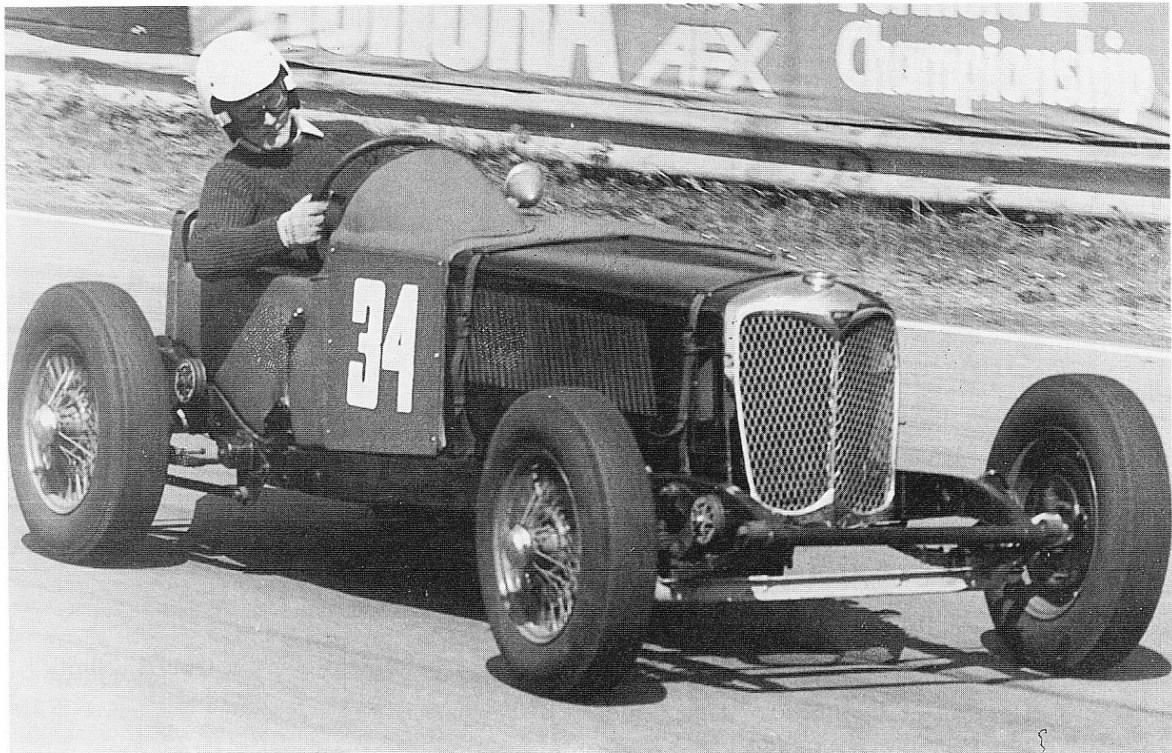


Riley-Alvis

As Alvis and Riley are both marques that are currently very much in favour with the builders of PVT specials, it was almost inevitable that a hybrid would eventually be built using parts from both manufacturers. In total there are probably three or four such Riley-Alvis or Alvis-Riley hybrids. The best known is the one built in the mid-1970s by David Duffy, which he named "Avril" for obvious reasons.

As he had previously raced an Alvis Speed Twenty model for a couple of seasons up to 1973, we can guess at the origins of his interest in Alvis

mechanical components. When this car was sold to finance the purchase of an "acceptable modern" in the form of a Bristol-engined AC Ace, there was sufficient small change left over to buy something cheap and interesting: £20 worth of derelict 1935 Riley Falcon seemed to fit the bill, and this saloon was dismantled to provide the chassis and running gear for the project. The rest of the recipe included a 1937 Alvis Speed 25 engine together with a gear-box and rear axle from the same maker's Silver Crest model. To ensure a good weight distribution,



1978 was considered the best season – Duffy and “Avril” at Oulton Park that year. The Riley radiator carries the inverted red triangular Alvis badge.

all the main components were weighed and by simple moments calculations with a scale drawing, the approximate position of all the parts was decided. At this point Duffy enlisted the assistance of “Clink” Clinkard, builder of several Alvis specials over the years, who shortened, widened and generally fettled the Riley frame until all the Alvis parts could be persuaded to fit. The resultant almost ideal weight distribution of 49 per cent front 51 per cent rear justified the earlier paper exercise.

On to the completed running chassis; a simple wooden body frame was constructed which was part panelled in aluminium and then covered in red leathercloth. The bonnet top and sides, and the radiator surround, were all ex-Riley parts with modifications, the last-named being fitted with a larger core to cool the considerably bigger engine.

From 1976 to 1979 the car was a regular competitor in Vintage Sports Car Club events and although the basic formula for the special remained unchanged, a few detailed improvements crept in. Early on an even bigger radiator was installed, and for 1977 the rear axle location was improved. For 1978 there were no alterations, just a very enjoyable full season of racing. A great upset the following year was an engine blow-up early in the season, and when “Avril” reappeared in 1980 she was wear-

ing a new set of clothes. In place of the homespun fabric body was an all-aluminium affair, which arguably looked smarter but made the car less distinctive.

From 1981, when David Duffy progressed to a Connaught, Richard Loveday continued to race the car. He fitted road equipment to the Riley-Alvis, renaming it “Black Flyer” at the same time. It has since been sold.

Riley-Alvis

Technical Specification Data

Date of origin: 1935-7

ENGINE

Type: Alvis

Capacity: 3571 cc

No of cylinders: 6

Valve operation: ohv

Estimated power output: 130 bhp

Carburation: 3 x SU carburettors

GEARBOX

Type: Alvis

No of ratios: 4

CHASSIS

Type: Riley

FRONT AXLE

Type: Alvis
Suspension: 2 x Semi-elliptics

REAR AXLE

Type: Alvis
Suspension: 2 x Semi-elliptics

BRAKES

Type: Drums
Actuation: Hydraulic

WHEELS

Size: 16 in
Tyre Size: 5.50 x 16 (front)
600 x 16 (rear)

OVERALL DIMENSIONS

Length: 144 in
Wheelbase: 100 in
Track: 50 in (front & rear)