



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ALVIS OWNER CLUB

David Salter

Whilst 2020 marks the Centenary of the production of the first Alvis cars, it also marks the 70th anniversary of the decision to form the Alvis Owner Club. It was only when I started investigating the history of the Club for the Centenary Yearbook that I realised that our Club was yet another example of the old saying that all good things come out of Yorkshire. For, in September 1950, Mr R P Birks of Sheffield and two other local owners decided to form the Club. An inaugural meeting was held on 14 January 1951 with 26 owners in attendance.

Things moved on apace and, by February 1951, the first issue of the Club magazine *Alvistas* was issued. Six area sections were set up at this early stage, which remain unchanged to this day save for the later addition of a separate Welsh Section (previously part of the South West Section) and an International Section, which encompasses members in countries such as Australia, North America, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany and New Zealand. There had previously been an Alvis Car Club founded in August 1934, whose badge has been adopted as the badge of the 2020 Centenary.

By April 1952, membership had reached 181 and, by Club year 1959/60, the membership had risen to 1000 for the first time, making the Club the largest one marque organisation at the time.

As well as Section Days, the principal focus of Club activity has been the Alvis International Weekend organised latterly by the Sections in rotation with a connection with Crystal Palace during the late 1950s and 1960s. An additional highlight of the Club's calendar has been the Club stand at the NEC Classic Car Show in Birmingham in November of each year.

Over the years, a number of tours of Britain have been held in 1970, 1976, 1991 and 2011 (marking the 60th anniversary of the Club's inaugural meeting).

A number of successful international tours have also been held including those of Switzerland (September 1985 and September 1995), USA (2000) and New Zealand (2003).

In 1994, the Club celebrated the 75th anniversary of the foundation of TG John Limited in 1919 with a parade of 250 cars through Coventry.

Until 2000, the Club was constituted as a members' club. At that time, this decision was taken to incorporate the Club as a company limited by guarantee, as with many other similar car clubs.

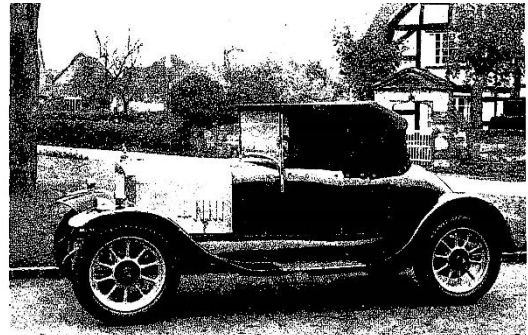


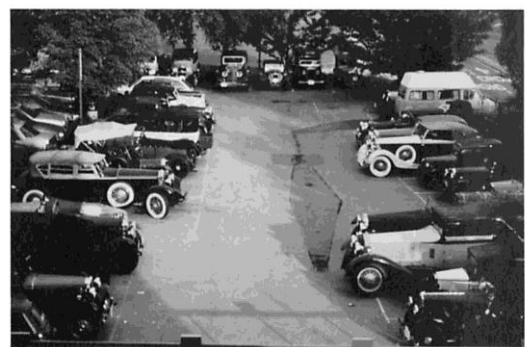
Photo: by courtesy Alvis Ltd Holyhead Road, Coventry.

Bulletin 053 December 1957



Our President presenting the Club Trophy to Alvis Apprentice, S. Pratt, with the Chairman of the Company, J. J. Parkes, Esq., on the right of the picture.

Bulletin 104 March 1962



Above: The car park of the Bristol Hilton before the start of the Esso Bristol to Bournemouth.

Bulletin 386 August/September 1990



In July 2001, the Club celebrated the Jubilee of the inaugural meeting with a celebration at Blenheim Palace attended by owners from all over the world.

2020 saw the Centenary of the production of the first Alvis cars. The Club's intention had been to celebrate this significant milestone at a long weekend of events at the Coombe Abbey Hotel, Coventry, the scene of publicity shots during the 1960s. Sadly, as a result of the lockdown following upon the coronavirus pandemic, events had to be cancelled. Nonetheless, the Centenary was celebrated in 21st century style with a Virtual Alvis Party and a "pop-up" event arranged at short notice at the Bicester Heritage Centre.

Despite these setbacks in the Centenary year, the resourcefulness and imagination of the Club continues to bounce back even after 70 years. The Club caters for all Alvis models, including military vehicles, produced by Alvis from 1920 to 1967, when the car division was acquired by the Rover Group and production ceased. It now boasts a total membership of 1309 (of which 15 are young members), including 972 UK members, 141 European members, 86 Rest of the World members and 110 Family members.



The man most associated with Alvis and competition, Major C. M. Harvey, takes the first of the two team cars around Pontleaze.

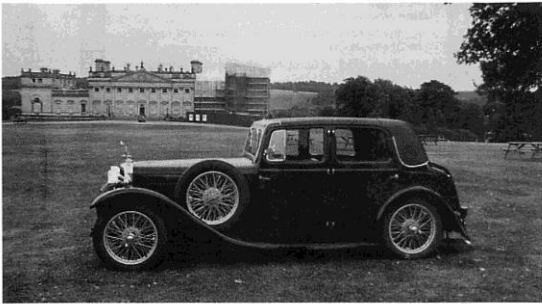
Bulletin 136 December 1964

Pre-1930 models are also catered for by the Alvis Register, with which the Club has close links. In 2011, the Alvis Archive Trust was formed to protect the Club's heritage documents and assets. The Trust became a charitable incorporated organisation in 2018.

The Club produces two regular publications, the Calendar, known amongst members as the Pink Un, and the Bulletin. The Calendar is a monthly e-newsletter of events, cars and spares for sale and hot news topics. It is also sent out on a bi-monthly basis in hard copy format. The Bulletin is a full-colour bi-monthly magazine with articles of various types, technical tips and reports of Club activities. In addition, there is a club website (www.alvisoc.org), where news can be found as well as car registers, the club shop, cars and parts for sale and the Bulletin Board. The Club has a presence on YouTube (AlvFlix) which contains many interesting video clips of a wide-ranging nature. The Club can also be found on Facebook and other social media sites.

For further information about the Club and details of membership, visit www.alvisoc.org or contact membership@alvisoc.org.

NORTHERN ALVIS WEEKEND
10th - 12th September



Mick Fletcher's Firebird in front of Harewood.

Photo: Mick Fletcher



Chris Taylor showing off the new paint job on his Firebird.

Photo: Mick Fletcher



Ron Buck's well-known Speed 25.

Photo: Mick Fletcher

Bulletin 460 November/December 1999



Above: Leslie Silver's SB Speed 20 tourer taking pride of place with the Talbot mob.

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*Concours area at Knebworth House
(picture by A. F. Flack)*

Bulletin 262 November 1975