

# Alvic

*The Newsletter of the Alvis Car Club of Victoria*

*April 2018*







## 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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**April 2018**

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## 2018 COMING EVENTS

- APR 20** GENERAL MEETING—GUEST SPEAKER STEVE DENNER
- MAY 18** GENERAL MEETING - Stan Bone will be our guest speaker for May, talking on his complete restoration (from many boxes of bits) of a 1910 Fabrique Nationale (FN), for which he has won multiple awards.
- 20** NATIONAL MOTORING HERITAGE DAY  
RUN TO & LUNCH AT THE TOOBORAC HOTEL (Organised by the Langs)  
PLEASE NOTE THIS SUPERCEDES THE JULY OUTING TO THAT VENUE  
DETAILS TO FOLLOW
- 25-27** WINTON
- JUN** VISIT TO THE MOORABBIN AIRCRAFT MUSEUM
- AUG 17** ROB ROY HILL CLIMB
- SEPT** WEEKEND AWAY St ARNAUD, WEDDERBURN AREA (McDOUGALLS to organise)
- OCT 7** TRYDEL MUSEUM & LUNCH (RICHARD TONKIN TO ORGANISE)
- DEC 2** CHRISTMAS PARTY AT THE FERGUSON'S, KINGLAKE

*Front page: one of the McKinnon 12/50s, chassis number 4691,*

*Inside front cover: Chris Higgins Firebird sheltering under a tree to avoid the Week End Away's rain & hail*

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I wish to thank Mark Weller for conducting last month's meeting in my absence. Frances and I in the second half of March were heavily involved in one and two cylinder veteran motoring. First as organisers of the annual Veteran Car Club event; this time based at the RACV Cobram Resort. It was a very successful four days with 63 vehicles attending. This was immediately followed by us changing cars and catching the ferry to Tasmania to participate in the biannual national single and twin rally, based on Deloraine. Both events were excellent but with notable differences in weather conditions and the topography. It was good to catch up with Chester and Sally McKaige and during a visit to their place on one run, Chester's workshop was pressed into service with a number of repairs to vehicles being effected. A week later we stayed the night with Chester and Sally and I was able to enjoy a drive of Chester's MGA; have an inaugural ride in his (or should I say Sally's) magnificent Delage and to closely inspect the wonderful restoration progress on the huge 1907 6 cylinder Napier.

Now that veteran motoring is temporally over we are looking forward to some Alvis motoring in the Yarra Valley this coming weekend. We have to again thank Mark Weller for being the instigator of this weekend and for the great runs and visits he and his helpers have planned. By all accounts there will be a good roll up of members and their cars.

We have two excellent guest speakers scheduled for this month and May. In April Steve Denner will be speaking about his experiences in driving his 12/50 (Mother Goose) from the UK to Australia. This will be accompanied by photos which Dale Parsell has digitised for the presentation. This is a meeting not to be missed.

Last year we had Stan Bone give us a fascinating talk on his life of operating gold mines and all that it entailed. In May, Stan is returning to talk about the acquisition and restoration of a veteran FN car. You will be amazed how he managed to turn the remnants of a car buried in a river bank into a multi award winning vehicle. Stan is not one to farm out work for others to do, but in using initiative and self taught skills, he does the work himself.

The 2019 Down under Centenary Tour sub committee has been putting the final touches to the event planning. As previously mentioned if you are unable to participate for the full 19 days you are most welcome to participate in a portion of the event. Please contact Noeline & Alan McKinnon, Dale and Maritta Parsell or Mark Weller if you wish to discuss your participation. As this is a unique event for us, celebrating 100 years of Alvis and in order to attract as many local and overseas participants as possible, the Club's committee has agreed to a request, to make available from Club funds up to \$10,000 to help defray the costs for participants. The Club funds have been accumulated from various sources, including from previous major events. By way of example the very successful JNBC international rally, run by our Club in 2008, resulted in many international friendships and

recognition in the greater Alvis community that our Club plays a vital role in the promotion, restoration and use of Alvis vehicles. We see the currently planned centenary event reinforcing this position.

I sent out via email a survey document to gauge the interest of our members in participating in the UK Alvis Centenary event in 2020. The idea was to provide feedback to the UK on who might attend the celebrations, with an Alvis shipped from Australia or without a vehicle. So far I have received 10 responses: 2 are likely to attend without shipping an Alvis across to the UK, none would attend with an Australian shipped vehicle if there is only the currently planned limited UK activities, 4 would attend and ship a car across if there was either a planned extended UK/European event associated with the UK celebrations or if there was an extensive privately arranged event in addition to the limited UK celebrations and 5 said that they would not be attending the UK celebrations. I am keen to receive more responses from our members. I am also mindful that since the survey was circulated, the Maserati Club encountered difficulties over asbestos content in vehicles which were coming temporally into Australia for an event. Unless this issue is resolved quickly it could well affect the thinking of those members who were considering taking an Alvis to the UK and then shipping it back into Australia.

I have been made aware that a desirable (fabric bodied two seater, boat tail) and mechanically very well sorted 1930 TJ 12/50 is to become available. I was able to drive this car last week and found it to be a strong, excellent driver and with a fully reconditioned engine fitted with a billet crankshaft. The current owner is keen to find an appreciative new owner and we wish to have the car remain in our Club or as a minimum in Australia. I feel that the car is reasonably priced and in the first instance I would like to hear from interested members or people you think could be interested. It would be best for any enquiries to be passed on via me.

For the monthly meeting this coming Friday night, if you are able to come to dinner at the Malvernvale Hotel prior to the meeting, please let me know by Wednesday evening so that I can reserve enough places.

Andrew McDougall

PS.

This report was written late last week but the sending of it to John Lang was held over pending the return from the weekend away. A more detailed report will be provided in due course, however I wish to mention how successful it was, notwithstanding the poor weather on Saturday and Sunday. Whilst we had some physically damp participants, their spirits were not dampened. We enjoyed a wonderful variety of activities: excellent driving roads where we were able to extend our cars, great lunch and morning tea venues, a visit to an excellent private car collection, winery visits, enjoyable evening meals and

most importantly great camaraderie. The 12/50s generally performed well with the exception of Geoff Ross's car which needed some magneto and carburettor attention. The Firebird and TA14 of Higgins and Parsells, respectively also performed well, but the Tonkins had to resort to plan "C" when the TE 21's starting system wouldn't play ball, the TA 14's brakes started dragging and so the Armstrong Siddeley was pressed into service. We enjoyed the company of an older motoring enthusiast, Bertie Innes-Irons who accompanied Peter Mackay in his recently acquired bright red Jaguar MK 2, 3.8 Litre. Bertie was most surprised at the performance of the 12/50s. The event concluded at the Scoresby National Steam Centre where machinery in the inside pavilions was running. Many of our people had not visited before and so now they are looking forward to returning on the major opening weekend to see all the mobile machinery running as well as the inside displays. All in all it was an excellent weekend away, with many thanks to organiser, Mark Weller.

Andrew McDougall

**SUPPER**  
*The Hetheringtons*

**JOTTINGS**

It rained almost all day. Both our available Alvises declined to proceed at the last moment, so the Siddeley was called into action. That was quite pleasant - the 2 speed self-cancelling wipers & the heater worked well. The Vintage drivers got very wet & are now considering coming over to the (post-war) dark side. But it has been a great, well planned weekend.

Richard Tonkin

Catching up with Geoff Ross last Friday, he mentioned that he won a trophy at Kalorama for the car that best reflected the spirit of Kalorama.

The trophy was quite substantial and he claimed that a lack of smart phone ability means that he could not send me a copy of the photograph. Maybe another day!

**SLIDE and NEGATIVE SCANNING**

I am currently able to scan slides and negatives (35mm and larger) at ~4,500 pixels/inch and am happy to do this for members for their Alvis related slides with the proviso that the Alvis community can use the images. Scanned images will be provided to the owners on CD or DVD.  
Contact me for details or mail your slides/ negatives to my address (see contacts page.)

Dale Parsell: [dparsell@ozemail.com.au](mailto:dparsell@ozemail.com.au)

**MARKET WATCH**

1933 SA 11.9 Cross & Ellis Firefly tourer. Rolling chassis. Brightwells, 7 March. \$17,850.

1934 SC SP20 DHC by John Charles & Co. Bonhams, 6 December. \$145,500.

1961 TD21 Series 1 FHC. In need of TLC. Brightwells. 7 March. \$15,700.

1961 TD21 Series 1 FHC. Manual. \$31,600.

1963 TE21 FHC. Very good, restored, historically interesting, few owners. Bonhams. 18 March. \$31,600.

1948 TA14 Tickford/Mead DHC. Bodied by Richard Mead using a Tickford MG WA body, one of a small batch that MG had made but did not use. Excellent condition. Brightwells 11 April.  
\$30,350.

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

Alvis Down Under Centenary Rally March 20th - April 7th 2019  
Alvis National Rally April 7th - 13th 2019



*To join us in celebrating 100 years of these magnificent cars.*

Don't miss this special opportunity to enjoy  
the best of ALVIS motoring through some of  
our most picturesque countryside

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# APRIL WEEKEND AWAY

Well, our three-day April weekend away in the Yarra Valley has come and gone, with eight Alvis and four non-Alvis cars (Alvis-Mini, Armstrong Siddeley, Jaguar and BMW) and twenty-one people participating. Oddly, there were no Speed models, but instead six 12/50s, one Firebird and one TA14.

The focus was very much on driving, along non-main roads with little traffic and plenty of scenery (more of this latter aspect anon).

We began north of Melbourne at Yan Yean and headed further north to Broadford, before turning east and driving via Strath Creek and Glenburn to lunch at the C.J. Denis "Singing Gardens" at Toolangi. Thence to the handsome landscaping and modern architecture of Tarrawarra Vineyards and Gallery before assembling in our motel garden for pre-dinner drinks. All this in glorious autumn sunshine, albeit minus the company for most of the day of the 'Three Cameleers', messrs Anderson, Miller and Ross: they adopted a shorter and less scenic route whilst nursing Geoff's 12/50 which seemed disinclined to ascend hills.

A brisk walk (for some) to dinner at the Healesville Hotel.

Saturday dawned cloudy and forbidding and the Cameleers busily changing a magneto before breakfast. We set off to Yarra Junction to visit the private collection of a gentleman who lives in my street – and what a collection it is, even if not all present for us to see. Bugatti, Bentley, Lancia and Ferrari comprised the radiator badges and there were also several fascinating early engines on stands. Lunch followed in a crowded bakery café, during which strong winds and rain appeared.

We set off on what was planned as a highly scenic route of quiet roads to Cockatoo and thence to Coldstream (with quiz questions to answer as well), but admiring the scenery was soon replaced with just trying to see through the torrential rain and hail striking the windscreen and finding its way into the various open Alvises. I rode with Dale Anderson in his 12/50 with hood and side curtains in place and we were actually cosy, except for the odd drip and having to wipe condensation from the windscreen (a luxury not afforded to the other, more open Alvises).

The route led us to St Hubert's winery, where – of course – the rain stopped and the sun shone while we tasted various wines and fended-off a rather wet leather jacket-stealing busload of young women.

On then to a rather crowded cheesery and tea room and another scenic and less damp run through Yarra Glen to Healesville. Drinks were had sheltering from the rain under the veranda roof, before a good dinner at the Tokar Estate winery, a short mini-bus ride away.

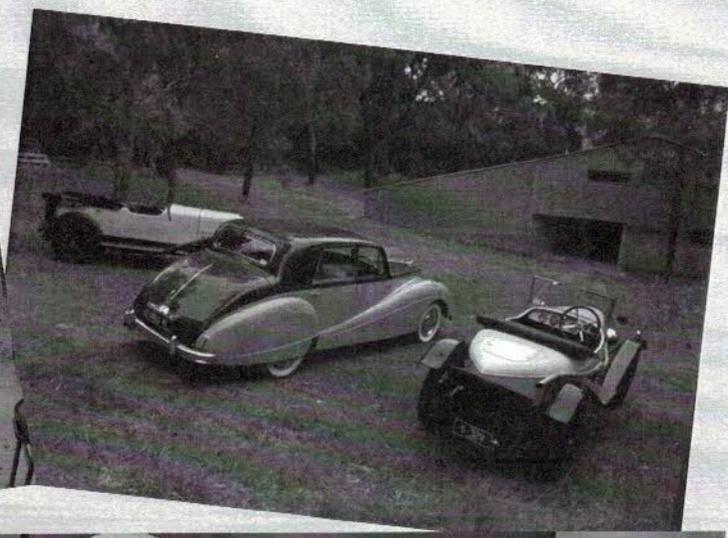
The McDougalls were announced as quiz winners, with 100% correct answers.

Sunday was again wet for our next drive. This was for all except the Three Cameleers who selected the flattest route to Geelong; the Ross 12/50 apparently survived a good deal of the way before finishing the trip on a flat top. Having what looked like sixteen hands applied to the task of wrenching the TA14 hood to close on the windscreen, the rest of us proceeded to coffee in Gembrook before the highly interesting **National Steam Centre at Scoresby**. Of interest was how and where these steam (and diesel) engines had been used, an example being one from a Richmond soap factory that was only sidelined in 1973. We then dispersed homeward.

The company seems to have enjoyed the eating and drinking and much talking – as well as some good driving, despite the rain.

Mark Weller

*Many thanks to the photographers: Frances McDougall, Dale Parsell & Richard Tonkin*



# ALVIS PEOPLE BEHAVING BADLY!



*Reflections of a great weekend away*



Many thanks to Clive Taylor for a collection of history cuttings from his archive. The first regarding Major C.M. Harvey and the search for his resting place.

Major C.M. Harvey, late Royal Artillery.

Special Notice.

The whereabouts of the last resting place of Cyril Maurice Harvey, who survived the Great War to become a highly successful racing driver for Alvis during the twenties and for Alfa Romeo during the first half of the thirties, were discovered recently after having remained unknown for sixty years.

In belated recognition of his services to his country and to the Alvis Company a wreath will be laid on his grave in Cornwall by Captain Peter Black, late EME, 3rd Battalion Royal Tank Regiment, 8th Army, and now President of the French Alvis Club.

The commemoration will take place at 11.00h on Saturday 2nd August next, the 61st anniversary of Harvey's death at the age of 41 in 1936. A few words will be said and a photo taken for posterity, after which lunch will be served locally for those who wish it.

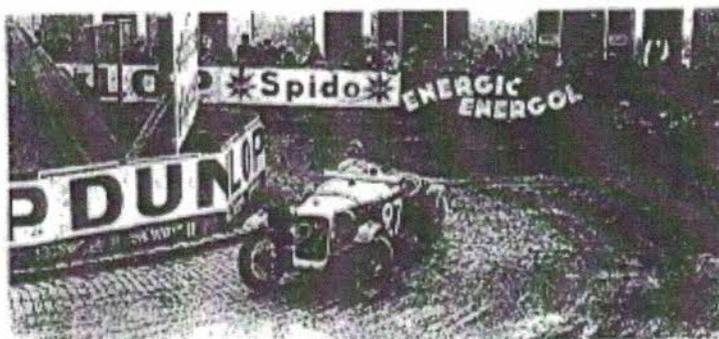
Would any Alvis Men (of whatever persuasion) wishing to be present on this historic occasion kindly signify in writing his intention to

Peter Black, Chateau Vilbrequin des Genestes, F-84430 Mondragon,

so that necessary arrangements may be made and details supplied to enquirers. If necessary a further announcement will be made in the light of the response to this one.

It would be a fitting accompaniment if a few Alvis were to turn up, the more sporting/special the better. Drivers are reminded that time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted....

Les Alvis 1,5 litres se sont montrées toutes deux rapides et très fiables pour leurs débuts au Mans. Voici celle de Harvey et Purdy en route pour la sixième place. (David Hodges)



Above: Harvey (no.27) in the 1.5 litre fwd Alvis, on his way to 6th place (out of 33 starters) in the 1928 24-hours of Le Mans.

Overshadowed at the time by the reputation of the Bentleys, the two little Alvis were categorised as "rapid and very reliable" by the French (a nation not renowned for its predilection for things foreign) and demonstrated decisively both the outstanding talent of Harvey (and his co-driver Purdy) and the inherent genius of Smith-Clarke's front wheel drive design.

It should be noticed that in front of Harvey were two Bentleys (1st and 5th), two Chryslers (3rd and 4th) and a Stutz (2nd), all of which were propelled by motors the capacity of which exceeded four litres. In this context the performance of the fwd Alvis was indeed remarkable.



ALVIS CLUB DE FRANCE  
Château Vilbrequin des Genestes  
84430 MONDRAGON DE PROVENCE  
Tel. 02 98 13 06



Major C.M. Harvey, Royal Artillery.

Thanks to the acumen and persistence of ACdF member D.W. Pound and the background information supplied to World Alvis News by members Nic Davies and others, the 60-year-old Mystery concerning the whereabouts of the last resting place of a man who rendered honorable and devoted service to his country during the Great War, and to the Alvis Car and Engineering Company during the nineteen-twenties (when he was its leading racing driver) has been solved.

**SEARCHING FOR THE LAST RESTING PLACE OF  
MAJOR C.M. HARVEY**

=====

by Douglas Pound, March 1997.

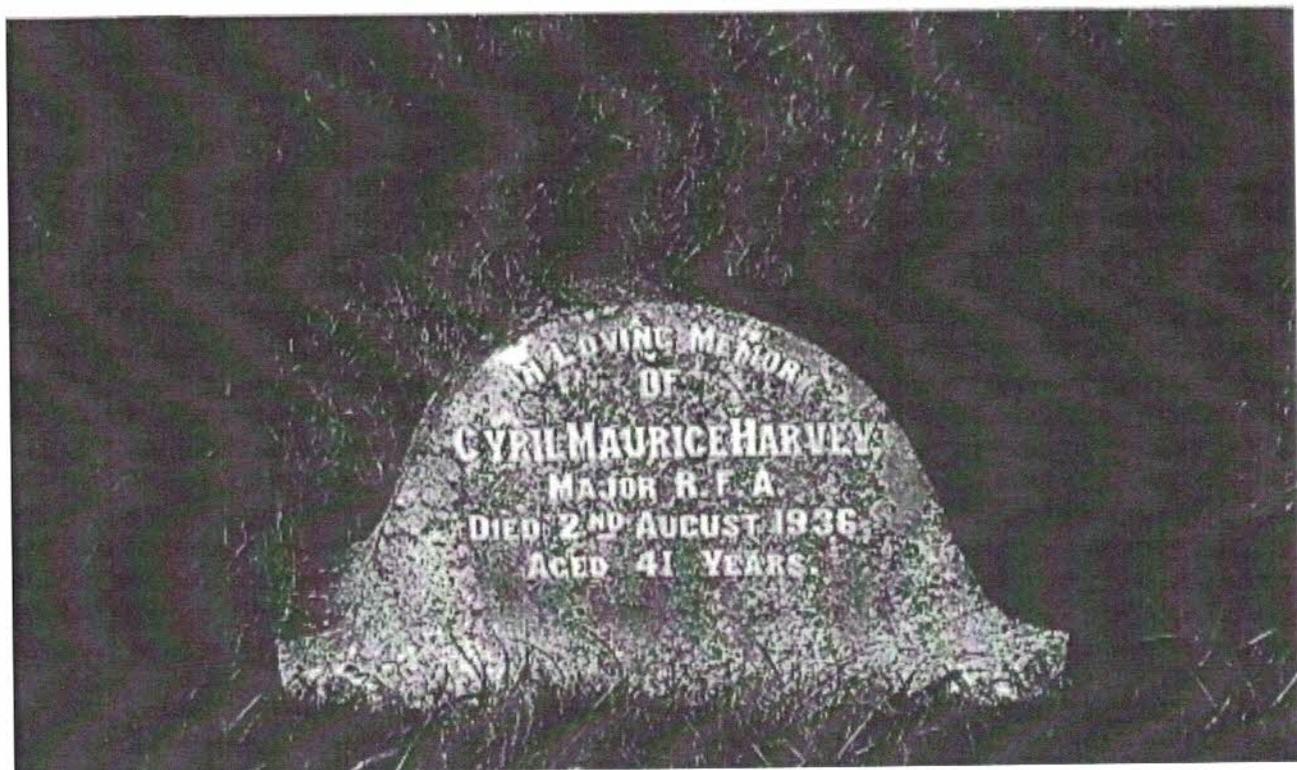
Shortly after Jean and I became acquainted with Peter Black, President of the Alvis Club De France, we became members and one of the first newsletters we received contained an offer from Peter of a 'crate' of his favourite Cotes Du Rhone to the first person to come up with a photograph of Major Cyril Maurice Harvey's grave. Most, if not all, club members will be aware of Harvey's feats in the twenties with Alvis racing cars but apparently the whereabouts of his last resting place are unknown within the Club. Subsequent newsletters contained re-prints of extracts from newspapers of 1936, the year of Harvey's death. These were provided by Nic Davies (he of the supercharged straight eight F.W.D. Alvis) and told of how Harvey committed suicide whilst camping in a field at St. Keverne in Cornwall. His wife, from whom he was separated, was living in Torquay and his father, who was quoted as saying that his son had no reason to be depressed (the reason afforded for his suicide) was living in the Clifton Down area of Bristol, as had been Harvey. It was assumed that Harvey's body would have been taken to Bristol for burial and when I began my investigation I was convinced that I should start with Bristol.

I wrote to Bristol Graves and Cemeteries Department and never received a reply. At the same time I also wrote to the Registrar at Truro 'just in case' and received a very helpful reply suggesting I write to Mrs. Jayne Howells, Superintendent Registrar, Kerrier District, which I did with a request for a copy of Harvey's death certificate. Mrs. Howells was kind enough to ring me to say that since a death certificate would not help with my quest, did I still want it? I did of course, I thought it worth the £5.50.

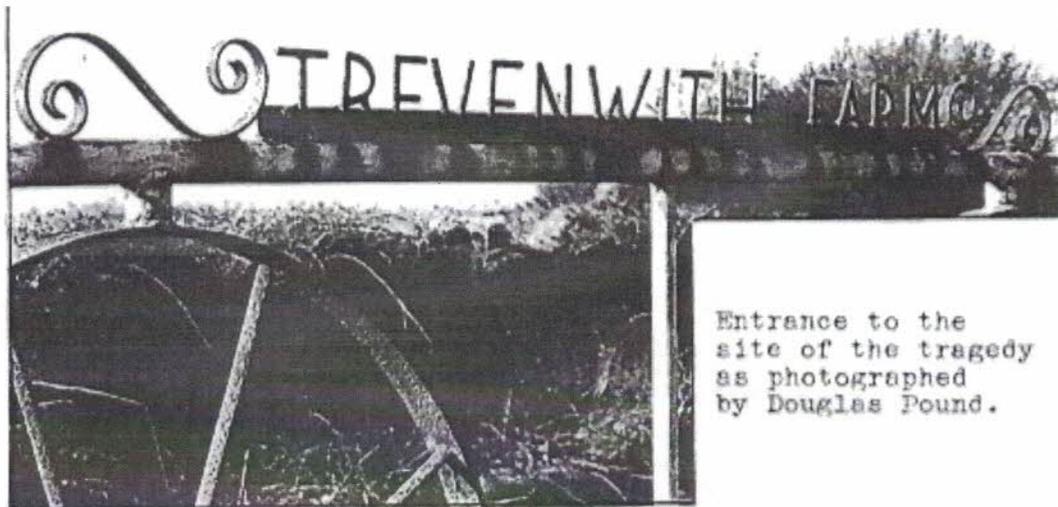
I was still convinced that Harvey would have been buried in his home city and when, through my membership of the Midland Genealogy Society, I became aware of a fellow member, Elaine Zair, in the Bristol area, I asked her if she could help by searching burial records around Clifton Down. She very kindly agreed to help but in the end had no success. She suggested I write to one Ron Lewin who had records of headstones in the Clifton Down area. Mr. Lewin was very helpful and did a lot of work on my behalf but had to admit failure and concluded that burial must have taken place in Cornwall.

About this time it occurred to me that perhaps I should make absolutely certain that there really was no knowledge of the subject of my quest within the Club and I rang first Ernest Shenton who suggested I speak to Ken Day who, in turn, suggested I speak to Peter Hull who thought it would be a good idea for me to ring Peter Lord. Everyone was tremendously helpful and when I spoke to Peter Lord he recalled that he actually drove Harvey down to St. Keverne at that fateful time. He told me of how he took Harvey down in his Railton, but he did not go to the funeral and knew not where Harvey was buried.

It seemed pretty certain that no one knew the answer so I resumed my enquiries and when I rang Peter Black in Provence to tell him of my progress and Ron Lewin's suggestion that Harvey must have been buried in Cornwall, he suggested perhaps I should seek out undertakers in the area. So I went back to Kerrier Registrar's Office and came up against an answerphone which reminded me that on a suggestion from Jayne Howells, I had telephoned Mrs. Marsh at Kerrier District Council Offices and left a message on her answerphone which I had been unable to follow up. I immediately rang Mrs. Marsh who remembered my message and told me that the Vicar at St. Keverne had the information I needed. I rang the Vicar, spoke to his wife and yes they had established from the Church records that Harvey was buried in the churchyard of St. Keverne Church. I suggested going down to search among the graves and was advised that the Church Warden was currently making a record of all graves so my next stop was to ring the Church Warden, David Steele. David told me that so far he had recorded about 75% of the headstone but the name Cyril Maurice Harvey did not "ring a bell". However, he would immediately seek out the 1936 burials for me and ring me back. Regrettably, when he did, his news was disappointing. He could see no headstone for Harvey but there were several unmarked plots among the 1936 graves and we had to assume that Harvey's grave was one of these. I felt that I could not leave it like that and decided to drive down to St. Keverne as soon as possible. I arrived on a grey drizzly afternoon to find my hotel closed up until 6 p.m. so I sought out David Steele and he showed me the area of 1936 graves. Eventually he left me to browse on my own and I began to find one or two graves of mid-thirties burials scattered around - then 'lo and behold' there it was - the lead lettering on the short thick rounded stone standing out very clearly after 60 years - I had to pinch myself - was I dreaming! It was so incredible after all the effort and after having virtually given up hope. I immediately rang my wife on the "mobile" I was carrying and then went to tell David who had helped so much - and I had to be the one to find it in an area he had not really dealt with. We had a good meal and an extra pint that night and David gave me a copy of the parish records from Aug. 1936.



Next morning, after photographing the grave, I set out to find Trevenwith Farm - the site of the tragedy - about 2.1/2 miles from St. Keverne but unfortunately the last mile was a track which became steeper and very rutted - too much for my modern B.M.W but I did find from the postman the name and whereabouts of the owner during the 1940-45 war. I may yet get in contact with him.



Entrance to the site of the tragedy as photographed by Douglas Pound.

A few days earlier Elaine Zair rang to tell me that she had found a report of the funeral in a 1936 newspaper indicating that Harvey's wife (separated) and parents were present and a bouquet of 'red flowers' was placed on the coffin. Others present were :

E.W. Harvey	Father.
Mary Dorothy Harvey	Widow.
Mr. and Mrs. W. Urquart Dykes.	
Mr. S.E. Lard .	
Mr. S. Hell.	
Reverend J. Britton.	

What a pity I hadn't started with St. Keverne but who would have thought Harvey would have been buried near where he was camping rather than where he lived.

D.W.Pound.

(Ed: E.W.Harvey is quoted as saying that his son had no reason to be depressed. From other evidence this is not so. It is reasonable to suppose that Harvey was commissioned in 1914 at the age of 19 and that he contracted in France the malady from which he was still suffering 20 years later. Socially this malady then carried a considerable stigma and, for the military, a court-martial and unpleasant treatment. It is therefore highly probable that Harvey kept quiet about it at least until 1919 - by which time it may well have entered the secondary (and incurable) stage. By 1936 he must have been suffering; he was separated from his wife - for reasons which are not difficult to guess - and the Alvis racing era had ended in 1930. Thus he was out of a job. Poor Harvey - the reasons for his suicide are evident....)

Alvis Club de France



*Peter Black, a hugely influential and respected member of the Alvis fraternity. Peter had been a tank commander in World War II, and his wife Marrienne who pre-deceased him had been active in the French Resistance. It was always a delight to have a copy of Peter's "World Alvis News" drop through the letterbox, being amusing and sometimes controversial reading. Peter sadly lost his life to an itinerant worker who had broken into the Chateau Vilbrequin in 1998.*

*Acknowledgement is made to the [alvisarchive.com](http://alvisarchive.com)*

16th March, 1997.

Dear Peter,

G.N.S. Davies  
Llain Delyn,  
Llanrhystyd, Dyfed,  
SY235BD, United Kingdom

Very many thanks for your two letters; good to hear from you, as always. I have never owned a Polaroid camera, but I see how useful they are, and maybe I'll get one.

Your clutch body is now ready to come back to you, except that I have made no attempt to balance it, since I don't have the facilities. If you decide to have it balanced, I suggest you make quite sure everything fits first, in case you have to grind anything. The face of the clutch body was quite badly distorted, which has called for more weld metal on one side than the other. Also, the clutch body was about .005" out of round. However, everything is reasonably true now, and should work well. I have given the bushes .004" running clearance, since clutches have been known to get hot.

We now have to decide how to get the thing back to you; let me know what you would like me to do. The carriers, of course, will pick it up here, and deliver it to your door, but they won't do it for nothing. Ron King might be persuaded to fit it into one of his trips, or you might well know of someone else who's going. I will have it packed, awaiting an address and your instructions.

Very many thanks for the shot of Marianne's daffodils; they look lovely. We have masses of them here, particularly in Aberystwyth, which is, of course at sea level. We are at 570 feet above sea level, and consequently, ours run a little later.

I am delighted to hear the news of Harvey's grave; many thanks. I was not surprised, since I knew Doug Pound was getting warm. I am ashamed to say, I had out the grave-finding project on the back burner, for several reasons:- It would obviously have involved a trip to Cornwall, for which I didn't really have the time, since I have so many other projects going, not the least of which is the straight eight. Doug Pound was much better placed to find things out than I was, and was obviously doing well; it was best left to him. I talked to Doug yesterday, and he will be coming to see us in a couple of weeks; he has very kindly offered to send me a photograph of the grave.

It will certainly be a great scoop for you and W.A. News, to relate the full story of the search and discovery. I like to think that another scoop for you will be the story of the straight eight's first appearance since 1927. I am trying very hard to ensure that happening next year, but it's rather too soon to start talking about it too much.

I will remember Norman Routledge; I bought a pile of F.W.D bits from him, for, I think, £7.10.0.

**Note.** An Alvis crank assembly comprises the forging itself, the flywheel, starter ring, clutch plate & body and damper assembly. Each assembly was balanced individually in the works and the parts are not interchangeable. Thanks to Nic I will soon be able to listen once more to a vibrationless tickover at 400 rpm! PB.

All the very best



Many will recall that Nic Davies (G.N.S. Davies) brought the Alvis 8 cylinder FWD GP car into Australia in the 1960s along with a 12/50 and a 4 cylinder FWD. Subsequently, Nic freighted the 8 cylinder FWD around the world as he went from job to job. The engine was from a different version of the car and was subsequently grafted in to the GP body.

The project was sold to Tony Cox and Alan Stote and is progressing slowly into 2 cars as authentically, the engine was not compatible with the GP body.

# WORKSHOP

## GOODBYE HELLS CONFETTI - Mark Hayward

The Alvis Front Wheel Drive has always had a reputation for being dauntingly complicated and probably the most daunting aspect, is the tappet adjustment.

Gerry Mitchelmore's description in the February Automobile is most accurate but could be a thing of the past. I quote, "The central overhead cam shaft acts on dashpots, like upturned buckets. Between the lobe and the valve head and the underside of the dashpot is a thimble like valve cap containing spacers that determine the valve clearance. To set the valve clearance you assemble the camshaft with the valve caps empty, measure the gaps between the back of each cam and the dashpot, and record it accurately in a table. Then dismantle the cam shaft, and, one at a time, start filling the valve caps with the calculated correct thickness of spacer to ensure the correct valve clearance. You then reassemble the cam shaft, torque down the valve caps and measure the gaps again. A result of 4 out of 8 would be a good first try. So, you do it all again, adding and subtracting spacers according to your chart. After several iterations you might have 6 right, but the wrong ones had been right first time, but now compressed a bit. And so, it goes on. No wonder the works driver R.M.V. Sutton coined the phrase -hells confetti – for the fiddly little shims."

An appeal through the Hells Confetti website brought me into contact with fellow FWD owner John Lang in Australia who put me in touch with Peter Miller and I am indebted to both for putting me on the trail for a modern alternative solution which Peter installed on John's car some years ago, with success.

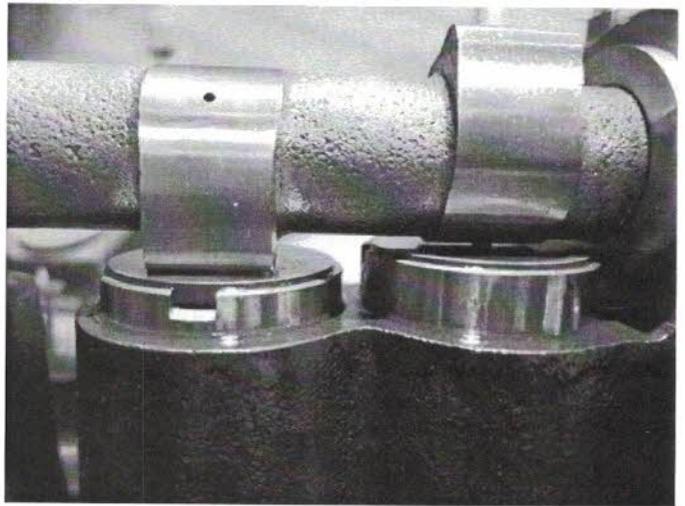
The solution is to use modern dashpots used on a range of Japanese engines. It transpires Landcruiser, Hilux,



Mitsubishi dashpot on the left showing the recess where the shim sits. Original on the right.

Hiace, 4 Runner, Dyna, Prado, Bundera, Coaster & Surf plus Mitsubishi also use this in their 4M40 engines found in Pajero, Triton & Canter Models. The amazing thing is these dashpots are identical in diameter to the Alvis ones, albeit a little shorter.

The beauty is that you remove the Alvis thimble spacers, measure the valves to suit as the dash pots are a little thicker than the Alvis ones with the Japanese dashpots in place. They are manufactured in thicknesses from 2.50mm to 3.30 mm in 0.05mm intervals.



Mitsubishi dashpots fitted showing the groove for shim removal and shims in place

Hamlin's of Bridgwater undertook this work for me on two heads, including white metaling the cam bearings, line boring and vacuum testing the valve seating. They also honed the dashpot chambers in the head to ensure a good fit but allowing oil to run down, as the dashpots turn slowly when the engine is running.

Part numbers needed for a complete modern FWD head rebuild with suppliers-

Red Triangle	N15061	eight outer valve springs
Red Triangle	N15062	eight inner valve springs
Red Triangle	C8704	eight valve guides TE 21
Red Triangle	C1378	eight spring collars
Alvis Register	E054	eight pairs collets
Alvis Register	E050	eight valves 12/50
Mitsubishi	TB32340	eight dashpots

And from Peter Miller

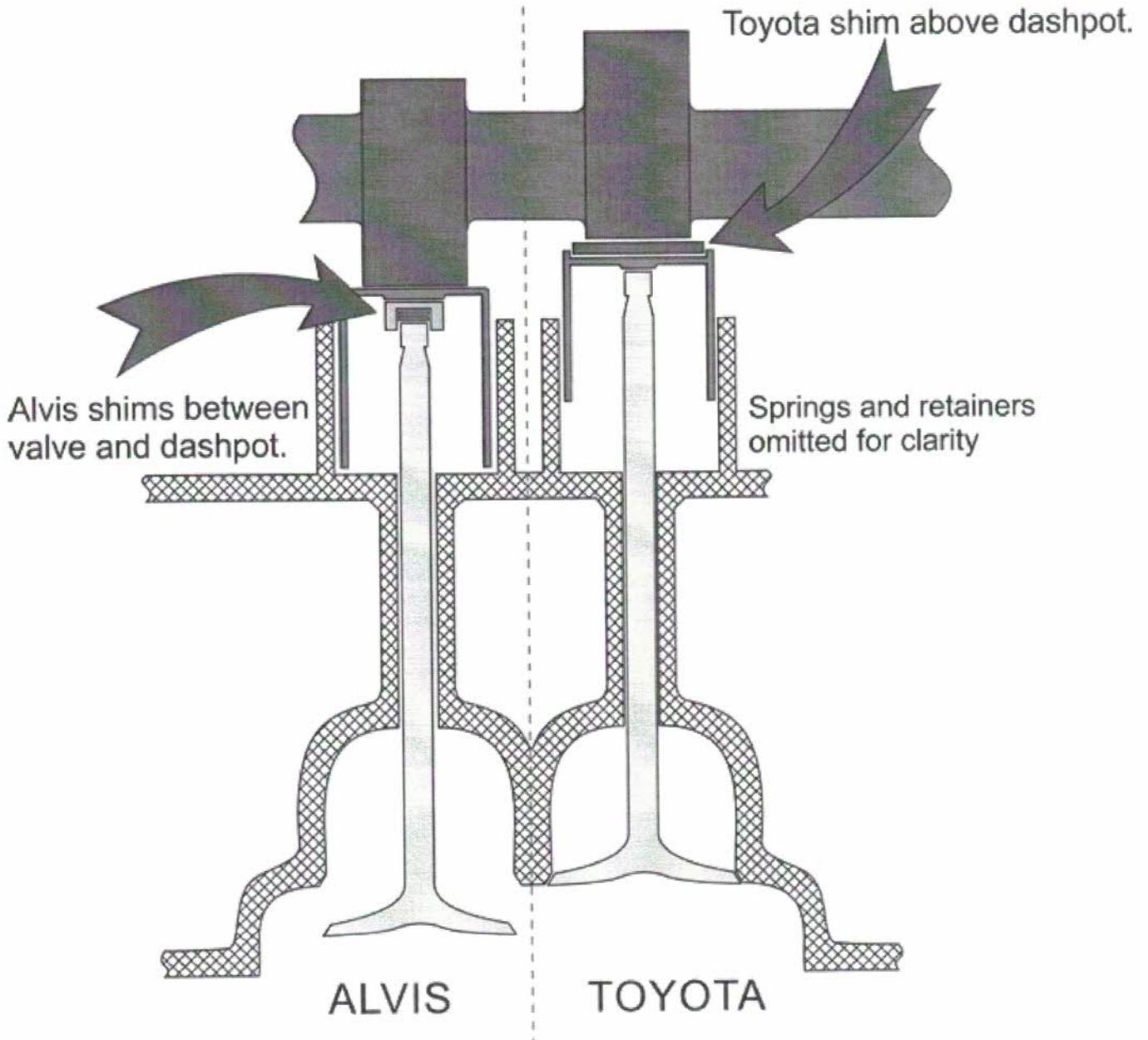
## Alvis FWD Dashpot modification.

Some years ago, Ray Dean in Melbourne while working on John Lang's FWD cylinder head, gave some thought to modifying the Alvis "Hells Confetti" method of valve clearance adjustment. He reasoned that as the cam follower used in current Toyota engines was exactly the same diameter (40 mm) as the Alvis "dashpot" (to use Alvis parlance), there was no reason it could not be adapted for use in the Alvis FWD engine. In the Alvis system, the shims are contained in a small cap interposed between the top of the valve and the lower surface of the dashpot, necessitating removal of the camshaft to effect adjustment. In the Toyota system the adjusting shim is positioned in a recess in the upper face of the dashpot, and is readily removable without disassembly.

Preliminary measurements indicated that if the Alvis dashpots, shims and shim retainers were removed, then Toyota dashpots with suitable shims could be used in their place. This would mean the valves could be used with little or no modification.

After checking the head surface for flatness, cutting valve seats as required and re-facing the valves, the valves were installed in the head. Toyota dashpots were then fitted to the head and the camshaft installed. It was then simply a matter of turning the camshaft so the base circle of each cam was above the corresponding dashpot and measuring the clearance. The required shim thickness for each valve was arrived at by subtracting the specified clearance (0.008" for the inlet valves and 0.012" for the exhausts) from this value.

Shims in accordance with these values were then installed and the clearances re-checked. This modification is fully reversible, all the original parts have been retained and no alteration to any original Alvis components was involved. To date the modification has performed flawlessly.



## “For the sheer joy of driving ..... I’d like to go there in an Alvis”

*(Advertisement in The Motor 1952)*

### Lockheed brake shoes and pull-off springs with particular reference to the TA-TD {1} series – location and fitting.

I’m not one for taking my TA21’s brakes for granted. In today’s traffic they are rather marginal. What’s more the single master cylinder means that a leak will **impair the entire** system. It wasn’t until the 70’s that tandem master cylinders became common and provided a greater margin of safety. In an earlier article I wrote about the fitting of an external reservoir similar to the Park Ward cars to my TA21. It has certainly made the task of fluid inspection and changing a lot easier.

I regularly check for leaks and found the near side rear cylinder weeping. Unless one keeps a few spares the local brake specialist doesn’t want to know you as it takes time to send parts away for rebuild and what they don’t want is a car taking up valuable floor space. The other option is to do it yourself. This was my preferred choice as I am keen to understand the technology of that period. Over time knowledge of these systems is lost and today’s professionals will more than likely only copy what they find in place. The purpose of this article is to share the experience I had in refitting the brake pull-off springs {springs}.

To start with removing the shoes was easy as mine is an early car and is not fitted with the steady “beehive” springs. I placed the shoes on the ground in the same configuration in order to preserve the spring location setup. See figure 1. Earlier series cars used Lockheed shoes with two holes at each end and in my case each spring was fitted to the second hole. Naturally I assumed that this was correct.

Having cleaned the area and fitted a rebuilt cylinder the next task was to refit the shoes. This looked quite tricky as the springs are behind the shoes and pliers cannot be used. It was at this point that I consulted Keith Dodge from the Alvis Car Club in New Zealand, as well as my own small library. I have collected a few copies of various Lockheed Service Manuals over the years and the publication listed in Figure two clearly shows that at the **cylinder end** the spring location was different to the setup on my car in that the spring was fitted to the **first** hole on each shoe.

Keith confirmed that the guideline on this type of shoe with 4 spring locating holes as per figure two is that the spring is fitted to the first hole on the piston end and the second hole on the abutment end. This can just be made out in a photograph in the TA-TC Manual of Instruction which I had initially totally overlooked. {A clearer picture of the brake springs on the rear wheels can be found on page 58 of the TD Manual of Instruction (May 61 reprint).} A Lockheed parts catalogue of the time listed 36 types of brake shoes with the Alvis type – BL7, being one of the early designs.

When refitting the shoes and springs in the correct configuration, the technique I found relatively easy was to fit the spring to the abutment end of both shoes on the ground and to then transfer the setup on to backing plate brake abutment. I then fitted the micram adjuster and mounted the top shoe into it. The next step was to correctly locate the spring on to the first hole of the same shoe, which was easy as there was no tension on it and then bring up the bottom shoe and at the same time move it in front of the cylinder in order to hook up the other spring end, again on to the first hole. The last step was to force the shoe downwards and inwards sufficiently for it to slot into place at the rear of the cylinder. {I found it much easier to push downwards than pull upwards.} I then repeated the new configuration on the other rear wheel. Figure 3 shows the end result.

My curiosity was aroused as to the spring setup on the front shoes of the car and I wasn’t surprised when they turned out to have the same configuration as the rears. {BL7 shoes are interchangeable.} Being a twin leading shoe setup means that there isn’t a separate abutment as is the case on the rears. Keith confirmed that on this setup the spring is fitted to the first hole on the piston side and as there is in effect an abutment at the rear of each cylinder the spring is then connected into the second shoe hole. The closest picture I could find used a “3 hole” shoe and this is displayed in figure 4.

You might be thinking to yourself, does it really matter where the springs are located? From my perspective I like to do things correctly and it certainly makes refitting the shoes easier. The pressure needed to force the springs down when in the second hole is so much greater. I have also noted that it feels as if less pressure is needed to be exerted on the brake pedal.

Now for a note of caution. It is advisable to have a few long cable ties available if contemplating the removal of the front shoes for when removed the pressure of the fluid in the system and spring pressure behind each cup will force the bottom piston out with the likely result that it will fall on to the ground along with the cup

and yes a lot of fluid too. The cable tie can be fitted to each cylinder prior to the removal of the shoes. An alternative is a length of soft wire or string. That said it is worth removing a piston under controlled conditions in order to inspect the bore. Whilst mine were not leaking I was nevertheless surprised as to the poor condition of two of the cylinders. See figure 5. The end result was that I replaced two complete cylinders and in the remaining two I only had to replace the cups. It is also advisable to have a supply of fresh brake fluid on hand. I find the one litre packs very handy.

When refitting the shoes I adopted the same approach as for the rears, in that I fitted the shoes to the top cylinder with the micram in place and then fitted the bottom again by bringing the bottom shoe in front of the cylinder in order to hook on the spring followed by downward pressure whilst pushing inwards in order to locate it.

My thoughts now turn to the master cylinder for it has been in place for nearly 10 years. The next task will be to remove the rear dust boot for a closer inspection.

Richard Wallach  
Melbourne  
richardwallach@hotmail.com  
Apr 2018

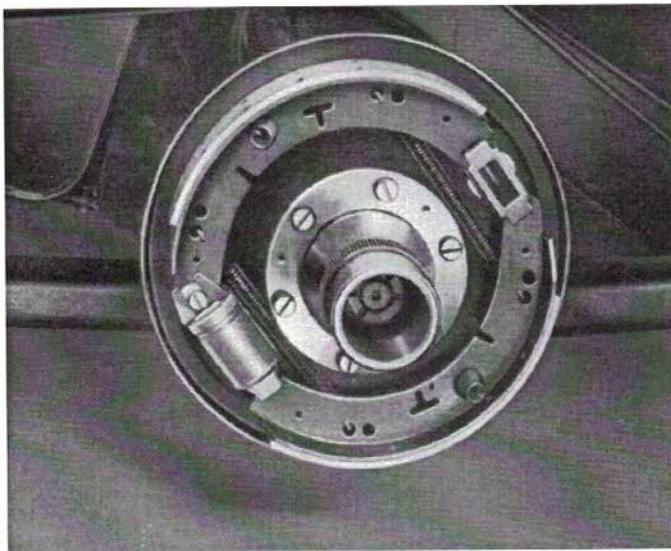


Figure 2- Lockheed Service Manual S.114/1 dated 1964 page 47. This picture clearly shows the pull-off spring location.

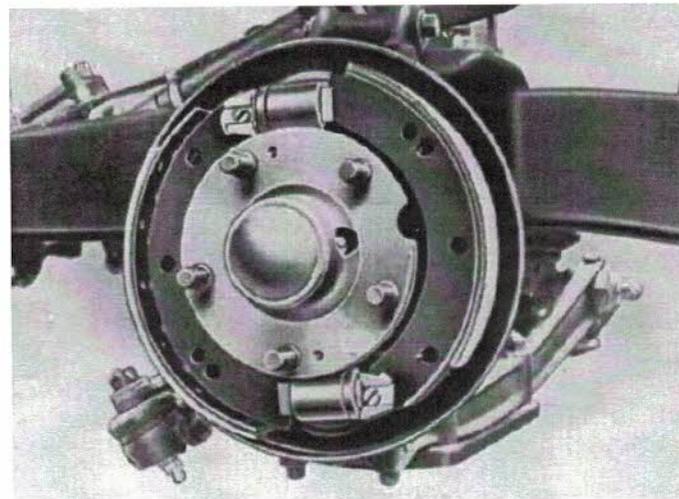


Figure 4- Lockheed Service Manual S.111/4 page 18 dated 1966- Note - The shoe at the abutment end of each cylinder has the pull-off spring located in the second hole.



Figure 1- My TA 21 pull-off spring configuration (back to front)

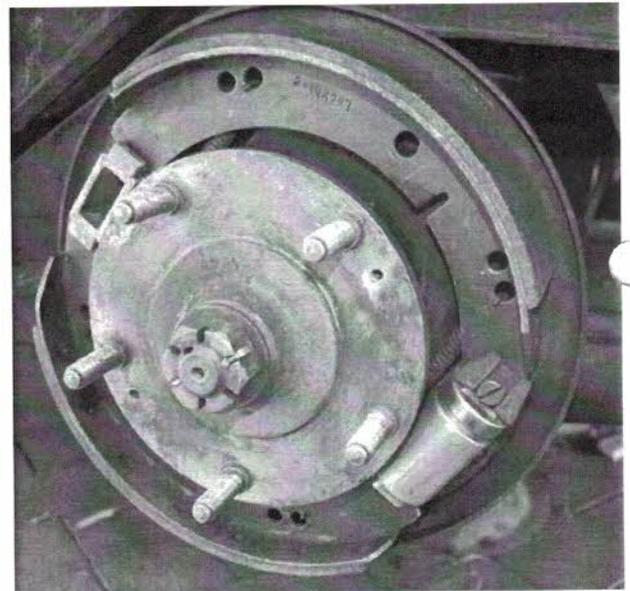


Figure 3- My TA21 - job done



Figure 5- Near side bottom wheel cylinder. The cup was quite scored.

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Margaret Caldwell advises that she has 2 leather hides that were purchased some time ago and never used.

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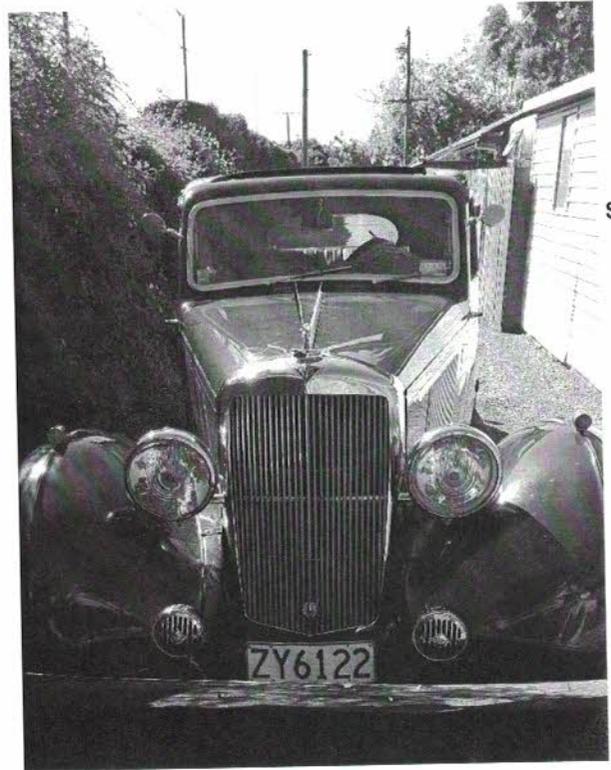
1928 14.75 Alvis Silver Eagle modified with a 16.95 engine many years ago. Chassis No 7046 Engine No 7940. Total restoration incl new replica C&E Tourer body frame. Engine total rebuild incl new pistons, rods etc. New ratio CWP 4.7:1 Sale on behalf of my daughter \$65000. Des Donnan 07 5478 6630

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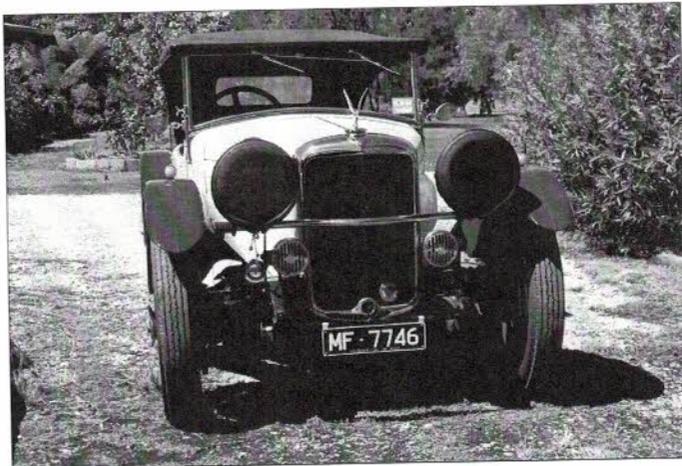
I am a member of the Alvis Owners Club in New Zealand. The car pictured is missing its sunroof. I have spent the last few years restoring the car and have the inbuilt jacks to finish, but, my biggest problem is that the sunroof is missing. Has anybody got one or a set of plans so I can make one?

Looking forward to your help

Richard M. Williams  
[rmw1@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rmw1@xtra.co.nz)



still



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## ALVIS TD21 or TE21

Please call: Colin Wilson 0412 165 058  
[cwilsonarchitect@hotmail.com](mailto:cwilsonarchitect@hotmail.com)

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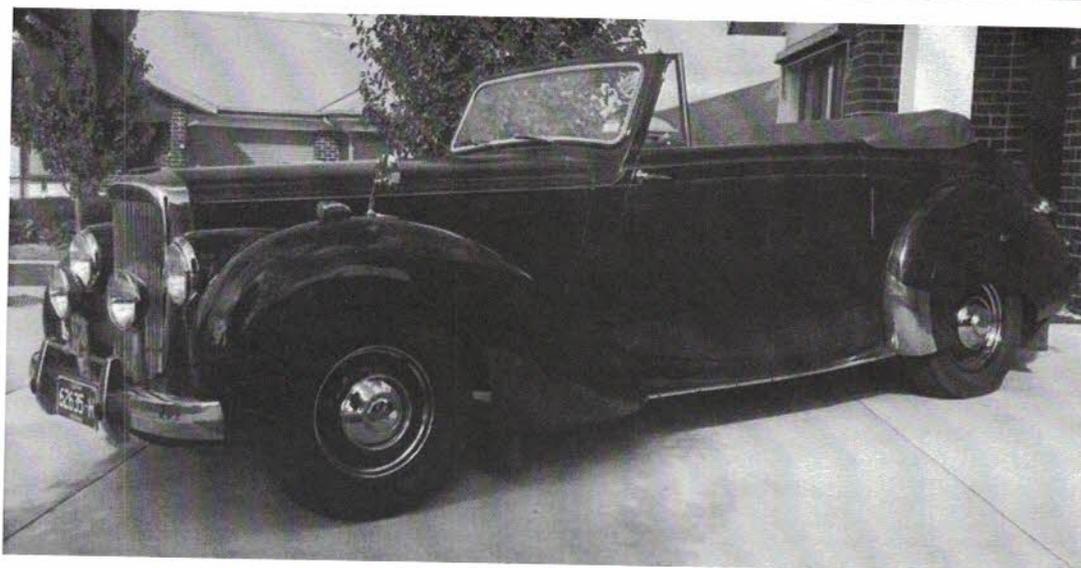
I have recently acquired a 1929 16/95 Silver Eagle and require a 6 cylinder engine, remote gearbox and all ancillaries. If you have any of these items for sale please contact me via email: [rob@carclubb.co.uk](mailto:rob@carclubb.co.uk)

Kind regards  
Robert Clubb

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ALVIS 3 litre DHC  
Chassis 24639  
Engine 24639  
Body: Tickford of London & Newport Pagnell – body # 20144 (144 of a total of 301 DHC bodies by Tickford on Alvis 3 litre chassis)  
Colour: maroon (Glasco # 227226)  
Trim: brown leather  
Hood: black duck  
Date completed: 12 May 1952  
Date delivered: 16 May 1952  
Delivered to Reg Brown, Hereford (presumably an Agent)  
Original registration: JUJ 200 (GB)  
The owners handbook carries an undated entry stating “JUJ 200” has been modified at the Alvis Works by the installation of twin carburettors and a 3.7 / 1 rear axle and is now a TC21. The TC21 superseded the TA21 in the mid 1950s.

Noted on [carsales.com.au](http://carsales.com.au) \$85,000

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1 x 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.

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# FOR SALE

## 1953 Graber bodied TA21G Fixed Head Coupe

Shown on Herman Graber's stand at the 1953 and 1954 Geneva Motor Shows, the car was discovered by Alvis expert Nick Simpson in Madame Graber's garage in Berne, Switzerland, in 1975. Simpson restored the car in the 1990s, installing a twin SU TC21/100 engine.

Owned by me for the past 12 years, the car participated in the JNBC Rally in 2008 and the Nick Walker Tour of Britain in 2011. She was accepted for display at MotorClassica in Melbourne in 2016 and for their concours in 2017.

This car was the basis for all future Graber-designed Alvises, including the TD, TE and TF21. She features in most of the Alvis books.

Recently refreshed by The Healey Factory in Melbourne, the Graber is in excellent condition and drives beautifully. She comes with a large history file.

\$134,500.

Richard Tonkin

0407 944 987

[rtonkin@tonkinlaw.com](mailto:rtonkin@tonkinlaw.com)

