

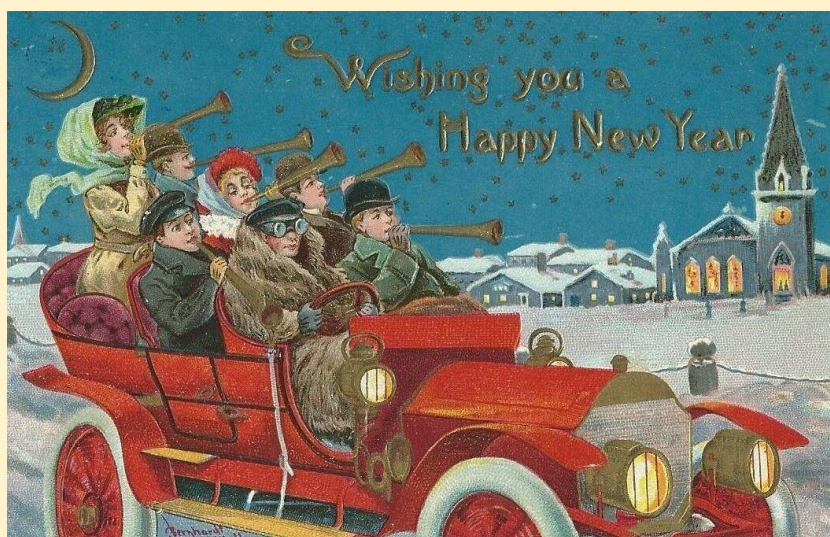


BVAC News

January 2021

Happy New Year

I hope you've all had an enjoyable, if necessarily quiet Christmas and are looking forward to better times in 2021. Who knows when normal service will be resumed? Planning for the BVAC Classic at Thirlestane next June is going ahead in the hope that by then we will be able to have some sort of show, although indications we have received from Scottish Borders Council are still very cautious about a show on the usual scale.



In the meantime, I hope you'll find something interesting in this month's BVAC News. I've had three articles contributed - Philip Weiss (writing from his hospital bed – above and beyond the call of duty!) describes how he built a matching camper trailer to go with his Land Rover. Dick Warren, after reading my article on Thomas Elliot last month, has done some more research about very early cars in Scotland and written it up for us. Lastly, Mark Halsall tells us about his Land Rover restoration that's nearing completion and lets us have a look at his new Mini project. Thanks to all three of them – I really appreciate not having to write the whole thing myself.

All the best, and clear roads,

David

To Make a Camper Trailer or Not ! by Philip Weiss

We can all claim stupidity sometime in our lives, but when it happens twice, you think something is not right! I was reading the latest newsletter from my hospital bed, I had a brush with death, but that's another story! All whilst in the middle of world locked down with covid! The million dollar question, yes I am on the road to recovery and I saw the request for articles, so here goes!

Four and half years ago, I bought a 1971 series 2a Land Rover as a restoration project (Henry), it's 5 months older than me, and some say it's in better condition than me, after the last two weeks, 8 operations and numerous procedures, it's hard to say who has more holes! I might have agreed with you!

I was two weeks into the restoration project (I finished Henry last year and some of you might have seen him at the Kelso show), well one night Lou, my beloved other half, who now can identify any series Land Rover from 2000 metres away by the smell of its exhaust, said "Have you seen this on eBay, someone had bolted a defender 110 rear tub on a trailer chassis and then put an Ifor Williams canopy on top of this , and called it a camper trailer ongoing project!" Our creative brain juices started to bubble and even though it was being sold in the home counties, we live in Coldstream, Henry was on bricks, we decided to buy it (it was £300 half the price of Henry!) So I picked up the camper trailer (this was given the name baby Henry, there is a theme running through this, there is Henry jnr, watch this space!).

Baby Henry was parked up on the drive and was forgotten!! For four years he sat there neglected unloved, Henry got all the love, money and attention, we saw many different ideas of how a Land Rover camper trailer should look, but very soon we had our vision, we wanted the ultimate recycling project, we wanted baby Henry to look like Henry as much as possible, warts and all, to use parts I had left over from restoring Henry and any parts I did buy were and needed to be series if possible and to be bought as cheaply as possible.

So back in July 2019, when everything was normal, I started working on baby Henry, no drawings, no plans just ideas, dreams in our heads, first the easy part stripping things down, half an hour later the Ifor Williams canopy was off.



So a blank canvas, then the hunt for parts, as I said I'm based in Coldstream, so very lucky for spare parts for Land Rovers, Alistair at Lauder Land Rovers, Ben at engine 710 Edinburgh, and my good friend Martin who helped no end sourcing parts, welding and his expert knowledge of landrovers!

The first item sourced was again found by Lou on Facebook selling page and was a Defender 110 roof, and sides, £50, bargain, found in Duns. But this did leave me with a problem these

were Defender parts and I wanted a series trailer, but don't look a gift horse in the mouth, after several different attempts of deciding what would look best, I decided to cut two feet of the back of the roof, thus achieving the new Land Rover configuration of 120 inch, you have all heard of 90, 110, 88, 109 and 130, well baby Henry is a 120 inch, he wasn't planned to be that, but it worked!

After sourcing a defender window screen frame and two old defender doors, followed by an eBay special of two old series three wings, series bonnet and a rotten series 3 front grille and some brand new steel sheet from DMI in kelso (I need to thank them for helping me with metal and bending work).

I had all the parts I needed to make baby Henry, I had in my mind, I would construct it in the fashion of building a ship, so laid down the keel plate, bolted this in plate (anyone who knows me, knows I have a thing about nuts and bolts, I used hundreds over the build). I cut the wings, doors and bonnet down to size. Now you can't get hold of good second hand bulkheads, so I made one myself, Bob at DMI folded the edges for me, and surprisingly it was mm perfect.

I then approached Martin to do the initial welding, Martin is a mechanical genius, there is nothing he can't make or fix, he made his own six wheeled Land Rover, a lovely machine, Martin had all the toys I didn't have, Martin is used to working from complex plans, maritime ships engines etc, I had to try and explain the plan in my head. Not easy!

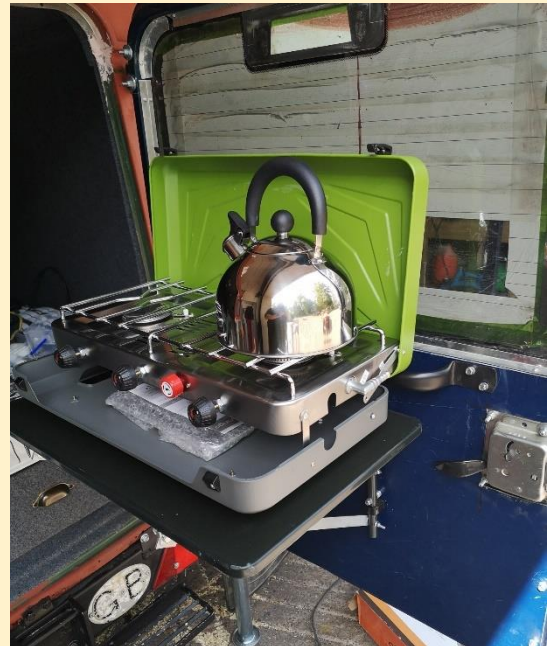
After three weeks the keel, the Land Rover camper trailer base-plate was welded and secure! Thank you Martin.



During this period Lou was in full camper mode and was in full construction herself. Now Lou is a very useful person to have around, she used to be a fashion designer and her sewing skills were picked up by Marks and Spencer's and she used to design and make naughty underwear for them. She made Land Rover curtains, duvet covers, pillows, sort furnishings etc.



During the winter months baby Henry was bolted secured, bit by bit the camper morphed from a defender to a series like Henry.



Finally, in the spring of this year, baby Henry emerged into the dappled light and the rear tub was converted into storage and a double bed, with a full Landrover theme throughout, it was finished the last details were fake decal windows installed around the camper giving the illusion of being a window but not leaking like a Landrover window!!



Henry's owner is safely back at home, he is on the long road to recovery, thank you for all the good luck and get well messages, much appreciated

I finished baby Henry a week after the first lockdown came into force, so as yet he hasn't been shown to the world or tested, but he's ready, a great project, please give him a beep if you seem them out when things get back to normal!

First Car in Scotland? by Dick Warren

Perhaps I should have avoided looking into Grace's Guide.

You see, I live within sight of Clifton Park, which was the home of Thomas Barnewell Elliot and am acquainted with the story of the two 'first cars in Scotland', one in Glasgow owned by engineer George Johnston and a second in Morebattle belonging to Thomas Elliot. Both cars were known to be Panhard-Levassor 3¾ h.p. All was well until I peered into Grace's Guide and, in particular, Malcolm Jeal's list of cars imported in 1895, for there, clear as day, was Thomas Elliot's Panhard-Levassor but no sign of George Johnston's. Instead there was the following statement,

"It is possible that engineer George Johnston, later the maker of Arrol-Johnston motorcars in Glasgow, had imported a car in 1895, possibly a Cannstatt-Daimler or only an engine from the German firm. He had a motorcar running on the City's streets in 1895, but its origins are unclear."

This planted a tiny seed of doubt in my mind, could I trust what I thought I already knew? Perhaps there was only one Panhard, perhaps George and Thomas were involved with not just the same model but the same vehicle.

No, too silly by far! But the idea just would not go away, and as I went about my business, especially when out alone, walking in the hills, the seed sprouted and grew into a proper wee drama with three principal characters, George, Thomas and one Panhard-Levassor 3¾ h.p.!

So here is a synopsis of my little work of fiction – what is it Hollywood would say? "Based on a true story?"

Paris in the Summer – a city of style, a city of romance and a city of countless horseless carriages; whether it was the music of the engines or the perfume of the Benzoline young Thomas Elliot was smitten. He knew that he must have a horseless carriage of his own. So once back home in the Scottish Borders he set about finding an agent who could arrange for a motorcar to be sent from Paris to Leith. He found the Daimler Syndicate based in London and they ordered a Panhard-Levassor 3¾ h.p. for him.

Thomas was, however, aware of a potential problem. When his purchase arrived in its packing case he wouldn't know what to do with it – he didn't have any idea how to drive it, no idea of how to start it in fact and there would be no-one near Morebattle who would be able to help. He had however, heard about this steam engineer in Glasgow who had built some trams or something for Glasgow Corporation so he tracked him down and arranged for the Panhard to be taken to Glasgow where the engineer could get it running and check it out. It would then be despatched, with suitable instructions, to Clifton Park in time for Christmas. It didn't quite make it for the main festivities but close enough! The engineer's name was George Johnston.

Thomas is delighted with his new acquisition and he explores much of SE Scotland over the next seven months or so culminating in a magnificent drive from Morebattle to Perth for the Highland Show. Not wishing to retrace his steps he leaves his motorcar and travels home by train but not before he had arranged for George to collect the Panhard from Perth and look after it for him. After a month or more Thomas buys a new more powerful Daimler and sells the Panhard to George. The End

Now all that was left to do was to find the facts that would support the story, or consign it to the waste paper bin!

George Johnston's car should have been the easiest to verify. Solid evidence of its existence is proven by a consignment note. This must be what identifies the machine as a Panhard-Levassor. I can't find it!

It was in the collection of the Royal Scottish Automobile Club but when the Club folded its archive material was dispersed, much going into Glasgow City Archives and some into the University archives. My attempts to track it down were unsuccessful so I have had to make do with secondhand information.

In October 1995 the Herald newspaper ran a 'on this day 100 years ago' article featuring Scotland's first car, i.e. the arrival of George's Panhard in Glasgow. It apparently arrived in Leith on October 28th 1895 and travelled by train and cart to Glasgow. George was assisted in the unpacking by a nephew called Robert and it was evidence from Robert that formed much of the article. They seemed to have quite a problem working out how to start the engine and to steer it around the park. It doesn't sound like engineer George, but his nephew was recollecting events that happened more than seventy years before. Perhaps his memory may have been a little rusty by then.

Now the 'Autocar' magazine of Saturday 23rd November 1895 carried an article headed "Trial of a New British Autocar". This informed the reader that the week before publication George Johnston had taken a 'representative of the Scotsman' on a twenty mile jaunt around Glasgow (in the early hours!) in his newly built motor car, which just had to be the prototype Arrol-Johnston Mo-Car having its first road trial. What a busy time for our George, he had just



Arrol-Johnston, 1895.
Scotland's first motor car.

agreed a partnership with Sir William Arrol to build Mo-Cars, and all this was no more than three weeks after he took delivery of the Panhard.

This photograph claims to be a 1895 Arrol-Johnston car, but it seems unlikely that they were in production before the end of the year given that the first road test was in mid November. So could this be the actual vehicle that drove around the City in November I wonder?

Thomas Elliot's car is a fairly straightforward matter and I missed an important 'clue', right at the moment when I first looked at Malcolm Jeal's list. (*the letters and numbers are very small!*) When I looked again I noticed that there was a date for his car leaving the factory. It

says December 16th and if that's true, and I've little reason to believe otherwise, George's car couldn't be Thomas'. Having said that though, Jeal did leave George's Panhard off his list, in spite of the consignment note, and he does have an odd date for Thomas' motor. Apparently the car was imported on the 27th December, the same day that it was driven around Morebattle. (and it would have been dark at four o'clock!) That's some delivery service!

The whole story seems filled with such discrepancies and such contradictions. Telling the tale in the twenties Thomas made it clear that he bought the car in Paris, yet the Kelso Chronicle reported, the week after that first trip, that the car was supplied by the London based Daimler Syndicate. The newspaper could only have got that fact from Elliot himself.

I made up the bit where he leaves the car in Perth although there is no mention I've seen of the drive home, which surely would have been something of an adventure; and he did have business with George Johnston late in 1896 even if they never collaborated at the end of 1895. George bought the Panhard off Thomas for £110, which was roughly half price.

There is one final question though, a very significant question, which I guess will never be answered. When that Panhard-Levassor left Clifton Park on December 27th to travel round Caverton, Morebattle and home via Linton, Thomas Elliot was not at the tiller. (Elliot drove the same route the following day). The local newspaper reported that, on that first drive, on the Friday, the car carried four persons, Thomas Elliot's parents, Thomas Elliot himself, and,

to quote the Chronicle precisely, ***"the man sent to instruct the latter in the working of the carriage."***

That final question? It's midwinter, it's Christmas for heaven's sake, and Morebattle is in the middle of nowhere.



CLIFTON PARK

Another First

While on the subject of very early cars in the Borders, Mike Webber passed on an item that Sid Palmer had spotted on the 'Lost Scottish Borders' Facebook page. It shows a car with the registration KS1, along with a lot of speculation about it being the first car in the Borders. There's a catch – registration numbers weren't introduced until the end of 1903, so while it



certainly is the first car **registered** in Roxburghshire, that was eight years after Thomas Elliot's Panhard. Nevertheless, it's a fascinating old car and has been identified (by my brother who knows much more about veterans than I do) as a Wolseley 10hp Tonneau from 1901 or 1902. He describes it as 'much more modern than the Panhard, designed by a young chap called Herbert Austin'. Now where have I heard that name before? The Motor Car Act of 1903 required owners of existing cars to register them before 1st January 1904, although apparently many were slow to do so, not believing these new-fangled registrations would catch on! By the way, KS1 now adorns an orange McLaren, which might attract some attention if it showed up locally, although I doubt that's likely!

Restoration Progress by Mark Halsall

The Land Rover has been in our possession for some 27 years, and like most things once the commitment is made you are reluctant to let them go. In the initial stage our son required transport from digs in Currie to Heriot Watt and so the vehicle spent a great deal of its time collecting parking tickets in the University car park. This went on for a period of close on 4

years until his education was complete and earning some money became a priority. At this stage the Land Rover went to my place of work and was stripped down to the chassis. Pressure of work and other priorities took over, and following the shot blasting of said chassis and the required repair, it was put away for close on 20 years. During that period and following my retirement we built a new house and workshop, and the rebuild commenced. As of today, the vehicle is very close to receiving a new coat of paint. All body panels have been stripped some will be replaced where necessary. The engine only having covered 45,000 miles required the valves to be reground and a new rear crankshaft seal. The gearbox however required adjustment to main shaft shims. All being well we hope to have it road worthy in the next few months.

Some background details:

Land Rover Series One, 88 inch, 2 Litre Petrol

All matching numbers even down to the correct wheels

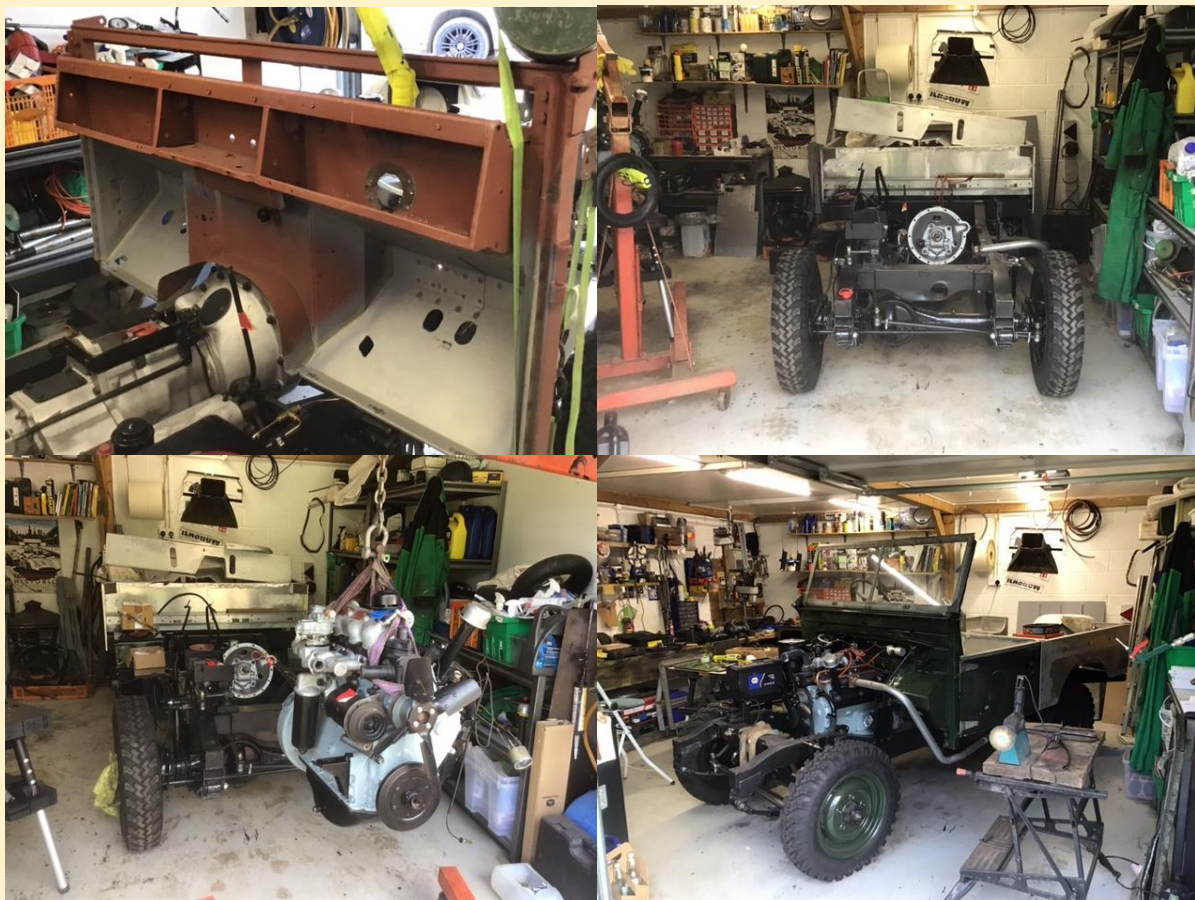
Built 23 December 1957.

Delivered to the ministry of Supply, Desborough, Northamptonshire February 1958.

Original reg no SKF718 First registered 01 07 1984

Purchased from a local farmer 1990

The first three pictures show earlier stages in the restoration, while the fourth shows what's been achieved to date.



Mark's next project is reviving a rather dilapidated early Mini, and as you can see from the pictures, he's made significant progress already.

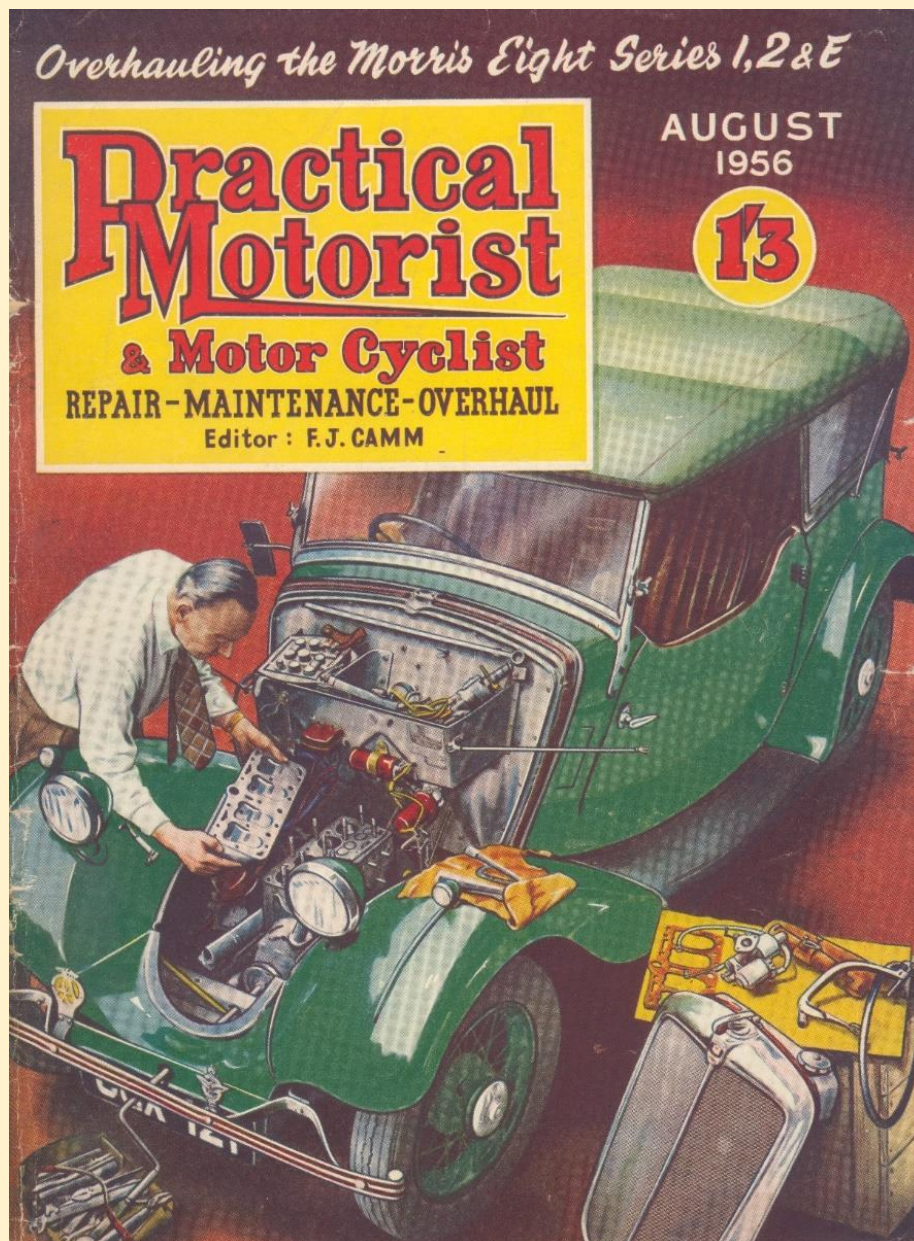


Covered Trailer Wanted to Buy or Rent

BVAC member Bernie Hartnett needs in the near future to transport his freshly painted but windowless car back from painters in West Yorkshire, despite having a normal open Brian James Minno trailer, the journey in late January could be hampered by rain or salt spray and he doesn't want to use a tarpaulin on fresh paint, so he won't be using his own trailer. He wonders if someone might have for sale, to rent, or can recommend an organisation in the Borders that might rent, a covered trailer. The car, a 1963 TVR Grantura, is just a fraction smaller than an MGB GT and the combination will be towed by a Volvo XC60, the trailer would be needed for two days!

Can anyone help please?

If so contact Bernie on 01450 870675 or berniehartnett@outlook.com



Practical Motorist?

In my Christmas stocking, Santa left me a copy of Practical Motorist from 1956, probably because he knows about my Morris 8s. The technical articles are useful if you've got a pre-war car, but what really fascinated me was the adverts. It's obvious there was no Advertising Standards Agency in those days - some of the claims are hilarious. Holt's take a whole page to extol the virtues of 'A completely new repair method' - the 'Cataloy Glass Fibre Repair Kit No.1'. How many of us have spent hours trying to chip away old Cataloy so you can make a proper repair? I can't wait to try 'Fling' shampoo, a steal at 9d (less than 4p) a sachet, and would you believe 'Pliobond' adhesive is strong enough to repair your clutch? I wonder how many people shelled out almost £2 on a 'Cornette', a little gizmo that attaches to the exhaust pipe and might (or might not) improve your fuel consumption by 15%. Sadly, the Mascot Engineering Company in Southall doesn't appear to still be in business (although they have a

namesake in India), so I can't order up one of their precision rebuilt engines for the Morris – shame!

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Repair splits, tears, holed and rusted out metal with CATALOY GLASS FIBRE!

This new CataloY GLASS FIBRE Kit contains CataloY powder, CataloY liquid, 2 forms of Glass Fibre and full instructions. Although CataloY liquid and powder on their own make an efficient filler ideal for the repair of dents, depressions, etc., the additional reinforcement given by GLASS FIBRE increase the tensile strength by up to ten times! This makes it ideally suitable for a repair where the strength must at least equal that of the original metal.

GLASS FIBRE IN TWO FORMS
In the kit are two types of Glass Fibre; Glass Fibre Matting; a relatively thick woven material suitable for carrying the CataloY over large rusted areas or holes; and Glass Fibre Ribbon, thin, closely woven and strong—especially suitable for repairs requiring great strength but without bulk (such as a split wing).

WHEN TO USE GLASS FIBRE
Use Glass Fibre for the repair of rusted areas, badly torn body work, splits, tears and wherever metal has fractured or weakened.

EXTRA REINFORCEMENT
By building up a lamination layer by layer, an extremely strong reinforcement can be made. The first piece of impregnated fibre is laid down centrally over the damage, each succeeding piece being offset to right and left as shown.

EDGE REPAIRS
By using 2 D-clamps and a piece of wood, badly bent edges can be secured in position while a CataloY Glass Fibre repair is made. Always allow an inch or so of material to turn over the edge to give extra reinforcement and a well-finished job.

SOME USEFUL HINTS
Clean off hands, tools, etc., with Loy Solvent.
Mix only enough CataloY for immediate use and remix as necessary as the repair progresses. Glass Fibre Matting can be effective in building up extremely deep depressions with economy.
Where the metal is suitable, a really coarse and effective surface roughening can be obtained by criss-cross scoring with the tang end of a file. This ensures really good adhesion. CataloY hardens in 30 minutes sufficient to smooth down. If convenient leave smoothing for 24 hours to allow maximum curing and hardening.

A TYPICAL GLASS FIBRE REPAIR

1. Clean and well roughen metal surface. Remove paint dirt grease and rust. Replace or tighten up all nearby nuts and bolts, etc.
2. Cut Glass Fibre into pieces allowing substantial overlap. Mix CataloY to smooth thin paste. Use equal parts powder and liquid mix.
3. Without delay apply with stiff brush a thin but complete coat of CataloY to prepared damaged surface.
4. Treat one side of ready-cut Glass Fibre with similar coating, then press prepared Glass fibre firmly into place.
5. If extra strength is necessary build up laminations. Cover patch and surrounding metal with a final coat of CATALOY.
6. When hard, use file or sander to smooth down to blend in with contour. Finish by normal painting methods.

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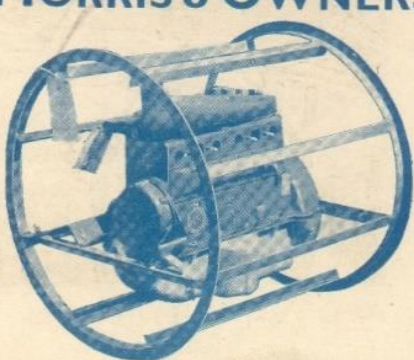
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