew McDougall is attending a potentially volatile Federation meeting due to its somewhat controversial stand on many of the aspects of the proposed Club Plate Scheme that had been accepted by the majority of other clubs.

My 1905 Darracq is currently on display in the foyer of the RACV Club in Bourke Street and with the 12/50 still on loan to Steve Denner, I have a rather empty garage at present. A good time to have a much needed clean up.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Feb meeting and don't forget, we have a meal at the Malvernvale Hotel prior to the meeting. Come and join us and please let me know if you are coming.

Chester McKaige.

ALVIS CAR CLUB OF VICTORIA

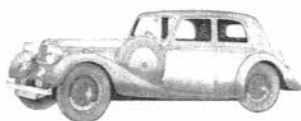
www.alvis.org.au

Dale Parsell has recently done a lot of work on the website with the addition of the recent booklet "A Brief History of Alvis."

Also can be found, are photographs of many of ACCV members' cars. If yours is not there, you could send Dale a copy of your best photograph.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR et al

Hi John and Marg.
Congratulations on the current Alvic.
I've really enjoyed working with you on the little input I've had into the newsletter this year.
There seems to have been a resurgence of interest and I trust that this will be sustained over, at least, the coming year. Enthusiasm appears to be a transient phenomenon which seems to start or cease without any evident cause. Lets hope for an enthusiasm filled 2010!
Meantime Ronnie and I wish you both the Very Best of Season's Greeting and please convey our greetings to all the Club members.
Sincerely John Brown



*Dear Chester & Sally
My thanks to you both and of course to the Alvis Car Club of Victoria for your lovely birthday card, good wishes and congratulations for my 80th birthday, kindly hand delivered by Don Bosanquet.*

The luncheon was brilliant and truly a great surprise, with friends making the special trip from both Melbourne and Perth to help me celebrate. All together it was a great day. Well it had to be because the group included 4 Alvis owners.

Please convey to my friends in the Alvis Vic Club my appreciation of their sincere birthday wishes and on my OBE.

*With fond regards
Claire MacDonald*

“Alvis In Australia”

For those ACCV members who have read the Jan/Feb Alvibatics, it is likely that there is now some confusion in regard to the production of a book relating to the history of the Alvis Marque in Australia.

The ACCV advertisement in the Nov/Dec Alvibatics, asking for historical information, was in response to an ACCV initiative to produce a book about Alvis cars in Australia, using information supplied by current owners.

Eric Cunningham's letter to the editor in the Jan/Feb Alvibatics indicated that he is working on a similar project also using the title “Alvis in Australia.” This fact was only made known to the ACCV as a result of an invitation for him to be part of a joint project. The offer was rejected by Eric but we in ACCV feel that there is a need for a book of less formal style than the one we understand Eric has in mind.

The ACCV committee has elected to proceed with its planned project and information will be sought for a publication under a different title. This removes any possibility of confusion and once again, all Alvis owners are invited to provide us with information and background on their cars that they would like included.

2010 EVENT CALENDAR

Please note—there is a lot of detail included in the information below

- Feb 19 General Meeting
Guest Speaker - Mac Hulbert "A Year in the Life of ERA R4D"
This is audio / visual & should not be missed
- 28 **RACV Classic Showcase - Flemington Race Course -**
see details attached/enclosed - we have been assigned a very favourable reserved site for 15 cars & it promises to be an extremely good event
Laminated information panels will be made for attending cars. Please advise John Lang if you are coming. The McDougall Trophy winner will be chosen at this event.
- Mar 19 General Meeting
21 Kalorama
28 **Point Cook Flying Display — 12.00pm at the Airfield—McKaige**
Directions & detail in March ALVIC
- Apr 16 General Meeting
24/25 Norm from "Aussie Desert Coolers" - the radiator man, will be the guest speaker
Overnight Macedon for ANZAC dawn service Mt Macedon, morning run & lunch. Service commences at 5.30am. Overnight accommodation at the Black Forest Motel. Block booking made for Alvis Car Club. Ring 5426 1600 to book. Offer expires 3 April—Lang
- May 16 National Motoring Heritage Day—details to be advised—McDougall
21 General Meeting
- Jun 18 General Meeting—David Head to talk about the Duigan Biplane project
27 Combined Run with the Sunbeam, Talbot & Darracq Club—Horton
- Jul 16 General Meeting
18 Combined run with the Armstrong Siddley Club—Tonkin
- Aug 20 General Meeting
22 Rob Roy Hillclimb—McKaige
- Sep 17 General Meeting
19 Run to Teasdale model railway & tea rooms—McKaige
- Oct 8,9,10 Weekend Away at Apollo Bay—McKaige/Remfrey
15 AGM & trophy award night
- Nov 19 General Meeting
- Dec 6 Christmas Party at Caulfield Grammar Junior School—Bosanquet
- May 1-6 **2011 National Rally—Western NSW**
more info from Rob Simpson 02 4384 3571 or metal1447@optusnet.com.au
or Sept 09 ALVIC



NSW Southern Highlands Beckons

Hub based in an original 1920's Robertson grand mansion now called "Fountaindale Grand Manor & Ranelagh Gardens", 'Alvis Family' members and all interested parties will gather for the best part of a week to celebrate the NSW club's 60th anniversary.

We will be partying from the moment you arrive on Sunday 26th September until we all sadly depart on the Thursday 30th September 2010. The actual 60th Birthday, 28th September, will be celebrated with a '1920/30's' period dress-up dinner dance complete with jazz band.

Your time can include exhilarating country drives with many places of interest to stop and visit, a luxury coach 'garden, winery & book tour' the day after you arrive to get you totally relaxed, cocktail parties, gourmet BBQ and much, much more. However some might prefer to simply take in the original open fire grandeur of Fountaindale Grand Manor and its own spacious gardens and overall ambience.

Robertson is regarded as the 'green heart of the Southern Highlands.' It is one of the areas prettiest towns with surrounding rich volcanic soils and emerald green pastures of the farming countryside. It boasts its own famous 'red soil potatoes' and its monthly 'local produce market', the spectacular 'Illawarra Fly In' and its now institutionalized 'Robertson Pie Shop.'

This celebration event is sure to be attended by founding members including Bill Boldiston, who has lined up the jazz musicians, and early members as well as the current enthusiasts. So come along, even if you haven't been part of the club for a while. There are sure to be familiar faces and shared reminiscences.

Contact David Macdonald (tel: 02 9817 8006; email: david@midasoft.com.au) for further details or Rob Simpson (tel: 02 9816 5512; email: meta1447@yahoo.com.au) to pay a \$250 deposit.

RACV CLASSIC SHOWCASE

Sunday 28th February

(Formerly the British & European Motoring Show)
Flemington Racecourse Nursery Car Park

CLASSIC SHOWCASE

RACV

SUNDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2010



INCORPORATING:
AUSTIN HEALEY CLUB DISPLAY DAY
TRIUMPH CLUBS ANNUAL CONCOURS
MERCEDES BENZ STATE CONCOURS
CLUB DISPLAYS WELCOME



DETAILS: 9890 0524
www.aomc.asn.au

FLEMINGTON RACECOURSE
MEMBERS CAR PARK

This Show is open to all classic and historic vehicles originating from Britain and Europe. Featured this year will be the Austin Healey Display Day, the Triumph Club's Annual Concours and the Mercedes Benz Club State Concours. The Peugeot Club will be celebrating 50 years of the Peugeot 404 with a display featuring this model

Gate Opening Times:

Display cars from 9.00 am to 11.00 am.

Spectators from 10.00 am.

Show closes at 3.00 pm.

Entry from Epsom Road

Display cars (driver & 1 passenger) \$12.00 pre booked or \$15.00 on the day

Pre booking to avoid queuing special express entrance

Spectators \$15.00 Concession for spectators only \$12.00 on presentation concession card Children (under 16) are free.

Pass outs will be available for vehicle occupants and spectators.

Please bring the Kids - they will be tomorrow's enthusiasts!

Club Displays

Club displays are welcome and encouraged. A trophy for the best club display will be awarded. Book your club display space by calling 9890 0524

Trophies

Trophies will be awarded for a number of categories and the presentation will be held at 2.00 pm. The Car of the Show Award will be made from pre-entered competitors only. An entry fee of \$20 plus normal admission will apply. Entries can be made prior to the Show using the entry form attached, or on the day until 9.30 am. An entry form may also be downloaded from www.aomc.asn.au or by phone from the Show's enquiry number 9890 0524

The Robert Shannon Award will be made to a young enthusiast who attends the show driving a classic vehicle.

General

Food and refreshments will be available, Musical entertainment, Children's entertainment - rides, animal farm, face painting. There will also be trade stalls.

Please leave the dog at home.

Club Permit authorised by the AOMC. Bring your flyer as notice of this event.

For updates, maps and information go to www.aomc.asn.au or for general enquiries Tel: 9890 0524

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In the Jan/Feb issue of "Alvibatics" there is the remarkable story of Rob G. Bell and his wife driving their 12/50 from Bombay to England via Afghanistan and several European countries. While in Coventry in 1960, Rob took the opportunity to examine the export records of Alvis Ltd, and from the resultant list of cars despatched to Australia, that one can establish a base line for recording the Alvises exported by their manufacturer. The author of this series of articles is indebted to Rob for his painstaking efforts.

The January 1st 1923 issue of the fortnight magazine "The Motor in Australia," printed the following item:

"Mr G.H. Williams, of Williams Bros Ltd., recently returned from an extensive tour of the old country. Whilst away he witnessed the motor car TT at the Isle of Man. He combined business with pleasure and the result of his business efforts is to be seen at their showrooms in the latest model of the Alvis, which arrived early this month (sic).

This car is one of the light car class that is making such a favourable impression in England at the present time."

Two Alvis cars, Chassis No. 1506 (with engine No. 1855) and Chassis No. 1507 (with engine No. 1854) were despatched from Coventry on 16 September 1922 and arrived in Sydney in December as rolling chassis with only the bulkhead, scuttle and bonnet attached. It is probable that these two Alvises were 11/40 models, although the 12/40 had been on display at the October Olympia motor show as superseding the 11/40.

The lack of bodies was to keep the cost of importing the cars as low as possible by avoiding the import duties imposed on bodies as it was Australian Government policy to protect local body builders who were still emerging from the horse-drawn coach-building days. This policy gave the local body builders a substantial boost and encouraged the development of a new industry in Australia, especially as the popularity of the motor car grew during the post-World War One period.

From the above press report it could be inferred that it was a simply serendipitous event that the Managing Director of Williams Bros. Called in to see the Alvis Car and Engineering Co., while he was on his way home from the Manx races. But it was more likely that it was the result of negotiations made beforehand by an active manufacturer's agent in Melbourne, who it is understood, was sometimes named as the consignee on documents associated with imports of Alvises into Australia.

Of these two Alvises, one was designated as the property of the managing director of Williams Bros. And promptly put in the hands of body builder Chas Kirkham, with instructions to build a tourer body on

it. The other Alvis was handed to Williams Bros Sales Manager, Stan Hill, to use an official car for supervising a 1000 mile Christmas reliability motorcycle trial despite it having no body. It had a pair of headlamps, but no mudguards over its artillery wheels, no windscreen to protect the driver or his passenger and only rudimentary seats. It had no number plate (according to a press photo) so one wonders if it was registered for driving legally on the road.

Two boxes were bolted to the driver's side of the chassis and one presumes that those contained tools and perhaps the other included a change of clothes for the crew. On the black bonnet was the legend, "Alvis Trial Car," crudely painted, apparently in some haste, in white paint. The firm of Williams Bros. Ltd, was by no means adverse to grabbing publicity for itself and for Alvis at every opportunity!

Apart from a piston snatching on the side-valve engine (there had been no time to properly run it in), which required the car to pause and cool down, no other problems were encountered. Thus the Alvis established itself as a reliable make for Williams Bros, to include it in its range of cars for which it became an accredited agent.

This firm already represented Morris cars and trucks as well as Sunbeam cars, so the Alvis marque filled a gap for a sporty light car in its range of cars. It was also the agent for a wide range of both imported and locally made motorcycles.

At this stage, Williams Bros. Ltd., was effectively the Australian agent for Alvis and had their showrooms in Elizabeth St, Sydney, as well as a service depot on Paramatta Rd, Camperdown. They were later to establish a sub-agency in Perth with Westralian Auto Syndicate, located at Tivoli Garage in Hay St, but it is not known if the Perth firm sold any Alvises.

The Sydney firm had already placed an order for a dozen 12/40 chassis to be shipped out in January 1923, and that order was followed up with more 12/40s to come out later in the year. Business was looking good for both Williams Bros and also Chas Kirkham, the body builder.

Meanwhile, Lionel Spencer was organising a group of Melbourne businessmen to form a motor firm which would have the potential to be a powerful rival to the Sydney Alvis agency.

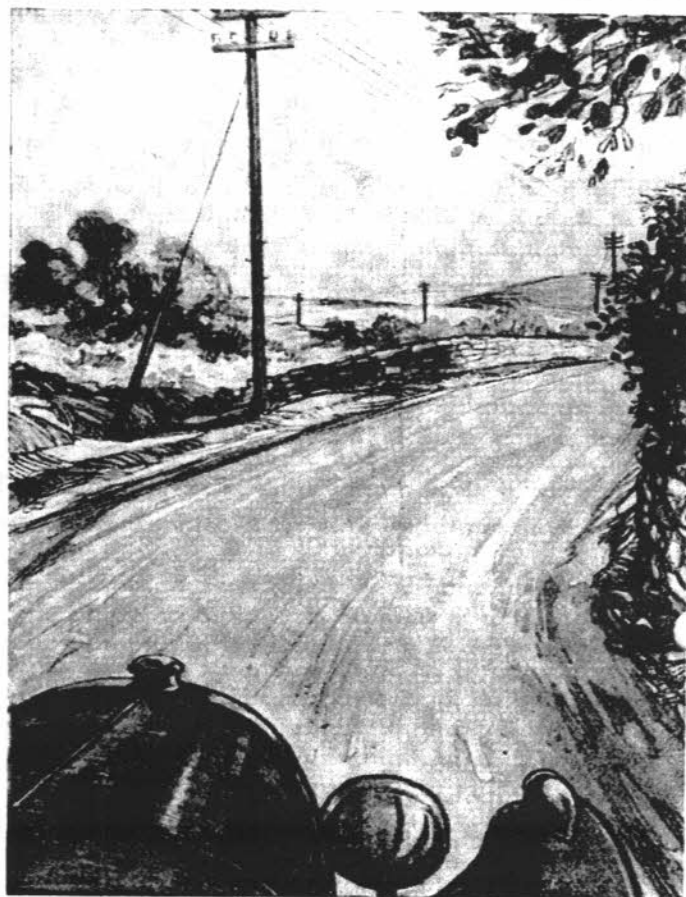
By Eric Campbell

As we age, it is well to remember some of the basic things we learnt about driving all those years ago. Here for your review, are some of those!

(with acknowledgement to the book "How to drive a Car-The Niceties of Control")



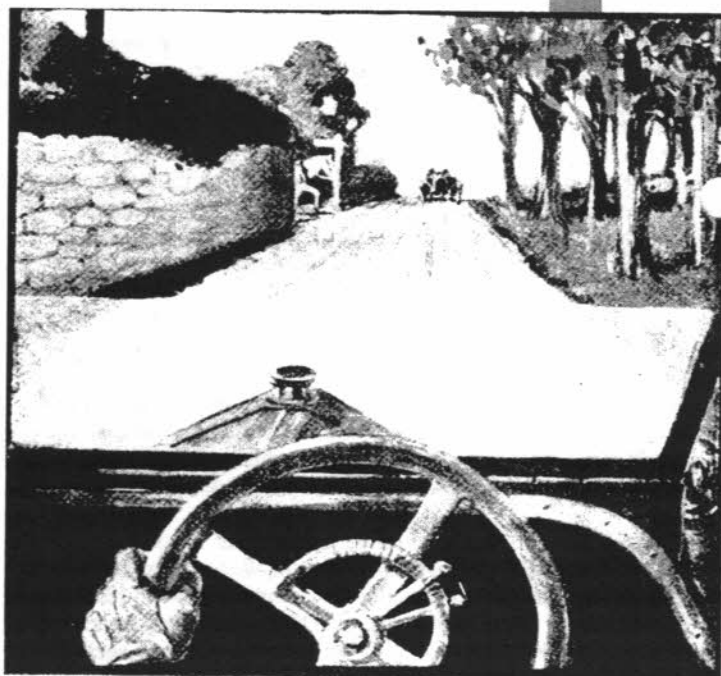
When the rear of the car skids to the left the front wheels should be turned to the left also. This will immediately check the sideways slipping.



By noting the course of the telegraph lines, bends in the road and the incidence of cross-roads can be observed several hundreds of yards ahead.



Trams and buses serve as most useful travelling route-indicators through towns by observing the destination boards.

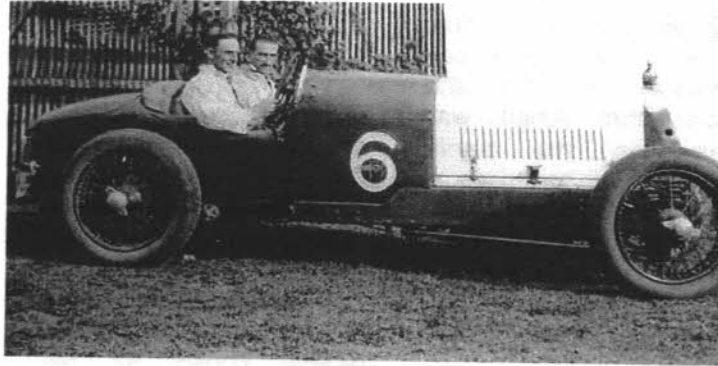


By cultivating rapid observation the motorist sees a possible source of danger while there is still time to avoid it.

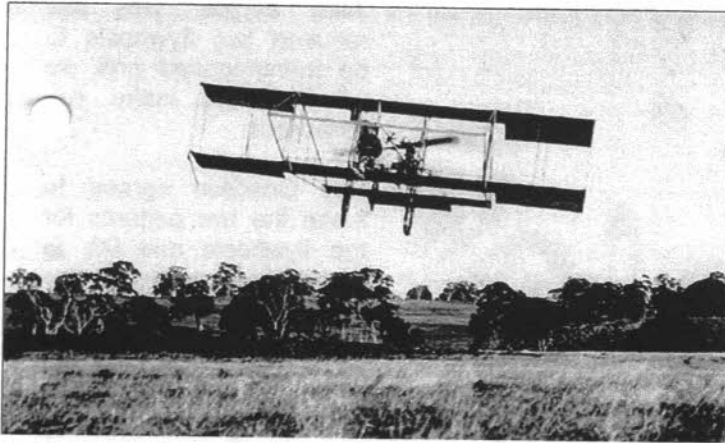
A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ALVIS FWD AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX CAR & THE FIRST BIPLANE DESIGNED BUILT & FLOWN IN AUSTRALIA

by David Head

In my retirement I have been building steam engines and restoring and rebuilding engines and cars. However, in the past 12 months I have been mostly involved in building a full sized replica of the Duigan Biplane.



This Biplane was designed, built and flown by John



Duigan, a farmer's son, who lived on the family property, Spring Plains, at Mia Mia near Heathcote, Victoria. He went to England in 1906 and studied at the City and Guilds in London. On his return he started to build full sized gliders to understand the dynamics of control and then designed his first powered Biplane. He built this with help from his brother Reginald and was actually testing the aircraft at the time that Houdini flew at Diggers Rest in his imported Voisin Biplane.

John's first flight took place at Mia Mia in July 1910 and this was just 16 weeks after Houdini.

I am part of a team of six retired professionals comprising two teachers from Geelong College, two

CPA's and two Professional Mechanical Engineers, both ex Ford. We work on a pro bono basis two or three days a week and are at a stage where the airframe is complete, covered and painted. The mechanical components have been drafted and are being manufactured. In some cases these components have been subcontracted to an engineering shop especially where machining of wheel hubs, drive shafts, the flywheel etc is concerned. In the building of the Biplane we have attempted to replicate the original as closely as possible. To do this we have visited the Museum of Victoria and, since there are no original drawings, we have taken measurements and photographs. The timbers used for the replica are the

same as used in the original, and metal brackets, turnbuckles etc have been hand made.

The original engine was made in Melbourne by J.E. Tilley and is also in storage with the Museum of Victoria. It is an inline 4 cylinder, air cooled except for the heads which have had an external water jacket added. It is of 3.0 litres capacity but limited in power output because it has atmospheric inlet valves. As with the airframe, we have been allowed to take external dimensions and photographs only. This means we have had to redesign the engine internals and, in this case, we have used modern materials and technology where possible. Externally the engine will look the same and were even able to find an original Schebler carburettor on ebay.

I visited a pattern making company in Geelong some months ago to discuss patterns for the Tilley engine. The company is owned by father and son, Ray and Andrew Goodwin. Whilst sitting in Ray's office discussing the drawings of the engine, I noticed a photograph hanging on his wall, a photograph well

known to Alvis FWD enthusiasts. It was the FWD which first ran in the Australian GP in 1929. When I asked Ray where he obtained it, he told me that he had had it copied from the original which was in his possession and that the driver was his grandfather, Albert Edwards

At this point all discussion on the Duigan engine was put to one side and the story of the FWD became the centre of attention.

The FWD Alvis in the photo is the one now owned by Richard Dyson-Harvey in South Australia.

It was bought in the UK by Albert Edwards who exported it to his home at Glen Huntley, Victoria. in late 1928 or early 1929. The car was one of the six Le Mans chassis built and prepared by Alvis for the 1928 race but was not used. It is thought that this car would have competed at Le Mans had Alvis decided to run supercharged engines that year.

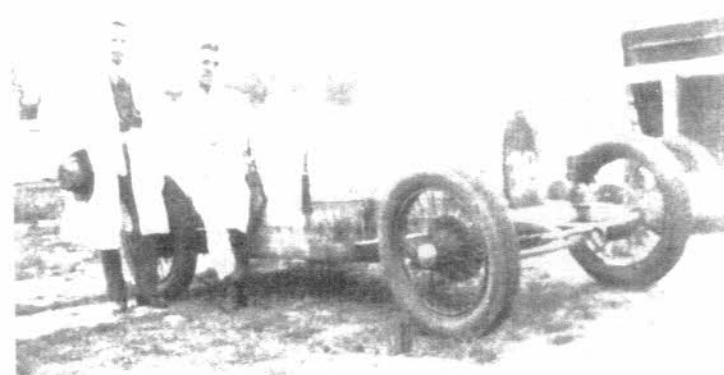
Prior to purchasing the car Albert Edwards had entered an Austin for the 1928 Australian GP. Although the car took part in the qualifying race it simply wasn't fast enough and did not make the minimum qualifying time.





back to Victoria and, as soon as the car was unloaded, took the car to Martin and King in Melbourne to have the body built. The third photo shows the car prepared for the 1929 GP and is the one on Ray's wall. Photo #4 was taken at Aspen Raceway in 1931 and shows that Albert was employing the same mechanic he had used in the GP events.

The driver that Albert was trying to outperform was Arthur Terdich who raced a Bugatti.



Arthur Terdich with the Bugatti at Phillip Island. Date unknown.

Ray's mother tells the story of the testing of the Alvis on the old Dandenong Rd on the then concrete section. Early Sunday mornings they would leave Glenhuntly to test the car, with Ray's mother in the mechanics seat where she could see the speedometer. She would

call the speed during testing and relates that speeds reaching close to 100 m.p.h. were achieved ...as she said "a bit naughty by today's standards." At that time Ray suggests his mother would have been between 8 and 10 years old

The photographs shown are the only ones which Ray and his family possess as all others were lost in a house fire in 1952. If any reader knows of other relevant photos or history Ray would be pleased to receive copies for his

family archives.

Back to the Duigan for a moment.

Because I have still to raise sufficient funds to build the replica Tilley engine I have the loan of a Heath Henderson engine from the Aviation Museum at Moorabbin. This engine in an in line aircooled 4 cylinder motorcycle engine of 1300cc produces 27BHP. We have decided to use this engine until funds to complete the manufacture of the replica engine are to hand.

The Heath Henderson engine was not in good condition when inspected and has required an overhaul comprising new pistons and rings,

regrinding of the crankshaft and re-metaling of the bearings. The ignition and fuel system have been reconditioned and valves reground.

The Pistons were supplied by J.P.Pistons in Adelaide and Ian Shugg of Melbourne is looking after the crankshaft and conrods.

Whilst this reconditioned engine is an excellent unit to enable taxiing trials to be undertaken it has one problem, it runs in the opposite direction to the Tilley engine. This has required two flywheels to be manufactured and we will have to make two propellers.

Ray Goodwin agreed to make the two patterns for the flywheels and IXL in Geelong agreed to do the casting. Both companies gave us very favourable terms for their excellent work. The flywheels are now being machined by Robert Lange Engineering in Geelong.

Robert machined the wheel hubs and the wheels are being built by Philip Degruchy of Melbourne with beaded rims and tyres supplied by the Victorian Vintage Motorcycle Club

On collection of the flywheel castings I went back to Ray Goodwin to show him and Andrew just how good they were and there sitting on one of his table was the cylinder head from the FWD GP Alvis.

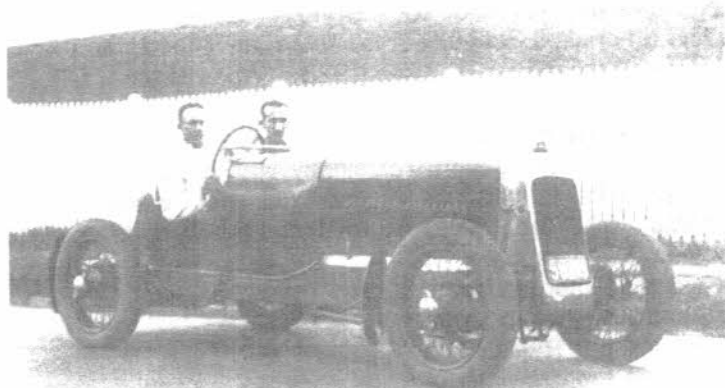
Richard Dyson-Harvey had sent it over from South Australia so that the Goodwin's can take measurements to make a pattern. The original head is in very poor condition with numerous cracks and weld repairs which are now suspect. Richard intends

As the photos show, Albert had the mudguards on for scrutineering and off for the qualifying event, but with headlamps still in place in both cases

It is also interesting to see the number of spectators who are simply standing by the side of the track with no protection whatsoever. In fact, the other engineer on the project relates the story of his parents attending the 1928 event and, thinking the race had finished, drove their car across the track only to see several race cars speed by just as they had completed their transition.

Finding his Austin uncompetitive Albert Edwards went to the UK and it is there that he purchased the FWD chassis. Ray explained that his grandfather had made good money as a Hard Plasterer and had then branched out into building complete homes. This was the source of his wealth and his ability to fund his passion for racing.

Having acquired the chassis Albert brought it



to have castings made in due course.

I am sure that Albert Edwards would be surprised to know that his grandson Ray and great grandson Andrew will be making a pattern of the head for the engine he imported from the UK all those years ago. I am also sure that John

Duigan would never have imagined that 100 years after his first flight a team of dedicated enthusiasts would not only replicate his aircraft but also its engine.

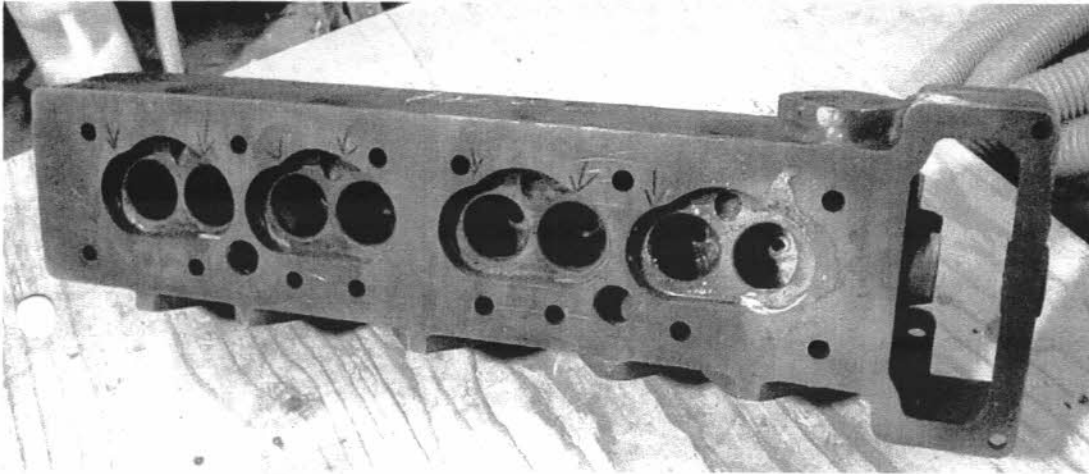
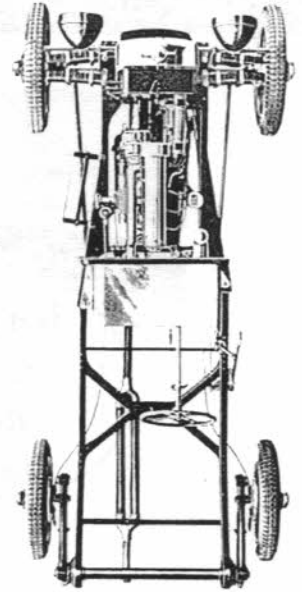
The fact that the same pattern maker is being used for both of these projects is, in itself, an interesting coincidence.

David Head
Batesford 2010

PS. The latest status of the Duigan replica project can be found on the website under

www.duiganreplica.org

and follow the link



Numerous cracks and repairs are evident in the head

Why men shouldn't write advice columns

Dear John,

I hope you can help me. The other day, I set off for work, leaving my husband in the house watching TV. My car stalled, and then it broke down about a mile down the road, and I had to walk back to get my husband's help. When I got home, I couldn't believe my eyes. He was in our bedroom with the neighbor's daughter!

I am 32, my husband is 34 and the neighbor's daughter is 19. We have been married for 10 years. When I confronted him, he broke down and admitted they had been having an affair for the past six months. He won't go to counseling, and I'm afraid I am a wreck and need advice urgently. Can you please help?

Sincerely, Sheila

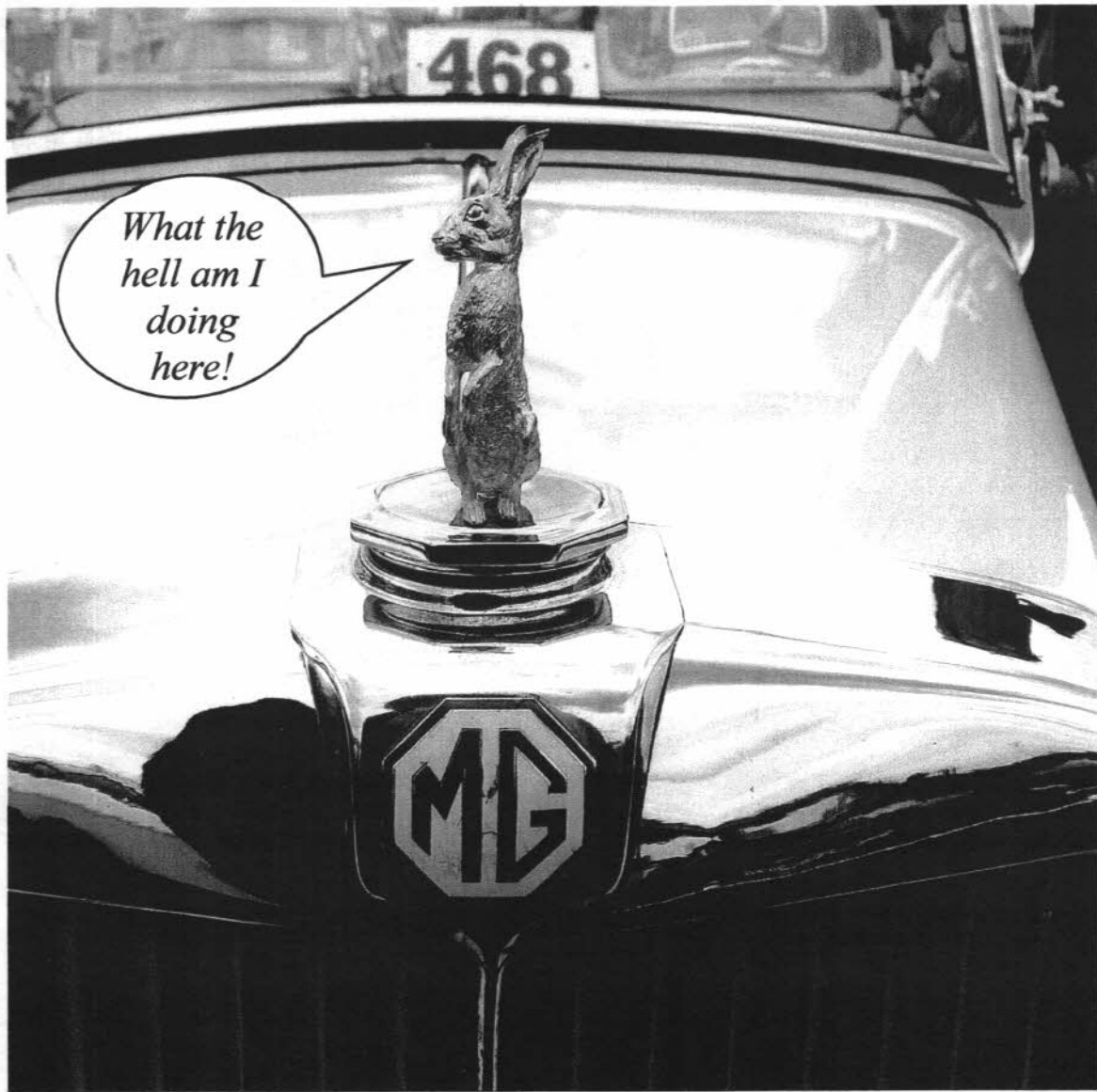
Dear Sheila,

A car stalling after being driven a short distance can be caused by a variety of faults with the engine. Start by checking that there is no debris in the fuel line. If it is clear, check the vacuum pipes and hoses on the intake manifold and also check all grounding wires. If none of these approaches solves the problem, it could be that the fuel pump itself is faulty, causing low delivery pressure to the injectors.

I hope this helps,
John

— Forwarded by Steve Sanderson,
Gilbert, S.C.

ALVIS PEOPLE BEHAVING BADLY!



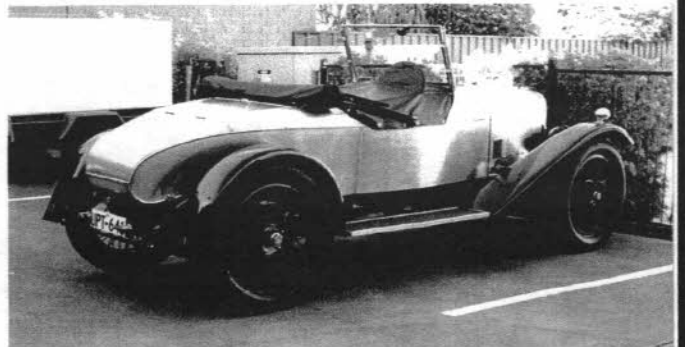
Englishman Steve Tillyer's wife Jenny has bought a TD MG. Steve has equipped it with a non standard hare looking over its shoulder.

FOR SALE

1924 Alvis 12/50 SC Beetleback

Full weather equipment. Trimmed in Brunswick Green Howe leather. Spares include crankcase, radiator with some dents no badge, hubs, gearbox casing & some internals, cylinder head - some repairs, pedals, front guard stays, stub axles. Spare parts catalogue. Copy of Mick Radford's book on the 12/50.

Vic Elliot - phone 08 83310833



Travels by TA14

A Little Background

My TA14 saloon (21534), bought on Boxing Day 1966, had been off the road for 30 years when I completed its rebuild just in time for son Dave's wedding to Cathryn in November 2006 (three days to spare). Aside from a couple of modest day runs into the Huon valley, the car has seen limited use since then. Liz and I had earlier decided to spend a few days on Tassie's NE coast during December and thought that we'd enjoy it more if we took one of the Alvises. The ex-John White TA14 DHC was the preferred vehicle but a dodgy weather forecast led us to take the saloon despite its not having a decent long drive since about 1972 and the fact that my rebuild did not include the engine and drive train. I was pretty optimistic about the motor which I'd largely rebuilt in the few years before body decay had forced the car off the road but I knew that the drive train was getting tired so this would be a good test and was expected to uncover some weaknesses.

Day 1

We left Hobart late in the morning on a Monday in early December and headed off via the Tasman Highway which leads directly from Hobart to the East Coast at Orford then runs along the coast all the way north to the seaside resort town of St Helens. The first part of the trip passes through the semi-suburban town of Sorell, through Buckland (interesting old church) to Orford (about 80km) where many Hobartians have beach shacks (and Mainlanders have mansions). The main features of this part of the drive are the climbs – the aptly named Break-Me-Neck and Bust-Me-Gall hills. Although not of the calibre of Mt Hotham, they present a fair task for a TA14 laden with tools, spares and luggage (and Liz isn't known for travelling light). I only had to resort to second a couple of times in response to very tight bends on the first climb; third was fine for the remainder. Once over the second climb (with scarcely a movement in the temperature gauge), it's downhill all the way to Orford.

From Orford, the lightly travelled road heads north past Triabunna (from where the ferry leaves for Maria Island, an ex-convict island, much favoured by the bush-walking fraternity) towards Swansea. As one nears Swansea the road runs close to the coast with magnificent views. Just south of Swansea is *Kabuki by the Sea*, a Japanese restaurant with an excellent reputation although we've not tried it.

We stopped in Swansea for a light lunch of fresh bread from



home, home-made rissoles (we brought a small supply of same to serve this purpose for the next couple of days) and a glass of red wine. To this point the car had run beautifully

save for a light drive train vibration at about 85km so we cruised at about 80.

Our target for the day was Scamander, a small beachside town about 11km south of St Helens, where we'd booked a few nights accommodation at the "Scamander Beach Resort" – a 1960's three-storey motel, currently being refurbished. This facility had

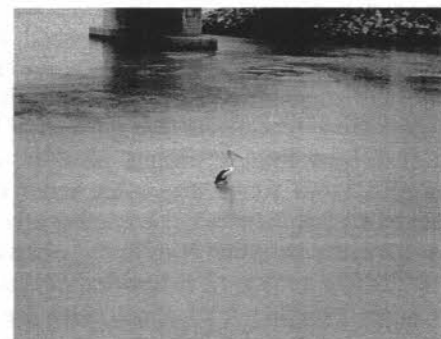
been established by well-known St Helens publican, the late Johnny Walker, who also owned the two pubs in St Helens (the "top" pub and the "bottom" pub). En route we passed through Bicheno (beaches, fishing, etc) and some excellent



east coast wine country (Freycinet, Coombend, etc). Between the two towns are turn-offs inland to Lake Leake and Campbelltown (an excellent drive) and south along the Freycinet Peninsula to Coles Bay, the National Park and the Hazards – very popular tourist country and with good reason. The run north from Bicheno to Scamander sticks mainly to the coast with some impressive views although arguably the viewing is better on a southerly course. We arrived at our destination in the late afternoon and settled into our room – pretty standard (not yet refurbished), friendly staff. That evening we ate in the motel restaurant which had food of a decent motel standard at fair prices. Liz and I enjoyed our entrée (a shared prawn thing) and our mains of scallops (Mike) and Mussaman curry (Liz) were quite reasonable. The wine list is very limited and I can't recall what we drank. There is a small restaurant just up the road called Sea Salt which has a good reputation but we didn't have a chance to try it.

Day 2

After a slightly disturbed night (the next door neighbour left his radio on all night) we ate and went for a wander across the two bridges over the Scamander river watching fish swim back and forth and a large Pelican waiting patiently for an opportunity (photo 3). We were interested in locating the spot where, on our honeymoon from South Australia 37 years before, we had stopped the road-going Elfin Streamliner we were driving to admire the view, only for it to fail to restart – the starter motor





had worked loose and I could not get to it to tighten it. So Liz had to push, a pretty fair introduction to marriage to a car nut I like to think.

We drove through to St Helens (a very pleasant town where many years ago an uncle managed the local sawmill and where I spent many

pleasant holidays) for fuel (we were getting about 25mpg) and to suss out the local scene. A couple of restaurants were recommended by a chap canvassing in the street for the local council elections. One of these (*Angasi*, run by the Bay of Fires winery) is in a small beach village called Binalong Bay just south of the famous Bay of Fires so off we headed only to find that it was closed on Tuesdays. We stopped at a small local park to have morning tea and a wander – stunning country and scenery – then drove back to St Helens where we checked out a possible

candidate for dinner that night. A late lunch (the usual) was taken at one of the numerous pristine white (decomposed granite – ie quartz as most of the feldspars have eroded away) empty beaches that extend virtually the entire length of the east coast. At about



this point we encountered our only mechanical hiccup of the trip – the latching mechanism on the passenger side front door jammed for some reason so Liz spent the rest of the trip wriggling back and forth past the gearbox and steering wheel to gain access.

Back to the motel for a rest and to book a table for dinner at *Margot's* in St Helens. It's only 10 minutes or so back to St Helens from Scamander and we rolled back there for a fairly early dinner. *Margot's* has been operating for only about 18 months and is a classy establishment. The food is French in style and makes excellent use of local produce, particularly seafood. Front-of-house is Emmanuele Delaunay, with whom we talked at length, and her partner Wayne Smith, ex *La Goulue* in Sydney, is in the kitchen. The wine list is first class and extensive. Our meal was outstanding – we both had zucchini flowers stuffed with prawn meat and a light gingery sauce to start (fantastic) then I had venison (as good as I've eaten) and Liz had a veal cutlet with Béarnaise sauce (excellent). We finished off by sharing a cheese plate (excellent local Pyengana cheddar and some imported *Buche d'Affinai*s which was a bit under ripe I thought). We consumed all this to the accompaniment of a nice *Cote du Rhone* (there are many excellent local and Australian wines on the list but we felt like a change). A terrific meal (mains: low thirties). I don't know how they keep afloat given the drastic variation in potential customer numbers from season to season.

Day 3

After a more restful night (he turned the radio down at the request of management) we set off the next day to visit the St Columba falls near Pyengana about 50km north of St Helens off the main road back to Launceston via Scottsdale. These falls are the tallest in Tasmania and are formed by the Georges River, that flows through St Helens, falling into the Pyengana valley. All the roads in this area were probably the best of the trip; narrow, windy, empty, with good

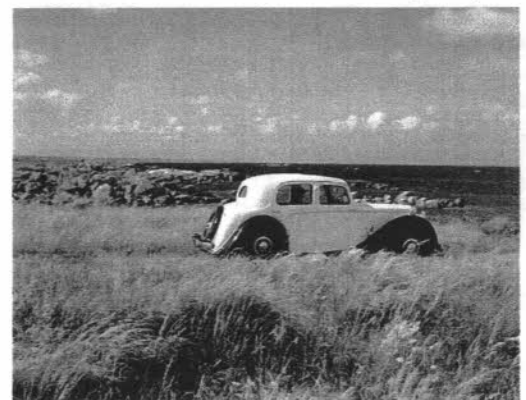
surfaces and running through stunning countryside. Near the falls there were copious (non-native) hollyhocks flowering at the side of the road (photo 9). The falls themselves are accessed by a short, pleasant walk through glades of man-ferns, blackwood, myrtle and other temperate rain-forest trees. One of the interesting features was the presence of epiphytes (at least I think that's the word) where one tree grows from seeds that took root in another – both grow together, with the roots of the former growing down the trunk of the latter until reaching the ground. A



particularly impressive specimen was a young blackwood growing around a large man-fern. The track is well maintained and slopes gradually down to the viewing point (meaning it slopes gradually *up* all the way back to the car park). Pleasant picnic facilities near the car park were used for the standard lunch while quite large numbers of tourists (mainly Japanese, Korean, etc) milled about. For such an out of the way place, we were surprised by the number of tourists there, although I'm

sure none of them regretted their visit. On the return journey we stopped at the Pyengana Cheese Co store and coffee rooms where we had an impromptu cheese tasting prior to picking up a couple of nice cheeses. Very pleasant people in a delightful environment.

On the Wednesday afternoon we drove back to Binalong Bay where we booked a table for dinner at *Angasi* (www.angasi.com.au) before wandering further up the coast to *The Gardens*, a small group of shacks about 15km north of Binalong Bay – virtually to the Bay of Fires. The beaches and scenery, especially the granite outcrops, were as lovely as everywhere along the coast and we sat in splendid isolation to have afternoon tea



and kill a little time until the restaurant was ready to receive us. *Angasi* (modern Australian cuisine) presented us with another memorable meal, albeit perhaps not quite as good as *Margot's* although it was a close run thing. We started by sharing the duck



terrine (excellent) then went on to us both having smoked salmon fritters – very nice but extremely rich, particularly with the accompanying potato croquettes. Fortunately we'd chosen a Beaujolais Villages that helped offset the richness of the main course. Back home to Scamander for our last night. By this time our next-door neighbour had taken to practicing his guitar (at least it was acoustic) so another word from management was needed to ensure a restful night.

Day 4

Thursday dawned with the weather looking a bit dodgy as we packed up for our trip back to Hobart. The route we chose was via the St Mary's Pass to St Mary's then along the Esk highway through Fingal and Avoca to meet up at Conara with the Midlands highway which we then followed back to Hobart. St Mary's Pass is a decent climb but the main constraint is the low speed corners rather than the gradient – the 14 didn't draw breath. In her conversation on Tuesday with the Council candidate, Liz was advised to visit *Cranks and Tinkerers* in St Mary's. We found it and pulled up in front of an apparently unattended large shop front full of old cars and a swag of odd bits



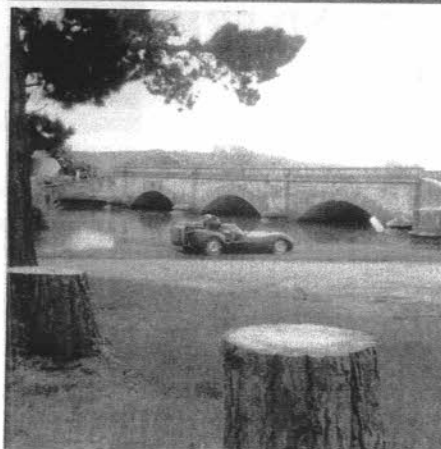
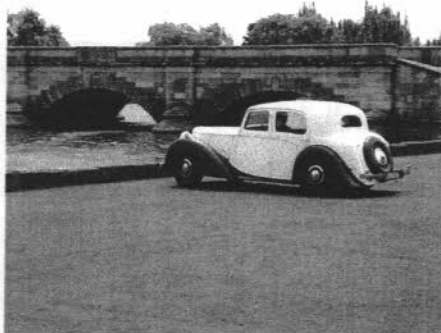
and pieces. No sooner had we climbed out of the car (literally in Liz's case) than a couple of ladies came charging across the road from the Quilting Crafts shop ooing and aah-ing at the car and asking for photos. We got into conversation and learned that the place was a car museum of sorts inspired by the efforts and enthusiasm of Ian, one of the teachers at the local school, who would be so disappointed that he'd missed us (he was teaching). There were apparently some other vehicles in a garage across the road so one of the women ran off to ring Ian for permission to have a browse. While awaiting her return, we prowled the museum which housed a eclectic mix of cars, models, old radios, pedal powered organs..... Fascinating – the nostalgia was rolling over me in waves. In pride of place was a rebuilt 1948 Ford Anglia tourer – the same as my first car that I'd bought in 1965 for £12. In truth they were terrible cars, at least when worn, as anyone who owned or drove one will attest – 6V electrics, hopeless cable-operated brakes, dreadful steering, and a gearbox that rarely provided access to more than the two gears. It had a terrific little 1172cc side-valve motor though that was the basis of many a special. Other vehicles were a Gogomobil sedan and Dart and Hudson Terraplane and pre-war Oldsmobile rolling chassis. The latter was an enormous thing.

Ian, it turned out, is a Rover nut and he arrived in a pristine Rover 90 along with his entire year 9 class (of one). We chatted at length as he showed me a garage-full of



Rovers (P2, 75, 105, 3 litre) (photo 19) and other odds and sods such as a Ford Prefect ute. A fun hour and a half were consumed in this way before we headed off for home. The run down the Fingal valley was very pleasant and, save for being overtaken from time to time by pairs of B-double log trucks, it was relatively lightly trafficked. The same can't be said for the Midland highway though, which is the main drag between Launceston and Hobart, two lane

for the most part and quite busy. On the leg south from St Mary's we encountered some wind and rain that forced the closure of the



sun-roof for the first time on the trip as well as exposing the dubious capabilities of the new windscreen wipers. Ross served as our lunch stop – we'd run out of rissoles and so were forced to rely on product from the local bakery (very nice) – and we pulled up by the Macquarie River and its impressively carved convict bridge (the same spot we'd stopped for lunch on driving north at the finish of our honeymoon although the environment had changed a lot – from a grassy bank to a gravelled carpark with tables and pergolas and all that).

As we travelled along, cruising at 80km/hr or so, I noticed some deterioration in the vibration mentioned earlier so put this on my list to review on our return home. On the last leg we stopped for afternoon tea (we'd picked up some tasty items at the Ross bakery for the purpose) at Bagdad with Pip and Graeme Roberts, some slightly eccentric friends who have a small farm in the area mainly growing grapes. Bagdad is only about 40km from the city so the last leg was quick and uneventful as we pulled back into our garage at about 5:30 pm after covering about 800km in total.

The Aftermath

For all intents and purposes, the car had run flawlessly for the entire trip. It started every time at the merest touch of the button, used only a couple of litres of oil, and the engine seemed to improve with the run – I suspect the rings may still have been a bit sticky and freed up with the extended running (at least that's my theory). Only the vibration (I suspected tailshaft and/or gearbox) and the jammed door (still jammed) created slight blemishes. An occasional noise on gear-changing and clutch drag on first starting also suggested the possibility of a sticky/damaged spigot bearing. A couple of days after the run I put the



car over the pit to have a bit of a nose around and found that:

- The tailshaft universal joints need replacing – there's play in them and the rollers are at least partly seized from extended lack of use;
- The gearbox needs new bearings – at least there's a lot of radial movement in the rear bearing. This problem was there forty years ago but has been exacerbated by lack of use and the dodgy universal joints. When I tried to disassemble it as a youth I was stymied by being unable to remove the layshaft so just put it back together again. It still changes beautifully and isn't overly noisy but a complete rebuild, at least of the bearings, seems to be in order. I'll put in a new spigot bearing at the same time and inspect the clutch which should be OK as I replaced it only 42 years ago.

Another job on the list, but when done I'll be very confident about the saloon's touring abilities. For good measure I might also replace the diff centre with a good spare I happen to have as I know it's very tired (the pinion teeth are like knife edges, even though it makes little noise).

To sum it up, a relaxing trip in a terrific car (greatly under-rated by some of the cognoscenti) on exciting, largely traffic-free roads, with good food and some of the best scenery in the world (in my only marginally biased opinion).

Mike Williams
30th December 2009

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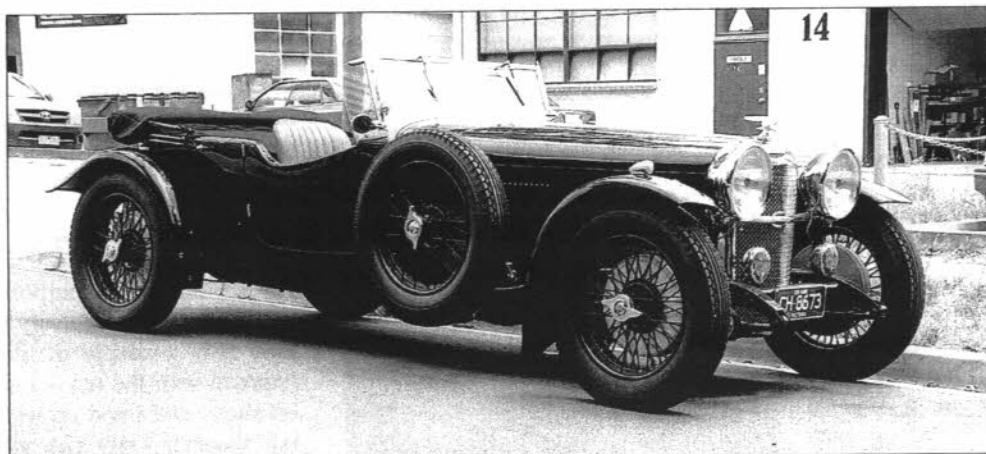
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Ch 9851, eng. 10504. Very little use since extensive restoration including body, paint & leather trim. 6 wheel equipped.

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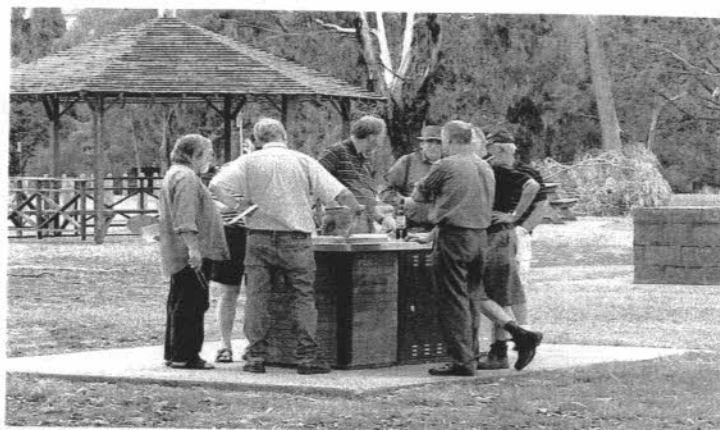
In the first instance contact Paul or Dale (HVR) on 03 9877 0666

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Photography by Frances McDougall



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Who's got a dollar to go in the electric BBQ



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rear*



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	<u>12/50 TE, TF,</u>	Instruction Manual	\$20.00	" "	
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