



**A
BRIEF
HISTORY
OF
ALVIS**



1930 Straight eight FWD cars were entered for the Tourist Trophy race and took first three places in their class, at nearly 70 mph. 'The Slump' meant that sales fell and Alvis announced their withdrawal from racing, being again in financial difficulties. John met Charles Follett, a West End car salesman, who saw a market for an Alvis with traditional qualities — good handling and excellent performance — with a low slung chassis to



which he could fit coachwork with long sweeping lines to give an impression of speed. This philosophy was to lead to the Speed Twenty models and the involvement of Alvis with coachbuilders such as Van den Plas and Charlesworth. It guaranteed the continuing survival of Alvis.

1931 A sports version of the 12/50 was produced known as the 12/60 (4 Cylinder, 1645cc, £500).



The Speed Twenty SA (6 Cylinder, 2511cc, £700) was introduced at the London Motor Show.

1932 The Speed Twenty SA was in production, the standard tourer being capable of nearly 90 mph.

It was followed shortly afterwards by the Firefly (4 Cylinder 1496cc,

£495), which shared many features of the Speed Twenty.

C.G.H.Dunham lapped Brooklands in a Speed Twenty at 103 mph.



1932 SA Speed 20 Chassis # 10019



1933 Firefly Chassis # 10456

1933 The Crested Eagle, designed to compete in the luxury market, was introduced with 6 Cylinder 2148cc or 2511cc engines (£780), pre-selector gear box and independent front suspension, believed to be the first British car to adopt independent front suspension.



1933 Crested Eagle Chassis # 10735

The Speed Twenty SB was announced, fitted with a four speed synchro-mesh gearbox, believed to be the first synchro box in the world to go into production. Both these innovations would be fitted to all the larger cars produced until the war. The Crested Eagle would remain in production in small numbers until the war (6 Cylinder, 2762cc or 3571cc, £850).



1934 SB Speed 20 Chassis # 11326

1934 The Speed Twenty SB (6 Cylinder, 2511cc, £825) was in production.

The Firefly was superseded by the Firebird (4 Cylinder, 1842cc, £510).

1936 Firebird Tourer Chassis # 13630



1935 Alvis were now producing about 1,000 cars per year, the Speed 20 SC (6 Cylinder, 2762cc, £850) being the latest Speed Twenty model. C.G. H.Dunham's single seater Speed Twenty lapped Brooklands at 118 mph.



SC Speed 20 chassis # 17297

The 3½ Litre (6 Cylinder 3571cce, £850) was announced, based on Speed 20 design but with a 7 bearing crankshaft.



A new factory for the production of aero engines was planned, and Alvis entered into an agreement with Gnome-Rhone for an exclusive licence to manufacture and sell their aero engines.

1936 The 1924/25 debt schedule having been paid off, the Company name was changed to Alvis Ltd. and the new factory was built and equipped.

The last version of the Speed Twenty was being produced, the SD (6 Cylinder, 2762cc, £850).

The Speed 25 SA (6 Cylinder, 3571cc, £850) was announced as a replacement to the Speed Twenty.



Later in the year the Silver Crest (6 Cylinder, 2362cc or 2762cc, £580) was announced, together with the 4.3 Litre (6 Cylinder, 4387cc, £1,095), the latter being an enlarged version of the 3½ Litre. The 4.3 litre was one of the world's few genuine standard 100 mph saloon cars.



1937 4.3 litre Chassis 14329



1939 Silver Crest Chassis # 14196

A new company was formed, called Alvis-Straussler Ltd., to produce a variety of experimental armoured cross-country vehicles based on N. Straussler's designs.



1937 The new 12/70 (4 Cylinder, 1842cc, £440) was announced. All larger cars were now fitted with Servo assisted brakes as standard.
A 1930 Silver Eagle lapped Brooklands at nearly 100 mph.

1938 Minor detail changes were made to the range of cars, including the production of the Speed 25 SC (6 Cylinder, 3571cc, £850).
The 4.3 Litre engine was modified to dry sump lubrication for use in tanks. The Company's main efforts were now being devoted to the aero engine and mechanisation departments. The Leonides, a nine-cylinder radial aero engine, was tested. The Company was in financial difficulties again, due to lack of Government orders for aero engines but John's foresight paid off in the long run. Straussler left and Alvis-Straussler became Alvis Mechanisation Ltd. Some Straussler Type A.C.3.D armoured cars were exported to the Dutch East Indies. A small number of prototype 12/30 ton tanks were produced.

1939 Prototype of the 1940 Silver Crest was built with razor-edge coachwork and Lockheed airdraulic struts fitted experimentally in place of front springs and shock absorbers.
A modified 4.3 litre lapped Brooklands at 115.29 mph and C.G.H. Dunham's 12/70 Special made the fastest lap (109.94 mph) in the last race ever run at Brooklands.

The Air Ministry ordered a dozen Straussler Type A.C.3.D armoured cars which saw action in Palestine. Production of Gnome-Rhone radial engines ceased.