



Monkey Business

No 136 - December 2022



Written By Chris Taylor

Bunged Together By Simon Griffiths

What a busy time it's been since we last spoke with four Alvis related Christmas gatherings attended by yours truly. Firstly of course on our usual 1st Tuesday of the month at the Deanwater hotel in Woodford where, as usual, we were looked after by Barry and his dedicated team. No fewer than 27 enthusiasts gathered this year in our usual room up the stairs; although if this trend continues we will have to move to one of the larger function rooms the hotel has scattered about.



Sadly, Richard Plant-Locke was our only no-show on the night as he had suffered a breakdown somewhere, in something, and his attention was completely drawn away from the fact it was Tuesday! On the other hand the rest of us had a grand meal - although the lack of pigs in blankets was mentioned to me more than once, I really had no idea they were so popular but you will read two more references to them later on in this report. I know we all had a right good time as the signing in page was just a pile of scrawl; largely illegible and very untidily tabulated.

Some good things to note were that Tim and Jayne were with us, which pleased me no end, Karen and Peter Lakin had not achieved their dream holiday so were late runners, but made it to the Deanwater as compensation, so that was good too. Mick Fletcher from Blackburn came across and Gez Holt from Stockport and, not by any arrangement, but just as it happened we shared the same table along with Chris Bluer which had not happened for a long time. Gez and, soon after, Mick are my oldest Alvis friends stretching back to the early seventies. From Wigan we saw Dave Culshaw and his companion Carol Munro, along with a long-time friend and previous TA 21 owner Graham Preston. The area we draw from is quite expansive as Stephen Walley, with Enid Saunders, joined us from the top of them there 'ills, and, from

the other side of the same hills, came Eric and Denise Ody from Uttoxeter. We really are in a great geographical position where it is close enough for all these people to join us, not to mention Richard from Wales (if he had made it) and Elizabeth Bennett from Chester and Charles and Judith Van-Ingén from the Wirral. Simon and Melissa must also take a bow on this one as Nantwich is not exactly close.

Whilst we are talking of taking a bow I am sure you will all join me in offering our collective congratulations to Simon and Melissa as they have recently become engaged as the signing in book bears testament. Michelle and Tari Mirza were having a great time, so much so that Michelle forgot they had got married in 2022 and used her maiden name to much merriment when the error was mentioned. I must now mention Mike and Maggie Robinson - which I had failed to do in a previous report but my excuse was that Mike didn't sign the book! - although I do admit it's a feeble excuse.

So who is next? well you don't need to ask its our meeting mascot of course our Norman, who immediately upon arrival, was becoming familiar with the ladies; so much so that I asked for some decorum but was rebuked by Elizabeth declaring his cold hands were very comforting, so, knowing I was beaten, I shut up and shared bottle of a good white with Chris Bluer and Claire wistfully looked on

So on to the excitement of the night, the annual prize giving which came upon us very quickly; this year to break the monotony of Charles and Judith running away with the coveted Bent Valve trophy every year for the highest mileage covered in an Alvis - where only a bus driver of a Routemaster in London (Alvis gearbox) could beat him - something they undoubtedly did this year as well, but, being a cunning sort, I devised a plan. This was to change the rules and give it to the person or couple who attended most meetings throughout the year; however I only thought of this



a bit too late and had to consult the signing in book at the do itself! Only to discover that Charles and Norman jointly had not missed a single meeting so, even with all my scheming, Charles still ran off with the Bent Valve, if only for the first 6 months! Well done to both of you and very well deserved too.

Next up was the Robin Bendall Memorial trophy, awarded for the furthest distance travelled to the meeting, which had a clear husband and wife team as winners in Andrew and Francis McDougall. They, if you remember, came all the way



from the Antipodes and in particular, Melbourne, Australia; so, short of an interplanetary visitor, that won't be beaten anytime soon. Norman was pressed into action to receive the award on their behalf – not sure if he's planning to pop over with it but if he does I hope they bring it back!

Last, but not least, it fell to Peter Lakin who as current holder of the Straight Valve Trophy, awarded it to Simon for his unstinting and dedicated service to the meeting as B'er T'er of Monkey Business which I whole heartedly endorse. It's not even just the bunging together that Simon does but he also prompts me to write the drivvel and sends it out to you all, so well done and many thanks Simon. *Stop it, you'll make me blush! B'er T'er*



And finally a special award was presented to Denise Ody,



this came in the form of an illuminated table decoration for use at hers and Eric's lunchtime meeting. The ladies can now, without embarrassment, pre-warn the quiet gentlemen of the excessive volume likely to emanate from the ladies' end of the table, the main function of this being to avoid industrial injury.



Tim Brown, as Section Chairman, gave a quick overview of the year's events and a sneak preview of some of next year's calendar

At the start of this Monkey Business I did mention that I had attended 4 dos and the previous ramblings covered one of them so on to the next three, The following week saw Simon and myself teaching in Rugby and, by sheer coincidence, it was Eric Ody's meeting at the Coach and Horses in Fenny Bentley, where a lovely quiet Christmas meal was partaken by the gentlemen present. Later Giles (having finished bell practice), and Richard, brought a boxful of wonderful local Derbyshire' cheeses from the Hartington Creamery, so that brought my Christmas stock up to par. Later that week I collected Gez and off we went to Mick's meeting's Christmas Lunchtime meal and another reet good do' where it was great to meet such people as the Wisdoms, John and Pauline Foster and Stephen Whittaker whom I hadn't seen since pre-

Covid. This was the second occasion missing pigs in blankets, however the Britannia Arms redeemed itself by bringing out a plateful for us all to enjoy and very good they were too.

So on to my final Christmas do which was the Alvis Archive Trust's, 3rd Wednesday, Lunch in the Drivers Club at Bowcliffe Hall, I had collected Gez who accompanied me to the meal where 8 friends and Alvis enthusiasts from Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Humberside namely Huw and Alison Morris-Jones, Paul Chasney, Richard and Judy Wilmott and John and Nadine Fox again enjoyed a superb meal and each other's company. On a personal note I would like to offer my thanks to Eric, Mick and John for organising these three events as they don't just happen by themselves.

Finally on a sad note I must report that to those who can remember far enough back that Eric Ody is now the fourth host of his meeting as it was actually started by Ernest 'Mr Alvis' Shenton at the Red House in Caverswall Village and it is with great sadness that his daughter Nina informed me her mother Marjorie had finally and peacefully succumbed to dementia on Christmas Eve. I am sure even those of you who didn't know Marjorie will join with me in passing on our sincere condolences to Nina for her sad loss. Marjorie supported not just Ernest but all the Alvis owners who they came across with parties at Gandria, technical advice and most of all friendship.

So finally, and now looking forward, may I now wish you a wonderful New Year celebration, whatever you are doing, and I hope you will have left just enough steam in the boiler to join in the next Deanwater meeting which is as usual on the 1st Tuesday of January which next year falls on Tuesday the 3rd 2023 at 7.30 at the Deanwater Hotel SK7 1RJ