



Great Ocean Road – Run to the 2015 National Alvis Rally 29th April to 3rd May

There had already been much Alvis activity. The tour of Tasmania, the 60th Anniversary celebratory dinner and the run to Cranbourne to visit the Botanical gardens; all before those, who were able to make the time to join the McKinnons on the run to the National Alvis Rally, on a trip via the Great Ocean Road.

Again the McKinnons excelled in their preparations, route notes and organisation of the weather, which was superb. The participating Alvis were: 4 x 12/50s, 2 x Silver Eagle, 1 x Speed 20, 1 x Speed 25, 1 x TA 21 Graber, 1 x TC21 Saloon and 1 x TE 21 Saloon. The remainder were in modern vehicles.

The lucky ones who could spare the time and make the trip totalled 25 with 13 cars. We very much enjoyed having our UK friends along: Claire and Norman Blundell, Ian and Jo Todd, Mike and Jan Baker, Mike and Ruth Hirst, Tudor Francis and Malcolm and Jennie Kindell.

For the first day's run, we met at 9.30am at a park in Ivanhoe, near the McKinnon's place. Even though the written instructions were spot on, due to traffic conditions, some of us got a little lost.

The first involuntary stop was a hot Speed 20, being driven by the Todds, when it was held up by road works. I had neglected to tell Ian that there was a master switch for the electric fan which is always on, except when Ian knocked it off with his knee. Soon remedied and we were on our way. Eventually we all successfully cleared Melbourne and onto the road towards Geelong.

Bypassing Geelong we stopped at Winchelsea for lunch at a great little eatery which is currently being bypassed by road works – tenacity and good directions found it.

From Winchelsea we headed down to the coast road and at the archway which signifies the start of the Great Ocean Road we paused for a photo and for Chester McKaige and Alan McKinnon, the memory of changing a head gasket on a 12/50 on the JNBC Rally in the car park. Being mid week the traffic was fairly light and with the great weather, the scenery was spectacular. It provided great driving conditions for Alvises.

The first night was spent at Apollo Bay and next morning it was off to Portland, but not before visiting the Cape Otway Lighthouse and the many other spectacular sites along the way. Most stopped at Port Campbell for lunch before continuing on via Warrnambool and Port Fairy.



Some got into Portland a bit late, which we found out was due the Todd (McDougall) Speed 20 having got a hot, binding, front right brake. This was backed off to allow the car to continue onto Portland. After dinner that evening an inspection revealed that the bonded lining on the bottom shoe was no longer bonded and was in chewed up pieces. Adjustment of the brakes allowed the car to continue for the entire rally on 3 effectively braked wheels without much detriment.

Next day we headed for Robe, stopping at Cape Bridgewater mid morning where some of us had a fantastic experience riding in a zodiac to see the spectacular sea caves, folded land formations and the New Zealand and the Australian fur seals which were frolicking in the water right up to the side of the boat and also sun baking on the rock shelves. It was truly a memorable experience with many megapixels consumed through lenses.



Again there were some stragglers getting into Robe. This time it was due to problems with Simon Ramsay's Speed 25 when it was approaching Mount Gambier. It gave the appearance of being SU fuel pump related, however that old misleading symptom turned out to be a faulty condenser in the distributor. Simon eventually made it safely through to Robe later in the evening. I believe he had no more problems after this.

Next morning turned out to be a rally organiser's nightmare, when the participants left before time with Alan and Noeline wondering where they had all gone. Fortunately there were no dramas and we all arrived at Meningie for lunch. Here we were met by Don Bosanquet who had organised the run into Adelaide via the Wellington ferry and Strathalbyn, where we stopped for afternoon tea and a browse of the antique shops. Getting into the accommodation in Adelaide was a breeze as it wasn't too far from the base of the descent into the city.

On Sunday morning, Don had arranged for us to visit the Historic Steam Railway Centre in Port Adelaide. It was easy to spend hours there looking at the collection and walking around the streets past the many historic warehouse buildings. It was here by phone we learned of John and Margaret Hetherington's accident near Tailm



Obviously both Ruth Hirst & Tudor Francis share the same hair dresser



Bend. Fortunately John and Margaret came out of the incident relatively well, which is a testament to the strength of the TE21. Don left us to render much appreciated assistance, leaving us all to continue to the National Rally venue at Tanunda, where we caught up with many more Alvisti.

Many thanks go to the untiring McKinnons for having organised a wonderful run to the National Rally.

Andrew McDougall

