



# Monkey Business No 141 - May 2023



*Written By Chris Taylor*

*Bunged Together By Simon Griffiths*

The signing in book says 'Glorious and Warm' which led to Charles and Judith Van-Ingén arriving in their lovely TD, fully open, although by the time I got to take their picture it was closed again.



We were a little light on numbers which I suspect was due to the lovely weather turning our attentions elsewhere. although I had apologies from Claire and Elizabeth who were both under the weather, fully recovered I hope ready for next Tuesday and from Melissa who was off visiting her dad. It was lovely to see Gez join us, under her own steam, as she was on a collection mission for Mick who had simply done enough driving that day that, to add another 100 miles, to us and back was simply too much. The collection was of a couple of wrecked pre-war brake cables. Mick is refreshing his Firebird's brakes, but not wanting to take the car off the road. The only part Speedy Cables cannot supply is the chassis anchor so I was happy to exchange the pair still on the old cables with the ones that would eventually come off Mick's car - you see the value of keeping apparently completely unusable parts that may have something to give up in the future!

The car park also saw Peter Lakin's equally lovely, but in a totally different way, 12/60 saloon parked and resting ready for the run home. I could tell the warm weather has arrived as the 12/60's smokers' hatch was open! I think I know the answer to this one but can anyone tell me the last vehicle to be fitted with a smokers' hatch? Answers to me please, to be published next month.



David Culshaw and I were in our usual historic discussion mode; this month's main subject being number plates, I had recently bought, off Mike Robinson, a wonderful example of a Hills of London 'patent applied for' cast aluminium, modular assembly plate that came off a Firefly, WM 8990. A car that David's research seems to show is no longer with us. However my interest is in the character styling as Follett's used Hills for the cars they sold and my project Sp 20 was sold by Follett. This number plate system, called the



Favourite Digits, is very well thought out as the base plate is cast with a pattern of dimples on the back in each of the location rectangles for the characters to be used. The characters had small 'pins' cast on their reverse which, depending on which character is needed to construct any particular mark, dictates which dimple is to be used. The centre for a small hole which is drilled and the character fitted by

pushing the pin through the drilled hole and a light riveting secures it in place. It is the style of the characters that interests me so I can eventually make sympathetic styled plates for AYF. Look, for instance, at the lovely flowing 9 which seems to me to be smiling. These character differences are very interesting as the 5 on my Firebird GS is in a style I have



not seen anywhere else; not even on other cars I know to have been sold through Galts of Glasgow, as GS was. It must be the archivist in me or could it be I'm just an anorak?

I don't know if Simon came with Peter in the 12/60 but since Melissa was not with him I suspect not and that he came straight from Manchester and, guess what, we actually talked locks briefly! The mention of Peter Lakin reminds me that on the 12th Peter and I were meeting fellow Alvis owner Huw Morris-Jones (SD20 DHC) to deliver the engine from JJ, Peter's Firefly, that, if you remember, failed to proceed whilst touring Scotland with Jack, his son. We were delivering the engine to Huw's friends Arnetts at Doncaster. Arnetts are proper old school engine repairers, still capable of casting direct metal bearings, and carrying out final machining, all in house. They can even offer a choice of white metals to best suit the car and its use best.

The photo of a very large Cincinnati milling machine is of a machine that has fallen out of use and Arnetts would like to dispose of to a good home; so if you know of such a new home for it please let me know and I will effect introductions. We then went to the fish market where the Clam and Cork serves a fabulous menu of the freshest 'cooked as you wait' sea food I have ever tasted and a good selection of wines to wash it down. Even the Calamari is wonderful and not the rings of bicycle innertube that has put me off it for years.

So, at last, but never least, we come to Norman our meeting mascot, Norman was telling us he has engaged the services of an Au-Pair to help around the house but he did let us in on his master plan, probably because Claire wasn't there. As you will see from the somewhat formal photograph taken at the Deanwater, Norman is practicing to perfect a pose to copy Michelangelo's statue of David which by his own



admission needs a little more work yet, but why is he doing this? well his plan is that when he 'has-it' to perfection he is going to stand on a chair in the hall just in time for Kristina doing the rounds with her feather duster to see if he can get a reaction. So for a live update on his progress I hope to see you all at the Deanwater Hotel SK7 1RJ on Tuesday 6th June at around 19.00 where I believe the half-year changing of the trophy ceremony will also take place.

### ***And now a quick note from our roving reporter Dean O'Spyder...***

I have been out and about peering through garage windows and the like to see what progress is being made on various projects. Simon seems to be trying to use the maximum

number of coats of paint ever seen in his attempts to get a half decent finish on BVC's scuttle..and failing! He does need to get a move on as he wants to tak it to his wedding!

It's probably not even worth mentioning Plant Pot's projects and Chris seems to have spent more time on clocks than any of his Alvis projects, although I did espy him working working on oil pump gears with Giles Lacey's expert assistance and progress seems positive as you may be able to tell from the pictures



However whilst I was out having an ice cream on Crickieth sea front I did spot an Alvis special parked up at a local car meet.



On investigation it turned out to be a TA14 chassis, wheels and radiator but not much else! The owner had battered the wings out of some steel he had lying around using what sounded like a hammer and a piece of wood and had made a pretty good fist of it. The car had an MGB engine and gearbox as the owner wanted something he could swap out easily when it failed - he clearly didn't understand Alvis' legendary reliability. Either that or he had no faith in his spannering skills