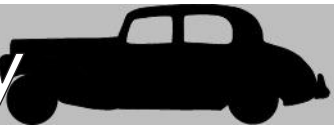


Alvibatics





Cover Story



How we acquired our Alvis

Rob & Lynne Robson

A lovely story. When we took our rather pedestrian 14 HP 1926 Crossley on the 1978 International FIVA Rally from Brisbane to Sydney, Rob met a very interesting English gentleman by the name of Frank Smith who was a Crossley owner of note. In fact he owned the Crossley bus featured in the film *Ryan's Daughter*, amongst a large collection. Smith owned a company that manufactured ship propellers and this business took him all around the world.

As this was our first FIVA Rally, we were unaware that it was a yearly event. Smith informed us that the next one would be in Ireland, that we should come AND he would arrange a car for us. He was so successful at encouraging enthusiasts to attend that he ran out of Crossleys. He was undeterred and arranged for us to borrow a car from a delightful gentleman in Manchester by the name of John Warburton. John was a dentist and actually gave Lynne a handsome gold filling while we were there and the special children she teaches love looking at it! Many of you may know John from his writings and drawings in the VSCC magazine. We were much indebted to him and enjoyed a lovely friendship with him and his family.

The car in fact ended up being a 1928 beetleback Alvis 12/50 and we thoroughly enjoyed the car. Rob was extremely pleased with its performance and we viewed for the first time some spirited driving by the Bentleys and the Vauxhalls. Manchester was ideally placed for a comfortable ferry trip to Ireland and so our relationship with Alvis began. The rally started in Cork and it was started in a memorable way with the Mayor of Cork presenting us with a bottle opener and the Guinness man beside him giving us a six pack! We were also fast learners at the art of taking Irish Coffee as a rally starter!

On our return to Brisbane we were exceedingly pleased to discover that a 12/50 was for sale. Unfortunately, a prospective buyer had yanked the steering wheel and broke the steering box and according to folk lore the car had been used to transport fridges during the war so had a door put into the rear of the body! Otherwise a very original car so a purchase was executed. The car was formerly owned by PG

Woodhouse, another notable car enthusiast from Brisbane.

So now we had to think about making our acquisition a goer! As Rob was working at Abel Point near Bowen on the coal loading facility and we were living in Bowen it had to be transported there. Firstly we had to replace the broken steering box, some of the timber frame, and some rust repairs along the body/chassis line. The panel at the rear of the body had to be replaced, the car painted and upholstered. The engine overhaul included the bottom end to be white metalled, new rings and the cylinder head reconditioned. This all happened in Bowen and its inaugural trip was to Cairns for the Hub Rally, a triennial rally between Cairns, Townsville and Mackay. The Alvis created a lot of interest and we would have to agree it is a very pretty body and it looked splendid in British racing green. We should also add that it is an original Cross and Ellis body. Not only did it look good but we managed to win a bounty of prizes. The only mishap on this journey, some 900 km was the split rim became detached because of a puncture, and disappeared into a cane paddock, but luckily was soon found.

Since then the Alvis has competed in a number of rallies and exciting journeys to the Blue Mountains, Warwick and Noosa, Greenvale and the lava tubes, Bowen River and Collinsville. The car is currently residing in Brisbane after being in Mackay for the last thirty years after restoration was completed in Bowen. We thank you for your interest in our TH 12/50 and also thank Frank Corbett for his research and Heather for her interest and encouragement. ▼

