

# 2022 Alvis International Follow On Tour 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> July

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Following on from the International Weekend 32 members signed up for the 5 day Tour based at The Oaksmere Hotel near Eye. The theme was to continue the cultural events of the weekend based on the Iceni an Anglo Saxon tribe that inhabited the local area.

It was a truly international group that included James Sprague and Eliza Rathbone from the USA, Leo Schmid, Emil Fehr and Anita Elvedi from Switzerland, along with Rob and Helen Claasen, Paul and Martin van der Velde, and Antoine

and Loes Soffers from the Netherlands, not forgetting Lex Westoby from New Zealand in his camper van. A further 20 members were from the UK.



However, our Swiss group decided to drop out as Leo had not been feeling that well and they needed to get back to Calais to repatriate their Alvis back to Switzerland as it had not made the trip. Also Jim and Trudi Oakman, having heroically made the International despite their Grey Lady loosing copious amounts of cooling fluid, also decided not to risk the Tour.

On Monday the Tour got off to a great start with an informal lunchtime visit to The Crown, Stowupland. A traditional Suffolk Pub with good food and ample parking on the Suffolk tourist route. We were made extremely welcome and well provided for as they had been alerted to our visit.

As the Dutch group were staying at The Best Western Cedars Stowmarket they decided to visit the Suffolk Owl Sanctuary at nearby Stonham Barns before joining us at The Oaksmere for Dinner.



Tuesday comprised a road trip to the Norfolk Broads National Park at Ranworth Broad and The Maltsters Pub with excellent parking for lunch. Visits to the Norfolk Wildlife Trust informative Visitor Centre and included boat trips, and St Helen's Church 'The Cathedral of the Broads' with its tower offering extensive views of the surrounding area once you had climbed the 89 steps, two ladders and a trapdoor to the top.

Dinner that evening was at The Auberge a fine dining restaurant that was the Tours 'overspill' hotel where Nick and Debbie Cook were staying for the week as The Oaksmere was fully booked.

Lex Westoby then took leave of us as he had to get the camper van back to London prior to continuing his European tour.

Wednesday involved a longer road trip to Sandringham House, the Queen's Norfolk home where a visit was specially arranged through Nicky Colman, the Sandringham Visitor Enterprises Administrator, to see the late Duke's 1961 Alvis TD21 Drophead.

The group were made extremely welcome with Alvis signs to a designated parking area. Lunch and drinks were available at the Courtyard Cafe and a group tour of the House had been booked. It included a visit to the Transport Museum and although it was closed to the public for renovation work our group were allowed access to see the Alvis and given a tour of the exhibits by Jeff Smith the extremely knowledgeable Museum Tour Guide.

The Dutch group were leaving the Tour on Wednesday evening so instead of travelling to Sandringham they visited the nearby West Stow Anglo Saxon Village, and word got back to us that they enjoyed the visit and were treated to a crash course in Roman history in Britain !

Thursday comprised a visit to nearby West Stow Anglo Saxon village of reconstructed buildings comprising a number of dwellings, various workshops and a meeting hall. There is also a Museum, Gallery and excellent cafe. The afternoon was free before returning to the Oaksmere for the last Dinner of the Tour.



The final group numbers for the last evening were 17 down from 32 members and a photo was taken of 14 members prior to dinner to celebrate the survivors, not forgetting Chris, Margita and Garrett who were eating elsewhere but joined us for breakfast.

Taken all together it was a successful Tour helped by a good week of weather and despite the dwindling numbers the organisers, Paul Baker, Susi and myself, had completed everything we had set out to do on the Tour.

Now it is time for a well earned rest.

Hugh Ivins  
E A Section Committee Member