

# MOTORCLASSICA

*(as seen through the eyes of a participant)*

Call me a woose or call me smart, I prefer the latter because Google's definition of a woose is "one of the most rarely seen animals alive it is a cross breed between a moose and a walrus!"

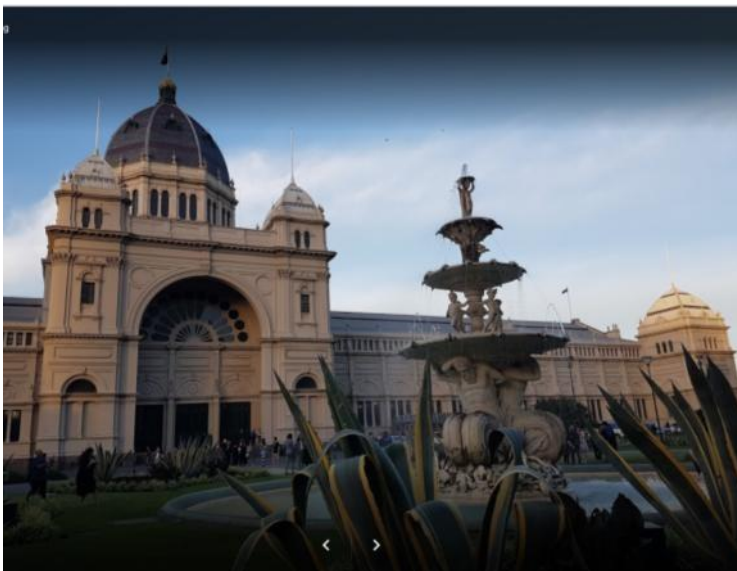
To set the record straight, I have been close shaven for most of my life; I am not a good swimmer in water over my head and nor do my ears have the appearance of looking like a couple of coral branches!

Not having sorted that, I must be smart! I decided that a 90 year old Alvis FWD had no right to add to Melbourne's horrific traffic problems and the decision was made to trailer the car to the Melbourne Royal Exhibition building on the allocated day; Wednesday before the event.

Not having been into the CBD for many years, I was staggered to see the huge building that have replaced some of the shops at the top of Elizabeth Street.

Fortunately I had Peter Miller who offered to accompany Marg and I to deliver the car. Peter who previously flew big aeroplanes and obviously had learned to hide his fear when training new pilots, sat quietly in the left hand seat which is normally where the Captain sits and showed some confidence that he would arrive home safely after the delivery. His skills as a navigator became obvious when I needed some direction about Mrs Tom Tom's instruction to take the second exit at the roundabout.

Clinging to the left lane, we reached the Carlton Gardens and looked for the entrance opposite Gertrude St (might call my next car Gertude, it has a special something about it) to find that the entrance was barred by a significant gate which even a Saracen would have trouble negotiating. With some expectation of an official waving a flag at the correct gate, we turned left in spite of the absence of a marshal. At least the trailer was clear of the road, but the truck behind us managed to block the traffic.



Peter managed to negotiate with security to lift the boom gate that barred our way and we pulled up in front of the east entrance to the Exhibition Building. New winch lead to an easy unload and the moment I had been waiting for was to drive the fwd down the centre of the building with its lovely sound ricocheting of the walls.

Fuel on. Ignition on. Two notches of hand throttle. Battery on. Who said FWDs were hard to start. IT WOULDN'T START!!!!!! Try as I could it would not start.

So the embarrassment of an ALVIS FWD with 4 backsides disappearing down the centre lane of the Royal Exhibition Building for 300 metres to our allocated parking spot. Conversation was a bit light on during the process!

Car parked, the obligatory drip trays were in place.

Autobarn must have had a special on drip trays for English cars as they were all similarly branded.

Home James without problems.

At about 3.00am having had the cat bounce off the bed several times, I got to thinking about the inability to start the car.

Why does the brain work better at that time of the night? Not wanting to have the car with a full tank of petrol in the building, I had been running the fuel level down. No petrol gauge; inability to see the level unless full, lead me to the

conclusion that had I turned my vintage ENOTS petrol tap to on instead of reserve, I could have accomplished some noise in the building after all.

Due to other commitments it was Sunday morning before we got back to Motorclassica and what a change had taken place since Wednesday. Firstly to get in we had to negotiate the "Club Sandwich" which was an outside area which was provided for clubs to park their cars in allocated areas and was where the food stalls were located; hence the name. There were 6 Alvises parked in their area which added to probably another 2 or 300 cars in the total outdoor display.



*Three of the Alvises at Motorclassica*





Inside the building it was full of motorbikes, classic and exotic cars and 11 Alvises from 4 of Australia's 6 states.

Along with Alvis celebrating its Centenary, also was Bentley and Citroen and special dates for the Mini Minor and Abarth.



The Motorclassica wrap up indicated that 21,000 people visited the event over the 3 day event.

Motorclassica's allocation of space was brilliant for us. As the photographs show we were located in the middle of the building at one end; three rows; nose to tail with adequate space all round. Other display cars filled the annex areas on either side beneath the upper mezzanine floor.

Also of benefit was that we were adjacent to a coachbuilding and panel repair demonstration in which the noise from their machinery drew visitors to that end of the pavilion.

Unfortunately there was one Alvis owner not happy with the location in that the Royal Exhibition Building resident magpie who chose to roost above his car and obviously during the night was unable to find the toilets in the dark. The new tourneau cover was not a welcome target.

A new collector category was revealed at the event with many of the visitors, photographing radiator mascots. It's a rabbit! No it's a kangaroo. No it's a hare. What's a hare?

Hopefully the prewar eagles were easier to identify, although the concept of a high wing eagle and a low wing eagle may have challenged some of them.

There was not a 4.3 litre car in the display, so the need to explain what an American red Indian chief was doing on an English car may have proved very difficult.

The special news is that the Northeys' Speed 20 SA, Martin & King bodied saloon was chosen by the judges as being the best of the Alvis marque on display. Congratulations!



Back at 6.30 to pick up the car.

With an event closure of 5.00pm, it was surprising how few cars were left when we arrived.

Yes! The reserve tank was required and the car started easily! At last my chance to drive down through the Exhibition Building to a special chorus not previously heard in its 135 year history.



Easy load and drive home.

It was a pleasure to have the chance of talking to so many Alvisi and other interested people during the event.

The effort of presenting a car at Motorclassica is time consuming for both owners and those supporting them.

The display both at the Club Sandwich and inside was superb.

The interstate Alvis owners who presented their cars are to be commended for the extra effort involved and combined an excellent display to create an event which can only help to promote the Alvis marque.

Well done everyone.

*Photography from Frances McDougall & the Langs*

