

Monthly Newsletter July 2020

So here we go again, another month on and little to report on any activities of the wheeled kind. In an endeavour to see what is possible Mike Wevill and myself have been looking into what if any events could be run, at the time of writing the AMCA are only issuing event practice permits, but not for an actual competitive event, MSUK as far as we can see have not made any significant changes to their previous bulletin in that permits are only being issued for events where there is no passenger in a vehicle. As we all know our club is very much a trials based club and that we always require a passenger to be with the driver be it in sporting or classic trials, so until there is a change in the ruling by MSUK or the social distancing rules are completely changed we are somewhat snookered, oops, snooker is allowed, but I'm rubbish at that anyway.

The Dellow register have been seeking to have the classification of Dellows changed to allow them to be moved into class 2 for "standard" cars and class 5 for mildly changed cars, those cars running much more modern engines etc would go into class 7 . I know I'm biased but to me this is a sensible move, the youngest of these cars are over 65 years old and in some cases running with 80 year old mechanicals , the basic engine, gearbox and axle derive from cars built in the 1930's. At present if I run my car in the main class of a trial I would be in class 7 up against Marlins, Duttons and Liege's to name but a few , all with much more modern running gear. Thirty years ago class 2 was a very vibrant class with loads of MG's, Austin 7's, Wolseleys etc, very few of these now run in either MCC and ACTC events so the move to put Dellows in class 2 may actually give it the boost it needs. (That wasn't too biased was it ?) The full guide lines can be found on the ACTC website.

So now it's over to our Club President Robin Moore:-

Alvis and the other lady in my life, part 2.

KDL 892 was in fact a TC 21/100 model that Alvis named, The Grey Lady, and that is how I became to be responsible for another lady in my life, albeit a graceful and totally rewarding motor car. "Grace, Space and Pace" the slogan

used by Jaguar to promote their offerings at this time, would aptly apply to this Alvis.

The 3 litre Alvis had the longest production run of the marque and gradually improved and updated during its production run, 1950 -67 , the b h p increasing from 90 to 150 over the period. The last of the line, the TF21 with its 150 brake horse was capable of a genuine 120 mph and the standing start ¼ mile in 17.8 seconds, not bad for a car of its type, a full 4 seater saloon of 55 years ago. The Grey Lady model was also capable of showing a clean pair of heels to others with its superb 3rd gear that gave wonderful acceleration from 30. Pulling strongly all the way up to 85 mph and would cruise quite happily at the 85 -90 miles per hour mark. There are many journeys that I made that I have never bettered since, yes there was much less traffic then, but neither had the road network been much improved from that of the pre-war period.

However, this story is more about my life and times during the period of my ownership and my involvement with the A. O. C. I very soon joined The Alvis Owner Club and became a member of the South West area, which basically covered all western counties including Hants and Wilts and South Wales, other areas being, South East, Midland and Scottish, who all operated independently of the overall national body, monthly noggins and natters were usually well supported, with many members often travelling some distance to attend, mostly with their Alvis, which in many cases was their everyday transport at the time.

In earlier days the monthly meets were held in mid Devon, but as the majority of regulars attending were predominately from Exeter, Plymouth and southwest Cornwall, by the time I joined in 1966 the venue was well established at the Edgcumbe Arms, Milton Abbot where a lovely couple Bill & Mary were mine hosts for a number of years. Our Annual meeting was held at a different venue each year in fairness to the widespread membership, The White Hart in Exeter for example , whereas the dinner held in November was quite an occasion with many staying overnight. Lewtrenchard was popular, whilst the George at Hatherleigh was another favourite. Area committee meetings were only held when the occasion demanded, as and when necessary and I remember these being held in Taunton at one time, a 180 mile round trip of an evening for me, although sometimes I would go as far as Exeter to meet up

with a couple who became good friends of ours, and from Exeter to Taunton, we would travel there and back in Alan's Bristol 405, having a good blast up the M5. Our wives, Marjorie and Jayne, would accompany us men on those trips as they kept us supplied with alcohol during the business of the meetings which were held in a room on the 1st floor of the hotel,- the bar being on the ground floor of course. It was good to have a couple of young lady runners,- we were all young back then,- to keep our thirst quenched during the debate- that was our excuse, but I remember those meetings always being very convivial affairs.

By this time I had become Chairman of the southwest area, in which position I was privileged to serve for three years. I was extremely pleased that we managed to secure the long term care of the Alvis Leonides 9 cylinder radial aero engine that Westlands of Yeovil had bequeathed to us, including raising the necessary funds and having it mounted on a purpose built trailer in order that it could be taken to different events in the south west for display.

Secondly, whilst other areas were ahead of us in having an annual Alvis day, we in the south west had not yet established our own event. It came about by chance. There was a time when we found we were without a secretary, and "feelers" were put out, A G.P. whose practice was in Black Torrington at the time owned a very nice TD21 Grabier Alvis convertible which he had lavished much care and attention, not to mention a lot of money, and he told us he might consider taking on the position of secretary, but he would like to meet us and discuss what might be involved. Now it just happened to be, that Dr Roger Filer-Cooper hailed originally from Surrey, as I am myself, and was well known to my life long friend Brian Floyd-Jacob of Riley fame, and he knew Roger well, through him owning a pre-war Riley,- the Alvis being purchased in a whim,- a flight of fancy. So I spoke to my friend Brian and asked him what he thought about Doc Filer-Cooper being the right man for the job. Brian's reply was, - anything that Roger took on he gave 100% commitment to whilst in the job, but when he had made his mark, would move on to another challenge.

Wonderful, we had a volunteer who fitted the bill, so it was decided to extend an invitation to Roger and his wife Anita to a dinner party at our expense and that was duly arranged at the Lord Eliot, Liskeard. It was quite an evening and we made sure the Doc was well lubricated, by the end of the evening there was no way he could possibly refuse, and so it was that Roger Filer-Cooper became

our secretary. He certainly fulfilled our expectations and left his mark on the south west area of the A.O.C., as will be recalled next time.

(to be continued) RHTM

HSTA Sporting Trial. Martin Halliday has this week had to put out the disappointing news of the Historic Sporting Trial scheduled for the 15th of August 2020 has been cancelled for this year. This was an event I was hoping to attend, it had a very good entry of 42 with some really interesting classic vehicles including Allard, Canon, Buckler, Dellows etc. The cancellation wasn't really a surprise but it does highlight just how widespread the effects of COVID 19 are. As Martin says some events are beginning to restart but these are for those who don't require a passenger, the good news is that he is planning to run the event next year, something to look forward to.

Whilst on the subject of trying to run events I've just received the news of the week from the **MCC** with an update on Mark Gregg's attempts to run the **Edinburgh Trial**. I really do feel for the guy, he and his team have put in a massive amount of work to try and make sure the event runs. At the moment they are asking for an expression of interest from competitors and marshals so that it can be established if the event is feasible to run, anyone wishing to do so have until the end of this month to respond. Check out the MCC website.



Thanks to Richard Bevan for sending this photo taken at one of our club dinners at the Eagle House Hotel – anyone any ideas what year? We're all looking a lot younger!

Andy Prosser sent me this picture from one of his visits to Zimbabwe, he said it was a drag race between their pickup and the Donkey cart, it must have been a handicap as the donkeys didn't have any carrots.



It's not been the most uplifting of newsletters this month but I'm sure there is light at the end of the tunnel, as long as the batteries don't go flat. I think it must now be time for me to hide in the garage and immerse myself into all things mechanical, I did have thoughts on joining the Alvis owners club, but my other half is not sure if my liver is up to it.

All for this month. J.T.

Please send contributions to billjan299@gmail.com