

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

# Alvic

March

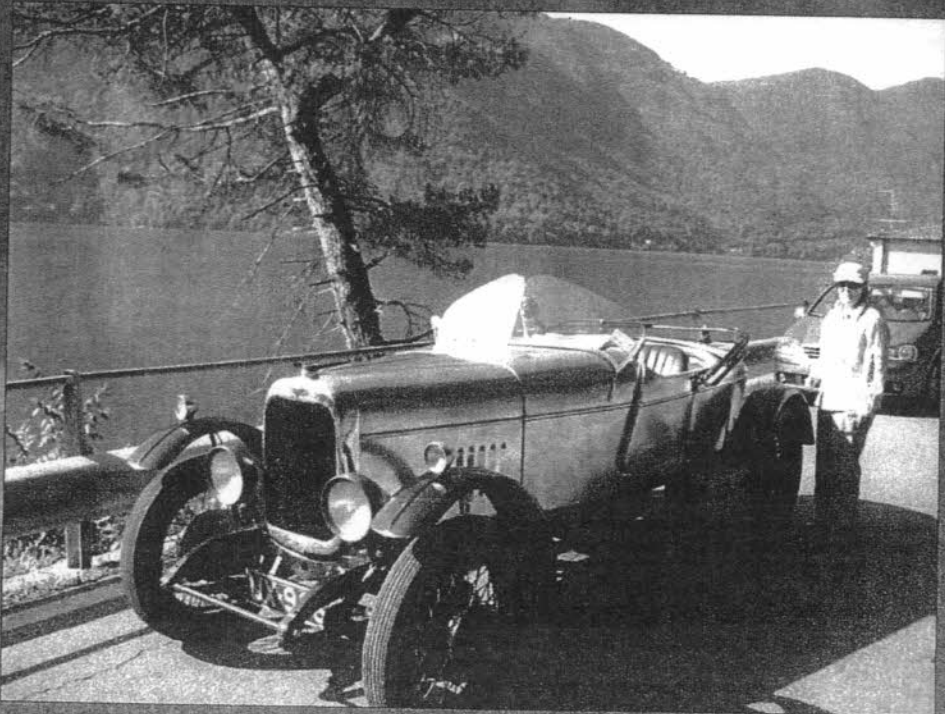
2011



## Inside

*"A Myth is not a Female Moth"*

### THE A.W. CHAPMAN STORY





# 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  
[www.alvis.org.au](http://www.alvis.org.au)

**MARCH 2011**  
**VOL 50 ISSUE 2**

## PRESIDENT

**Chester McKaige,**  
129 Tucker Rd, Bentleigh, Vic 3204  
Tel (03) 9557 1134 Mob 0407 113 516  
[ericmckaige@bigpond.com](mailto:ericmckaige@bigpond.com)

## VICE PRESIDENT & Spares Registrar

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

## SECRETARY

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

## TREASURER & PUBLIC OFFICER

**Darrell Horton,** 28 Carisbrooke St, Balnarring  
Beach. 3926 Tel 03 5983 2016  
[jocelyndarrell@bigpond.com](mailto:jocelyndarrell@bigpond.com)

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR & DISTRIBUTION

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

## LIBRARIAN

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

## COMMITTEE PERSONS:

**Lesley Northey,** 2 Orrong Rd,  
Elsternwick, Vic 3185  
Tel 03 9528 6767  
[northey@westnet.com.au](mailto:northey@westnet.com.au)

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

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

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



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Whilst February was a relatively quiet month, March is shaping up to be quite busy in Alvis circles.

The February meeting had a certain European flavour with Mack and Madge Hulbert in attendance along with Chris and Helen Storrar.

Chris presented us with the now framed Apsley and John Lang was presented with a Life Membership. Unbeknown to him, this also means that he will also retain the Newsletter Editorship for life as well.

Sal and I have planned the route for the March run (see details elsewhere) and soon after we have the British and European day at Flemington. A lot of work has gone into this event, and I urge you to attend and support our club.

The clubrooms were subjected to the recent rains and our Axminster carpet has suffered considerably. We need to replace this with new carpet as the old stuff could be regarded as a health issue. Is there any member out there that has any ties with a carpet warehouse that could supply us with enough carpet to cover the clubroom floor? We will then have to have a working bee to lay down the new carpet. This needs to be done fairly quickly.

The other day, someone asked me what I was tinkering with. On reflection of this comment I came to the conclusion that I don't think much of the word "tinkering" and suggest that it should be replaced by the word "fettling." This was further suggested on a sign that is located in a technology museum in San Francisco.

"Tinkering is what happens when you try something you don't know how to do, guided by a whim, imagination and curiosity. When you tinker, there are no instructions— but then there are no failures, no right or wrong ways of doing things." In other words, you are spending a lot of time doing nothing!

I will not be in attendance at the next meeting nor will Andrew McDougall. We are both attending a veteran car rally so I daresay someone will be chairing the meeting.

Look forward to seeing you all on the run to Jindivick.

Chester

(Malvernvale Hotel, 1321 Malvern Rd, Malvern – from 6.00pm)

## NEXT MEETING FRIDAY 18TH MARCH

THERE ARE SEVERAL ALVIS PEOPLE BEHAVING BADLY AND WHO WILL BE ABSENT DUE TO THEM DRIVING OTHER MARQUES OR DOING OTHER THINGS! SHAME SHAME!

WE NEED TO SHOW THEM THAT WE CAN HAVE A SUCCESSFUL MEETING, WITHOUT A PRESIDENT. WITHOUT A VICE PRESIDENT. WITHOUT A SECRETARY. WITHOUT A FORMER CLUB CAPTAIN.

PLEASE COME ALONG.

IF YOU ARE COMING TO THE MALVERNVALE HOTEL FOR DINNER, PLEASE EMAIL ME BACK AND I WILL MAKE SURE THERE ARE ENOUGH SEATS.

.....ED

*A very warm welcome to the following new members:  
Angus & Carolyn Gibb  
(have bought Chris Higgins 12/50 coupe)*

**Supper - the Hetheringtons**

### 2011 EVENT CALENDAR

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Mar 18  | General Meeting   |
| 27      | Run to Jindivick - cancelled due lack of numbers  |
| Apr 3   | RACV Classic Showcase - Flemington - brochure enclosed for Victorians                                       |
| 15      | General Meeting   |
| May 1-6 | 2011 National Rally - Western NSW   |
|         | more info from Rob Simpson 02 4384 3571 or <a href="mailto:meta1447@yahoo.com.au">meta1447@yahoo.com.au</a> |
| 15      | National Motoring Heritage Day - details to follow  |
| 20      | General Meeting   |
| June 17 | General Meeting   |
| 19      | Lunch at the Whistle Stop   |
| July 17 | Industrial Heritage Run (Western Suburbs)   |



# PEOPLE

Natural disasters seem to be affecting the Asia Pacific region with horrendous results and having previously reported, no known loss of life or car in the Australian Alvis community we are presented with the Christchurch and Japanese disasters. The Alvis Car Club of New Zealand happily report no loss of life or cars, however there are members who have had significant property loss as a result of the earthquake. While I have little knowledge of Alvis in Japan, our thoughts are with all affected by these disasters.

Alan Bratt has sold his TB14 to someone at Emerald in QLD and has bought David Seath's TB21.

David & Jan Seath are moving to Devonport and now Alvisless.

Bob Blacket is still doing battle with his FWD engine. He was keen to have the car at the 80 year celebration in 2008 but was not prepared to be rushed into a poorly prepared car. Subsequently the car was run, however Bob was not happy with the result. More work was done including a new set of gears to drive the cam shaft and ancillaries. It is being reassembled at the moment and we look forward to seeing the car at Wagga.



Recently, Chris & Helen Storrar were in Australia on holidays and Chris, on behalf of the AOC, presented the ACCV with a drawing of Phil Garlick at the Maroubra Raceway.

At that same meeting we welcomed, Mack & Madge Hulbert, Robert Penn Bradley, Ross & Marina McKenzie.



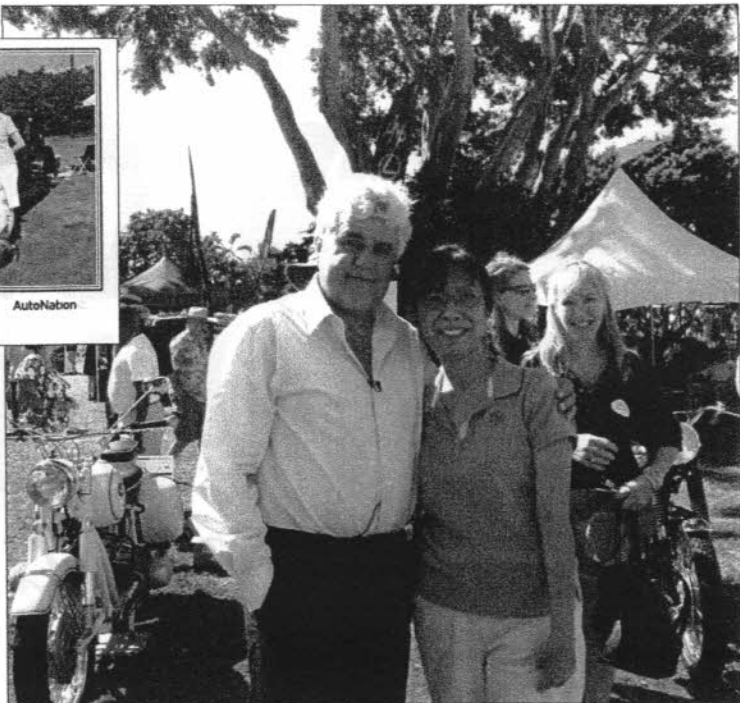
Also Richard Tonkin was delighted to receive an Armstrong Siddeley poster from Chester.

One does not normally refer to himself in the PEOPLE pages, however I need to make an acceptance on this occasion. Sitting comfortably at the back of the clubrooms, during the February meeting, poking cheek at the President, I was suddenly thrust into the spotlight by Chris Storrar who said he had another special duty to perform. I was presented with a Life Membership of the ACCV. In accepting the honour, I think I was so taken aback that I don't believe I said anything intelligible to express my feelings. But I can now.

Having been members since 1997, Marg & I have found a new meaning to life changing friendships & the real enjoyment of being involved with a group of people with a common interest. The other thing is that it is not just confined to the ACCV but the whole worldwide Alvis movement.

I am extremely honoured to join a very special group of people.





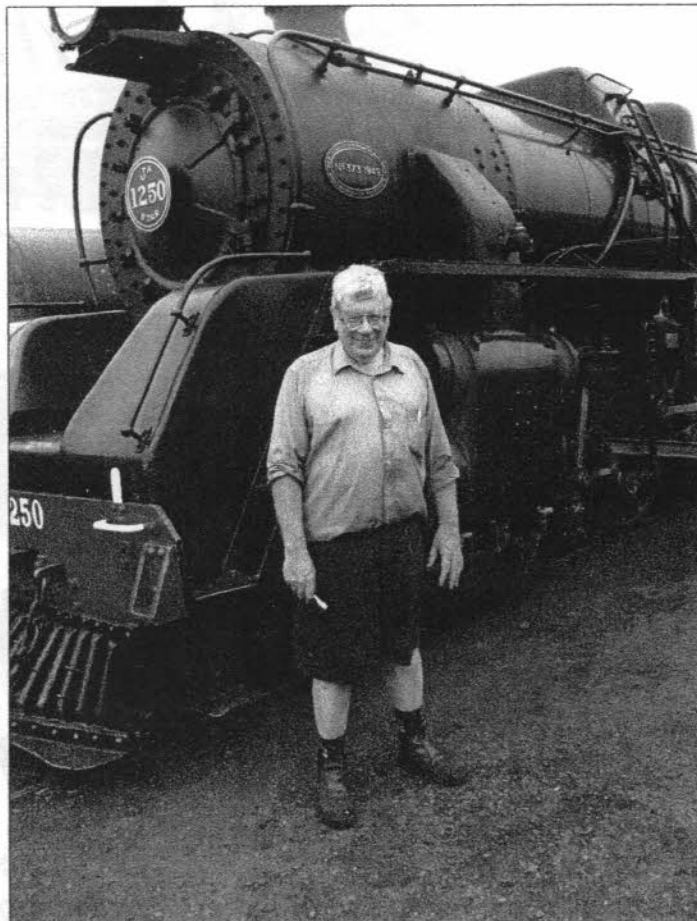
John Layzell sends these two pics of the Concours d'Elegance in Boca Raton, Florida 28 February .

*Above: John & Celia's Sp25*

*Right: Celia with Jay Leno, American Late Night TV host and avid car & cycle collector.*



*Above: Chris & Helen Storrar sitting in Chester McKaige's Darracq*



*Above: Chris Storrar recently in New Zealand, caught up with the current owner of a Speed 20 SB he previously had owned. John St Julian President of the New Zealand Alvis Car Club.*

*John was obviously busy with something other than his Alvis, however it is interesting to note the numbers on the steam engine.*

# RACV CLASSIC

# SHOWCASE

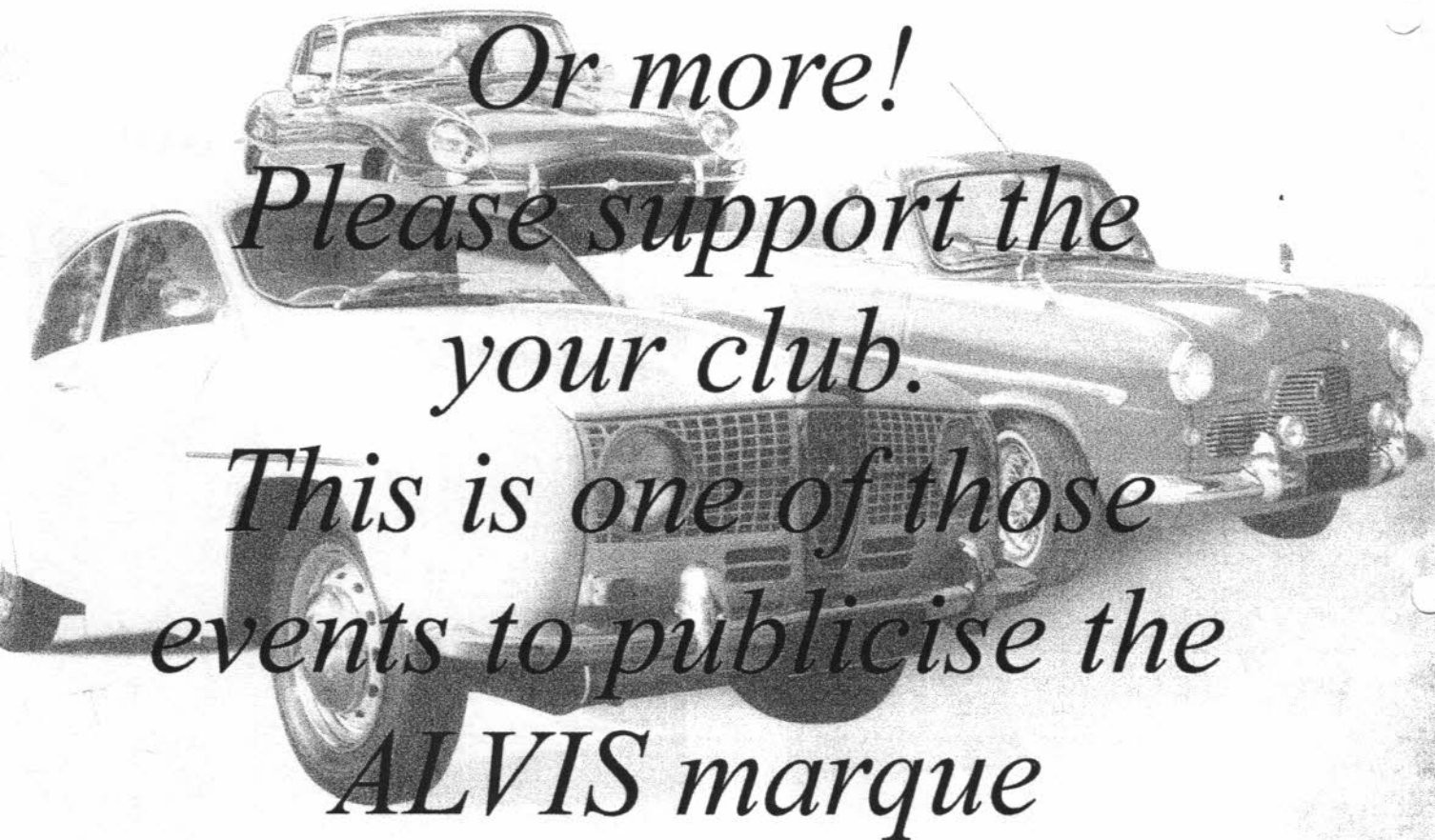
SUNDAY 3RD APRIL 2011

*We have 8 starters for  
the event and would  
like to make it 10 or 12*

*Or more!*

*Please support the  
your club.*

*This is one of those  
events to publicise the  
ALVIS marque*



CELEBRATING:

60 YEARS OF FORD ZEPHYR AND FORD CONSUL

50 YEARS OF E TYPE JAGUAR

THE MERCEDES BENZ STATE CONCOURS

CLUB DISPLAYS WELCOME



## RACV

DETAILS: 9890 0524

[www.aomc.asn.au](http://www.aomc.asn.au)

FLEMINGTON RACECOURSE

MEMBERS CARPARK





SUN. MARCH 27TH

We meet in the carpark of the shopping centre on the corner of Maroondah Highway and Killara Rd, Coldstream (Melways Map 281, B 8). We will depart from there at 10am. Coffee will be available from the Coldstream Brewery opposite the carpark from 9am.

We will then wend our way through some delightful countryside with a morning tea stop at Powelstown. We finish at Jindivick (Melways Map X912, U 6) where we will lunch at "The Barn" at 1pm.

We need to know numbers for lunch, so anyone intending to come please contact Chester and Sally by phone:

05571134 or 0407113516

or by e mail; [ericmckai@bigpond.com](mailto:ericmckai@bigpond.com)

We welcome anyone who just wants to come for lunch but please let us know.

**DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR THERMOS**



# The Competition Page



## ALVISTI & VSCC

### Trophy Presentation 30/01/11

Geoff Hewitt  
Chester McKaige  
Andrew Green  
(with Mark Alsop)

Crossley Trophy  
Stan Coath Clubman  
Bail Trophy

Performance in road events.  
Most Service to the Club Award  
Contribution to running events.

Andrew Green

1<sup>st</sup> Vintage

Alex Bryce Two Day Trial.

### Night Trial 9/2/11

Team Winners: Harey Blokes:

Mark Burns                      D N Showforduty  
Bob Northey                     Leslie Northey  
Alan Willingham                Peter Elliot  
All in 12/50s

Ian Barber                      Ashley Barber  
Silver Eagle

Also ran  
Geoff Hewitt                     Liz

Steve Denner reckons that Mark Burns' result proves that navigators are of limited value – being dead weight, the issuers of confusing instructions, wanting to stop all the time and being temperamental when cold and wet.



*Alvic*





# LEVEROLL

A.W. CHAPMAN LTD  
LONDON S.W.6

*In delving back into history, it is interesting to look at some of the companies, that over the years, have had their products used in or on the cars of many automobile makers. The most obvious are the coachbuilders whose products are there for all to see. However there are others whose are far less obvious and many people will say I know the name Leveroll but can't recall where.*

Chapman Seating is the renamed original A.W. Chapman Ltd that was founded by Mr Albert William Chapman in June 1901.

His first venture into seating, was a patent developed in a small workshop in the Midlands. Hearing that fortunes were to be made in Scotland he moved across the border and purchased an old church. Here he set up a workshop, carved his name into the fascia, and hoisted a flag to show he was in business.

The anticipated fortune did not materialise and after learning that the streets of London were paved with gold, sold up and migrated south.

He purchased a large garage in Ranelagh Gardens, next door to Putney Bridge District Line underground station and much of his early days were taken up with the provision of horse drawn and later motorised taxicabs from the station to the surrounding stockbroker Hurlingham Estate. Even up to the late 1960s the horse lashings were still to be seen in the assembly shop at Fulham!

Post first world war advertisements showed Chapman was purchasing ex-ministry and second hand car chassis and building high class limousine bodies on them. A completely rebuilt 1916 Daimler (ex armoured car chassis) with a spacious saloon and tube and whistle intercom with the chauffeur sold for 950 guineas upholstered in leather. At that time Chapman advertised themselves as Engineers, Body Builders, Car Repairers, Car and Limousine Hirers, new and used cars and launches (yes, even the marine market did not evade Chapman!), and boasted a showroom of 100 cars for sale.

It was during the first world war that Albert's talents were put to the test with the designs for the War effort, although due to secrecy much of it was not recorded. In the post war years business really became busy, with his latest patented single line contact friction seat slide becoming in much demand by long demised vehicle

manufacturers such as Armstrong Siddeley, Morris, Motors, Austin Car Company, Hillman, Riley, Bean, Alvis, Swift, Crossley, Weyman, Lagonda, Barkers, Maythorn, H.J. Mulliner, Chrysler, Freestone & Webb etc.

The rapid demand for motor cars in the 1920s led the way for much of Chapman's creative and ingenious talent to manifest itself, with products marketed under the trade name 'LEVEROLL,' such as dual friction slides, basic seat tilt mechanisms, and duplex seat winder mechanism very innovative for their day, and certainly first in the industry.

Other Chapman products appeared, such as: the Chapman Thermorad, the first car interior heater which drew its heat from the car exhaust, later versions being demanded by the Charabanc industry for passenger coaches; the Chapman Louvre, a self cleaning step mat to be placed on the running board at the door entrance; and the Chapman 'Nevajah' shock absorber, at the time the cheapest and most effective sprung damper on the market. Even a Chapman 'Pirouette' directional wireless turntable hit the market in the 1930s and the Chapman 'Ad-Ex' appeared in 1939 - a patented muscle exerciser for golfers!

At this time the Leveroll range of products were protected by over 30 world wide patents and anyone who sought to infringe Chapman's jealously guarded inventions found it a very costly legal exercise.

It is recorded that on Saturday 7th January 1928 at 2am, the River Thames burst its banks and Chapman's Showroom and workshop sank under 6 feet of muddy water. Advertisements were immediately placed in the AUTOCAR and showed Chapman's sense of humour at its best: He stated that the FLOOD of orders would not be affected, and that at the CURRENT time the clean up was going SWIMMINGLY, and whilst there would be some delay in the FLOW of despatch, work was going on in the divers

(diverse) task of clearing up. For years later advertisements carried 'established before the flood' quip.

The 1930s increasing popularity of the Motor Car and the Motor Coach brought new prosperity to Chapman and with the declaration of War in September 1939, new fortunes were to be made under the guise of the 'war effort.' Civilian production was suspended, and the whole production at Fulham geared to the production of war Department requirements, although some records show that civilian supplies were manufactured and delivered during the war.

By the end of hostilities Chapman had produced about half a million seats and fittings for the military.

After the war the demand for adjustable seats became even greater, but a high level involvement with military orders continued. The Centurion, Matilda, Crusader, and Churchill tanks all carried Chapman seating as did Alvis armoured cars, including the Stalwart.

Considerable extensions were carried out at Ranelagh Gardens, with the purchase of land at the rear of the existing factory, and the renting of the land under Putney Bridge Station. Design and development continued apace to cope with the ever-growing demand from the private car and the bus and coach industries which flourished with the new found post war prosperity.

New innovative products were launched, and up to the 1960s virtually every public service vehicle boasted a Chapman Driver's seat.

To cope with the demand, in 1960 a second factory at Riverside Road in Wimbledon was opened.

The product range, already including fully adjustable driver's seats and mechanisms, increased to include luxurious passenger seating for coaches, and high quality seat back adjusters for Aston Martin, Bristol, Rolls Royce and Bentley.

The late 1950's saw the sale of A W Chapman Limited to the Constructors Group in Birmingham who were then market leaders in metal office furniture and commercial shelving.

A W Chapman Limited continued and grew under this ownership, producing more and more innovative products in commercial seating and mechanisms.

By then the product range of A .W. Chapman Limited had grown to meet the ever demanding market of the private and commercial motor industry and from Chapman's original trade name of 'Leveroll' such brand names as 'Leverex,' 'Levelride' and 'Dualac', appeared, which were innovative drivers fully adjustable seat mechanisms of various heights, some hydraulically dampened, some in steel, some in Aluminium alloy, for all applications and were highly accredited by both the Bus and coach bodybuilders, construction industry plant manufacturers and the end operator.

Still in production at this time was specialised rugged military seating for the Ministry of Defence including the Drivers seat for the Vickers Armstrong produced Centurion Tank Mk5, Drivers and crew seats for the Alvis Fv620 Stalwart, FV603 Saracen and FV601 Saladin armoured vehicles, Daimler Ferret Armoured reconnaissance vehicle and other 'odd' items such as Ambulance stretcher bases for Dennis Brothers at Guildford, and even seat adjusters for Barbers Chairs made by LaRein!

Commercial vehicle manufacturers relied heavily on the quality adjustable seating available from A W Chapman Limited for their cab seats, Albion Motors, Atkinson Vehicles, Cornmer, Dennis Brothers, Fodens, Guy Motors, Leyland Motors, Seddon Vehicles,

Scammell Lorries and Thornycroft, Trojan, to name a few. Chapman also supplied bus and coach bodybuilders including Walter Alexander & Co, Appleyard of Leeds, Bonallack & Sons, Burlington Motor Bodies, Duple Motor Bodies, Dennis Brothers, Eastern Coachworks, East Lancashire Coachbuilders, Hoopers, Herbert Lomas, Metro Cainmell, Northern Counties Park Royal Vehicles, Charles H Roe, Spurling Motor Bodies, Plaxtons, Reeve Burgess, Robert Wright & sons, Weymanns, Willowbrooks,

The Construction machinery manufacturers including AWD-All wheel Drive, Aveling Barford, Babcock & Wilcox, Barfords of Belton, Boss Trucks, British Crane and Excavator Corp, Clarkes of Camberley, Coles Cranes, Hymac JCB, Matbro, F E Weatherill, Winglet, and many others all relied on the quality products made by Chapman, including many special versions of seats incorporating shock absorbers and large buckets seats, small pan seats with tip up armrests, swivel seats and even a special reversible backrest seat for crane cabs.

All of these were still being manufactured in the original factory at Ranelagh Gardens in Fulham, London, and at the Riverside Road Factory behind Wimbledon Stadium in Wandsworth, south London. Part of the Ranelagh Gardens original Factory extended under the elevated Putney Bridge District Line Railway Station and used eight of the railway arches as part of their production facility experimental facility, turning shop and storage. How they cope with trains thundering over their heads every five minutes one cannot imagine!

At that time the upholstery trim shop facility was situated just across the road from Ranelagh Gardens on two floors at the Fulham Pottery, a 1670's building with its own ghost, John Dwight a master potter who perished in a kiln fire in 1703.

He (apparently) is heard walking nightly thus preventing many of the superstitious workforce from doing overtime after dark!

The Riverside factory also produced luxury fixed (Mk155) and reclining (Mk166) Passenger Seating for coaches, so advanced for their day that a set was used in the Sci-Fi film 2001 as space ship seats (remember that was a long time ago!) These were of such durable quality that they were sold on when the coach was scrapped, some sets surviving service in four different coaches.

In 1968 the whole Constructors group including Chapman seating was purchased by the Slater walker industrial giant and many changes took place, including the establishment of a further production facility and offices at Sullivan Road in Fulham, where the administration was moved for a short time.

The 70's saw a new bus and coach Passenger seat designed and developed by Chapman Seating especially for the new National Bus contract - the Mk 188 'chameleon' range of reclining seats with quickly changeable seat covers which had each coach fitted with half blue and half orange moquette seats - some still in service today!

In 1970 the owners, Slater Walker Group, decided to close both the original factory at Ranelagh Gardens and the Sullivan Road factory and move the whole Fulham production to the Constructors factory in Tyburn Road in Erdington, Birmingham close to Fort Dunlop. The Riverside Road factory in Wandsworth remained open. subsequently the original factory and car showroom at Ranelagh Gardens opened by Mr Albert William Chapman in 1901 was unceremoniously sold off.

The move to Birmingham involved some personnel redundancy, but most key production, design and administrative personnel moved up to Birmingham with the migration of the production facility and a culture shock followed trying to integrate both



Midland and Southern workforces into common working practice. Against all the Slater Walker Group efforts rationalise the products into a common production facility, after two years of turmoil It was decided that the two businesses were not compatible and the ever profitable A. W. Chapman Limited products were sold to the Surrey based Rodd Engineering (1950) Limited who had factories at Walton upon Thames, Shepperton in Middlesex, and Havant in Hampshire.

To ease a return to the South in 1971, Rodd Engineering made extensions to their Shepperton factory and the A W Chapman Ltd production was accommodated there being renamed CHAPMAN SEATING LIMITED. The design department went to Shepperton and integrated alongside the Rodd administrative personnel whilst the CHAPMAN SEATING sales took the top floor of the Fulham Pottery in London just above the trim shop. Great investment followed at Shepperton in automated seat slide production aimed at the lucrative automotive market mainly through Ford, whilst still responding to the bodybuilders needs of more sophisticated and comfortable Drivers seating, and a mutual development programme was established with Bremshey AG., a German market leader in commercial seating.

With the pending retirement of the two owners of Rodd Engineering Limited Mr Ted Cross and Mr Jack Baker, Chapman Seating was sold over a 5 year lease/hire period to a Mr John Harvey who instigated massive development programmes of seat slides and passenger seating.

Chapman seating purchased Genyk Products Limited and their factory at Mitcham in South London from the Spillers Group and all the pet type products including bird and hamster cages ceased production as they were no longer economical or viable in a diminishing pet market. Chapman Seating moved to this factory

and traded under the Genyk Products name for a while, but the trading name reverted to the well known and respected Chapman seating again after two years.

The 1990's saw more investment in the design, development and production of a new range of railway passenger seating, which was extremely popular with the builders and end user but transferred to a third party in 2003 when the rail side of the business was sold off by the administrators.

In 2001 the group that owned Chapman Seating Went in to receivership and there was a management buyout which saw Chapman rise again as Chapman Transport Seating. Much investment went in the passenger seating side of the business and despite a very buoyant order book, Chapman went into administration due to massive over-commitment to contracts which were then subsequently delayed. The rail driver and passenger seating side of the business was sold-off very quickly by the administrators, followed by the remainder of the driver seat business in 2004 to OIC Partners Ltd who have since then traded as Chapman Driver seating from their factory in Milton Keynes.

The much respected brand Chapman has now seen a new lease of life and the development of new products and improvements to some of the products dating back 50 years or more continues today.

A concept of total focus on a limited range of products with an emphasis on service has seen the business rise again in the urban bus market. whilst this market segment accounts for the largest proportion of the Chapman business, seats have been supplied for use in mining and military vehicles, lifeboats and cranes and a number of other applications.

oooooooooooooooooooo

### Our Alvis Club by Norm Adams

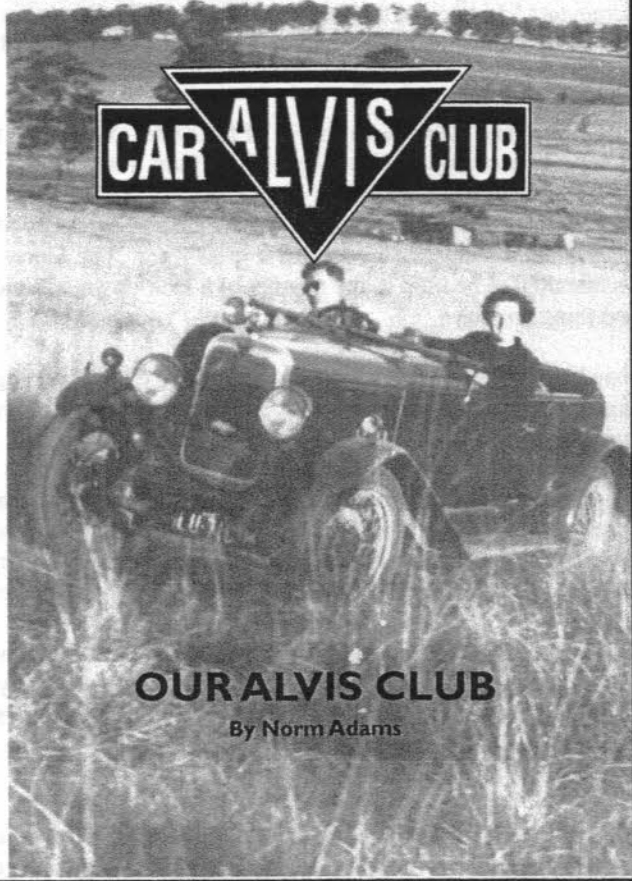
Written in 1980 when Norm Adams was suffering from Motor Neurone Disease "Norm's Book", as it is fondly called, recounts the halcyon days of the NSW Alvis Car Club, when you could turn up at a disused airfield and race your cars as you desired without the fear of stifling bureaucracy. Perhaps a bit foolhardy, but we were younger then and sure to live forever.

Norm describes Trials, Treasure Hunts, Hillclimbs and Club inventions such as the Petit Prix. Characters, eccentric and robust from all walks of life, with many talents and skills are included. Everyone was welcomed and encouraged and those with troubles always found a helping hand.

Although determined to make the most of our common interest in Alvis cars, there was clearly a sense of professionalism in how things were done. Still Norm emphasised that the most important ingredient was a sense of fun and enthusiasm. The Club had won our hearts and we were all prepared to do our bit and enjoy it.

The break-away of the Victorians, as inevitable as it was sad, is described from a NSW perspective.

This second edition of Norm's Book, enhanced with contemporary photos from the Club Photo Album, has been released to celebrate the Club's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. At the very reasonable price of \$10, this 88 page B5 sized black and white paperback book is available for purchase from Heather Goldsmith (Email: Alvibatics@optusnet.com.au; Tel: 02 9427 0816).





## A MYTH IS NOT A FEMALE MOTH"

*Contributed by Bill Barber*

One of the interesting facets of vintage motoring which has always had a horrible fascination for the writer is the extraordinary number of myths and pieces of folk-lore that have come to be accepted as articles of faith.

In this Club we are familiar with the old story - "12/50s are always breaking their pinch-bolts." In the course of many years of Alvis motoring, about the only thing that has not failed on one of your humble scribe's cars has been these components!

Of course, one must remember that the vintage movement took its rise in the U.K. in the mid-thirties on purely economic grounds. One could buy a really good 4½ litre Bentley for less than the price of a new Singer Le Mans. Consequently, many people made virtue out of necessity and bought what were, in fact, the superior pieces of engineering. The people who bought these cars would have given their left ears for a 57 SC Bugatti, but naturally le Patron wanted gold francs and not left ears. The fact that these vintage cars were bought for a low price meant that one did not spend much money on their restoration and so bolts from Woolworths were used for the little ends, rather than the high tensile variety specified by the makers. As the little end bolt is probably the most highly stressed component in a 12/50 engine, it was not surprising that the Woolworths' variety pulled apart.

There are, of course, many other popular fallacies regarding Alvis. The FWD cars were alleged to be prone to engaging two gears at the same time. A not particularly endearing trait. Experience of the writer's own car showed that, provided the selector mechanism had any sort of reasonable maintenance at all, this was "just aint so."

However, refer to the cost structures mentioned earlier. Speaking of the FWD cars, it is popularly believed that the engine was a 12/50 with an OHC head dropped in back to front. Bitter experience has shown that about the only component that interchanges between the two engines is the oil filler cap.

Another furphy relating to 12/50's is that the cone clutch on the earlier cars was diabolical. While admittedly it is not ideal for sprint starts, the author's 13 year old son has never found any difficulty with it.

While on the subject of clutches, the type fitted by Bugatti is also a victim of false legends. It is NOT centrifugal. It has, in fact, two positions - engaged and partly engaged. A multi-plate clutch will never free completely, which accounts for the rather uncouth noises as Bugatti drivers select first gear when at rest. Bugattis are, of course, a constant source of old wives' tales.

"I make cars to go, not to stop" is alleged to be a comment by Ettore. In fact the brakes on a Bugatti were very good by the standards of the time and the use of the aluminium wheel cum brake drum meant that the drivers could use the brakes hard and with confidence. One feels that Bugatti had quite a sense of humour. In one of his catalogues was the statement "the Automobile Bugatti contains all the allurements." In view of the fact that they were frequently used for conveying the "good friend" from Paris to Cannes for the weekend, this is probably quite true. On the subject of Bugatti catalogues, there was always more pages used to list the previous year's histories than to describe the current offerings.

Rolls-Royce has over been a source of false tales. We are all familiar with the sealed bonnet nonsense and the man who offered two Silver Shadows in exchange for his Silver Ghost farm truck needed for the non-existent museum.

Mercedes Benz, however, do have a museum and a very good one at that. The famous 38/250 is not nearly so nicely balanced a car to drive as is the slightly smaller model that it grew from. The Mercedes blower arrangements were often maligned, but when it is considered that it was intended to be used in the manner of a kick-down of a modern automatic, it was really quite a good idea. Of course, supercharging is a good thing anyway.

If one has to get more urge from an undersized engine, adding a puffer is far more sensible than planing half the head away and adding cams of peculiar profile. Moreover, as the extra power is delivered right through the range and not only at excessive revs, reliability is actually improved.

To go from the sublime to the gorblimey, at is always said that Henry Ford invented mass production with his model T. This is arrant nonsense. Many other motor manufacturers used the idea although, as they were not thinking in terms of a production run of 15,000,000 they did not take the idea as far. In point of fact, the Colt company had adopted the idea long ago, during the period when everyone from cowboy to congressman in the U.S.A. carried his "peacemaker."

"Ah, they don't build them that way anymore." How often have we all heard this cry. Actually the writer always replies, "Thank God for that and drives off." They don't put the stuff in them these days." Do these people really believe that metallurgy has not advanced over fifty years? Certainly Henry Ford did use quite sophisticated alloys for the time in the T, and Lord Austin put some good stuff into the "7," but the fact that a modern, cheap car can cheerfully withstand the abuse it gets, shows what can be done even if General Motors are still selling glass beads to the natives.

One could go on at great length, exploding fallacies like Frenchmen exploding bombs, but in an attempt to keep the newsletter to a reasonable size, the writer proposes to stop at this stage and get you to start thinking about the popular drivel which surrounds vintage motoring, and by contributing your own gems to make the Editor's job a bit easier.



# Ballarat Festival of Motoring

## 20 - 25 April 2011



### Ballarat hosts motor race revival at Easter

The 50th anniversary of a unique International motor race meeting will be celebrated in Ballarat over the Easter weekend, 2011. The Ballarat Festival of Motoring will commemorate the running of the Victoria Trophy race held on 11th and 12th of February 1961 at the Ballarat air field. Over that memorable weekend Ballarat in central Victoria reverberated to the sight and sound of Formula 1 racing cars racing in an International race meeting organized by the Melbourne and Ballarat branches of the Light Car Club of Australia.

The meeting was graced by the presence of BRM, Lotus and Cooper factory cars driven by Formula 1 stars Dan Gurney, Graham Hill, Ron Flockhart and Innes Ireland and supported by local open wheeler stars Stan Jones, Lex Davison, Austin Miller, Bib Stillwell, Alec Mildren, Jon Leighton and John Roxburgh.

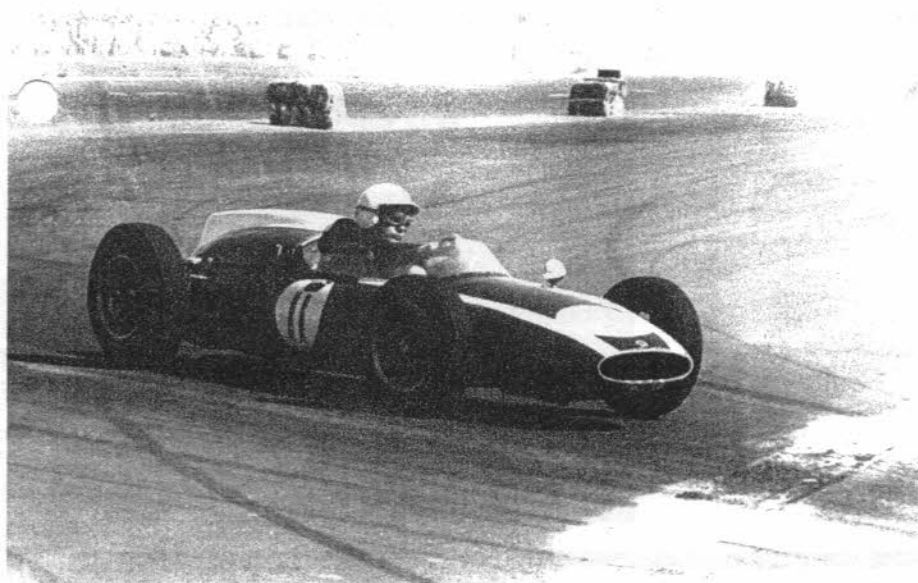
They were backed up by a program of racing which included touring and sports car legends Norm Beechey, Bob Jane, Bryan Thompson, Harry Firth, John Fish, Jim McKeown, David McKay and Murray Carter.

Thousands of motoring enthusiasts from all over Australia are expected to attend the five day Ballarat Festival of Motoring celebration, which runs from 20-24 April. Events will include an Historic motor show, a reunion dinner with many of the 1961 drivers present and appropriate guest speakers, a show and shine display at the Ballarat Polo field on Easter Saturday. The highlight will be the track activities at the Ballarat airfield on Easter Sunday April 24, including regularity runs and parade laps using as much of the 1961 track as is possible. In addition, a section of the airfield has been set aside for timed sprints.

These events are open to CAMS certified historic racing and sports cars of the period.

Great support has been received from the Ballarat community, particularly the City of Ballarat council and the Ballarat Light Car Club, so visitors can be assured of a warm welcome for the celebrations. The organizing committee is headed by local Ballarat motoring identity John Emery together with Gary Grant, former organizer of the famous Geelong Eastern Beach sprints, supported by a number of experienced motor sport organizers.

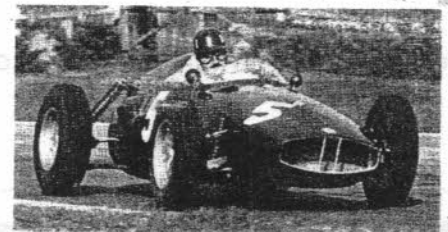
Further information and entry details will be available from the event web site, [www.ballarat.vic.gov.au](http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au) from late February 2011 or contact John Emery, 0408 570217, [johnkemery@bigpond.com](mailto:johnkemery@bigpond.com)



*Ron Flockhart*  
BALLARAT AIR STRIP

LIGHT CAR CLUB OF AUSTRALIA  
INTERNATIONAL  
MOTOR RACE MEETING  
BALLARAT AIR STRIP

Saturday, 11th and Sunday 12th February,  
1961



GRAHAM HILL driving a B.R.M. at GOODWOOD, England.



Official Programme 2/-



# OCTAGON MANUFACTURING

REPRODUCTION ORIGINAL SPECIFICATION WIRING HARNESSES FOR  
BRITISH CARS

*Manufacturing wiring harnesses of the highest standard to authentic Lucas specifications since 1968*

We specialise in wiring harnesses for British from 1929 through to late 70's. We re-manufacture the most authentic and original harnesses in the world. We have completed a thorough research programme to ensure our products are correct in every detail.

- Complete or Part Wiring Harnesses
- Pre war herringbone, post war cotton trace, and PVC cables available
- All new terminals and connectors fitted. Many are hand made by Octagon manufacturing as many authentic Lucas fittings are no longer available.
- Harnesses come with original wiring diagrams and plans to assist in fitting.
- Bespoke service so that additional items can be can be integrated for example fog lights, indicators, trafficators and alternators.
- Cotton braided in original colours or non adhesive PVC harness tape used as per original specification
- Waxed and braided battery and starter cable sets with optional Lucas helmet style battery connectors. Carpet sets and wing piping also available for post war MG's

**Octagon Manufacturing PO Box 1505 Toodyay WA 6566. Email : [twojshed@bigpond.com](mailto:twojshed@bigpond.com)**

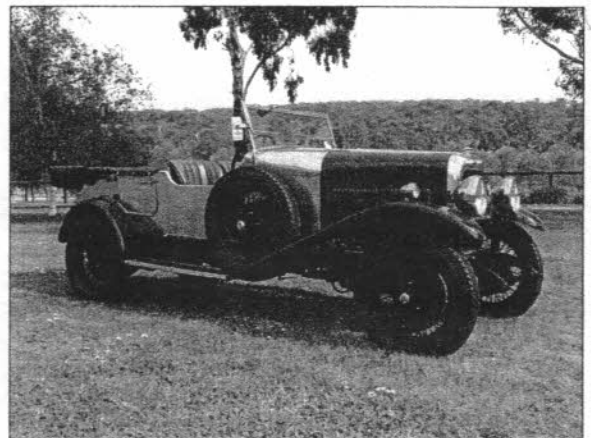
**(08) 9574 4905 or 0408 889 279**

BRUCE SHARMAN (ACCV Member)

Affiliated with Bygone Spares and Restorations [www.bygonesparesandrestorations.com](http://www.bygonesparesandrestorations.com)

## FOR SALE

1928 Silver Eagle,  
chassis 7462,  
engine 7949,  
\$ 110,000  
contact Paul or Dale (HVR) on  
03 9877 0666

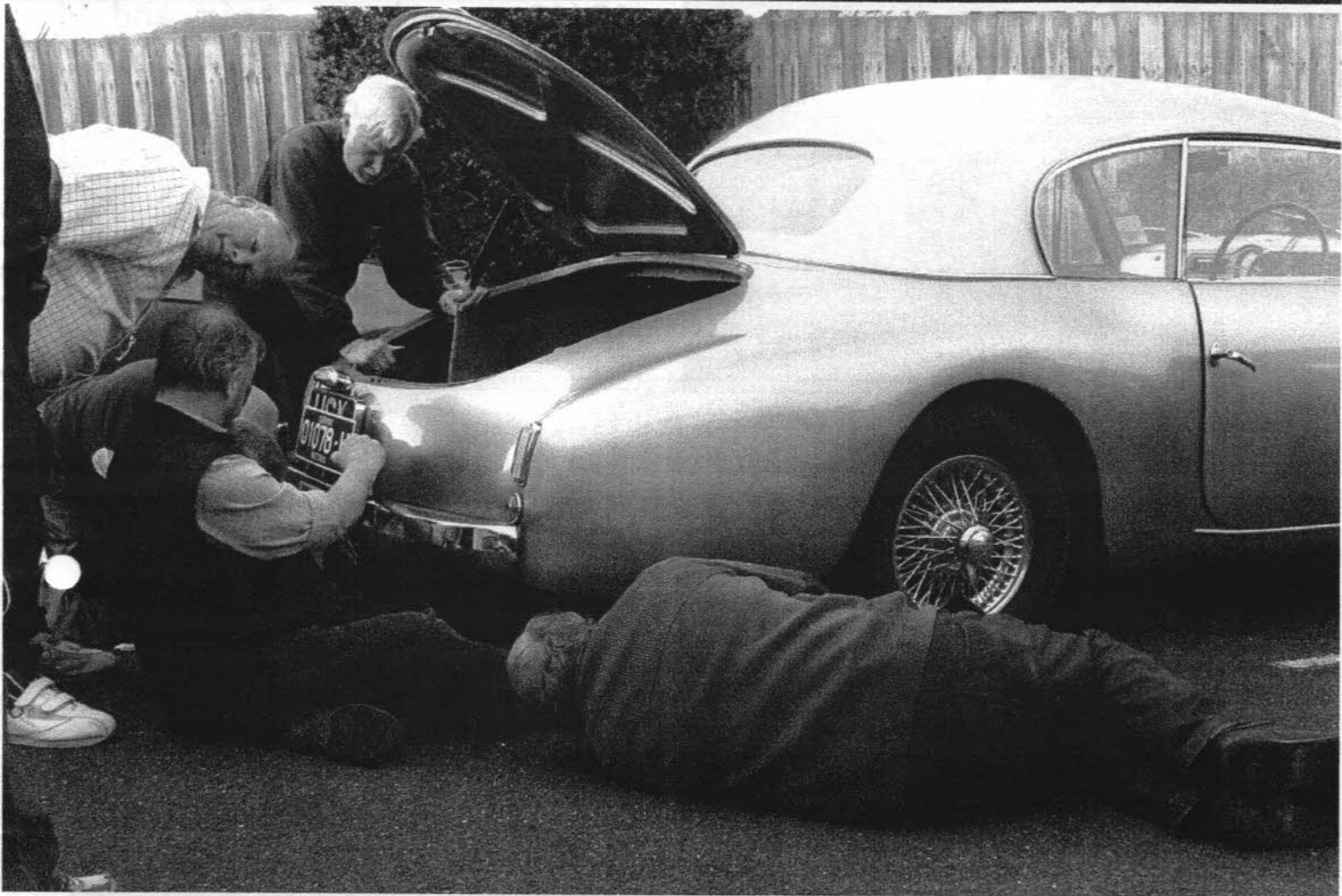


## FOR SALE

TA21 ROLLING CHASSIS  
FOR DETAILS  
RING ALAN BRATT 0427 405 573



# ALVIS PEOPLE BEHAVING BADLY



How many Alvis people does it take to put the Graber spare wheel back in its possie? Obviously more than six! Marg Lang saved the day by pushing the retaining catch as the six brave souls lifted the wheel and carrier up into position.

## FOR SALE

.J52 TA21 DHC. Chassis and engine number 24639.

Black duck over original maroon body. Interior, tan leather with unusual walnut veneer dash in exceptional condition. Interesting provenance.

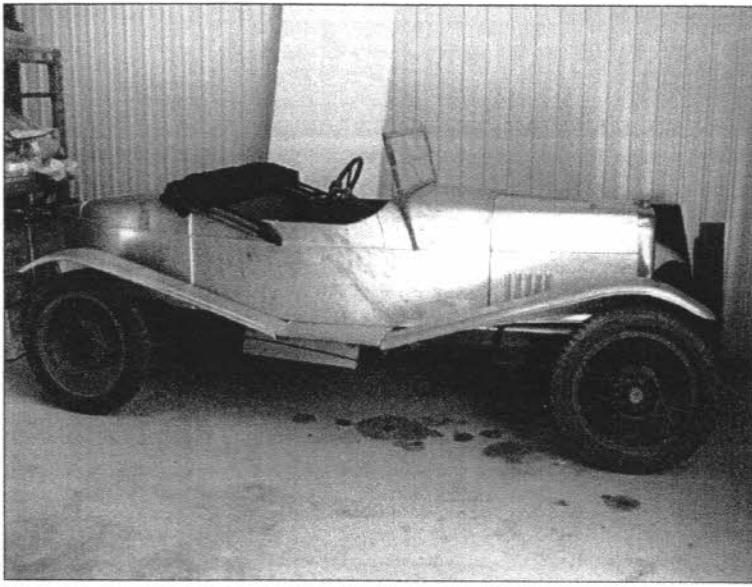
The car has been in the ACCV ownership for many years and in the hands of its present keeper, has undergone steady improvement to the point where it is delightful and reliable vehicle ready to participate in club activities.

Offered due to circumstances beyond my control.

\$75,000

For further details contact Darrell Horton  
on 5983 2016 or by emailing [jocelyndarrell@bigpond.com](mailto:jocelyndarrell@bigpond.com)





## FOR SALE

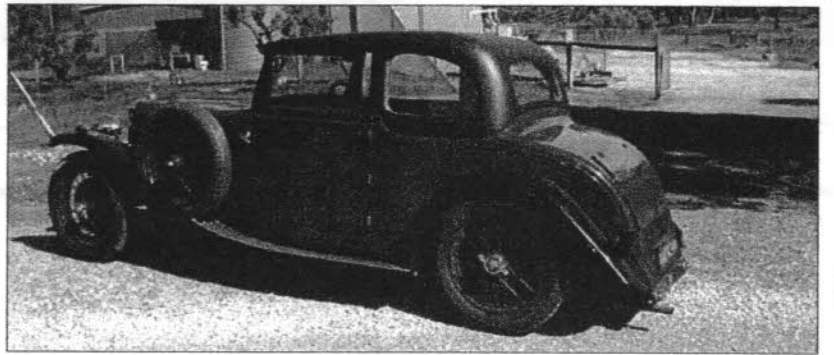
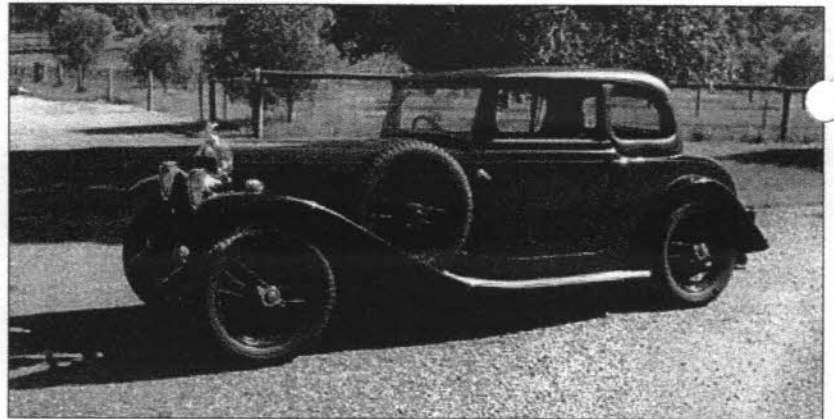
12/40, new body, trim and hood, requires mechanical restoration, ch 2361, eng 2707, \$50,000

Contact Paul or Dale (HVR) on 03 9877 0666

## For Sale

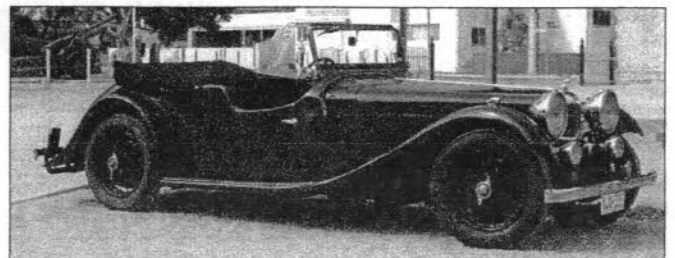
Firefly Coupe,  
car 16653 chassis  
11878, engine  
12068,  
\$ 50,000

contact Paul or  
Dale (HVR) on  
03 9877 0666



## FOR SALE

Speed 20 chassis 11317  
\$160,000, contact Paul or Dale (HVR) on  
(03) 9877 0666





## FOR SALE

1936 6 light TF Crested Eagle saloon - chassis number 13197 "Mrs. Simpson"

This totally unmolested Crested Eagle saloon is offered for sale for the first time since being purchased from Brian Hemmings in 1996. She has been a much loved member of the family and is being offered for sale reluctantly because of lack of space following another purchase.

She has recently had the benefit of a full service from Historic and Vintage Restorations in Blackburn, Melbourne. \$75,000 ONO

Richard Tonkin 0407 944 987



## FOR SALE

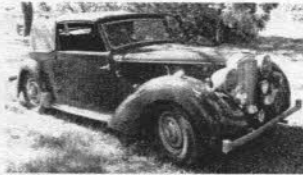
1949 TA14 DHC

Ring Keith 0419 357 512

Can be viewed

on: [carsales.com.au](http://carsales.com.au) (listing for Alvis) \$23,000

Good little project for someone!



## FOR SALE

FOR SALE New Crown wheel and Pinion for prewar Alvis cars. Ratio 4.1:1 Bought from Red Triangle and never used. \$1200-00 Ring 07-5478 6630 or email

[dedonnan@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dedonnan@bigpond.net.au)

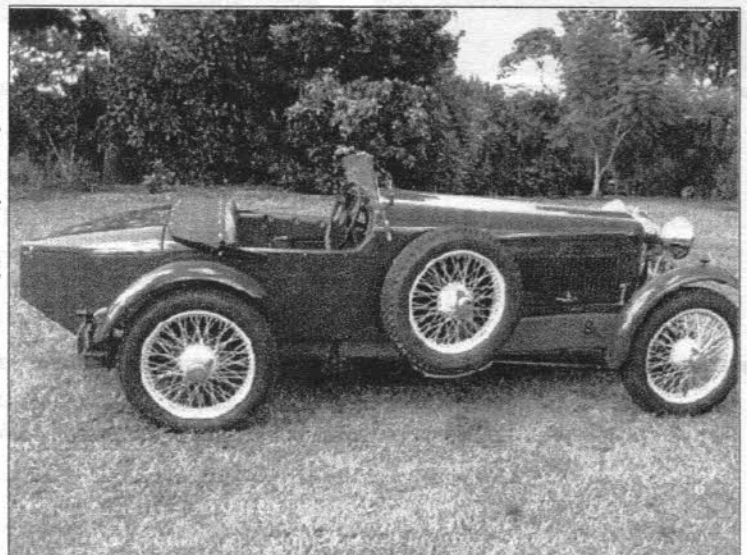
## FOR SALE

1928 Alvis FD FWD is for sale. Chassis # 7190 Eng # 7653 Car # 11982. Major restoration was recently completed which included a replica TT body and engine work including new conrods with slipper bearings, new main bearings, new pistons, valves, new gearbox gears, etc. The supercharger has new gears and the lobes and interior casing have been built up using teflon. The front hub splines have been re-made. Full details are available to serious parties.

Des Donnan

[dedonnan@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dedonnan@bigpond.net.au)

Price is \$100,000 firm.





## FOR SALE

FOR SALE

1958 TD21

Chassis # 25996

Manual gearbox, wire wheels, front disc brakes, electric fan, sun roof.

Re-built front suspension. Re-painted

Full History available

Recently restored. Repainted in red. Rechromed,

new carpets & tyres. Clutch & brake seals

Mechanicals restored—clutch & brakes

\$37,500

Ring Tery Hurst 0438 689 544



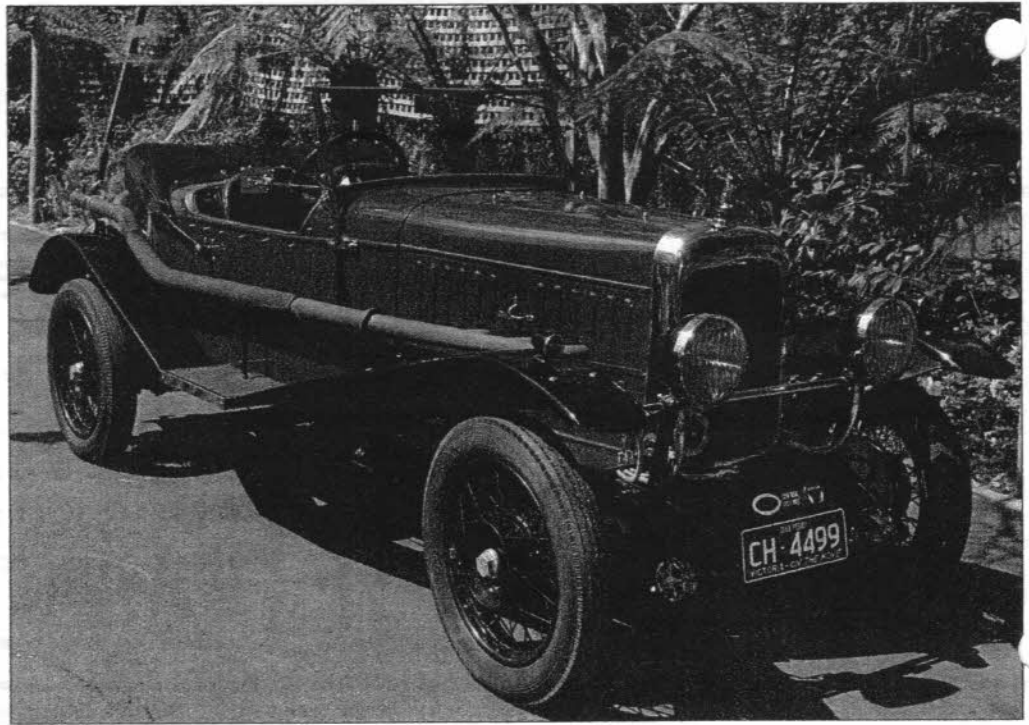
## For Sale 1931 Alvis 12/50 TJ

Chassis No. 9145

Engine No. 9626

Supercharged two seat roadster in excellent condition. Full wet weather equipment in Mercedes cloth with leather upholstery. A well known Alvis Club Car with great performance, reluctantly offered for sale. \$70,000

For more information contact Ray Newell 03 9755 3280 mob. 0428 558 228



## FOR SALE

SC Speed 20 magneto—good condition. Diff centre. Alloy waterway for SA Speed 20.. Starter cover. Magneto to coil change over switch. New head gasket. Push rods. Alistair Clarke ph (02) 4447 8340

*If your advertisement appears on these pages and is no longer relevant, please notify the newsletter editor.*

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Alvis Car Club of Victoria (Inc), its officers or its editor. Whilst all care has been taken, neither the Club nor its Officers accept responsibility for the availability, quality or fitness for use, of any services, goods or vehicles notified for sale or hire or the genuineness of the advertiser or author. Other car clubs may reprint only articles originating from our members. Acknowledgement would be appreciated.

# Cavalcade of Transport

A drive to Yarra Glen Racecourse

## Sunday 15th May 2011

To celebrate the

# National Motoring Heritage Day

A tribute to Australia's Motoring Heritage

Entry is by Gold Coin Donation

Proceeds donated to fire affected regions

Event Sticker & Grille Badge

Childrens face painting

Picnic atmosphere

Local Producers market

Various starting points

Onsite catering

Entertainment



Proudly sponsored by

# Lumley Special Vehicle Insurance



*Frank Moore's 4.3 litre Tourer chassis number 14329*