



# Monkey Business

## No 170 December 2025

*Written By Chris Taylor*

*Bunged Together By Simon Griffiths*



December 2nd saw 24 of us gather at the Bulls Head, Smallwood for a second visit. This was our Christmas bash and we would have been 31 but, sadly, Andrew and Barbara Myers could not join us, due to ill health, Tari and Michelle Mirza had previously said they were abroad, Charles and Judith Van-Ingen were on grandparent duties so couldn't be with us on the night and, finally, Dave Culshaw who regretfully tendered his apology due to the time it took him to drive to Smallwood. All were missed.

The meal went very well and, as before, the portions were good, the food quality was excellent, the prices charged very reasonable for these days and a sensible method for paying employed - although on this occasion we had prepaid for the meal. We were joined by Stephen Wallbank, Kayleigh, and Mike Hatton who although new to us are regular attendees at Eric Ody's Derbyshire meeting. Eric and Denise Ody, Duncan Mather and, for that matter, myself are also regulars at the Coach and Horses.

Of course, being our end of season event, after the meal we held the ever popular prize giving. I was delighted to present Stephen Wallbank with the Robin Bendall memorial trophy.



He had emulated Robin's insatiable appetite for epic travel by taking a week to drive a rattly old, oil dropping, gear grinding, Albion lorry to Biggar and back - as I have previously reported.

Next up was the Straight Valve Trophy, which is awarded by the previous year's recipient - in this case, Melissa - for their own reason. So, whilst on the subject of epic travels I was equally delighted Elizabeth Bennett received the Trophy for driving her 3 litre to the AOC International, flying solo.



And finally, no less deserving Simon Griffiths selected that Peter Lakin was to be awarded the coveted Bent Valve trophy for carrying out the double restoration of his 12/60 saloon, following his tumble on the way to our monthly meeting. I would like to add that having secured the car's recovery he demonstrated his stoicism by continuing to the meeting, so a very well deserved recognition.



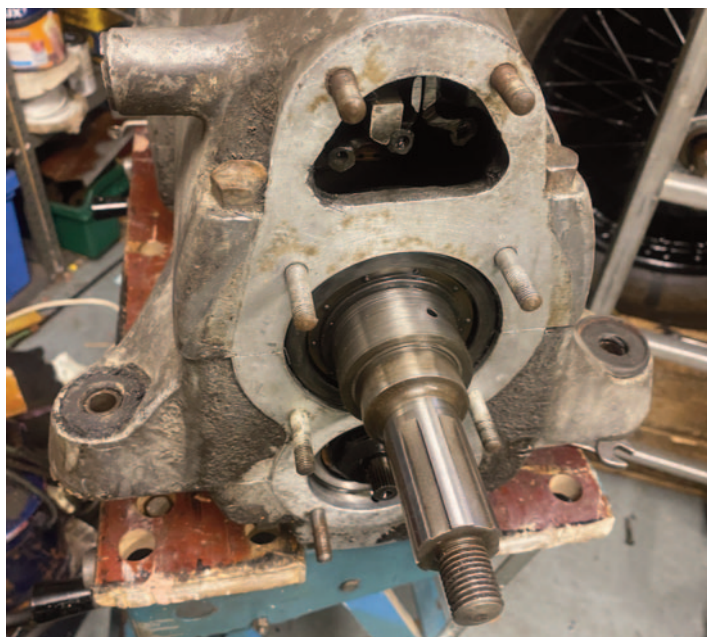
I was so pleased to receive the booking from the Donnelly



family; as I have previously reported Shaun is midway through a course of treatment and arrived with us in great health. I was very pleased to have a chat with him about SB clutches! It was also great to chat with Katie and Shirley before the meal, If you remember I reported some time ago that Katie had made a collage, which included the late Bill Buxton's TA 21 as its focus point, as a submission for her A levels and I am now delighted to report she passed with flying colours, of which I had no doubt due to the powers of observation displayed in the picture.

Others making the party such a happy event were Tim and Jayne Brown who shared a table with Simon and Melissa Griffiths and, as this was more of a social gathering, Peter Lakin was accompanied by Karen who it is always good to see. Talking of wives and partners it is at this event that Maggie Robinson always insists Mike accompanies her to the meal and it's always good to have a catch up chat.

I am so pleased that John Woodcock and Barbara Holmes join us now on a regular basis - not just because we three were contemporary former Norweb employees but also as he is also an Alvis owner, John's 3 litre is a car we have not yet seen but along with AYF it should be with us for the 2026 season.



Whilst on the subject of AYF the car has completed 24 miles and even though this run was short it has shown a noisy bearing in the gearbox which is now replaced with a NOS original Hoffman 140. With the gearbox out of the chassis, I have taken advantage of the improved access to remove the clutch as it was suffering from a violent juddering when starting from rest - cause as yet unknown but I'm on its case.

I have just heard that Huw Morris Jones' project Speed 20 SD DHC, which he repatriated from the USA, is also going to be roadworthy during 2026; although Huw is looking for a JD6 magneto rotor arm which, if not found, may slow things up a bit. However see the photograph to show the progress to date.



Thinking on, it seems 2026 should be a good season for fresh Alvis with John's 3 litre, my & Huw's speed 20's, Peters 12/60 (and hopefully his RR P2) and Duncan's meticulously restored TD21 (that we have seen the photo updates as the car's restoration draws near to completion) so fingers crossed for a good car park show next year.

I can't close this report without mentioning our meeting mascot, "Our Norm" as Cilla would have put it, with whom, along with Claire, I shared the dinner table and I know Claire and Denise had a real good girls' chat while Norman was doing the rounds to everyone's delight. Last but never forgotten was our own Richard Plant-Locke who in effect was a gate-crasher, as he phoned me to book after I had paid in and submitted our menu choices, but all was well as the pub could happily cater for him and we love him for it.

So, our Christmas celebration of 2025 was concluded by Tim Brown, on behalf of the AOC, thanking everyone who had supported events during the year and asking us to look out for the upcoming events for 2026. Eric Ody told us of his meeting at the Coach and Horses at Fenny Bentley on the 2nd Tuesday of each month where all will be welcome (see his invitation I've copied as a footnote) and I made mention of the AAT's 3rd Wednesday lunch meeting at the Drivers Club, Bowcliffe Hall (contact me as places have to be booked in advance) so plenty to look forward to as the days grow longer.

Whilst at the December meeting I took the time to canvass opinions about the venue as, up to then I didn't actually know where it was! But as I was going straight to my hotel at Bulkington, due to me teaching with Simon at Rugby the next day, my sat-nav turned me left out of the car park not to the right and I was amazed that in a very few hundred yards I was at M6 J17 which is where I usually join the motorway if I am going south. So now I know where it is I understand various comments as to how convenient Smallwood is for many although not all - me included! I was really impressed with Elizabeth who I know doesn't like motorways, especially at night, and had mapped herself a route avoiding the M6. She had travelled to the Bulls Head before making her booking and driving the route and taking lunch in the pub to fully test it out - now that's what I call dedication!

To this end I have booked for us to go there for a third time where I hope to have a run there and back in a vehicle with all its lamps now working and hopefully without a tropical storm so I can fully appraise my route. So the next meeting is on January 6th 2026 at the Bulls Head Newcastle Road, Smallwood, Cheshire CW11 2TY, as it's further for me I think I will be there by 6 o'clock so I can leave earlier, but 7pm is still fine for those who prefer it.

So as notification of forthcoming events:

I can report the first lunch gathering for the AAT at Bowcliffe Hall Drivers Club is booked for Wednesday 21st (please contact me if you wish to join us)

And I will leave the invitation to Eric's lunch meeting at the Coach & Horses in his own words .....

A message from Eric Ody, Chris and myself have decided to offer the **New Year Lunch** at the Coach & Horses open to all of you.

The date will be Wednesday 14-01-2026 12-00 for 12-30 at the Coach & Horses Fenny Bentley DE6 1LB  
The pub is on the main Buxton to Ashbourne Rd on Left.

If you wish to join us please let Chris know numbers by 31st Dec to give the pub plenty of notice.

The pub is offering a great menu, the head of each family will have a tab for food & drinks, (please pay at Bar before leaving)

Alvis cars are very welcome but not essential, the pub has its own car park.

Seasons Greetings to you all

Eric Ody  
please email [chrisalvis20@gmail.com](mailto:chrisalvis20@gmail.com) to book your place

