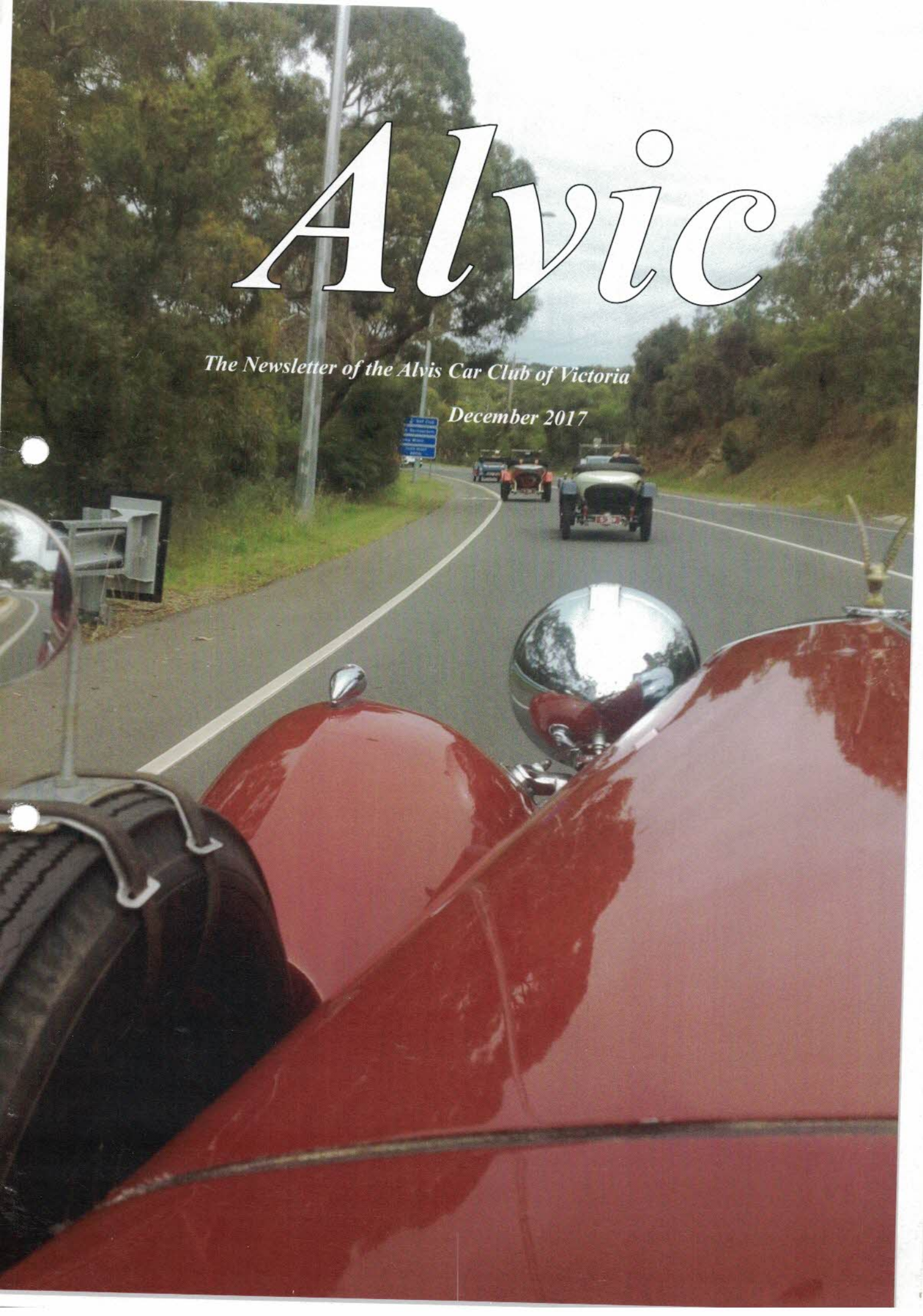


Alvic

The Newsletter of the Alvis Car Club of Victoria

December 2017



MERRY
CHRISTMAS

**AND A PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR**

**TO ALL ACCV MEMBERS
& THEIR FAMILIES**

& ALL OTHER ALVIS OWNERS





Alvis Car Club of Victoria (Inc)

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December 2017
VOL 57 ISSUE 11

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(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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2018 COMING EVENTS

- Jan 19** OPENING BBQ AT THE KEVIN BARTLETT RESERVE BURNLEY, BYO EVERYTHING. FROM 6.00PM, MELWAYS 59 A1
- Feb 25** AOMC RACV CLASSIC SHOWCASE - SEE BACK PAGE
- Mar 25** KALORAMA
- Apr 13/15** MARYSVILLE WEEKEND AWAY (DETAILS TO FOLLOW)
- May 20** NATIONAL MOTORING HERITAGE DAY (DETAILS TO FOLLOW)
25-27 WINTON
- June TBA** TRYDEL MUSEUM (BEACONSFIELD)
- July** TOOBORAC PUB RUN (Langs to organise)
- Sept** WEEKEND AWAY St ARNAUD, WEDDERBURN AREA (McDOUGALLS to organise)
- Dec 2** CHRISTMAS PARTY AT FERGUSON'S, KINGLAKE

Front page: "Big Red" and the three pesky 12/50s - see page 8

DECEMBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our very successful year of Alvis activities has just concluded with three excellent events. The first was in mid November when a large contingent of us enjoyed lunch at Williamstown before boarding the replica of John Pascoe Faulkner's schooner, The Enterprise, for a sail on Port Phillip Bay, in ideal conditions – a great experience to be under sail and to get some appreciation of the conditions in which the first settlers to Melbourne travelled when coming from Van Diemen's Land. I wish to thank Mark Weller for having the foresight and for arranging the day. Next, came an informal 3 day drive and 2 nights stay along the Great Ocean Road. Those who were able to participate on the run enjoyed a great time, especially those who were driving their 12/50s on that wonderful road. Dale Anderson and Peter Miller are to be thanked for arranging this event. They are keen to do it again, when it is hoped that more members will be able to come along. Our final event was the well attended Christmas barbecue held at the Dale and Judy Anderson's home at Barrabool. The weather leading up to the Sunday had been atrocious, but on the day we had pleasant sunny conditions which attracted a good roll up of members, especially many from the Bellarine Peninsular district. It was pleasing to welcome along new members Colin and Sonya Wilson and also to have the opportunity of presenting the Bob Morrow trophy to Allan Wettenhall for his restoration of the 12/50 ducksback. Again I wish to thank the Anderson's for hosting the event.

The AGM was held over to November as Frances and I were away at the normal scheduled time of the October meeting. The election of office bearers was a formality as they were unchallenged and with the addition of Malcolm Ferguson officially joining the committee. I wish to thank the committee members for their past efforts and their ongoing commitment for the coming year. Also it was the occasion to present awards to worthy recipients. The following awards were made: Bob Morrow to Allan Wettenhall for restoring the 12/50 Ducksback and getting another worthy vehicle back onto the road; Bill Barber literary award went to Nick Simpson for his wonderful and knowledgeable articles on Alvis models; Andy Hannam for the most use of an Alvis on club events went to yours truly, Andrew McDougall and the McDougall Award for a regularly used well presented Alvis went to Bob and Leslie Northey with their 12/50. Of particular note was the award of the David Muirden Club Person of the year to Peter Miller for his outstanding help to other club members and in particular for working on the engine of Margaret Caldwell's 3.5 Litre and getting the car into good saleable condition. The competition awards, being the Basil Bowes and Simon Ramsay for specific competitive events and Mt Tarrengower respectively were not awarded this year.

Last Friday night Alan and Noeline McKinnon hosted the Committee for a planning meeting. Here we discussed events for the coming year, with the aim of attending a couple of display days, having day runs to eating venues and private museums and as it is not a national rally year, to have two weekends away. One weekend away is to be notionally in April and the other in September. Details of

these events will be provided in ALVIC when planning is completed. Our first event for 2018 will be the New Year barbecue at the Kevin Bartlett Reserve on Friday 19th January at 6.00pm. We propose supporting the RACV/AOMC Classic Showcase on Sunday 25th February, as we have done in previous years. However this time it will be held at the Yarra Glen Racecourse in place of Flemington. A number of us enjoyed the run up to Kalorama for the picnic day this year so we propose participating again on Sunday 25th March next year. We are also looking to have guest speakers at every second monthly meeting. At present we are hopeful of having Patrick Moore, an employee of Alvis for 12 years, come along to our February meeting and tell us of his experiences. Also Dale Parsell and his subcommittee spoke on the progress with planning for the 2019 100th Anniversary of Alvis run prior to the 2019 National Rally in Albury. Planning is proceeding well and we can look forward to a great event. Please register your interest in attending the event with Dale, as per the details provided in ALVIC and on the Club website. On behalf of the Committee I wish to thank Noeline and Alan for providing an excellent venue and a fun night.

Today (Sunday) we joined many others on the VSCCs 2 wheel braked run around Melbourne. We met in the Domain near the War Memorial at 7.30 ready for an 8.00am start. There was a great range of vehicles assembled in perfect weather; from a 1907 single cylinder Cadillac, many veteran 2 wheel brakers, vintage 2 and 4 wheel brakers and up to a mid 30's Derby Bentley. As we took the 12/50 we had to pay a \$10 penalty for having too many brakes. There was one other Alvis, being Steve and Margaret Denner in their 12/50. The theme of this event was to cover the routes and depots of Melbourne's horse drawn omnibus network, which commenced in the 1840s. The route took us south as far as Brighton, then up to the inner North and then out as far as Keilor in the west. It ended up being quite a long run and the route instructions and questions proved to be quite challenging. We bailed out at Ascot Vale, at a bit after midday, as it was getting hot and we were encountering too many red traffic lights and boom gates down on railway crossings. However it was a great event which took us to parts of Melbourne seldom visited. I am sure the 12/50 enjoyed being out after a long period of hibernation. Next year will be the 40th anniversary since the inauguration of this run. I am sure that this will be a special event and well worthwhile participating in.

A committee of motoring enthusiasts, chaired by Doug Young, an Alvis owning Queenslander, has been working hard to prepare a case for the Australian Government, for the abolition of the Luxury Car Tax, for vehicles which are imported that are 30 years and older. Normally the submissions in preparation for the national budget have to be in by February. However the Government has brought forward the submission date to Friday 15th December. As you can imagine the pressure is on to compile the supporting information and to prepare a paper for submission. A preliminary paper will be submitted, signalling the intention of having this impost

UPDATE.....UPDATE..... UPDATE....

The 2019 Downunder Centenary Tour

Most of the route has been driven over and mapped out. The scenery is stunning with interesting stops, fabulous foods and wonderful camaraderie.

In our search for the best roads and some concern about the distances to be covered we have decided to re-route some of the journey and include a surprise visit to Sydney. We will be taking the train from the Blue Mountains into Sydney and stay overnight at a secret destination on the harbour. (Cars will be secured and entrants will pack a light overnight bag and their sense of adventure.)

By way of a taste of our journey - the route starts in Melbourne with overnight stops planned in Inverloch (2 nights), Lakes Entrance (2 nights), Bermagui / Narooma (1 night), Goulburn (2 nights), Katoomba (1 night) then leaving the cars we take the train into Sydney (1 night), return to Katoomba the following afternoon, back in our cars head for Cowra (2 nights), Canberra (4 nights), Cooma / Jindabyne (1 night) and then to Albury to join the 2019 National Rally group.

The entries are coming in with both local and international interest which is fantastic. It is not too late for those that would still like to join us. We would be delighted to have you come along. If you are interested please contact one of the organizers.

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***The Editor would like to thank all contributors,
text and photographers to this month's ALVIC***

removed. This will be followed up with a more comprehensive submission in January. There is still the need to have members of historic vehicle clubs complete an on line survey, which not only seeks to get information about historic cars lost to Australia, but also the benefit to the Australian economy from money spent on restoring and maintaining historic cars as well as the amount spent whilst using them. The survey is very short and will take only a few minutes to complete. The Committee needs the survey information from as many enthusiasts as possible, by no later than 5th January 2018. I ask that members log onto the following site(s) and complete the survey, whether you intend importing a car or not, as the information on expenditure will be very useful: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FR3RFJV> This is the survey site related to the Alvis Car Club of NSW. It will be preferable if you can get the link for Victoria to work on your computer by logging onto <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GWTM7TS> If the Victorian link doesn't work then please use the NSW link, which I know works on my desktop computer.

Another issue of concern is the action being taken by Border Force in inspecting imported and exported cars for asbestos. Whilst this has been part of government policy since 2002 it has only been since last March that there has been a keen interest taken by Border Force in the asbestos content of imported cars. We have heard some horror stories of classic cars being damaged, high costs relating to inspections incurred and long delays being experienced by some importers of classic vehicles. The Luxury Car Tax Committee intends turning its mind to this issue at the conclusion of the LCT submission. No doubt other people and organisations are also in discussion with the Government over the implications of this rigid approach to asbestos in old vehicles. In the mean time the Maserati Club, which is holding a world rally in Australia next year, have sent a submission to the Government asking that those vehicles being temporarily imported by overseas owners for the event will be exempted from the asbestos inspection. The Maserati Club is still awaiting a response. We are watching this with interest as the same situation could well apply to Alvis cars, which may be temporarily imported into Australia to attend our 100th anniversary events in 2019.

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 2018.

Andrew McDougall

At the November AGM, the Annual Financial Report was Presented & Accepted by the Meeting

**ACCV General Account 94-343-8818
End of Financial Year 1st July 2016-30th June 2017 & Term Deposit #9847-60431**

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Membership Fees	\$5,360.00	Newsletter	\$1,326.78
Supper Money	\$144.60	Postage	\$644.10
Sundries Donation	<u>\$10.00</u>	Assoc Fees/Insurance	\$991.00
		Rent	\$1,200.00
		Consumer Affairs	\$55.80
		Website 3yrs	\$395.64
		Mac Hulbert book	\$120.00
		PO Box	\$124.00
		DVD player	\$49.00
		Book Trophy repair	\$120.00
		Trophies	\$325.50
		Sundries	<u>\$133.93</u>
Total	\$5,514.60	Total	\$5,485.75
Balance Carried forward 1st July 2016	<u>\$4,681.77</u>	Balance as at 30th June 2017	<u>\$4,710.62</u>
	<u>\$10,196.37</u>		<u>\$10,196.37</u>
Income	\$5,514.60		
Expenditure	<u>\$5,485.75</u>		
	<u>\$28.85</u>		
Term Deposit # 9847-60431	\$48,743.81		
Interest July 2016-June 2017	<u>\$1,509.07</u>		
Term Deposit reinvested 26th June 2017	<u>\$50,252.88</u>		
Total Assets			
General Account	\$4,710.62		
Term Deposit	<u>\$50,252.88</u>		
Total	<u>\$54,963.50</u>		

GOOD NEWS WEEK

John
Sonia and I would like to thank you and the other Alvis Club members for making us feel so welcome at the Club Xmas function. We look forward to meeting you all again at another function in our TD/TE 21 which I hope becomes available to purchase in the near future. If the sale of the TD21 as advertised in the Club Magazine does not proceed please advise me .
All the best for Xmas and the new year.
Regards
Colin Wilson

South Australians have been busy with their involvement in the recent National Veteran Rally held in the Clare Valley at the end of September and the 30th South Australian "Down Under London to Brighton" which was held on the first weekend in October.
Alvis owners Stuart and Claire MacDonald were in Clare, with Stuart being an excellent marshal and Don and Jill Bosanquet had a wonderful week of motoring in their 1912 Renault.
Whilst there were of course no Alvises in the Downunder London to Brighton, it was great to see two magnificent examples of the marque as observers!

Don & Jill Bosanquet

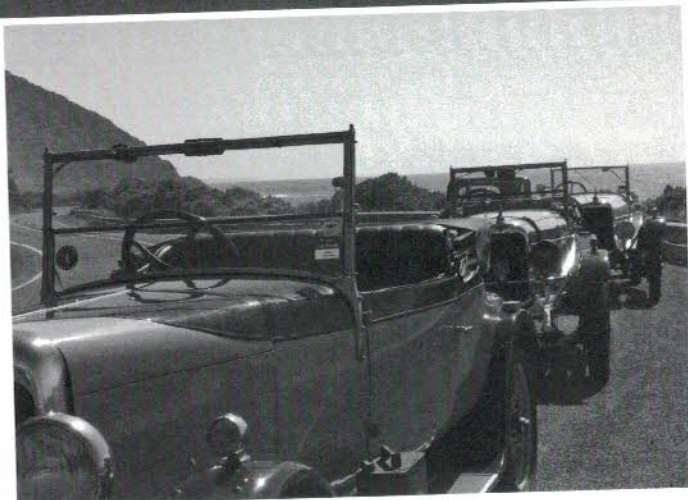
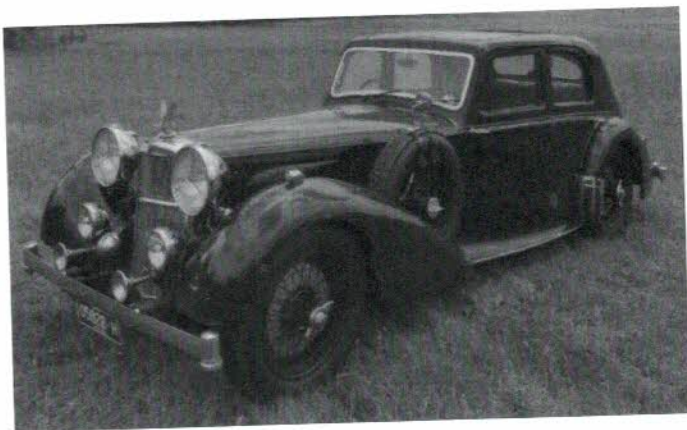


Margaret Dymond advises that she has sold the TD21, advertised in November ALVIC, to Terry Wills-Cooke. Congratulations all round.

Hi John
What a surprise!
Say to the Committee "Thanks very much" - highly appreciated!
Its my pleasure to do these things as I now have the time and all my archive around me!
Feedback directly to me is absolutely zero most of the time so I have little idea of how they are received.
Thanks again,
Greetings to all the ACCV people, I'll send a pic of the award on my desk when it gets here!
Attached is a recent pic for the newsletter of me and Patricia with the two-seater SA after a heavy outdoor lunch under the oak trees after a rally with the Torpedo Club Gordien in August.
Alviscarement,

Nick Simpson

BIG RED & 3 PESKY 12/50s



Sometimes when two people get together, great ideas are hatched!

Peter Miller and Dale Anderson came up with the idea of a three day run in the middle of the week; down the Great Ocean Road with a couple of overnights in Lorne and no set agenda.

Also, meals and refreshments would be, up to the moment, when we were hungry, and nothing POSH!

The event was published in ALVIC and apologies were made to those who had to work.

So at the appointed time, Three 12/50s and Big Red gathered at the Anderson farm house in Barrabool. Those who went on the Bellarine Weekend Away will recall the sort of Alvis roads we were presented with.

Dale Anderson was driving the ex- Derek Dixon 12/50 which is going like a fire cracker. Geoff Ross in his 12/50 was actually sounding like a fire cracker on the overrun, as was reported by Peter Miller, who has the ex-Mike Williams 12/50 tuned to perfection.

Then came Big Red, the Lang's Speed 25 with some expectation of eating the 12/50s on the hills.

Last but by no means left behind, was Judy Anderson who was in a modern with some thoughts that it would let her do some retail therapy when she was not with Dale.

There is nothing like following someone who knows exactly where he is going and has lived in the area for decades. So Big Red was comfortable at the rear.

There was no need for the "knock on" hammer to be introduced into the cabin as the navigator did not need to be pacified!

We stopped for lunch at the Aireys Inlet pub that we frequented on a weekend away many years ago when we were younger and less prone to injury.

Through Anglesea. Very little had changed since my

single days and a home made sports car, so many decades ago. OTHER than the traffic!

On to the Great Ocean Road and still no opportunity to show Big Red's prowess on hills.

Off they went, like three startled fruit bats! Eating up the corners and anything that resembled a hill.

I must have forgotten how much of a handful Big Red was on the curves or am I aging faster than her (or him).

At one point the rear tyres were squealing, so I wound up the window in case the navigator could hear them.

Whew, what a relief to find the 12/50s stopped in one of the pull off zones. They suggested that the views were brilliant, which was good because for a minute there I thought they were waiting for us.

A young English couple pulled up to see the views and became interested in the cars and what we were up to. The pantomime of Anderson and Ross had them in fits and they will no doubt go home thinking the Aussies really are fun people even if they are about to slaughter our cricketers.

Soon it became a traffic jam on the run off and we had to move off again.

It was amazing how many more stops there were to see the views. "Are you sure you are not waiting for us?"

The Great Ocean Road allows you to see cars well ahead of you and so all I could see on several occasions was 3 Pesky 12/50s about a kilometre or two ahead. The tight formation would have done the RAAF's Roulettes proud!

The day before our departure, I heard word that it was "schoolies" week at Lorne.

For those uninitiated, it is the end of the school year, when kids divorce their parents (or visa versa) and play up like there is no tomorrow. For some there nearly wasn't! There was not a person under the age of 17 on

the streets until well into the afternoon!

Our motel was on the main road and overlooked the front beach. Two of the 12/50 owners decided that they needed undercover car parking. One of my best decisions was that we would park out the back near our room as I could see that if I had managed to squeeze Big Red into an undercover park it would take two RACV trucks and several floor jacks to get her/him pointed in the right direction for the morning's trip to Apollo Bay and Cape Otway.

Was there a schoolies party just over the back fence that night and the next. YES!

Did I have a pair of ear plugs? YES! Was I prepared to share? NO!

After Tuesday breakfast, we set out for Cape Otway.

Lunch of fish and chips on the foreshore at Apollo Bay. Cars parked in a row. Literally bus loads of hundreds of Chinese tourists around many jostling to take photographs of the cars.

Better roads for Big Red, lots of hills and much fewer curves. Did we catch the 12/50s NO! Must have been the traffic!

I have previously written about an experience when in company with Peter Miller we ventured down Boundary Road after a visit to the Point Cook RAAF museum. The road literally shook Big Red to bits and Pete's 12/50 took a lot of TLC on return. Having exited the GOR to go to Cape Otway, it was worse! 8 km of pot holes that were hidden in the shadows from the trees that over hung the road. (seemed more like 20 km)

Interestingly, it seemed less treacherous on the way back.



Aireys Inlet Hotel

On the first night our choice of dinner venues was the Lorne Hotel which was virtually deserted. Ordering at the bar which had a list of meals at \$10 each for schoolies. Dale who must have felt a financial crisis coming on tried to order a meal from the list. "No mate you're a Toolie!"

Comfortable meal until the music started in a room below in which the vibrating floor made it feel like you were driving a 12/50!

On the second night, following pre-dinner drinks, we walked down the town busy with schoolies on their way up to the music venues. Spotted a hamburger joint that was about to close in literally 2 minutes. Quick order, sat outside and enjoyed the best ever hamburger in 75 years. Each was served with a shaslick stick holding it all together. Perfect night at sunset and a return to the motel via the swing bridge and the beach.

Final day was the drive back to the Andersons where Dale saved our lives!

Temperature was in the mid to high 30s and Peter and us two had another hour and a half from Barrabool to Gisborne. Dale's offer was, leave the Alvises at Barrabool and borrow his 4WD. Pick up the cars at the Christmas party 4 days later.

There was no other answer than "Yes Please."

At one point of the way home the temp reach 38C.

Thanks Dale.

Peter's 12/50 did 32 mpg
Big Red did ₁₅mpg

Did we ever catch the 12/50s - NO!
Did we ever see them on the GOR. YES occasionally!
Did we all have fun - YES
Will we do it again - a resounding YES!

John & Marg Lang



Lunch at Apollo Bay

TALL SHIP CRUISE



On 19th November, twenty members boarded the "Enterprize," a replica of a square-rigged ship built in Hobart in 1830 as a coastal trader. It was purchased in 1835 by John Pascoe Fawkner, to found a new settlement in Victoria. His party looked first at Westernport Bay, then the eastern side of Port Philip Bay and eventually the Yarra River.

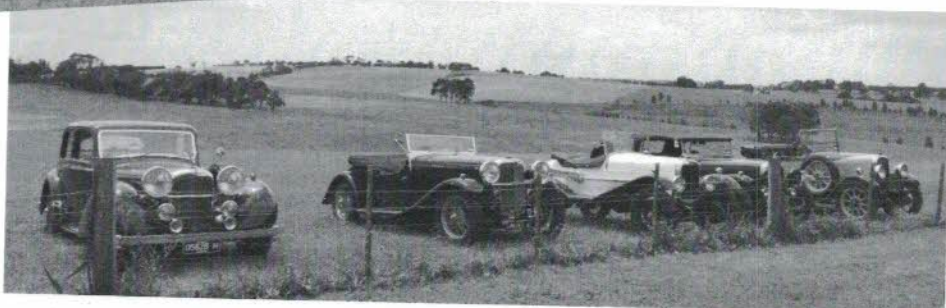
This "Enterprize" was built in Melbourne in 1987 of salvaged timber. Its sails are of hand-sewn flax cloth and the rigging is of natural fibre hemp. It has a crew of five who do all the work, occasionally calling on Dale Anderson to haul away on a sheet. There is one non-original feature: a diesel-powered 'iron sail', for use when the wind does not blow and for manoeuvring around the jetty.

After lunch in Williamstown, we boarded for an hour's cruise on the bay, fortunately with enough wind to enable use of the sails. Whilst the scenery and weather were pleasant, I think most of us found interest in the ship's operation: raising and reefing the sails, using the sails to 'come about' and so on. All in all, an enjoyable Sunday afternoon.

Mark Weller



The 2017 Christmas Party



LOVE ANY DISCOURSE OF RIVERS

ALVIS MEMORIES"

by A F Rivers Fletcher

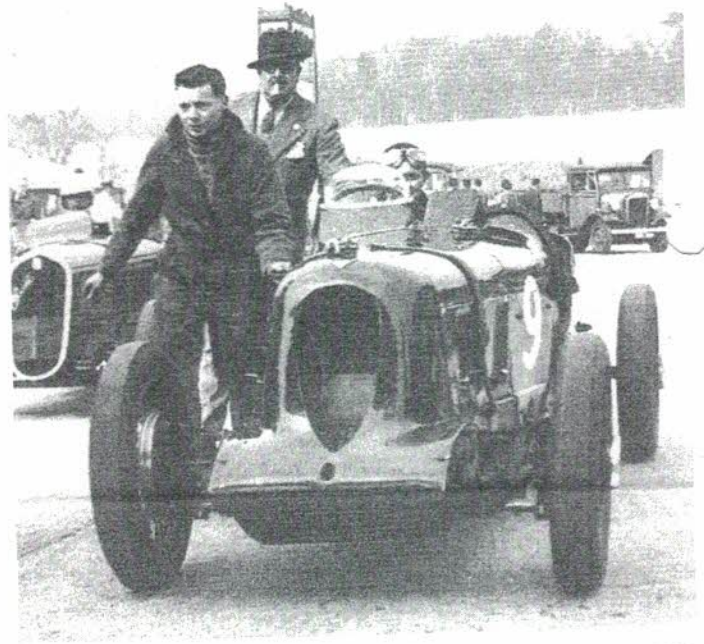
As a preparatory school boy in the early 1920s my first love was the Bentley. My second love was the Alvis, as in matrimony one should never underrate the second love. I was about ten years old and it was only the appearance which appealed - the Alvis polished aluminium ducks-back 12/50 Super Sports was outstanding.

Over the years I saw them on the road and at Brooklands. In 1923 my adulation was confirmed when Major C.M Harvey won the important 200 Mile Race. I was still a school boy when Alvis started to produce their exciting front wheel drive models, featured in *The Autocar* and *The Motor*, seen at Brooklands but very seldom seen on the road.

In 1926 Paddock Passes, kindly supplied by Malcolm Campbell, enabled me to see in the Campbell shed at Brooklands two absolutely stunning straight eight Grand 'Prix Alvis cars. They were terrific, long and low, only spoiled by ugly disc wheels. If they had had proper Rudge Whitworth centre - lock wire wheels these cars would have been to me, the best looking British Racing cars ever. They were built for the 200 Mile Race and for the British Grand Prix. The drivers were to be Major Harvey, The Earl of Cottenham, and George Duller. Malcolm Campbell was very interested in the project and outside his shed he had driven up in an ungainly front wheel drive Alvis Saloon. He showed me drawings of an Alvis front wheel drive Land-Speed Record Car, which he thought he was going to drive.

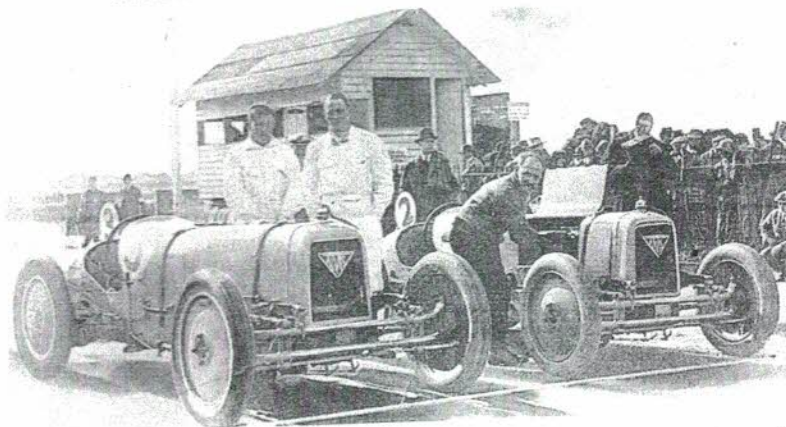
The project was stillborn because T.G. John, the Alvis Managing Director, obviously thought that Campbell would pay for the car. Campbell thought otherwise, and even considered that he should be paid to drive it!

I won't attempt to tell the story of the races, they have been well chronicled. I will write a little about Mark Pepys, the Earl of Cottenham, because so little has been written about him. In his racing days I saw him at Brooklands but never spoke to him. I got to know him later because he was a great friend of my Chairman, Wolf Barnato, at Bentleys. They were both keen amateur boxers and members of "The Fitzroy Lodge Boxing Club" sparring together just for fun, because Cottenham was a lightweight and Barnato a heavyweight. Cottenham's closest friend was de Hane Segrave to whom he dedicated two of his books. He was a good writer of fiction and was about the only author of his time who featured motor racing accurately. He was also a good friend of Barrie Lyndon, the playwright with whom he



A mechanic, Charles Follett and Rivers Fletcher with the Follett 12/50 at Brooklands in 1938

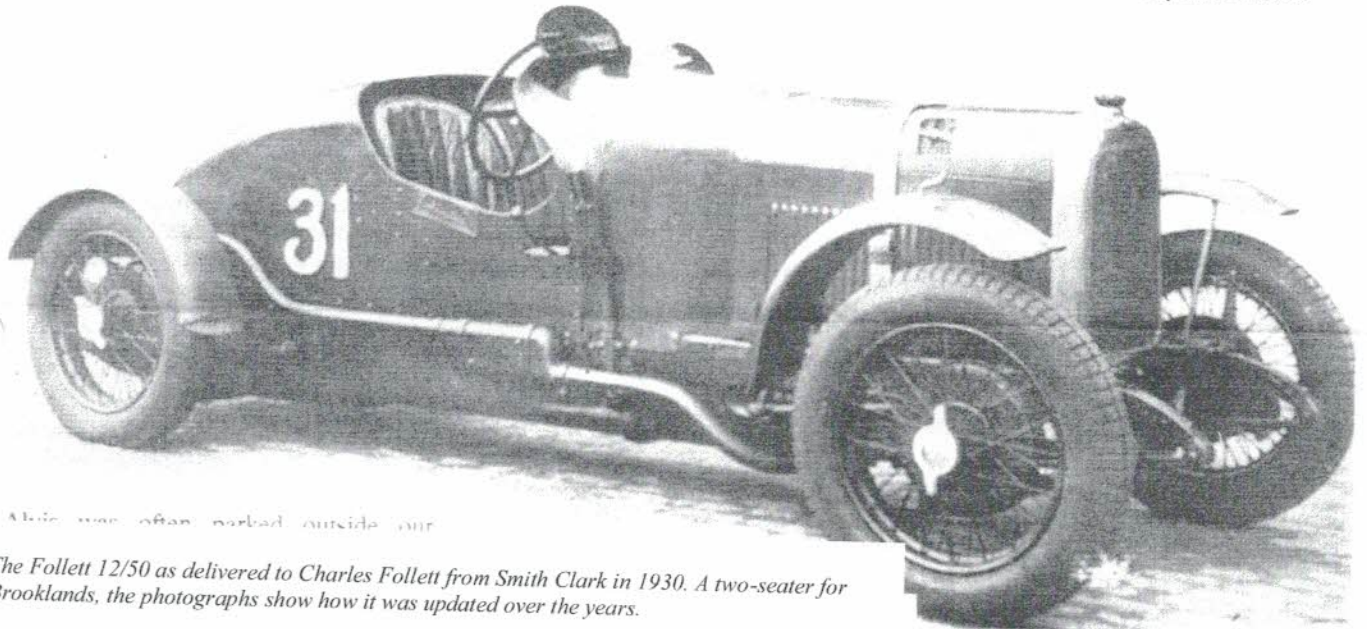
collaborated in a motor racing production. Cottenham's Silver Eagle Alvis was often parked outside our Bentley Showrooms at the end of the working day, when he joined Barnato and some of the other "Bentley Boys" for a drink at the Bristol Bar, just down the road. He was very absent minded and one night he forgot that he had left his Alvis and went home to Oxford with someone else. So I



Brooklands 1925. The start of the JCC "200" mile race. Mark Pepys, the Earl of Cottenham, is standing beside H Irving in white racing overalls. Cottenham is the driver, (goggles around his neck). Harold Irving his mechanic George Tattersall of the Alvis racing department is bending over the second car. The 1925 front wheel drive racing cars were very good looking even better than the 1926 and 1927 Grand Prix racing models, but again spoiled by those disc wheels

was roped in to take his Alvis home, very late, that night. This led to seeing more of him and I got to know him quite well. He became very frustrated because he developed serious heart trouble, which put a stop to his boxing and his motor racing. Not being allowed to race hit him very hard because he showed a lot of promise, his lap times in the difficult front wheel drive Grand Prix Alvis were comparable with Harvey and Duller.

drawn carriage as we approached the Wellington Arch. So I was in the middle of the road as I neared that edifice, The gates were wide open right in my path. To swerve off the left of the Archway I would have had to lift off and make the turn on the overrun. It was far easier and no trouble to anyone to keep straight on under the Arch, so I did so. Sensation! I was halted by two policemen who rushed from behind the side pillars of the Arch. Mark had shouted a warning too late. The senior police officer



Alvis was often parked outside our house. The Follett 12/50 as delivered to Charles Follett from Smith Clark in 1930. A two-seater for Brooklands, the photographs show how it was updated over the years.

I had just one very good drive with Cottenham when he took me to the Alvis Works at Coventry. He had the use of a 4 cylinder front wheel drive Alvis similar to the competition models raced by the factory. We were to meet Sammy Davis at his office at Dorset House, Stamford Street, London. I was early and Sammy was late, so I had a good talk with his Secretary, Miss West, always known as Mae "Come up and see me West." Cottenham arrived with Sammy and we had a look at the Alvis in the Autocar car park, a black fabric four, seater, not at all attractive to look at but exciting withal.

shouted "Didn't I know that the public wasn't allowed through the Wellington Arch, which was reserved for Royalty and Official Processions". As I replied that I didn't know, Cottenham said under his breath to me "They'll put you in the Tower". As the policeman started to rant and rave at me Cottenham came to my rescue in splendid fashion. He announced that he was the Earl of Cottenham and was shocked that the gate was open, without police blocking the way and that he would report the matter to the Chief Constable and raise it in the House of Lords, asking the policeman for his name and number.

There was a tonneau over the back compartment which we didn't open. As Cottenham knew the model well, he waited at Dorset House when Sammy took me round the block and gave me some guidance for a couple of laps. The gearbox was straightforward but strange, with a ball change on the right side. Sammy told me that the car would handle well only if one made the engine pull the car round the corners. He said, "never attempt to corner on the overrun." That seemed to be alright and I just did my braking before each corner and I could feel the difference on the steering wheel as I accelerated round the bends. Back at Dorset House, Cottenham took Sammy's place so I was at the wheel as we set off to Kensington before our run to Coventry. Driving very carefully in Green Park, past Buckingham Palace towards Hyde Park Corner, I overtook a slow horse



This is the saloon FWD Alvis that Malcolm Campbell used, a press car from the works. Photographed on the start line at the Bugatti Owners Club Chalfont St. Peter Hill Climb that was featured on the inside rear cover of the last Bulletin.

Quite suddenly there was a dramatic change in situation. Much climbing down and excuses from the police and we proceeded on our way, Cottenham chuckling to himself. I can't remember much about the run to Coventry. I didn't take to that front wheel drive Alvis, although I thought that Cottenham handled it splendidly when he took over the wheel. Mark Pepys, the Earl of Cottenham, died very young, presumably because of his heart trouble, and the title passed to his younger brother, John, who was also interested in sports cars but he didn't race. For a time he was in business with David Holland who today looks after eligibility in the V.S.C.C. Although David is a generation younger than me we happen to have had quite a lot of mutual contacts over the years.

Now I will recall another pre-war Alvis driver of a later period. I first met Charles Follett around 1932 when he became the London distributor of Alvis cars with his Showrooms in Berkeley Street. Alvis, having built their fine reputation with the 12/50's and then broken new ground with the front wheel drive cars, were going through one of their rather usual lean periods. Like Bentleys, Alvis made no bodies themselves and their standard productions were mostly bodied by the medium priced coachbuilders that abounded in the Coventry area. Since the front wheel drive models had been a commercial disaster, the 1932 models were all orthodox rear wheel drive with a large range from the 12/60, developed from the famous 12/50, through many well engineered Touring models and a new 2½ litre 6 cylinder sports car of a very low build, called the Speed 20.

Charles, who lived quite close to my home in Bamet, was a very forceful dynamic personality. Although he was pleased with the engineering of the Alvis cars, he was very dissatisfied with much of the coachwork. He had his own ideas on much more modern and striking designs, particularly for the latest Speed 20. Collaborating with Mr Fox of Vanden Plas he produced special Saloon and Coupé models, which sold well. These were followed by new designs from Carbodies and Mulliners, all of which changed the face of Alvis, which had been so conservative. This was not achieved without dissent from Coventry and the relationship between Follett and Alvis was never a very smooth one.

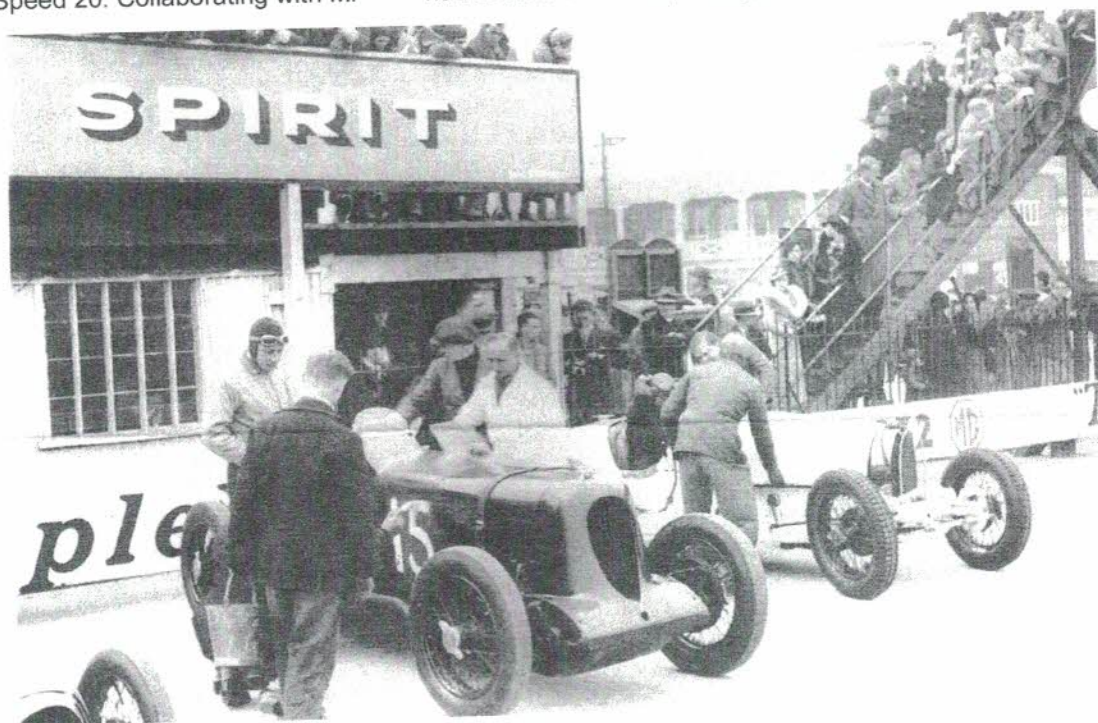
Charles had great charm and a fine sense of humour and at a party he was always the centre of a group.

He and his wife, Pearl, had three disney daughters and one son, Pat, all rather younger than me. As well as the Showrooms in Berkeley Street he had a Service Department at Hammersmith run by the very experienced O.M driver R.F Oates. Dick Oates and Charles Follett developed a very successful racing partnership. Smith-Clarke at Coventry produced a modified 12/50 for racing at Brooklands which Dick Oates steadily improved from a two seater to eventually a slim single seater. All this as to beat the Handicapper at Brooklands and often caught "Ebby" napping. Where other drivers had to lift off to reduce their speed to beat the handicap. Charles always as hard as he could, whilst Dick made the necessary adjustments to the engine.

One day I went with Charles Follett to Luton to meet his great Alvis rival, Charles Dunham. They were both motor traders and competed against one another all the time, with Speed 20s. Follett's cars were always independent front suspension models with his special Vanden Plas bodies to promote sales.

Dunham's Alvises were the earlier models with very light sketchy bodies. Follett and Dunham got on very well. Dunham's son and daughter were great enthusiasts and planned to race themselves, when they were older. Sure enough it all came true; the pretty daughter Hazel, competed with a special Rover and the son raced the original Speed 20. Now the grandson, the third generation of Dunhams is a successful VSCC racing driver in a development in that first Dunham Alvis.

The difficult Follett Alvis partnership couldn't last and when it collapsed, Charles Follett campaigned the Lammas Graham and then a second generation Lea Francis. Just before the war he raced a lightweight Railton. This was a fabulous car. Some time previously I had a short drive in a prototype Railton tourer, which



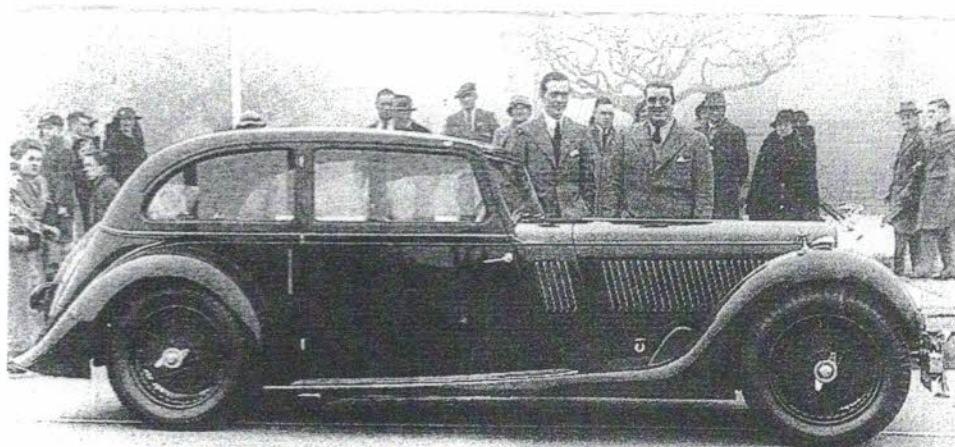
The Follett 12/50 at Brooklands in about 1935, with the car is the Hon Brian Lewis who often raced it, so did S.J. Humphries, Alex Hutton, Dick Oates and me. Beside the car in the picture is Eileen Ellison at the wheel of the Cholmondeley-Tapper Type 37 Bugatti.

Sammy Davis was testing for The Autocar. The silent engine produced tremendous torque, even from tick-over. Sammy really raved about that tourer and so did I. Charles' ultra-weight example was a flyer, he took me around the houses and the Campbell Circuit at Brooklands and did one whole lap in top gear, showing how he could spin the wheels in top after each corner. By using second gears in the 3 speed box, the acceleration was like an ERA, but in dead silence, so that one could hear the screech from the inside wheel as it spun out of the corners. We took it to Donington and it was outstanding, but I did think that it was floating a bit at maximum speed on the straight. The only bad feature was the brakes which soon faded when they got warm.

Charles gave me a picture of him entering the Esses at Shelsley too fast and said that he hoped it would not be published, but this was more than 50 years ago and if Charles looks down from Heaven and sees it, I don't think he would mind. The trouble is that I cannot find the photograph. Mind you, if I ever join him I will be very careful because Charles had a temper like one of those horses that headed up a hearse - and pee and then stamp in it. His son Pat, in business with his father was a good friend of mine. We met when I visited the Service Department; on such mornings we went out for coffee and I had a couple of biscuits, but I noticed that Pat usually had two or three slices of toast and marmalade. Pat said "Nobody in our house has breakfast except my father who has it alone. Nobody dares to speak to him in the morning because of his impossible temper."

Footnote:-

In about 1934, Harold Parker with Leslie Callingham (both of them in the racing department of Shell) were talking to Lord March and me about one of the Shell Directors who had been very cross about the money that Shell was spending on motor racing. Harold said that Director was very bad tempered in fact he had "a temper like a funeral horse."



Lord de Clifford and Charles Follett with one of Charles' very good looking special saloons. A Speed 20 in the RAC Rally 1934

Freddie March and I fell about laughing, the funeral horse with long black plumes did stamp a lot..

In the early days Belisha Beacon controlled pedestrian crossings, I was riding with Charles in his Speed 20. Approaching a crossing in Finchley we saw that there was a policeman standing some way beyond the crossing and there was a woman just starting to cross the road. Charles did not stop and I don't really think that he needed to. He pulled up beyond the crossing close by the policeman and I could see that Charles was red-faced and furious. Why, I couldn't think. He lowered the driver's window and then beckoned the policeman over and then accused the policeman of being about to issue a summons for failing to stop at the crossing. Every time the policeman started to speak Charles interrupted him, saying "I know what you are thinking. You think I should have stopped to let that woman cross the road." I could see that the policeman was as bewildered as I was, but Charles went on and on about police harassment. The poor old copper was speechless but eventually he slowly got out his notebook and I thought rather reluctantly asked Charles for his Driving Licence and issued a warning. As we drove away I looked round and saw the policeman shaking his head in wonderment. Charles was still red in the face and furious. I said nothing and he never received a summons.

Charles was a keen shot and took pride in his guns. On one summer night, at about three o'clock in the morning, he got up to spend a penny. Quietly crossing the landing he looked out of the window and saw in the bright moonlight a rabbit sitting in the middle of his tennis court. He crept downstairs, got out his twelve bore gun, crept upstairs, carefully opening the landing window only an inch or two, and just poked the nozzle of his gun through, aimed and fired. The enormous explosion in the confines of the landing brought down the whole of the ceiling and filled the house with the stench of gunpowder. Charles' wife and four children, terrified that there had been a murder, rushed to the scene and found him on the floor, with the ceiling all over him and still clutching the gun. I understand that he also killed the rabbit. In a way this was typical of Charles - delightfully impossible, but we all loved him. He ran his Alvis in most of the RAC Rallies teaming up with friends. Parties at his home afterwards were always enjoyable. Amongst his Rally co-drivers was Jack Warner, whose sisters were the well known Variety Artistes, Elsie and Doris Waters. Some years later Jack himself achieved fame as "Dixon of Dock Green," After the war Charles Follett did not return to racing and when he retired he farmed in Wiltshire. He was a memorable and charming fellow.

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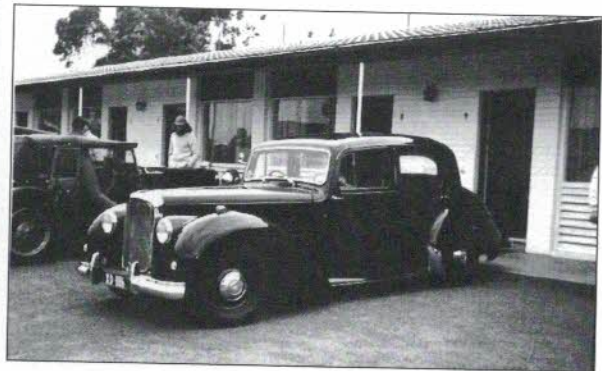
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Are you going to control your reindeers or do I have to call the ranger!



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1935 Alvis Speed 20 DHC
Charlesworth body
(manual)

\$199,000

(also on carsales.com.au)

WANTED

Wanted – Manual (crash) gearbox and clutch for an Alvis Firefly. It has only taken me 25 years to come to the same conclusion that Alvis themselves came to in a few months. That is that the ENV 75 pre-selective gearbox is too light for the Firefly, especially one fitted with a rather heavy saloon body.

I have the necessary bell housing but need both the crash gearbox and clutch to make the thing usable. Please help ASAP as I am also considering fitting a foreign clutch and gearbox, surely a tragedy too dire for Alvis aficionados to allow to happen!!

Some of said aficionados may be able to advise me if an early SA20 box is the same animal. This box is not separately mounted as on later 30s cars, but bolts directly to the bell housing.

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