



BVAC News

December 2020



'Tis the Season to be Merry

Christmas is nearly upon us, and a very strange Christmas it promises to be. It seems lots of people are getting their decorations up early this year, so I thought this image (courtesy AnnaliseArt via pixbay.com) would set a suitably festive tone. In any normal year, we'd be about to have our club Christmas Dinner and there would be the prospect of club nights and get-togethers at Milestone in the New Year. At the moment, all we can hope for is that the prospect of a vaccine will allow us to resume activities before 2021 is too far advanced. Planning for the 2021 Thirlestane show is pushing ahead, but only time will tell if such a mass gathering will be acceptable next June. Let's hope so!

In the meantime, you will all have had your membership renewal reminder from Kenny. I hope that despite the current lack of activities you'll choose to support the club by renewing so that we can hit the ground running as soon as we're allowed.

All the very best for Christmas, and clear roads in 2021,

David

We Are Not Alone

The FBHVC (Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs) carried out a survey earlier this year – some of you may have taken part – and now they've published the results. There's a clear political message that the classic vehicle movement is fast growing and a significant contributor to the British economy. Here are some highlights, you can see the full report at www.fbhvc.co.uk



Restoration News

In the absence of any other reports (come on, some of you MUST have been busy in the garage lately!) I can only offer an update on my Morris 8 Two Seater. The chassis has been



repaired and is now 'good as new' as you can see here. It's been painted



since these pictures were taken. We discovered the chassis number stamped on it which indicates the scrap car was built late in 1935, about two or three months after the two-seater. Meanwhile, I've been refurbishing parts taken off the car. One surprise was the running boards which ought to be a complex three-dimensional steel structure, but when I stripped mine I found an accurately shaped home-made replica on a wooden former. Since I'm not looking for a concours-winning car and building new 'original pattern' boards would be difficult and expensive, the plan is to put new rubber on these and refit them. They're solid and will look right unless you go poking around under the car.



I can hear the sharp intake of breath from the purists already! They'll be fitted to the original chassis brackets, so could easily be swapped in the unlikely event that eBay turns up a pair of perfect Morris 8 running boards.

Talking of eBay, it does come up with the occasional real bargain, and I'd a lucky purchase a

few weeks back. The wheels on my MX-5 were a bit of a disgrace, and were non-standard, so when I spotted a set of Mazda originals, not perfect but in decent nick, I put in a bid and won at a very reasonable price. It gets better – when I collected them, they were shod with Pirellis, two of them brand new and the other two lightly used. Just shows there are some real bargains out there if you keep looking! I should point out "other auction sites are available".

Thomas Elliot

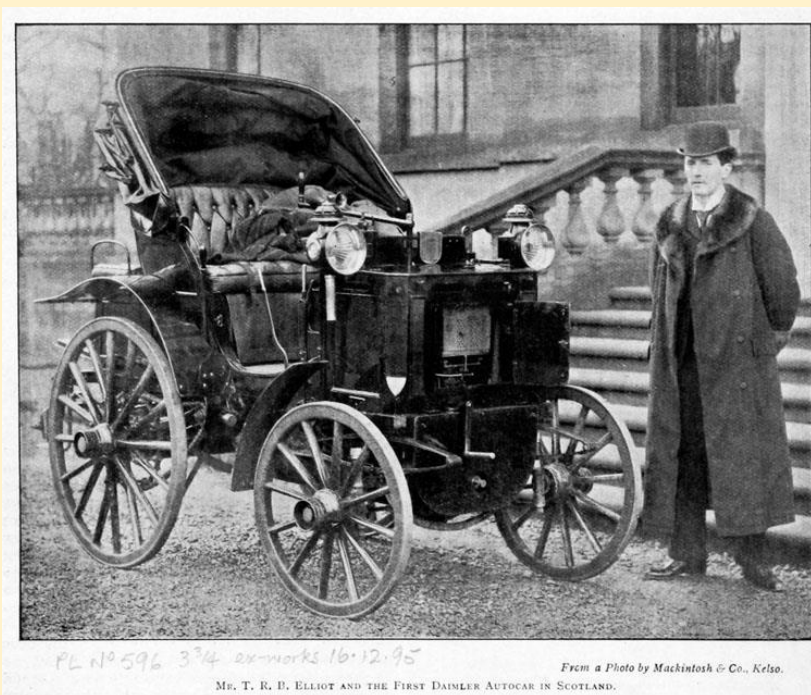
The name of Thomas Robert Barnewell Elliot may be well known to long standing club members, but perhaps isn't familiar to many of us. His was the car which features on the club's badge. According to Mr Elliot, it was the first motor car in Scotland. That claim has been disputed by some historians as George Johnston (of Arrol-Johnston fame) apparently had a car running in Glasgow earlier in 1895. However, it was certainly the first in the Borders and so a fitting symbol for the club. Mr Elliot lived from about 1871 to 1949 and lived at Clifton Park House (right, now a ruin) near Morebattle.



Reminiscing in 1923, Mr Elliot wrote:

"I was the first person to own and use a motor car in Scotland, and about the fifth in England. I imported direct from Paris (and first used it in this district on 27th Dec. 1895) a 3.5hp Panhard car: weight, one ton; iron tyres; tube ignition; tiller steering; no radiator. It carried four and had a hood. Speed up to 12 miles per hour; but on steep hills three of the four passengers generally had to get out and walk. On 19th March 1896 I was fined 6d. and 19s. 7d. costs at Berwick for not having a man on foot

walking in front of the car. Modern motor cars could only be used legally after Nov. 1896, but I ran 1200 miles before this, including a trip to the Highland Show at Perth; the police for this trip undertook not to prosecute unless compelled to do so in the event of any accident being caused by me. The car cost £235 in Paris and cost £10 to bring here in a large wooden case. I sold the car in 1896 and then got in England a 4hp Daimler."



PL N^o 596 3³/₄ 2x-works 16.12.95

From a Photo by Mackintosh & Co., Kelso.

MR. T. R. D. ELLIOT AND THE FIRST DAIMLER AUTOCAR IN SCOTLAND.

I can't help feeling that Morebattle to Perth at 12 miles an hour on iron tyres must have been quite an ordeal, but such is the lot of the pioneer. I have no knowledge of who bought the car in 1896 or what subsequently became of it. According to the caption, the car in the picture above of Mr Elliot

is the Daimler which replaced the original Panhard. The picture below shows an 1895 Panhard-Levassor like Mr Elliot's. This one belonged to The Hon. Evelyn Ellis and was the first foreign-built car imported into the UK a few months earlier than the Scottish car. It is pictured at the Horseless Carriage Exhibition at Tunbridge Wells in Kent on 15th October 1895, Britain's first ever car show. The show consisted of three cars (one of them steam powered), a tricycle and a fire engine and a seat in the grandstand cost a shilling. A far cry from Thirlestane!



Sources for this article are Graces Guide and The Autocar:

[https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Thomas Robert Barnewall Elliot](https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Thomas_Robert_Barnewall_Elliot)

<https://www.autocar.co.uk/car-news/anything-goes-throwback-thursday/throwback-thursday-1895-britains-first-public>

And Finally,

A festive picture from Chris Biggs. I'm sure Chris isn't in the habit of leaving his pristine Traveller out in the snow, so I suspect some digital trickery...

**Merry
Christmas,
everyone!**

