

August  
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# Alvic

*The Newsletter of the Alvis Car Club of Victoria (Inc)*



Inside  
and

*Mia Mia - the Duigan Flight Centenary*

*more ALVIC history*



# ALVIS/ARMSTRONG SIDDELEY OUTING ON SATURDAY 17TH JULY 2010 TO THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS FOR THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN BUILT AIRCRAFT TO FLY IN AUSTRALIA



There were some ironies in the build up to the three day Centenary Celebrations of the first flight by an Australian aircraft.

Firstly the need to build a replica of the original aircraft when the original was still in existence.

The original has in the past been displayed in the Victorian Museum but was badly damaged while being transported to a storage facility.

One must ask, how an organisation that is apparently dedicated to protecting and preserving the treasures of both Victoria and subsequently of Australia, has driven an aircraft, designed to be flown at a maximum of about 30 mph have expected it to survive on an open top truck in transit over the West Gate Bridge.

That a replica that had been made in 2000, with some replication inaccuracies could not have been made available by the Museum, for the event.

That when a band of volunteers who decided to finance and build a second replica, were not granted adequate access to the original.

Enough of the political issues lest they diminish the importance of the event.

Members of the Alvis Car Club of Victoria and the Armstrong Siddeley Club, met at the Mickleham Primary School and proceeded via the picturesque Konagaderra and Lancefield Roads to John and Annie Links country house at Romsey. There they were treated to a very pleasant morning tea.

The drive from Romsey to Mia Mia was via Lancefield and Glenhope on the Burke and Wills track.

*It is interesting to note that 2010 is the 150th anniversary of the Burke & Wills Expedition. The expedition was originally called the Victorian Exploring Expedition and its aim was to cross the continent of Australia from Melbourne on the south coast to the north coast, which at the time was uninhabited by the micaloo (white-fella). No one had done this before and to the Victorian colonists the centre of the continent was unknown, unmapped and unexplored.*

*The expedition was organised by the Royal Society of Victoria and it became the first to cross the continent. Three men travelled 5,000 kilometres from Melbourne to the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria and then back to the Depot Camp at Cooper Creek. Seven men died in the attempt, including the leader, Robert O'Hara Burke and the third in command William John Wills. Only one man, John King, survived to return to Melbourne.*

*After travelling via Lancefield, over the great dividing range at what is now called "The Burke and Wills Track" the party halted for a rest day at Mia Mia, and sightseers from Heathcote and Bendigo came to see the camels.*

On arrival at Mia Mia, we became aware that overnight rain and during the morning had made the recreation reserve somewhat saturated and interesting for narrow classic car tyres to retain drive. The cloud was low and drizzle set in which subsequently curtailed the planned flying display.

The replica aircraft had been painstakingly recreated from original



*Above: David Head, facing the camera, discussing the project with the public*

drawings and due to holdups along the way, was only completed with its engine mounted, on the day before it was to be displayed. Thus an engine run, in situ, had not taken place. The engine had of course been bench tested but using an electric start. However it was found that there was insufficient momentum in the propeller to swing start the engine at its location on the aircraft.

The engine was on loan from the Australian Aviation Museum and had been rebuilt by David Head. It was not identical to the original,

however fundraising is taking place to recreate the Tilly engine that



*Above: Frank Mornane's SP25 at the Links  
Below: Geoff Hood picks his way out of the car park*



*Above & below - the paddock*

powered the first flight.

The Vintage Sports Car Club was also present following their annual Frost Bite Run and had made an early morning visit to the Victorian Museum.

So all in all there was an interesting collection of cars from the public and the three clubs.

There were 13 Alvises present on the day, those being:

- 12/50s of Rob Sands and Geoff Hewitt
- 12/50 race car of Geoff Hood
- Silver Eagles of David Head and the Parsells
- SA Sp20 saloon of the Northeys
- 3½ litre of David Caldwell
- Speed 25s of McKaiges, Langs & Frank Mornane
- TB14 of Alan Bratt
- TC21 of Geoff Shepherd

Richard Tonkins Graber  
Also in attendance were the Hetheringtons, Simon Ramsay, Chris Higgins and Eric Nicholl.  
(Apologies in anyone has been omitted)

Following the event, participants made their own way home using a variety of routes.



Thanks to all participants and those who made the event possible.  
*Acknowledgement is made to the BURKE & WILLS WEB for the historical information in italics and for the photography by Parsells & Langs*