



Monkey Business

No 175 May 2026



Written By Chris Taylor & Duncan Mather

Bunged Together By Simon Griffiths

Bing Bong, my 'phone goes with a message from Simon "It's THAT Tuesday again"; the monthly message that Simon sends weekly (it seems) to remind me MB is due.

On settling down to write a report on proceedings I suddenly remembered I wasn't there, and neither was Simon so I couldn't volunteer him this time, which meant a bit of quick thinking was needed. Since Duncan has proved himself most eloquent in the AOC bulletin, coupled with my knowing he was there as he kindly booked the garden room for June, I could not think of a more appropriate victim - oo-er sorry volunteer - to jot down the proceedings. I am pleased to report Duncan stepped up to the plate admirably and he writes as follows:-

The week before this month's gathering I had a very indulgent day out to the H&H auction viewing day in Buxton where there had been three Alvis's available following the sad passing of Richard Buckley. These were a TA14 Shooting Brake, a TD21 series 2 (same as mine, hence my particular interest), and a Speed 20 SB (APK 354) which Chris admits to admiring and having crossed its path in years past. I watched the auction online, hands firmly in pockets, and thought the SB in particular must have been a bargain to its eventual purchaser. I was hoping to find out a little more about the sale at our usual gathering, because I know for a fact that at least two of our usual number attended the auction itself. What is more the SB was sold to someone "in the room". Suspicion and intrigue festered in my convoluted mind. Could it be one of "us" who bought it? Surely, I would discover the truth when we gathered. I still don't know.

There was to be an almost perfect storm of other commitments on the date when May's usual gathering came around. Even the host himself couldn't make it. But this is not something to be downcast about as we all have lives to lead that do not fully revolve around the Alvis marque. As a result, this month's gathering at the new venue and a more spacious Garden Room drew a reduced attendance. For all that it was much easier to hear and be heard, a valuable aspect of the evening. There was also some fun to be had in seeing some of the modern machinery that other customers, those with a penchant for displaying their wealth, turned up in. The fancy Aston Martin looked nice for example but wouldn't have stood a chance in the desirable cache stakes if he'd been there the month before with the Alvis's who were there that night.

My own TD21 still hasn't made the journey, partly due to

concerns about being able to see in the darkness with a dodgy column-mounted high beam switch and modern LED bulbs of uncertain effectiveness. Its day out to Heage Mill that Chris referred to last month uncovered a related (electrical) concern about its quite newly fitted voltage regulator, one that is manufactured on a distant subcontinent. Coming back from Belper the ammeter showed that the regulator wasn't doing its job correctly and as a result the battery became drained to extinction. Happily, it was revived by the car equivalent of a defibrillator, making it well enough to get home, and the next day a more robust, solid-state version was purchased (and now fitted). It looks like a standard Lucas unit, but it isn't. I think the innards are of an American design, but I don't hold that against it. Hopefully one less niggle to deal with (there are others, but I'll shut up about those for now). As I write this the car is having a final bodywork wax & polish to give it a bit of sparkle after all the work done to it. Hopefully I'll find the courage, faith and belief to bring it to Cheshire someday (and evening) soon so it can meet others in our other flock, and have the other Bulls Head customers crave the distinctive elegance of our lovely machinery.

So, as a follow-on I can report on my month which, motoring wise, started at the H&H auction in Buxton, mainly to see APK (Sp20 SB DHC by VDP) again. This was Richard Buckley's pride and joy, and nearly was mine in the seventies but it was not to be and that's another story for another time. However at Buxton there was a get-together of Alvis friends so numerous it was a meeting in its own right. I will list the participants, starting with my original arrangement to meet Ian Francis (SA 20 C&E tourer), as we are locals to Buxton. On meeting with Ian and his wife Laura we mused at the Alvises on offer and I then met with John Fletcher who is a pal of John Fox of Archive Trust fame; John had asked me to meet John as he was interested in the Buckley TD in the sale. However by the time we met up he had already seen the car and decided it wasn't for him so it was back to his first love of Rileys.

My next encounter was Roland Rogerson, who I have not seen since his sad loss of Trish but he is bearing up well. He was concerned that he had lost contact with Stephen Whitaker who had been busy parking the car; however a 'phone call from Steven and all was set to rights. I was in the hall with Stephen and Roland when my phone binged again with a message from across the room, this time from Paul Chasney! He apologised for his wordy description about his

location across the, by then, active sales hall as he didn't dare risk having to explain to Lisa about an unwanted car he had just bought because he was waving at yours truly! So, after a short time, I made my excuses to Roland and Stephen and crossed the floor circuitously in the Octagon only to find Mick Fletcher was also with Paul. What a gathering of very dear friends, all brought together unknowingly by our love of Alvis cars.

On my personal Alvis journey this month I've said farewell, but not goodbye, after 39 years to GS 6656 which now resides near Preston next to OPU which is Chris Hewitt's TF21. Which means Chris now owns two final chapters in Alvis car history as GS is; the last Firebird built, and I've seen it written as such, the last definitive 4 cylinder Alvis, and of course his TF 21 is one of the last Alvis models from the original company.



The Firebird had to leave me rather ignominiously via a suspended tow as I simply haven't had the willpower to remove yet another engine to reveal the clutch problem. But there is good to come out of all situations in that, during the

tow, the problem that had eluded me with GS wanting to go where it pleased instead of where I wanted it to go was found to be a loose front axle! To my utter shame I had looked everywhere else to find the problem including; steering box, lignum ball joints, spring shackles all to no avail only for Chris to discover within a hour or two of ownership that half an hours, work with a 3/8ths inch BSF spanner and the steering will be restored to its pinpoint accuracy I've known over 100,000 miles with me.

This has assured me I have made the right decision as clearly my Alvis attention lies elsewhere now; talking of which as you will remember AYF took me to our first meeting at Mottram St Andrew but I was not at all happy with the indicated loss of oil pressure, traced later to a faulty instrument. But lots of misfiring, oiled up plugs and blue smoke led me to remove the cylinder head to see what was going on, which proved to be nothing more than valve guide suction; all went back together with valve stem seals recommended by Stephen Wallbank at Eric Ody's Coach and Horses meeting the following week. As a result, I immediately recognised a great change had happened as AYF came alive, so much so I drove the car to Mick Fletcher's second '3rd Sunday' breakfast meeting at Blacko where the car performed impeccably and back to Gez Holts for tea and biccies! Accompanied by constant little fine adjustments to the carburettors, charging rate, brakes and steering tracking my confidence in the car is growing.

As a speed model with the carburettors and the later auxiliary starting carburettor (not fitted by me therefore it was substituted for the disastrous original arrangement sometime in or before the 1960's when AYF was last used) the engine starts hot or cold 'first one up' so I am pleased with that side of things. However the clutch is simply awful, when starting from rest it is juddering in a most alarming and violent manner so much so that it will, after a season's good work, certainly have to come out AGAIN. Hopefully, by then, it will have completed enough miles (including a trip to Holland in



Mick's 3rd Sunday meeting at Blacko with AYF nearly parked in a space!

September) that I will know by experience what is wrong with the clutch and form a plan for correction; so it can be the winter project for 2026/7 providing the horrible juddering doesn't break something! Setting the clutch issues aside, as I say, I am now gaining confidence in the car and this led me to drive it to the Alvis Archive Trust's 3rd Wednesday lunch meeting at Bowcliffe Hall and, upon returning home, a respectable trouble free 140 mile run was concluded.



On to the future, the AOC is not taking a stand at Tatton Park on the 15th and 16th of August but there are a few of us that have been attending this meeting (in fact, the AOC international gathering was once held within this gala) and some of us in excess of 40 years. Therefore I have approached the organisers who are happy for us to take a stand but they need us to have a name to book under, so I approached the Archive Trust who are happy for us to have a charity stand at the show. To date I have filled in and sent the application forms so if any of you want to join us on either or both of the days please drop me an email to chrisalvis20@gmail.com and when I get the entry forms I will contact you for vehicle details.

This now leads me to invite you all to our next meeting for June which, as I have mentioned, is in the Garden Room at the Bulls Head, Wilmslow, Road Mottram St Andrew, SK10 4QH at 6.30 (ish) on the 2nd of the month where we will be back to full strength to enjoy each other's company, a good meal, the summer weather and the light nights, what can possibly go wrong?? Let's hope we have, as Duncan says, a good showing of Alvis cars in the lower car park so the customers can crave our lovely machinery, but it's us that gets the privilege of driving them home! see you on the 2nd.

