

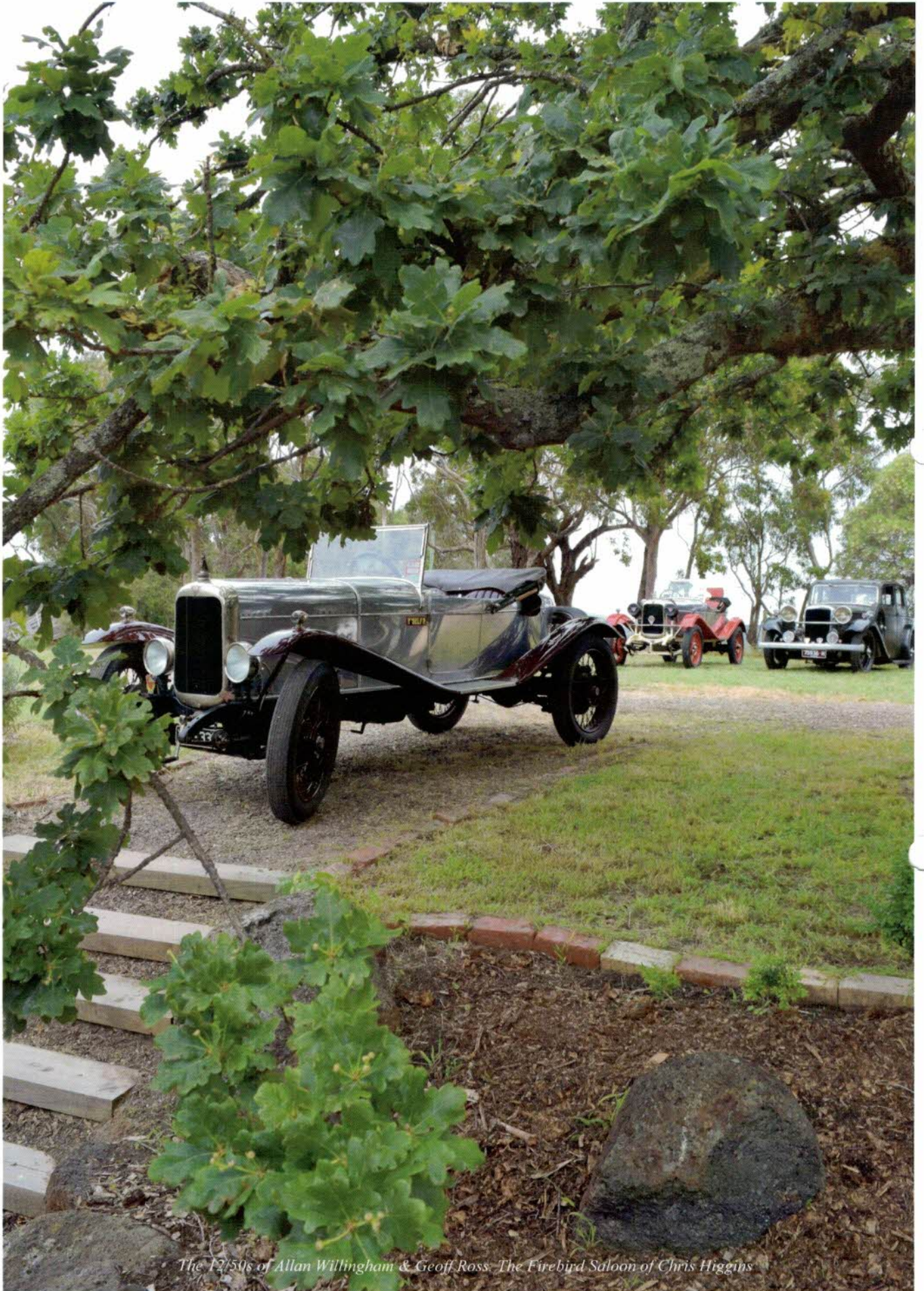
Alvic

The Newsletter of the Alvis Car Club of Victoria

December 2016

Merry Christmas





The 12/50s of Allan Willingham & Geoff Ross. The Firebird Saloon of Chris Higgins



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.
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December 2016 VOL 55 ISSUE 11

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*The Editor would like to thank all contributors to
this month's ALVIC*

2017 COMING EVENTS

2017

- | | | |
|-----|--------|--|
| JAN | 20 | OPENING BBQ AT THE KEVIN BARTLETT RESERVE BURNLEY, BYO EVERYTHING FROM 6.00PM, MELWAYS 59 A1 |
| FEB | 19 | RACV CLASSIC SHOWCASE—SEE PAGE 10. We have 10 car spaces reserved. Please contact John Lang if you are coming. |
| MAR | 26 | KALORAMA—ALVIS FEATURED MARQUE |
| MAY | 7 - 13 | NATIONAL RALLY—SEE PAGE 19 |
| MAY | 15 | NATIONAL MOTORING HERITAGE DAY |
| JUN | 18 | EARLY MORNING RUN - based around the remaining infrastructure of Melb's cable cars |
| JUL | 23 | YARRA VALLEY RUN & LUNCH |
| AUG | | WEEKEND AWAY - BELLARINE PENINSULA |

MORE TO COME FROM THE MARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Front page: Geoff Ross arrived at the ACCV Christmas Party complete with one of Santa's helpers in the jump seat. Geoff commented that he had many waves & toots from other motorists on the trip up from Drysdale. A round trip of about 300km.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Whilst not a national rally year, we have had a successful 2016 and enjoyed a great variety of Alvis activities. In particular we enjoyed two long weekends away, run by Peter and Jen in the Ballarat district and by Rowan and Amanda in the Mansfield area. Both were excellent events with lots of wonderful Alvis driving and great camaraderie. I am also pleased to record that we were able to welcome a good number of enthusiastic new members, even though some are still to find themselves a suitable Alvis. We hope that they find one under the Christmas tree!

The committee has met and planned out many events for the coming year. In particular I wish to draw your attention to the following events. On Friday 20th January we will have our New Year barbecue at the Kevin Bartlett Reserve, followed on Sunday February 19th by an Alvis display at the RACV/AOMC Classic Motor Show at Flemington and then we have been invited to be the featured marque at Kalorama on Sunday 26th March. The Kalorama display is always preceded by a great run up the mountain from the Manhattan Hotel. For both displays we wish to have a good number of cars so as to promote Alvis and attract new members to the Club. Of course in early May the National Alvis Rally will be held in Warrick in Queensland which we wish to support with as many cars as possible. Interesting routes to and from the rally are being planned so that there will be the opportunity for great runs before and after the main event.

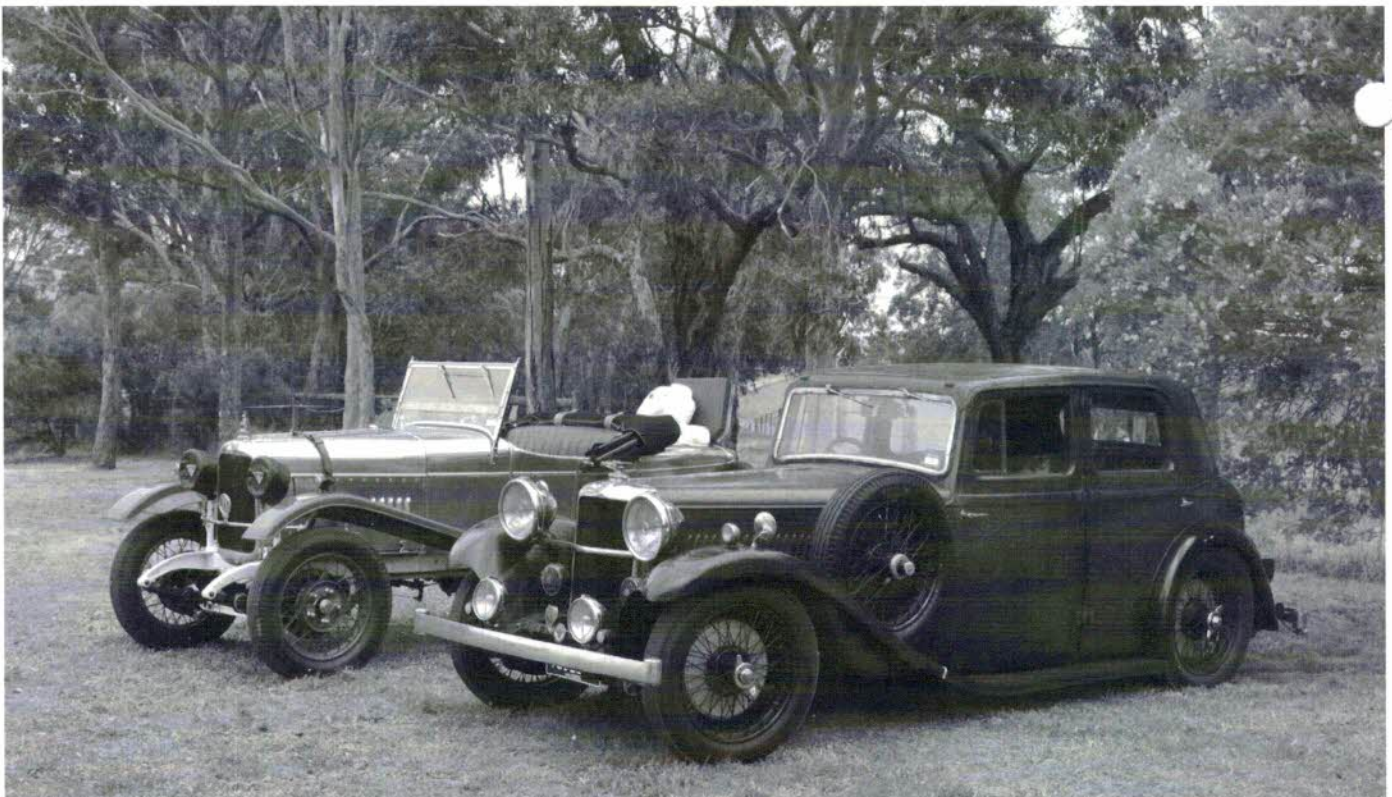
I wish to thank Pauline and Richard Tonkin for hosting a most enjoyable Christmas barbecue at their place. Initially there were the regular attendees, however these were followed by a second wave, with many new members, those who had travelled quite some distance and Chris Higgins who for his first event with the car, brought the recently acquired original Firebird Saloon, with its wonderful patina. Geoff Ross came a long way in his 12/50 and I understand had some overheating issues on the return journey. We hope that all is well with the car. Dale Anderson, in a modern, came from Barrabool.

New members Dale and Judy Anderson have taken delivery of the ex Derek Dixon wide bodied two seater 12/50 and have been enjoying some short drives around their local district, whilst they get to know the car. Also Bru Jones is making good progress in refurbishing the ex Chris Higgins doctors coupe. We look forward to seeing both these 12/50s on events in 2017.

I also understand that congratulations are in order to Alan Willingham for recently winning the VSCC's Alpine Trial in his wonderful 12/50 ducksback.

December is generally hectic with end of year events and preparing for Christmas and the New Year celebrations. I wish you all a safe and happy festive season with family and friends and I look forward to enjoyable Alvis camaraderie and motoring in 2017.

Andrew McDougall



Celebrating 100 years of Alvis

The Centenary Tour – the pre rally before the National Rally 2019

We are looking for expressions of interest in joining us for all or part of the journey as a start to celebrations of 100 years of Alvis.

2019 will be the start of world--wide celebrations - 100 years of Alvis.

The proposed tour will take in a taste of key areas from the Victorian high country, south to Victoria's east coast region north along New South Wales Sapphire coast, then up into the Blue Mountains, inland western NSW, then back down visiting our nation's capital - Canberra, through the snowy mountains and finally culminating with a gathering in Albury which is the proposed starting point for the 2019 National Rally.

We anticipate the tour will be approximately 15 -20 days in duration. Driving will be minimised to approximately 300 to 400 km on transport days. We will be working towards a minimum of 2 nights in each location where possible and in some instances a little longer. The aim is to enjoy comfortable motoring through some of the most picturesque regions in South Eastern Australia.

We are seeking expressions of interest at this time. If you would like to participate please contact: Dale Parsell, dparsell@ozemail.com.au

We are very fortunate to have in our membership, people who are knowledgeable about Alvis cars and their mechanics and are prepared to spend time sharing that knowledge and their technical skills to the benefit of the members and the Club.

See page 11 for the first of 2 episodes of an article from Nick Simpson who has previously provided excellent articles on the SA Speed 20, de Freville and lately the history of the Alvis Fourteen, "An Admirable Car."

Nick's article is about the 6 x SA Speed 20 cars that came to Australia as rolling chassis in the early 1930s.

CAR NEWS

Peter Miller has bought Mike William's 12/50 Ducksback and looks forward to bringing it back to Victoria early in the new year.

The car has a very interesting competition and touring history and will make a great addition to Peter's growing Alvis interests.

CAR NEWS

Chris Higgins brought his newly acquired Firebird saloon to the Christmas Party. Obviously there are a few bugs to sort out, however it was great to see the car back in the ACCV fold and being used. A very handsome car.

See photograph opposite page.

A great pleasure to see John & Kay Ball with us at the Christmas Party.

Not yet with the TD21, which John says is coming along slowly and we look forward to seeing it in all its glory, very soon.

KALORAMA

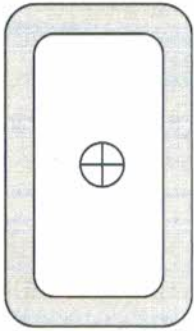
Please be advised that the date for Kalorama has been changed to 26 March 2017 due to the previous date clashing with the changed Grand Prix date.

REMEMBER THAT ALVIS IS THE FEATURED MARQUE FOR THE EVENT

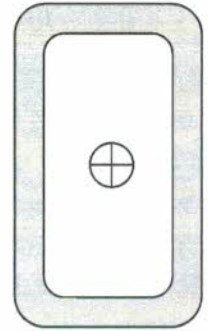
RACV /AOMC CLASSIC SHOWCASE

To be held on Sunday February 18 at Flemington Race course.

Our display area has been booked. The event plan can be viewed on aomc.asn



GRABER



THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE WHITE TAILLIGHTS

"Your taillights are white!" declared Mike Baker. He and wife Jan had just returned from the 2015 pre-Rally rally to Tasmania in the Tonkin's TA21G Graber. I had noted a couple of issues with "Mrs. Graber" that Mike had mentioned as needing attention before they set off to the National Rally in the Barossa Valley via the Great Ocean Road, but white taillights? I thought Mike was kidding – anyway, they were unlikely to be driving at night, so I promptly forgot about it.

When the Bakers returned Mrs. Graber after the National Rally (in good order and condition - thanks chaps), I remembered the "white taillights" and I turned them on one night at home, in the darkened garage. Sure enough, they were white – not a trace of red, or even pink, just plain old white. Now there has to be a Road Traffic Regulation about that sort of thing, as well as white taillights being confusing to fellow motorists, so I investigated. I removed the lens from the right side – the inside was opaque glass, with not a trace of red. The bulb was also clear and stamped "21 Watts." The cause of the problem had been found – now to determine why and to fix it.

So I hopped down to my friendly AutoBarn store in Eltham and explained the problem to Colin, one of three or so on the staff who have grey beards and thus a decent amount of accumulated knowledge.

The first thing Colin said was that 21 watts was way too bright for tail lights – they should be 5 watts. That may have been the cause of the disappearance of any trace of red from the lens – perhaps the additional heat from the 21 watt bulb eventually burned away the red paint on the lens – the taillights had been red, or at least pink, when I noticed them over the years.

Alas, Colin's searches through the books revealed that neither of the two main bulb suppliers made a red one with the correct connection. So, watt (sorry, what), to do? "Aha," said Colin, "we have a solution" (literally). A company called Specialty Automotive, from Croydon Park, NSW (no, not China), make a product, "Brush-On Lens and Bulb Dye." I bought a bottle, complete with applicator brush and rushed home, full of excitement that I could actually do something myself, to fix the problem.

And so, with both the new, 5 watt clear bulbs and the inside of the lenses duly painted red, the problem was solved. Mrs. Graber can now go out at night, safe in the knowledge that she is shining brightly from both ends and in the correct colours.

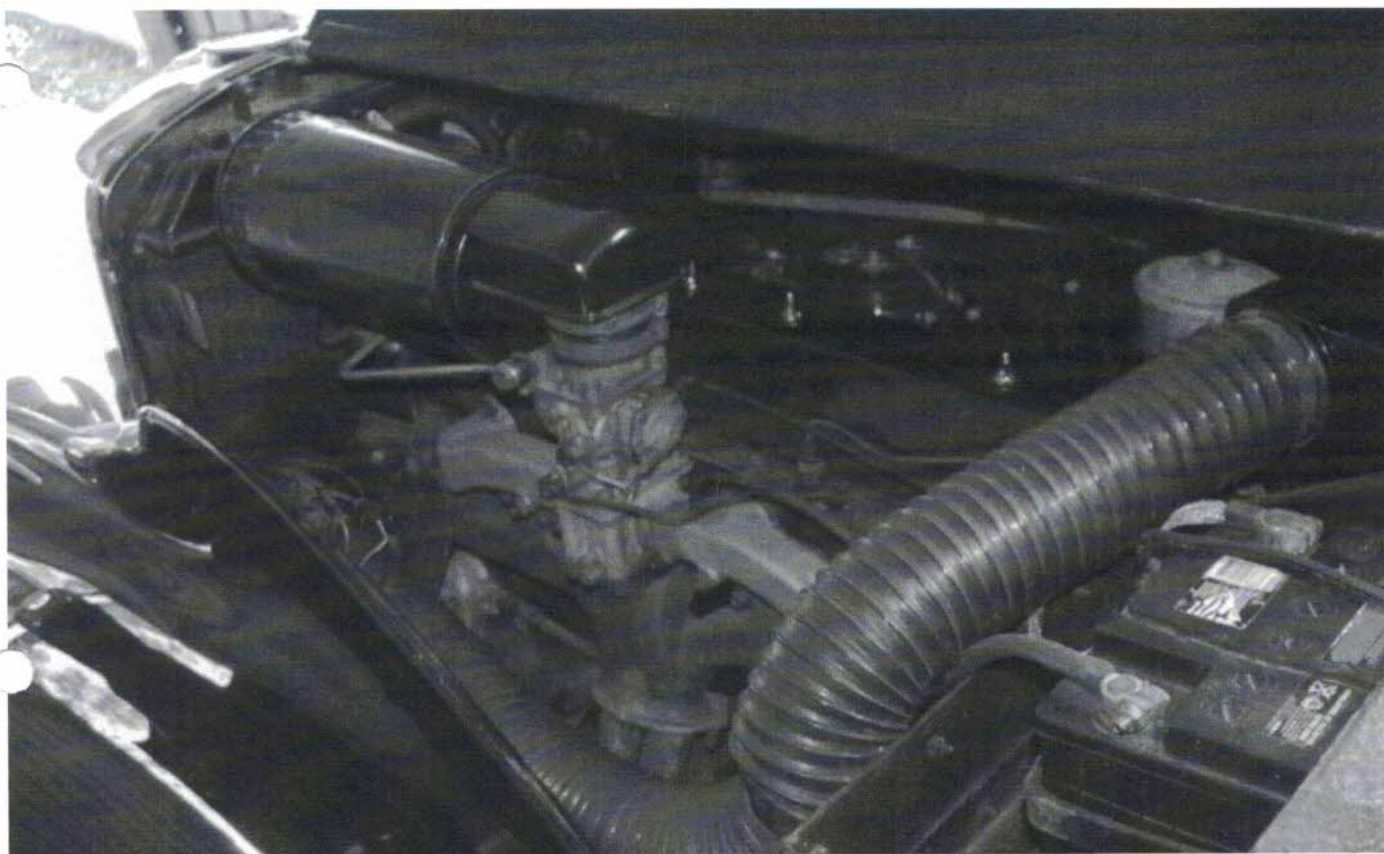
Richard Tonkin



"For the sheer joy of driving I'd like to go there in an Alvis"
(Advertisement in The Motor 1952)

TA21 - Solex to Twin SU conversion.

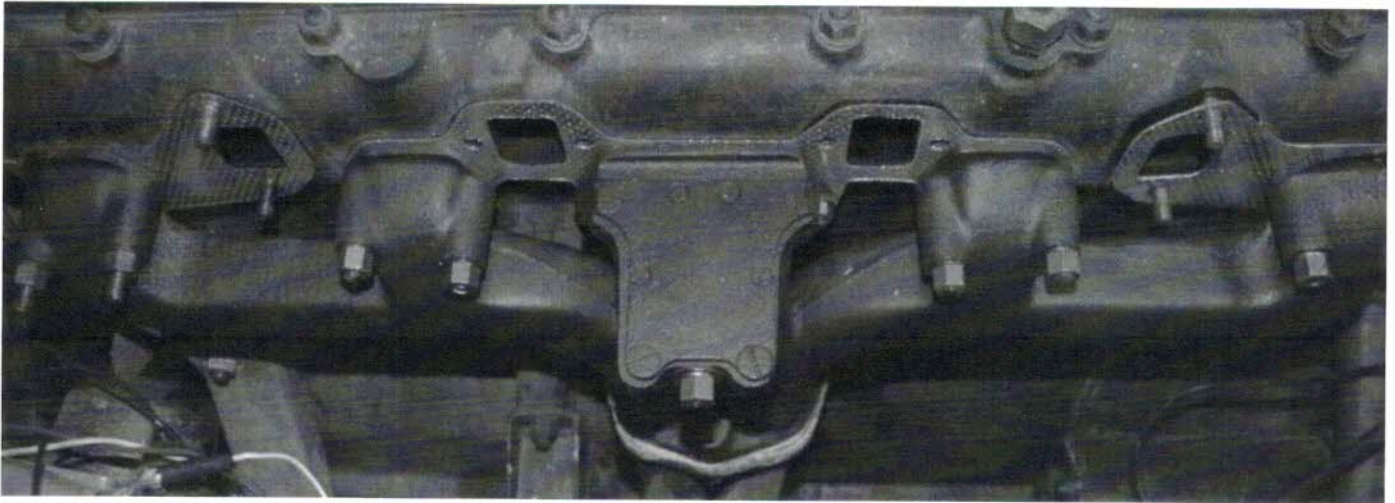
I had often wondered how many early TA21's were travelling UK roads with their original Solex carburettor. When the TA21 was released the logic behind fitting the twin barrel Solex 30PAAI was that it was more forgiving of the terrible "pool" petrol available and of course at the time as everything was export market focused, the thinking was that local mechanics in the "colonies" would better understand the operations of a simple compound carburettor. Well this was how matters stood in 1949 and yes early production TA21's were fitted with a slightly different version of the Solex that was on the drawing board at the time.



(Chassis 24314 with its much tinkered with Solex 30PAAI carburettor)

By the end of 1951 petrol quality had improved and by now the out of favour Solex was superseded by twin SU H4's. This happened with chassis number 24482. The factory, considerate of owners with Solex equipped cars was willing to convert these to the new induction system. To do so would also require the additional expense of a new exhaust system as the exhaust manifold was also redesigned. Likewise too the air silencer (I can't call it an air cleaner for in our dusty conditions it certainly wasn't up to that task) would need to be replaced, again at additional cost.

What resulted was a hybrid of the old and new. The old exhaust manifold had a plate affixed where it was attached to the inlet manifold and acted as a hot spot. This meant that the original exhaust pipe set up could be maintained. Not stylish but effective. It certainly saved on conversion costs. As for the air silencer, an extended piece of rigid rubber tubing allowed it to be adapted to fit the aluminium air intake.



{Keeping the original exhaust manifold and blanking off the inlet manifold hot spot saved on cost.}

The end result was an increase in power and of course a far superior look; a look more reminiscent of the 30's Speed cars. However the story in Australia was quite different. The cars tended to remain with their original configuration. This was certainly the case with my car, chassis number 24314. I always considered the Solex to be the Achilles heel of a good motor.



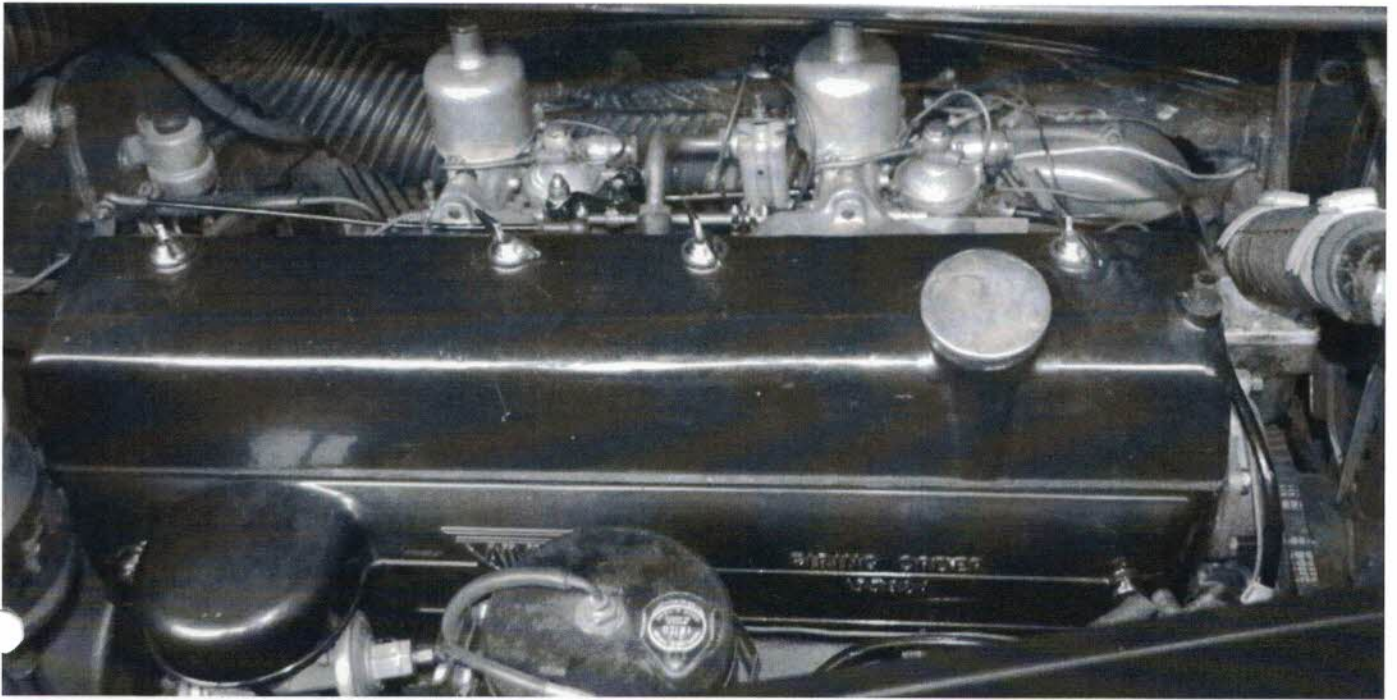
(Assembly was quite straightforward)

I made the decision to try and source the parts needed for a conversion. The Alvis Car Club of New Zealand was very helpful and carburetors and manifolds traversed the Tasman. Likewise Chris Prince and Red Triangle supplied the other parts and advice necessary to make the conversion.

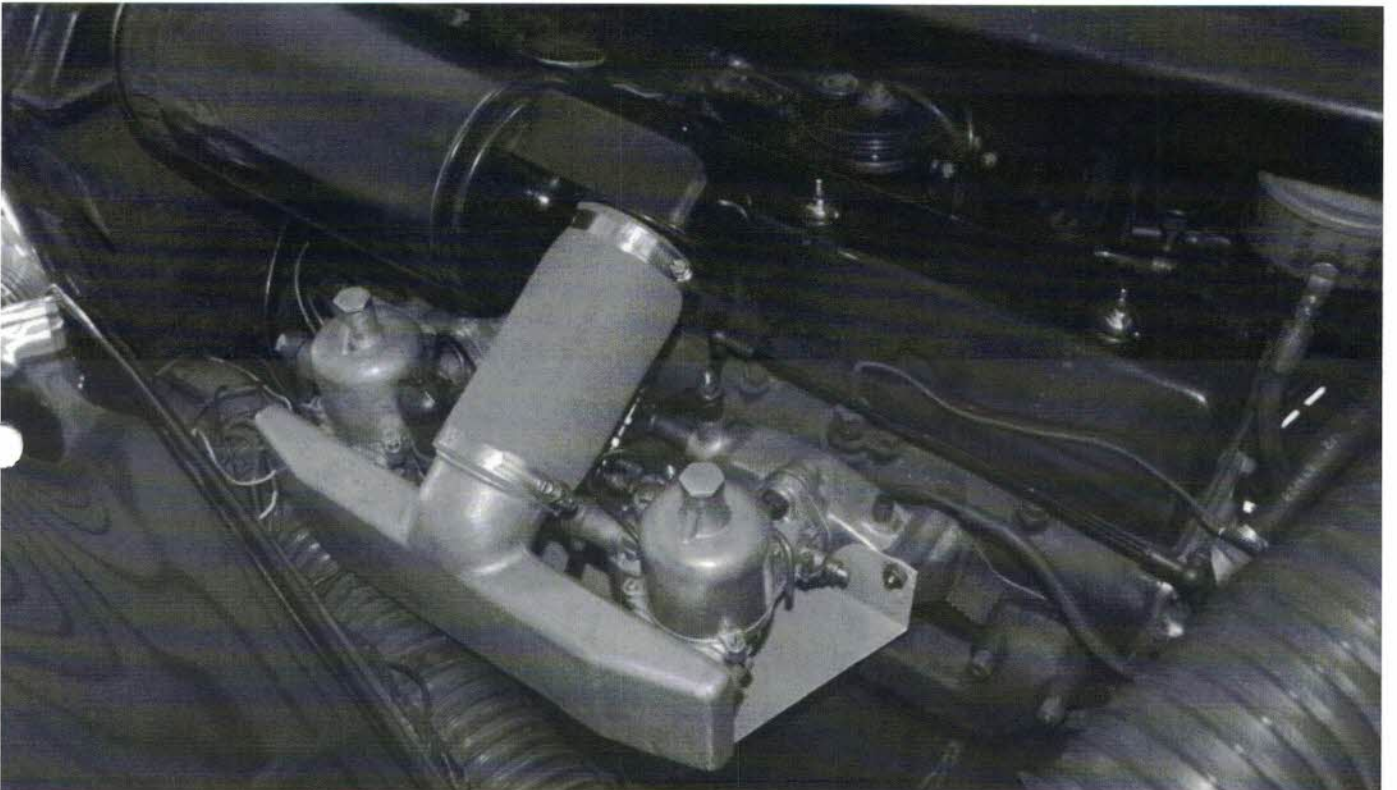
And so 64 years later Chassis 23414 is now sporting a new induction system.

Now compare the first and last image. What a difference! Now of course as the saying goes, the proof of the pudding Yes there is more power. A favourite hill in the Dandenong Ranges could only be climbed in third when fitted with the Solex and can now be taken in top.

The car also idles better however cold starting is more of a drain on the battery as more cranking is required. With the Solex a couple of pumps of the accelerator was all that was needed.



(The offside view- a more impressive look)



(The finished result)

Classic cars are all about enjoyment and I had that in bucket loads tinkering away with the conversion. That is the beauty of the marque as the cars are straight forward in design and lend themselves to the budding home mechanic. I have boxed up all the original parts and a conversion back is likewise very straightforward. But why?

Richard Wallach
Melbourne.
richardwallach@hotmail.com

RACV *CLASSIC* *SHOWCASE*

Open to all vehicles manufactured
in England and Europe

Incorporating
The MG Club (Vic) - Annual Concours
The Mercedes Benz Club -
Annual State Concours

Celebrating 90 years of Volvo; 60 years of
Jaguar XK150; 50 years of MGC, Hillman
Hunter, Ford Cortina Mk II and Jaguar 420.



Display Cars \$20
(passengers included)
Spectators - Adult \$5
Children free
Spectator parking \$20

Sunday 19th February 2017

Flemington Racecourse - Nursery Car Park

Childrens Entertainment, Music, Trophies, Club Displays & Vendors

Gates Open for Display Cars at 9.00am & Spectators at 10.00am

Club displays encouraged. For more details and site plans visit www.aomc.asn.au or fb.com/infoaomc

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The Six Alvis SA Speed Twenty chassis imported new into Australia

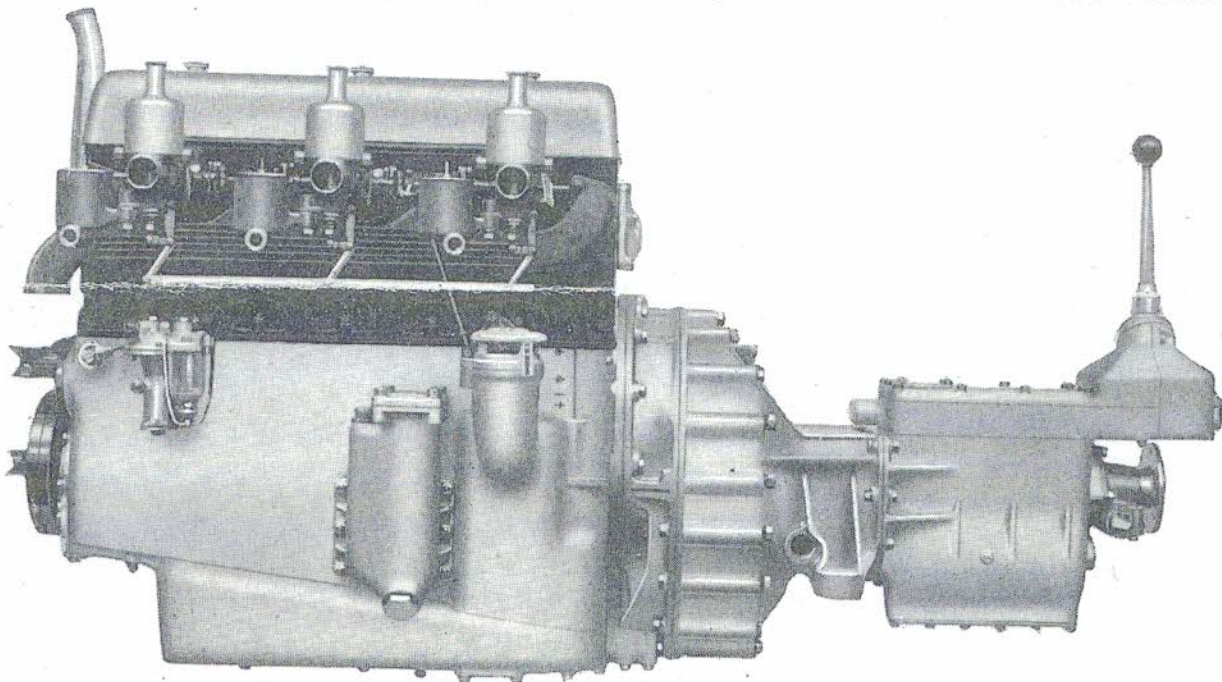
1932-1933

Doing the rounds of the Register for the SA Speed Twenties, it was time to revisit the Australian SA20 cars; six chassis were imported. I had corresponded with Eric Cunningham years ago as both of us had tried to identify two of the cars, without success. A brief check showed there was little to add; there still remained two chassis that could not be positively identified so there seemed little point in putting pen-to-paper. Having gone through it again and still unable to solve the mystery, it went back into the pending file. Soon after, as usual, Sod's Law intervened and *voila!* a vital piece of information arrived enabling positive identification of the two chassis-body combinations that had been long confused!

The two cars had belonged to Alvis enthusiasts and had been used for spares before the residues were moved on. In the process one car is thought to have been scrapped following unsuccessful attempts to fit it with I.F.S from a Crested Eagle and the other was badly damaged in a fire. A brass plate had moved from one chassis to another causing over fifty years of confusion.... I am grateful to John Lang, Dale Parsell and *Alvibatics* contributors enabling me to untangle the identities. Other contributors include the late Eric Cunningham, Max Houston and the late Barry Turner and probably others that I have forgotten. It is remarkable that five of the

THE AMAZING NEW "SPEED TWENTY" ENGINE

The "SPEED TWENTY" engine is a clean, straightforward engineering job, depending for its exceptional efficiency and power output on carefully applied racing experience and punctilious workmanship in machining and fitting. Its clean external appearance and the accessibility of components are invaluable features in this type of engine. Complete particulars of specification will be found overleaf.



The SA20 engine, clutch and gearbox illustrated in the December 1931 U.K. brochure. Only three cars had been completed at this time, the Works demonstrator, a Cross & Ellis sports 9184, 9268, a chrome plated chassis for exhibition, (quite soon sold and fitted with a Bertelli FHC for Swedish racing driver Henken Widengren) and 9335, the first Vanden Plas sports for Follett. Perhaps these cars were modified later in service when the new cylinder head became available! The picture shows the modified crankcase without the side mounting flanges, the new A.C. mechanical fuel pump (replacing the Silver Eagle's S.U. Autolift), the circular port cylinder head and finned exhaust manifold. Perhaps Kemp had not quite completed his new cylinder head design at this time. Curiously, the Silver Eagle crankcase already had provision for a mechanical pump but it was blanked off.

original six cars and the motor of the sixth have survived.

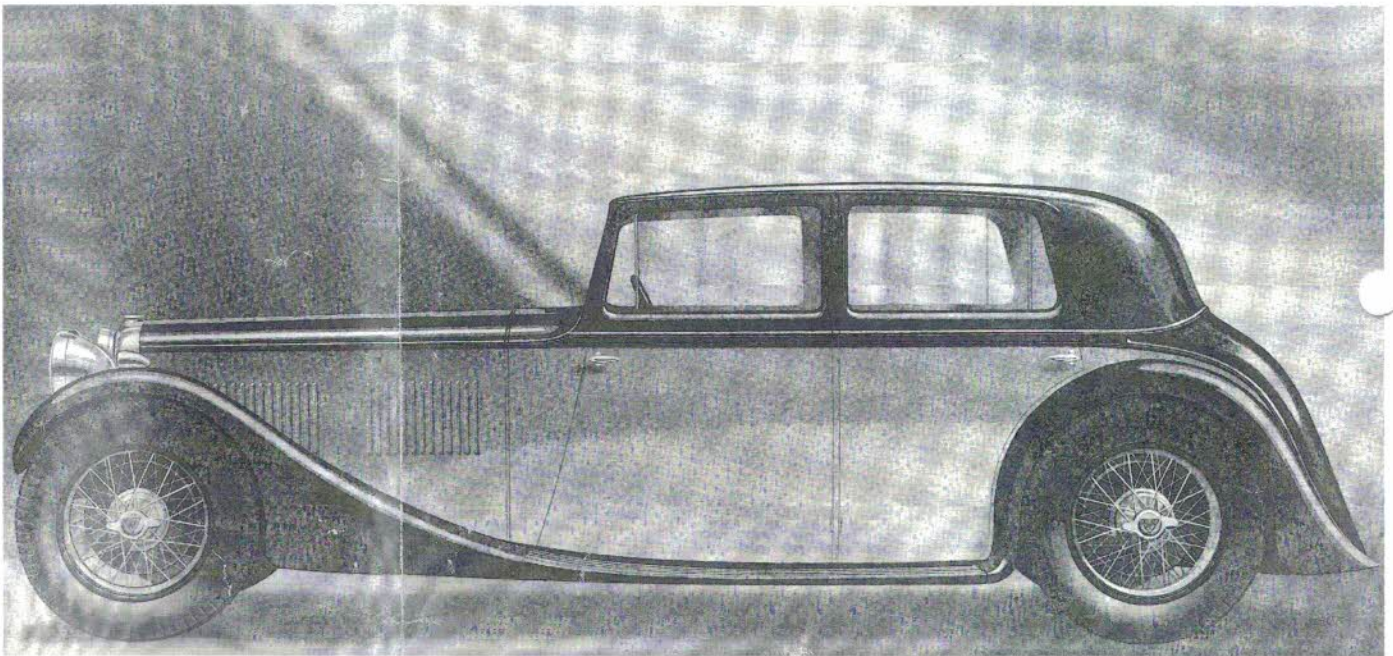
Before moving into further detail on the Australian cars, here is a little background to the SA and how it was conceived. It was arguably the last Alvis manufactured with spade-fulls of *vintage* character. This was due to the use of designer Varney's new double-dropped rigid chassis with rather crude, short conventional semi-elliptic springs at the four corners, a novel unsynchronized gearbox, brakes operating through a traditional cross shaft and a massive flywheel on the Silver Eagle based engine.

The engine had its roots in Smith-Clarke's first six-cylinder, the solid 63 x 100mm 1870cc TA14.75 unit from 1927 giving a modest 60 bhp. It had received intermediate development and had been used in 16.95 and 19.82 HP Silver Eagles at 66 and 75bhp successfully.

For the first Speed Twenty, Andrew Kemp, who came to Alvis from Ricardo's, brought it bang up to date. He deleted the unwieldy flanged engine mountings from each side of the crankcase and moved to later technology with a single front engine mount and two at the back; three point mounting had been widely adopted to avoid chassis twisting stresses being transferred to the engine crankcase.

The updated engine retained its 73x100mm bore and stroke, four main bearings and 2511 cc capacity. The capacity put these cars into the over 2.5 litres category for track work and they were uncompetitive for those who wanted to race them. This capacity came about because the Alvis Marketing Department had their eye on the all-important fiscal taxation class for cars in the British market; at the time, *Fifteen Shillings* per horsepower. For *John Bull*, the annual car tax was an unpopular expense in his budget. The manipulated stroke/bore ratio giving this capacity kept the car just under the all-important twenty fiscal horsepower band at 19.82 h.p. a tax bargain for a car with such an exciting performance! The bleats of a handful of racers who were uncompetitive were ignored!

It was this idiotic tax formula, dreamed up by the government and the R.A.C. that encouraged long stroke engines with small bores and it continued until after WWII. This arcane but profitable tax formula was only abandoned post WWII when the government, following pressure from the car manufacturers, abandoned it when it became understood that British engines needed to move to more 'square' bore/stroke ratios to match foreign competitors. Their engines were more up to date and would rev freely without the inevitable British disease of big-end trouble after some spirited driving on the turnpikes and expressways of U.S.A....



An artist's impression of the SA20 Charlesworth saloon for the British market. This particular car appears to have the early 'flat' radiator so was probably based on chassis 9406, the first saloon completed and the only one in the pre-production series although for series production the spare wheel was mounted on the back. Regular production of Charlesworth saloons did not begin until June 1932 by which time all cars were equipped with a 'V' shaped radiator. It was Follett, the London distributor who demanded the 'V' format radiator for his coachwork. The Works standardized it for all models following huge buyer approval, to the chagrin of Smith-Clarke who never forgave Follett for introducing the idea!

Follett admired the quality of the engineering from Holyhead Road, but was critical of some of the old fashioned Coventry coachwork features. He referred in particular to vertical coachwork lines, fussy interior details with tassles, blinds and brocade banding. As a result he preferred to sell his more fashionable London coachwork designs from Vanden Plas, Thrupp & Maberly and others. He irritated Smith-Clarke when he referred to Coventry's interior designs as "only requiring aspidistras..." His relationship with Smith-Clarke and Dunn was often strained at their meetings although John liked him; often an admirer of a good salesman. Smith-Clarke and Dunn, regarding Follett as close to the Spiv end of the London

motor Trade and had never forgotten the spectacle of Follett turning up at Holyhead Road for his first meeting with John, taking the Chairman's parking place and making a lot of noise in his white supercharged Mercedes-Benz S 36/220 sports in which he had motored up from London...

Kemp breathed a load more power into the engine. He was one of a small, clever group of a new type of motor development engineers who had studied gas flow principles and knew how to uprate older designs. It was he who had designed the OHV conversion to update the Alvis 12/40 engine in 1923.

Kemp having increased the power output to 90bhp, its performance was much discussed by competitors in motor circles at the time as it pushed some other makes to pick up their game. One such was the S.S., still making do with the side-valve Standard engine and by 1935 they were forced into employing Harry Weslake, another very skilled engine designer to design an overhead valve conversion for the S.S. to raise the power to a competitive level... Kemp designed a new cylinder head for the Speed Twenty engine incorporating the latest *swirl* combustion chamber technology and his characteristic, rectangular upright inlet and exhaust ports. This gave a highly competitive 87 BHP and 90+ (145kph) miles an hour for the 1250kg open sports, something of a sensation at the time.

The engine was further modified with the addition of an A.C. mechanical fuel pump driven by a plunger from the camshaft. By the use of a mechanical pump together with magneto ignition, it was possible to drive in daylight with no electrical consumption. This reserved the entire generator output to charge the batteries and supply just about enough amperes for night driving on one headlamp with miserly use of the main beams. Excessive daytime overcharge could be avoided by use of the manually controlled '½ Charge' position on the lighting switch. This brought into action a shunt winding, placed in a little box on top of the generator to absorb the unwanted current and prevent it overheating the batteries.

The first SA Speed Twenty brochure was dated December 1931; it had been printed before development was completed and production had begun. It incorporated a picture of the engine and gearbox, but the motor illustrated still sported a Silver Eagle round-port cylinder head and finned exhaust manifold! Perhaps the three 1931 cars were fitted with earlier heads pending the Kemp modifications reaching production? Volume production did not begin until late in January 1932. They retained the same photograph in the 1933 catalogue – typical Alvis publicity economy!

Read SIR HENRY BIRKIN'S opinion of the 'SPEED 20'

*T. G. John, Esq.,
Alvis Car & Engineering Co., Ltd.,
Coventry.*

22nd March, 1932.

Dear Mr. John,

I have to thank you very much for the loan of the new ALVIS Speed Twenty Model this weekend, and offer you my heartiest congratulations on having produced such an extraordinarily good car. My outstanding impressions of this car are, firstly, that I did not like giving it back to you, and secondly, that I have never driven a more delightful motor car from every point of view.

The steering is superb and appears to be ideal from the point of view of control. The springing is excellent. The brakes are very powerful. The

engine is very smooth throughout its range and is extremely docile and smooth-running at slow speeds.

The road-holding qualities are in my opinion second to none, whilst the driving position and the position of the controls are admirable.

I can find no fault with the car whatsoever. It is, in fact, an extremely fine product and a truly magnificent motor car for the man who is a connoisseur, whilst the speed is ample even for the most blasé speed merchant.

As a standard production I feel you have nothing to fear from anything now in existence, and I should like to wish you every success with this very fine British product.

Yours sincerely,

Henry R.S. Birkin.

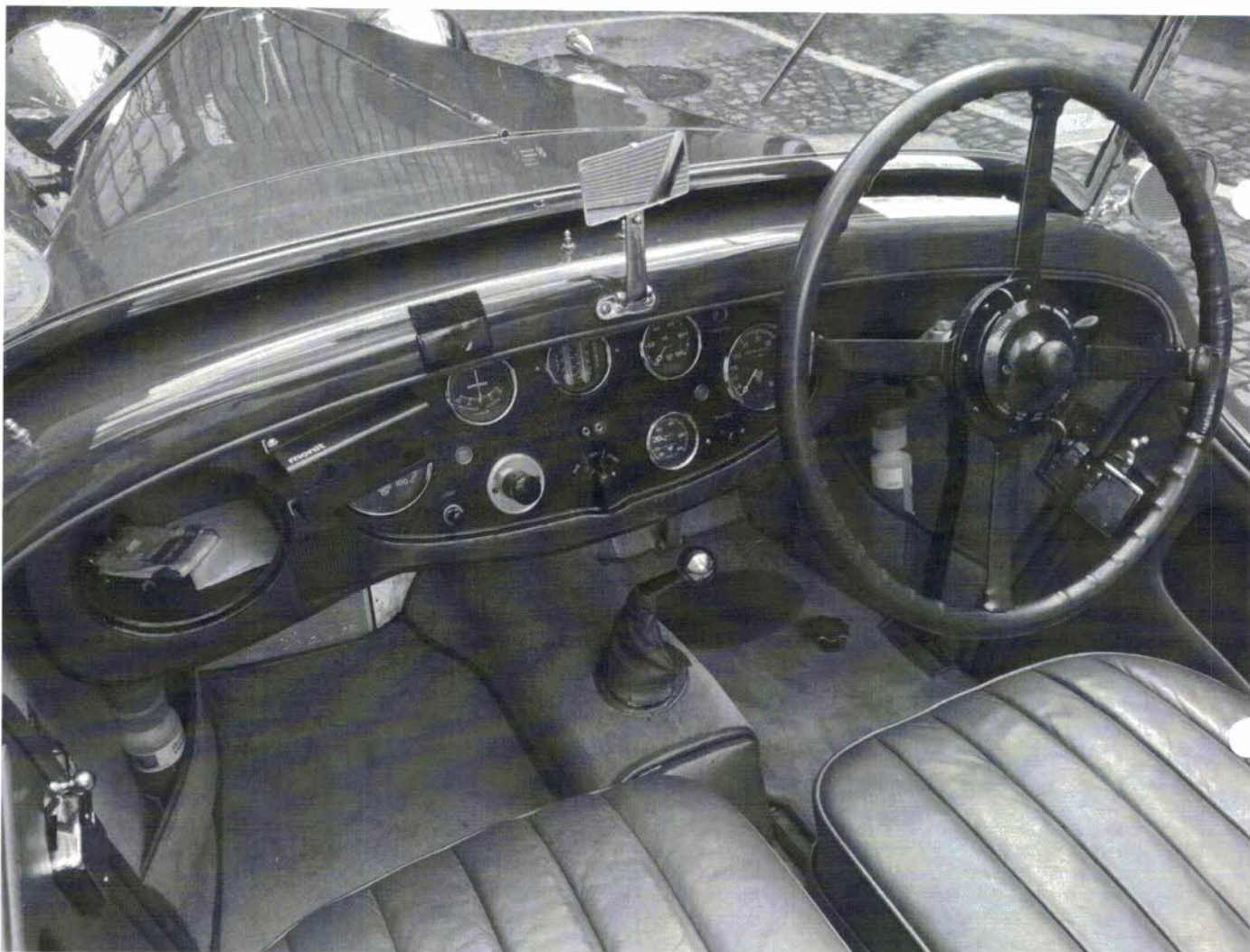
Here is Sir Henry Birkin's rapturous endorsement from the brochure, describing the SA Speed Twenty in glowing terms. It is interesting that he ordered a chassis (9900) soon after (!) for his next racing car... (Sadly he died before the car was ready.)

A new gearbox was needed for the new car as the traditional vintage Alvis box with four mountings and a right change

was out of date and a gearbox in-unit with the engine was needed to complete the three-point mounting technology.

There's an interesting anecdote concerning this box. Around 1930, before the SA20 was even a twinkle in designer Varney's eye, Alvis had submitted designer Dick Ashby's new gearbox design with its novel sliding main-shaft to a local competition in Coventry for an easy-change gearbox. There had been a lot of discussion in the motoring press around this time about the need for better gearboxes to make driving easier for those who struggled with unsynchronized boxes. Following the Great Depression, the Trade had finally woken up to the fact that many more cars would be sold if gear changing could be made easier!

The competition was won by Daimler's entry with their pre-selector and fluid flywheel system and poor old Ashby was fired because his box would not work – whilst his sliding main-shaft idea for the third and top gears selection was advanced, he had made a basic mathematical error calculating the gears and the box locked solid on assembly! The problem was soon put right by Varney and the box was used successfully in Dunn's two ACE prototype cars.



The Rotax FT78 instrument panel with 85mm Speedometer and Revolution counter. It also shows the curious Hobson Telegauge for indicating engine coolant temperature and fuel contents.

Although of considerable promise, the ACE car project was killed off by Smith-Clarke after he returned from a long absence for illness and its gearbox went into the new Speed Twenty as it was a centre-change box ready made on the shelf. As speed was of the essence, the SA20 went from drawing board to running prototype in just 14 weeks! Dick Ashby eventually 'had his day' and is credited with designing the first fully automatic car transmission while he was at Humber's, to where he had moved....

The SA20 was manufactured from October 1931 until July 1933 when the sanction was completed at 350 chassis to make way for the changes in the factory for the introduction of the forthcoming SB series with independent front suspension and the new synchromesh gearbox. The SB20 was introduced at the October 1933 London Show at Olympia for the 1934 Model Year. Varney had designed the new synchromesh gearbox during 1932 and it had been considered for the SA20 for the 1933 Model Year cars. It was held over as the Speed Twenty had sold so well in its first

year; no further improvements needed...

Production of the Speed Twenty got off to a slow start with only three chassis delivered in 1931 with the remaining 23 pre-production cars being delivered sporadically in January and February 1932. Full production and a dedicated numbering series began with Chassis 9801 in March 1932. The Speed Twenty became a runaway success very quickly and paved the way for Alvis' great success in the 1930's decade.

The first two of the six Australian (Chassis only) SA20's were imported to Melbourne, Victoria by Tozer, Kelmsley and Milbourne an international shipping and forwarding company with offices in Melbourne and London. The four later chassis were imported by Russell J. Hancock who was the Alvis Representative for Australia. His offices were situated at United Bank Chambers, 357, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.



An example of the Rotax FT82 instrument panel with 5 inch speedometer and revolution counter, fitted to 1933 Model Year SA20's. Watch out for spares problems here; Follett cars were supplied with longer ignition switch control rods and instrument drives cables to accommodate his sloping instrument panels, mounted further back than those with Coventry built coachwork.

Alvic Editor John Lang turned up an Alvibatics article for me by Max Houston about Hancock; he lived and worked in the Melbourne area for many years and looked after several manufacturers and importers interests. He looked after legalities, patents and presumably dealt with the paperwork and customs duties to do with the importation of British products to Australia. Hancock was the Alvis representative from 1924 until 1940. A quick 'Google' search shows the firm to exist today in New Zealand where they continue to represent businesses with engineering interests.

The Melbourne Alvis dealer in 1932 was Regent Motor Service Co located on the corner with St Kilda and Toorak Roads. A Google 'Earth' search reveals that these roads are still there although today it is a big city junction and there is no car dealership evident; much of the property appears to be of high-rise residential or office accommodation.

It is probable that the chassis orders were placed by the cars' first owners' individually with Regent. (Devon Motors is also mentioned as taking over the Alvis Agency later but I don't know if Devon handled any of the six SA20's.) Devon

Motors were located at 117 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne and relinquished their Alvis franchise in 1965 when the ACCV took over their spares stock. As far as the records show, no other SA Speed Twenties were imported into Australia as *chassis only* although several complete cars were imported privately later.

The SA20 Register shows many 'chassis only' supplied to Charles Follett, the London Alvis Distributor. Most of these were for British clients who bought them for bespoke coachwork and most have been recorded, but curiously there are several 'pairs' of chassis that have vanished without trace from day one, never appeared in Club records and have no Alvis Works service history or name of owner. It is thought that Follett occasionally exported chassis from his dealer stock. So far, none has been recorded in Australia.

According to the Car Record sheets, five of the Australian SA20 chassis were dispatched without tyres and batteries and only two were supplied with Works bonnets. All were supplied with a Smiths screen wiper cable-driven from a small reduction gearbox on the speedometer drive on the gearbox. The chassis were crated and shipped from *The Motor Packing Co* situated conveniently opposite the Alvis Works on Holyhead Road, in Coventry.

All six imports were fitted with locally constructed coach-work by Martin & King of 77-87 High Street, Malvern, a suburb of Melbourne; they constructed five saloons and one open sports. Martin & King were familiar with coachwork for Alvis cars having clothed at least one Silver Eagle. We know 10622 started its life in Newcastle, NSW – did any of the others begin their first service lives outside the State of Victoria? Is there a way to trace previous owners of cars through the vehicle administrative systems in Australia?

Orders and deliveries for each chassis were separated by approximately three months. This suggests that the chassis were supplied against individual orders rather than a block of chassis ordered for stock for the Alvis dealer. In terms of first registration and use in Australia, the Alvis Dispatch Dates only indicate the time-line for the chassis leaving the Alvis factory. There must be added to this the shipping and handling time (four weeks?) and then, (if the British coach-builders were a guide), another three or four months for body construction and commissioning.

Martin & King bodied five of the six chassis with four-door saloon coachwork; they had characteristic fabric roofs and rear quarters. The first was very much to a 1932 style with rather tall front screen and roof; the next is lower. The third was a four door open sports not dissimilar to the British *Cross & Ellis* body and numbers four and five exist as chassis although their bodies have disappeared. Today both have replica sports bodies and so far we have no pictures of them with their original bodies. Number six exists in lovely restored condition with its late 1933 style of Martin & King saloon. The two surviving saloons, although separated by model years, are broadly similar and both have more sloping windscreens than the first. The general style with its well-balanced curves is very pleasing, especially from the rear three-quarter view, rivaling some of the best London coachbuilders and prettier than the standard *Charlesworth* style for the same year.

There were two Model Years for the SA20 chassis, 1932 and 1933, substantially the same but with minor but important mechanical updates. I will not attempt to describe all the changes, the Parts Catalogue being the best source for this information. I have already briefly mentioned the coachwork changes.

The easiest model year identifying features are the instrument panels; 1932 MY chassis used the Rotax FT 78 instrument panel with 85mm speedo and rev counter while the 1933 chassis was equipped with the Rotax FT 82 panel with 5 inch speedo and rev counter. Beware; today, 85 years after the birth of these wonderful machines, enthusiasts have sometimes interchanged instrument panels.... Between Model Years a modified engine timing cover was introduced and for 1933, there was an adjustable clutch stop and a modified clutch adjustment control. Just to confuse matters, in production the FT82 instrument panel was introduced *sporadically* from chassis 10016 but not exclusively until chassis 10028 as the Works used up old stock. Some British owners were disappointed to find their new SA's delivered with the 1932 instrument panel and had them replaced with the updated version!

The temperature and fuel gauges, combined at the centre top of the panel in a single gauge, was the tricky *Hobson Telegauge*, a system that predated the electric gauge that we are more familiar with. The Hobson is essentially simple but frustrating to maintain unless the system is fully understood. It relied on a continuous sealed brass capillary tube from the tank air unit along the chassis and up to the top of a 'U' tube on the back of the gauge unit behind the fascia. Very few are in operation today as various menders, copers, restorers, fiddlers and tidiers usually broke, flattened or jettisoned the tube.

The gauge head has a glass 'U' tube with a fluid that rises or falls according to fuel/air movement in the tank causing the aforesaid fluid to move and give a reading in gallons. The gauge was calibrated by adding or removing pieces of fine fuse-wire from the 'U' tube – a lovely job on your back under the dash trying to check out the reading... Nobody in the garage trade was sorry when they disappeared with the arrival of the Smiths electric gauge later in the 1930's.

Chassis production began with a 'pre-production' series of 26 chassis with non-dedicated chassis numbers inserted between Silver Eagles and Twelve-Fifty production between October 1931 and March 1932. These early chassis were supplied with a flat-fronted radiator and their cast alloy bulkheads were described as *narrow type* on sports models.

Many of these were supplied with 'Silver Eagle 20' motifs on the cross bar although some were modified to the later 'V' radiator. In spite of the slightly experimental nature of these early cars, fourteen of the 26 still survive! None of the Australian imports were in the pre-production series.

The production chassis were numbered from 9801 and ran from March 1932 to chassis 9900 in July 1932. The second series ran from chassis 10001 from July 1932 to chassis 10200 in June 1933. Sales were so buoyant by that time that a final extra series of 25 Chassis were sanctioned to keep the dealers supplied until the arrival of the SB series in October. This final series was numbered from chassis 10601 in July 1933 to chassis 10625, the last SA20 in August 1933.

A few words about revealing the Chassis Number; it is stamped on top of the chassis front right dumb-iron, at the front, across the chassis, just above the large rivet securing the spring hanger forging. The numbers were often badly stamped and unclear. Care is required to reveal the numerals without damage as the paint and rust needs to be sanded off very lightly, to reveal the rather lightly impressed digits. Grinding with a power tool may render the stamping permanently illegible.

Of the 350 chassis sanctioned, the main styles of bodies constructed were Charlesworth who built saloons and Cross & Ellis for the sports tourer. These were sold as 'Standard Cars' and was the start of a new works policy to improve profits by selling complete cars. At this time the market for a drop-head coupe style of coachwork had not been identified by the Works and enquiries for this style of body were passed to Charles Follett in London to supply his Vanden Plas drophead coupe. This loss of business was rectified with the introduction of the SB Speed Twenty in late 1933 by which time a standard Charlesworth drop-head coupe was listed to complete the factory range.

Approximate Production by body maker.

Charlesworth saloons 94,

Cross & Ellis sports 61,

Mayfair saloons & dhc 11,

Vanden Plas sports 56,

VDP saloons 29,

VDP coupes 45.

The remainder of the production was made up from *chassis only* some of which are unidentified. Then there were the six Australian Martin & King bodies, and small numbers, in some cases one only, of Thrupp & Maberly, Carbodies, Grose, Duple, Bertelli and others, most of which were special orders placed with Charles Follett for his London customers.

The Works Guarantee Cards and Build Record Sheets for the Australian chassis are remarkably devoid of detail and there is no mention of the guarantee period whereas those for British deliveries specified the dates and period of guarantee, and sometimes the name and address of the owner. British deliveries normally had a one-year guarantee; perhaps the export chassis had differing guarantee periods related to conditions in the country of use? Variations in specification and guarantee period in keeping with the local market conditions would be just one of the functions of the Alvis Representative, Russell Hancock.

The photographs accompanying this article were scanned from Alvisatics and other press pictures as the originals are not available, hence the poor quality; I have reproduced them with each car simply as a guide for identification purposes only. It would be great to have better quality pictures for the Register if anyone has them out there!

'NUMBER ONE'.

Chassis 9851/Car Number 14527/Engine Number 10302. Dispatched ex Alvis on 2nd June 1932 to Tozer, Kelmsley and Milbourne in London. There is no mention of Hancock, the Alvis Representative of Melbourne receiving this chassis. It may have passed through T.K.M at Melbourne for delivery to the Regent Motor Service Co of La Trobe Street, Melbourne before it went to Martin & King for coachwork. Regent were the Alvis Distributors for Australia. It was supplied without tyres and batteries.

This was a late 1932 Model Year chassis fitted with the 'small' FT78 instrument panel with 85mm speedometer and revolution counter. According to the Build Record, the Andre shock absorbers were uprated to Tele-Controls at the Works during production; a special order and a worthwhile addition when one knows how difficult the rear shockers are to manually adjust on this model unless raised on a hoist!

The coachwork was a four-door part fabric covered saloon body by Martin & King of Melbourne. The front wings, similar

to the period *Charlesworth* style were heavily skirted and continuing into the running boards. The windscreen and side glass looks a tad on the tall side, a fashion in Britain as well, *Highvision* persisting on the SB series Charlesworth saloons too. I found only one poor quality photograph showing this car on the left of a group and it is reproduced in picture 1.

Registration plates:- Unknown. ('CU166' was previously wrongly attributed to this car – this plate is now known to have belonged to Chassis Number 10054.)

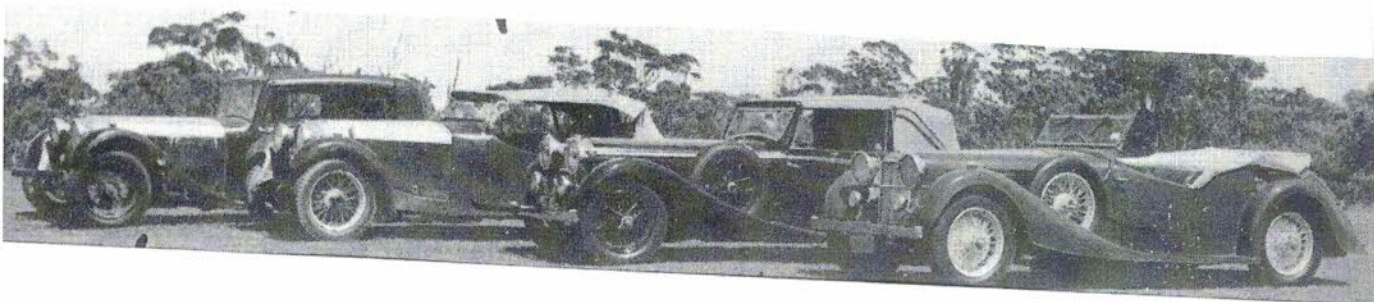
Known owners:-

1) Barry Turner 1958.

B.W. Turner owned this Alvis along with Chassis 10054 at the same time around 1958 when he fitted the independent front suspension from a Crested Eagle to this chassis. During R.B. Jones' ownership, it is said he ordered parts from the UK and got into trouble for importing them without a license! The name John Medley is only associated with this car and he may not have been an owner.

Barry dismantled chassis 9851 and some of the parts were retained and some of them found their way into 10054. The Brass Plate (Showing Car Number 14527) and the early 'small dial' FT78 instrument panel from 9851 are now in Chassis 10054. The crankcase from 9851, (engine 10302) was saved and later Barry Turner rebuilt it with 14.75 hp and SB Speed Twenty parts (ex SB20 chassis 11696) and installed it in Chassis SA20 9810; this was originally a UK delivered SA VDP sports that later found its way to the Hollywood film studios. So, the 'heart' of 9851 survives in an Australian resident Alvis with Marg Lang!

We don't know what happened to chassis 9851 and body of this car. It is thought did not survive but we do not have positive information.



*This is the only known surviving picture we have of 9851, the saloon to the left of the picture, by Martin & King. Equipped with running boards, the style of the coachwork is very '1932' when compared with the later cars. Martin & King favoured a fabric covered roof and quarters and this example has a rather tall windscreen. Eric Cunningham sent me this picture many years ago telling me it had been reproduced in a copy of *Alvibatics*. It appears this SA20 does not survive intact although its engine lives on in another SA20 in Australia! The second from left is 10054, the third SA20 imported with a Martin & King sports body. More on this one later in the article.*

EPISODE 2 IN FEBRUARY 2017 ALVIC



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7 May — 13 May 2017

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the coming Australian National ALVIS Tour and
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to our wonderful state.*

*Below you can see all the amazing things we have
planned*

and know you will enjoy your stay.

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the chance to*

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Two years is a long time to wait for the next one!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Ronnie Brown

2684 Moggill Rd, Pinjarra Hills Qld 4069 Australia

Tel: 061 7 3202 7462; email: alvisronnie@gmail.com

THE PROGRAM

*Sun 7 May - Welcome & register at the
Coachman's Inn, Warrick.*

*Mon 8th May - Lunch at the Rotunda at
Leslie Park and welcome by the Lord
Mayor. Explore Warwick
Dinner at the Coachman's Inn*

*Tuesday 9th May - Drive to Stanthorpe
Morning Tea and demonstration at
Lawdogs. Lunch and tasting at
Ballandean Winery. Afternoon at
Anna's candlemaking & Jamworks
OR visit Dave Ford's Restoration
Workshop. Return to the Coachman's Inn
for dinner.*

*Wednesday 10th May - Morning Tea at
Private collection of Sulkies, Coaches,
Wagons and horse drawn vehicles.*

*Lunch at Warwick Golf Club. Afternoon
Tea at Rodeo Heritage Centre.
Dinner at Coachman's Inn*

*Thursday 11th May - Bus takes us to
railway station Steam train to Clifton.
Lunch at Clifton Arms hotel. Return by
steam train to Warwick and by bus to
The Coachman's Inn.*

"Bushies/Federation" Theme Night

*Friday 12th May - Morning Tea at
Mary Poppins house at Allora
OR Allora Regional Sports Museum
Lunch at Killarney hotel. Visit heritage
centre and Queen Mary Falls
Final Dinner at Coachman's Inn*

Saturday 13th May - Depart for home.

FOR SALE

"Mrs Cleary"

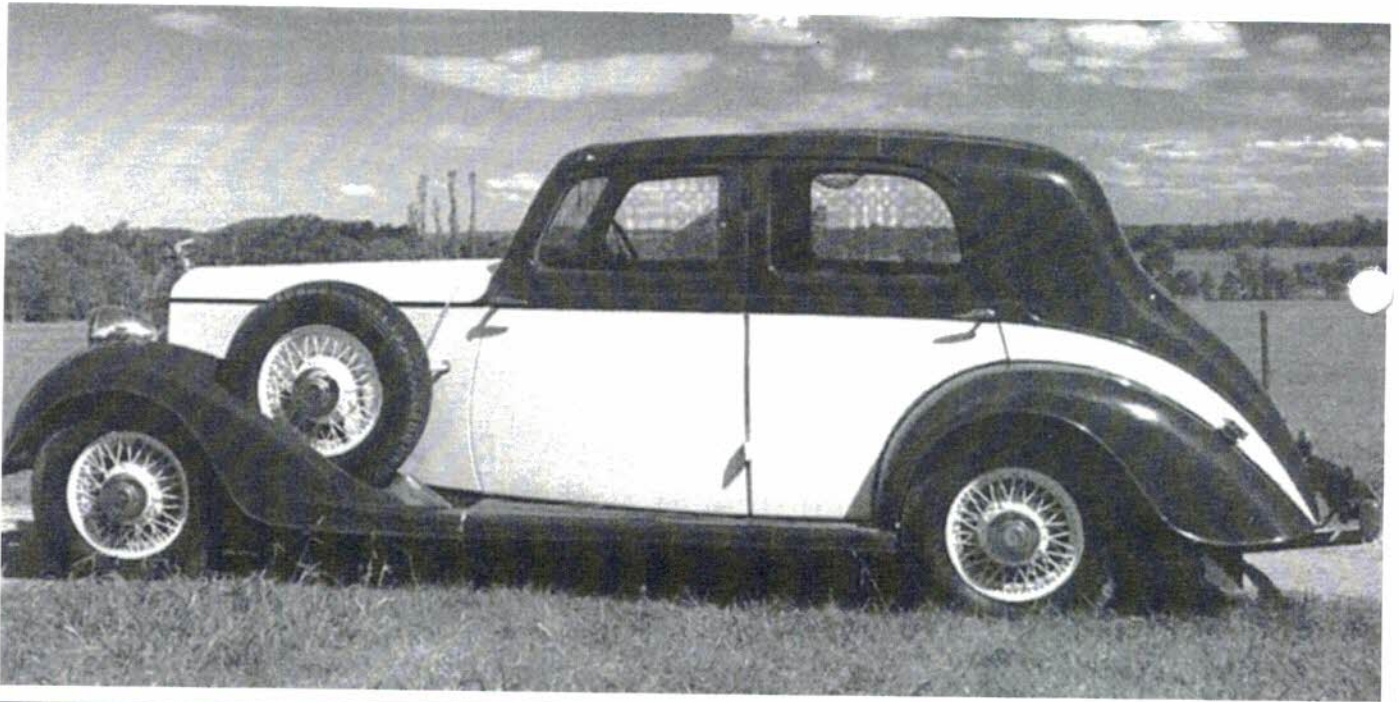
1938 Holbrook bodied TH Silver Crest

Chassis No 14210

3 owners—unregistered, minor bodywork and interior need attention

Contact: Ian Farquar, Mittagong Tel: 02 4878 5143 Email: toofar2@bigpond.com

Price on application to the right owner



FOR SALE



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Grease gun suited to Alvis 12/50
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New hub nut spanner
\$300.00 the lot obo
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ALVIS PEOPLE BEHAVING BADLY



No!
I'm keeping this one for
myself!

FOR SALE

1x 1928 TA16/95 Silver Eagle, car no 12006. Complete car in need of full restoration, complete with some spares including spare cylinder block and cylinder head. Reco-gearbox with John Needham gear set and original gear set also available, spare diff housing and diff centre.

1x 1951 TA/21 saloon chassis no 23864 body # M2047, complete car.

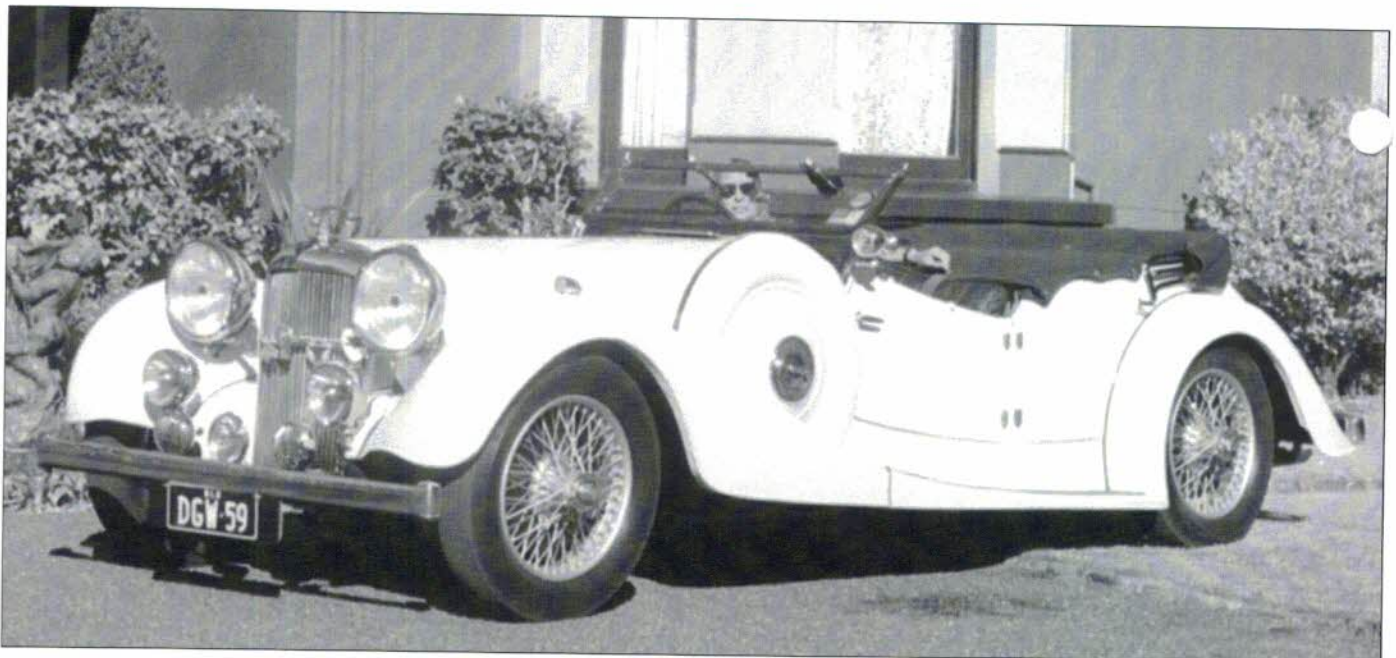
1x 1953 TC/21 saloon chassis no 25213 body # 3084 complete car in need of restoration.

Also included is a host of spares for the 51/53 cars including a full set of doors, guards and bonnets in excellent condition as well as spare guards that are good for a pattern, radiator shell, 2 spare motors and gearboxes as well as a host of parts including lights, trim, starter motors and generators. Too much to mention. This is a quite extensive collection of spares for these cars and is almost a complete car's worth of spares.

To be sold as a complete collection will not separate cars or parts.

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FOR SALE

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including new body & full weather equipment &
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Restoration details available on request.
\$82,500 negotiable
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FOR SALE



Noted on justauto.com.au (Dec)

1931 Alvis 12/50

\$65,000

FOR SALE

Rare opportunity to own a good example of this quality marque with ease of ownership and maintenance. Chrysler 5.2 litre V8 engine with tough Torqueflite automatic gearbox. We bought the car in early 2009 and it has been regularly used since then. Retrim in leather, new door cards and carpets. File on work carried out Electronic ignition and distributor. Power steering. Might suit an Alvis owner looking for easier classic motoring. Selling as too many cars and a Alvis Grey Lady project to complete. On CHRS in SA, Rego- LITRE3 \$45000



Mike Osborne, 08 88373 158, 0427 373158 ozbornes@internode.on.net



The Christmas Party

