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# BVAC News

## August 2020

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### Editor's Ramblings

Well here we are, lockdown is easing a bit, but the limit for outdoor gatherings is still only fifteen people from five households so that doesn't yet allow for anything like business as usual for BVAC. There's a message from Chris Biggs below about plans for club activities and Edward Maitland-Carew is convening the show group to start planning for 2021 at Thirlestane. After the disappointment of this year's postponement, the castle is looking forward to welcoming people back next year.

This month we have a fascinating article from David Watt about a car that went half way round the world before coming home to the Borders, some pictures to illustrate last month's article about the rare Bitter Coupe and assorted snippets from here and there. In case you thought old cars and new technology don't mix, have a look at Tim Jackson's article on smartphone navigation. The FBHVC have also started publishing an e-newsletter (where BVAC leads others follow...) including a request for you all to take part in a survey which aims to arm the FBHVC with the facts it needs to be able to lobby government in the interests of classic car users. I've included key details below along with a link to the full newsletter. I'd urge you to take a few minutes to complete the survey.

As usual, thanks are due to everyone who's sent me material, large or small. I can't write the whole thing myself!

### Getting Things Going Again

[Report from the Club Management Group by Chris Biggs](#)

The last few months have been difficult in many ways for most of us and it has been all too easy to get discouraged by the situation.

Nonetheless the members of the Club Group have been in regular communication, researching, planning and doing our very best to be ready to resume activity.

We have been working on two broad fronts. Firstly to see which events on the published programme for this year might still be able to go ahead, perhaps on revised dates and with some modifications, along with things like our regular monthly meets at Milestone Garden Centre. Secondly to consider transferring some events from this year's programme to next year to be joined by other new additional items.

We have made progress in both areas but at the time of writing I have no big announcements to make. I can tell you that Milestone has promised to let us know the moment that legislation and advice allows them to feel comfortable in welcoming us back as a Club. We are currently working on arrangements with Dawyck Botanical Gardens for an Autumn visit and there is an entirely new event in planning and currently seeking the necessary permissions that I hope to have more news about quite soon.

We are determined to look forward to next year with confidence. With this in mind I hope that we shall have an outline programme to present at the time of this year's AGM whatever form that eventually takes.

In the meantime do get out on the road in your cars and enjoy the good weather when you can find it. I have had a number of cheery waves and headlamp flashes when out and about recently. Keep your wheels revolving.

## Return of a Special Bentley by David Watt

This is a tale which includes Brooklands racing, that nice Mr Hitler, Archie Frazer-Nash and a Commander of the International Space Station, so read on and I hope you enjoy!



For a lot of us, I'm sure, the longing to own a particular car goes back to childhood. That's certainly the case with me. My ambition one day to own a 1950s Bentley S1 was born one sad day in 1970 when my father, Eric, sold his Bentley (chassis No B48EG, reg no TLL 360) to a London dealer who had flown up specially to take away our pride and joy. The car was a

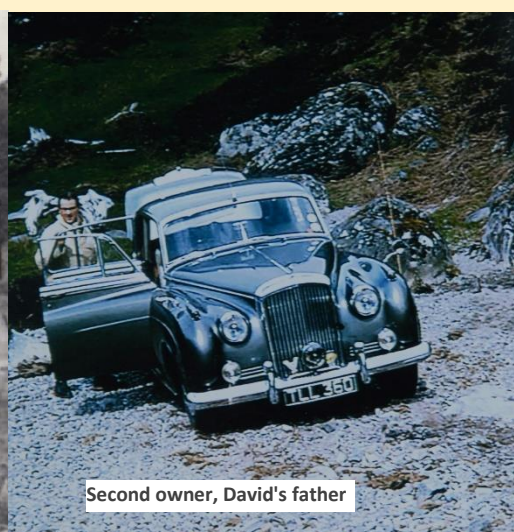
standard saloon delivered to its original owner in February 1957. That original owner was, in fact, my maternal grandfather, Philip Ellis, of Pinner, Middlesex, who sold the car to his son-in-law – my dad – in 1964. So, she was truly a family car.

When the time came for dad to sell her in 1970, he got me to spend two days helping to clean and polish her so that she left our ownership looking wonderful. I wasn't really interested; I was 8 years old and was much more excited at the prospect of the new car which was arriving the following week – a 1967 Bentley T Series. The first indication that something "big" was happening was when the London dealer drove off in TLL 360 and my mother and two older sisters burst into floods of tears! The sense of loss was palpable and the rest of the day was spent in silence. When the dealer rang that evening to say he had had a super run down to

London, the wailing broke out again! I think that was when I vowed that, one day, I too would own a Bentley S1.



TLL360 with the original owner (right) on delivery day



Second owner, David's father

TLL 360 represented so much for our family. Here's why. After seeing active service in the army fighting Adolf Hitler and his gang in North Africa and the Middle East, dad found himself in Greece in 1942. One day on patrol, his platoon was ambushed by Germans in a remote village and dad sustained severe gunshot wounds to his legs, arms, spine, shoulders and head. In fact, for some time he was placed on the "dead cart" along with other bodies and, but for some eagle-eyed soldier spotting his twitching finger, would certainly have died on it.

Back in hospital in Britain, and aged only 22, with a paralysed leg and arm and serious, life-changing injuries to his neck and spine, dad received the dreadful news that it was almost certain he would never walk again or be able to feed himself and to forget any ambitions to get behind the wheel of a car ever again. Now, the thing with my old dad was that if he was ever told he couldn't do something, he would move heaven and earth to do it! Only two weeks later – and grinning from ear to ear – dad got his best friend, home on leave from the army, to bring his father's Rover to the hospital. With some help, dad was positioned in the driver's seat and was able to get the car moving – again with the help of several colleagues – round the hospital compound. When the lady doctor who had told him he would never walk or drive again came out to see what all the cheering was about, dad flicked her a good-natured V sign and, to her eternal credit, she cheered almost louder than anybody! From that moment on, and for the rest of his life, dad was "driven" to enjoy the pleasure of owning nice cars. It took a few years before he was once again able to walk unaided but his determination got him there.

A Lanchester and two automatic Rovers (P4 and P5) fitted the bill in the late '40s and '50s. Then, in 1964, his sights were raised a little higher when his father-in-law, Philip Ellis (mum's father), decided to sell his Bentley S1. My grandfather had owned the Shell over Tudor Grey car from new having bought her from London dealers Jack Olding. Jack was an acquaintance of my grandfather's whom he had met through his good friend, Archie Frazer-Nash. Encouraged by Archie, Philip was a regular spectator at Brooklands in the '20s and '30s - watching the racing rather than partaking in it - and it was there he fell in love with Bentleys, vowing one day to own one. It took him almost 30 years to achieve the ambition!

When the time came to sell TLL 360, he was delighted that she was to stay in the family by going to his son-in-law and daughter and their family. Imagine how good it must have felt for Eric to be driving north in what was now his Bentley, some 20 years after being told that his driving days – indeed, his entire independence – were over. For the next 5 years, the car fulfilled her role as a much cherished family car, being taken on annual fishing holidays to Ireland and the west coast of Scotland, my sisters and I playing games in the back and singing songs. Eric was a mad keen angler but, being disabled and none too steady on his feet, the car was expected to transport him and his rods and fishing gear down some very rough tracks and remote by-ways. She performed her duties marvellously well. She was a much loved member of the family.

By 1970, however, Dad's eye had been caught by the T Series Bentley and TLL 360 was sold. From then until 2006, we heard absolutely nothing about her but she remained fondly in our memories and always came up in family chats. But my dream persisted of, one day, owning a car like her. Then, one day in late 2005, I ran into a man called Ian Johnson of the Real Car Co. in North Wales, one of the best known Rolls-Royce and Bentley dealers in the country. I innocently told Ian about TLL 360 and was utterly amazed when he straightaway looked her up on his computer and uttered the unforgettable words: "I've good news for you. She's still on the road – in Canada – and I know the owner!" He even brought up a recent photograph of the car, now painted white (it had originally been two-tone grey). I was utterly stunned!–

In all the years of dreaming of being an S1 owner, it had never once occurred to me that it might be possible to be the owner of the very car which had inspired my dream in the first place. But now I did start to think along those lines. It turned out she was owned by retired Air Canada pilot Roger Hadfield and his wife, Eleanor. So I wrote to them. And I told them all about the first 14 years of the car's history. And I suggested that, if they ever came to sell her, they might like to speak to me first. After a couple of weeks, I received a lovely letter from Roger in which he explained that the London dealer who had taken the car from us in 1970 had sold her to a gentleman from the Canadian Consulate in London. He had taken her back to Canada with him in 1973 where she subsequently passed to another owner who drove her throughout the harsh Canadian winters on salty roads. By the time Roger came across her, major restoration work to the bodywork was necessary. Roger is one of Canada's foremost Rolls-Royce and Bentley enthusiasts and experts. The restoration work was carried out to the highest standards, including a terrific paint job (albeit in white!). At first, Roger said the car was promised to his son, Chris Hadfield, who was Canada's first astronaut and was in training to become Commander of the International Space Station, a role he subsequently took up in



In Canada reunited with TLL 360 with Roger & Eleanor Hadfield

2012. You may remember him – he famously took his guitar into space with him and became a major hit on social media by playing David Bowie’s song “Space Oddity” (“Ground Control to Major Tom...”) from the viewing room of the Space Station. Look him up on YouTube where there are lots of fascinating videos about life in space.

To cut a long story short, their plans subsequently and happily changed and I received another letter two months later to say that there was only one person in the world they would sell the car to – and that was me as the grandson of the original owner. Imagine my excitement! I flew to Toronto to meet the Hadfields and shake hands on the deal. They instantly became firm friends and, in fact, have since been over to the Borders three times to visit us here. Then began a tortuous six month, red tape-filled operation to ship the car back to the UK. If you’ve ever done it, you will know what I mean! Finally, on a sunny day in September 2006, we had the joy of unloading my (my!) Bentley out of the shipping container and had a wonderful drive back to the Borders. I now knew for certain how dad must have felt driving north from London 42 years earlier. And, let me tell you, it felt GOOD! Sadly dad died 5 years before this all happened but mum was still with us then and able to share the excitement we felt. She told us that nothing would have given dad more pleasure than to see the old car back with the family.



One of the car’s first duties was to be the official car at my nephew Mark’s wedding in the Highlands. It was a thrill to drive him and his lovely bride, Gill, in his great grandfather’s car.

Next time you see us and the Bentley at a BVAC event, you’ll know why TLL 360 means so much to us.

## Bitter Pictures by Esta-jane Middling, Letitia Mace and Rob Jenner

Here are some illustrations held over from last month for Letitia Mace’s article about the Bitter Coupe.

At the auction...





On the road to Orkney...



In Orkney (and how spark plugs **shouldn't** look!)...





The Bitter stand at the NEC, November 2019...



## National Historic Vehicle Survey (copy from FBHVC)

**Please complete the National Historic Vehicle Survey to keep transport heritage on our roads.**

The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs are having to make the case for historic vehicles retaining their current access and freedoms on our roads more and more strongly in coming years, as we navigate the most challenging period in our history. In order to defend the future of historic vehicles, they need your help by completing this crucial survey.

The Yorkshire Post recently quoted Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport as saying "I'm sorry internal combustion engine fans, I think its days are overall likely to be numbered."

A local authority, in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, recently debated a motion, which was fortunately defeated, to cancel its historic vehicle rally and parade.

The historic vehicle community, its events, freedoms to use the roads and even the fuel we use, are under increasing threats and pressures amidst a changing landscape of political and environmental influences.

If we are to defend the use of historic vehicles, then we need to act and act now. The Federation needs your help.

The FBHVC is in the process of carrying out its 2020 National Historic Vehicle Survey, an update to a similar survey undertaken in 2016. If we are to represent the case for historic vehicles in the best possible way we need to have up to date information about the movement and how important the movement is to the economy, particularly in current COVID-19 circumstances.

The answers you give in this survey, will help shape the future for historic vehicles within the United Kingdom for the next 5 years.

The FBHVC aims to lobby Government against adverse legislation and restrictions that may affect the future for historic vehicles. But, in order to achieve a positive result, the organisation needs to have reliable data on the significance and size of the historic vehicle movement to hand.

The survey takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete depending on the answers you give. Please complete the survey in one sitting.

On submission of your questionnaire, you will be given the opportunity to enter a prize draw to win one of the following prizes: A year's Club Insurance policy to the value of £250 including IPT, courtesy of Peter James Insurance, one of three pairs of tickets for the 2020 Lancaster Insurance Classic Motor Show with Discovery, Courtesy of Clarion Events, or one of 15 display copies of the FBHVC's historic vehicle wall chart.

Complete the survey here: <https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/2020-enthusiast-survey> or [click here to see the whole FBHVC Newsletter](#).



## Route Navigation using a Smart Phone by Tim Jackson

I've been using this smart phone [navigation app](#) successfully for several years in the UK, Europe and the US. You simply plan and drive where you want, rather than where a satnav (or Google maps) dictates. It's great for planning trips on scenic backroads away from traffic. I've pretty much binned my old satnav.



Here are a few tips which I've learned for trouble-free navigation:

- download UK maps (or other countries)
- when planning your route on your computer, locate your first waypoint a few 100m ahead of your actual start point to ensure you start forwards
- make sure all waypoints are on the route (zoom-in), and in the correct driving lane (for multi lane roads); double-check route across complex road junctions; Google 'street view' can be helpful
- you need an internet connection to open your planned route on your smart phone; no need thereafter (voice instruction requires a connection, best avoided)
- before setting off, check that your smart phone will exactly follow the whole route as planned on your computer; occasionally, some extra waypoints may be needed
- 'edit route settings' and switch off 'navigate via start'; this avoids starting backwards (second bullet above); I found this frustrating when first using the app
- whilst navigating, the route should always be forwards; if the route line also shows backwards, the device has missed a waypoint and will try to reverse your route; to resolve this, 'exit' the route and restart

Once mastered, real-time navigation works pretty flawlessly, making for relaxed and enjoyable driving, even on tortuous backroads.

Why not register and try the [14 day free trial](#), and see what you think? The annual subscription is currently £18pa. There are periodic offers.

There are other navigation apps, but this one does the job for me. Please note that I'm just a satisfied customer with no commercial interest in this product.

**Note:** I use the 'discovery' route option in **Michelin maps** to locate interesting and scenic roads (marked with a green line) <https://www.viamichelin.co.uk>. Unfortunately, the alignment cannot be 'dragged' (re-arranged).

## New Arrival

Chris Biggs has taken delivery of his 'new' MGB after a frustrating delay due to the lockdown. It's a 1969 roadster in primrose yellow, with an Ivor Searle 2 litre 'fast road' engine. Something to look forward to seeing when club events start again...



## New Classic Business

It's good to hear of a new classic car and bike business setting up in the Borders. Petrol Haven Classics opened a week or so ago in the old French's bus garage in Coldingham village. They aim to offer a selection of interesting cars for hire, storage for classic cars and bikes and servicing facilities. I've had a brief word with Hugh, the owner, and hope to have more information on this interesting development next month, meanwhile you can see their website at <https://www.petrolhaven.co.uk/>.



## Watch Out, Scams About?

An email dropped in to the [entries@bvac.org.uk](mailto:entries@bvac.org.uk) mailbox recently purporting to offer to sell tickets for a number of high profile motoring events this summer. Knowing how little is going ahead due to Covid-19, I was a little suspicious and being a cautious sort of chap, I didn't click on any of the links. When I checked directly with the organisers' websites, I found that indeed several of the events had been cancelled. I'm not sure what might have happened if I'd tried to buy tickets. It might have been a genuine mistake, but you can never be too careful. Buyer beware!

## Quiet Roads

Although things are gradually getting back to normal, we've been getting used to the roads being a bit quieter lately – but not as quiet as these two pictures from the 1930s show. They were both taken in East Berwickshire. In the first the 'Major Road Ahead' at which you are commanded to halt is that well known country lane, the A1. Heugh Head Smithy, long since



demolished, used to sit directly opposite where the B6438 from Coldingham reaches the A1 just outside Reston. I use this junction almost daily (it's only a mile from the house) and it's **never** this quiet! I haven't been able to pin down the precise location of "The Rest Tea Rooms", but I suspect that's also on the A1, perhaps one of the stretches that's been 'improved' out of all recognition. If anyone can shed light, please let me know.

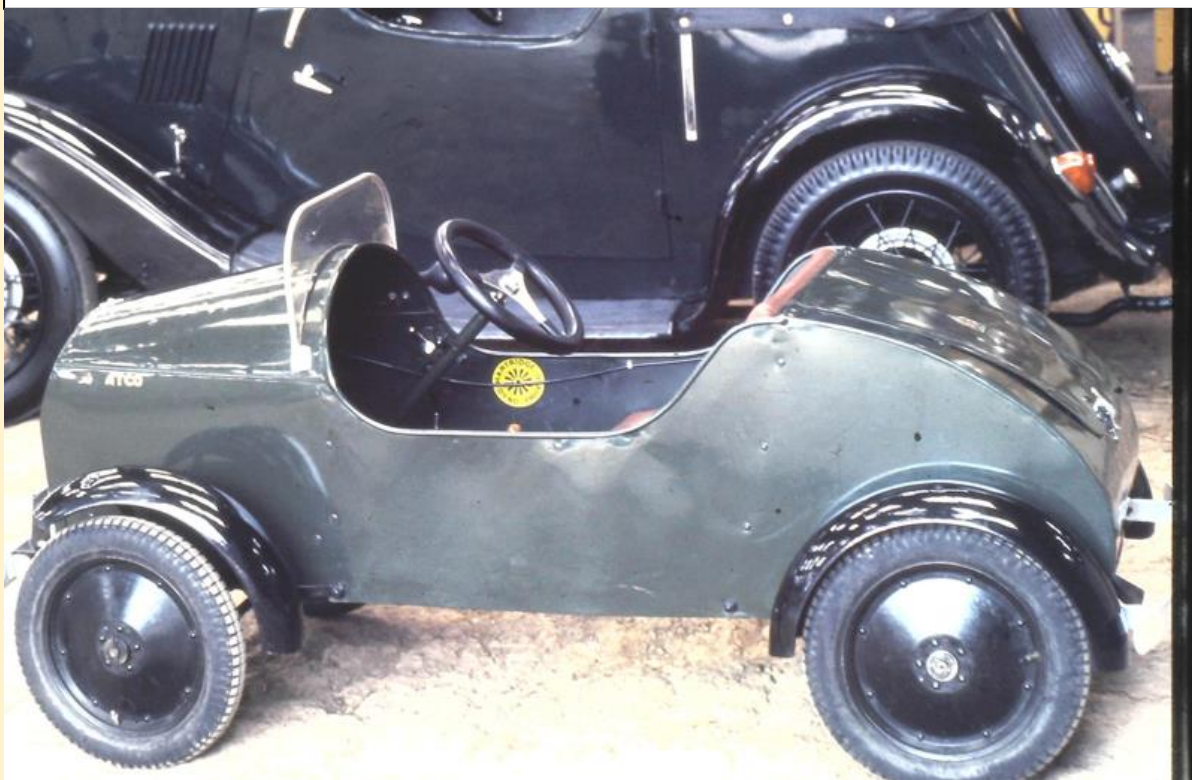


## SADCASE

Fred Magill keeps me informed about doings of SADCASE, of which I assume he's a member. In case you were wondering, SADCASE is the Storrington and District Classic and Sportscar Enthusiasts, obviously a very keen bunch of drivers from West Sussex. I don't think they're sad at all, but then I'm biased. Here's a gem from their last news which they've kindly given me permission to repeat:

Thanks to Colin Smith for sharing this delightful picture of his first car:

"This is my very first car (not including pedal cars) from around the age of 8. My father got it for me in the late sixties and restored it for me. It is a two-seater Atco trainer made in 1937 to promote road safety with cars and kids. It is 98cc with one forward gear and one reverse, a top speed of around 10mph. The clutch was always difficult to use. I still own this car though it is on permanent display at the National Motor Museum Beaulieu. The tyres are now solid as I have been unable to find a tyre size match. It would run again with a little attention to its lawnmower engine but it was never road legal."



They also have an idea for a regular series of articles which we might pinch. For 'First and Last', they invite members to send in details and pictures of the first car they ever owned and their latest (classic) acquisition. I think the 'last' sounds a bit too final, but otherwise a great idea. Anyone out there care to contribute?

## The Old Bridge



Last weekend was the bicentenary of the world's oldest car-carrying suspension bridge, the Union Chain Bridge which crosses the River Tweed between Fishwick in Scotland and Horncliffe on the English side. Although Covid-19 put an end to plans for a major celebration, quite a few individuals, including several club members, turned up during the day to make the crossing. Although the bridge hadn't been spruced up in time for the anniversary, the good news is that the multi-million pound refurbishment will start very soon. This picture by Ian Lindley, reprinted from the club's [Facebook](#) page, shows Tim Jackson crossing in his MG. See more at <http://unionchainbridge.org/>.

Well, that's all for this month, another bumper edition, but ... it's only sustainable if you keep the articles flowing. That's a HINT! Contributions to [entries@bvac.org.uk](mailto:entries@bvac.org.uk).

Clear roads,

David