

CLASSIC SCENE



January 2010

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The next 'Classic Scene'
GOES TO THE PRINTER
on the Monday of the week
preceding the next meeting
Please send articles by e-mail or typed.

Archivist

Ranald Smith
The club has an extensive archive of information
relating to all aspects of classic car ownership
including technical advice etc. To access this,
please contact the archivist, Ranald Smith, at
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Cover picture

*A brace of Morris 1000s at last summers
Fortrose Rally*

THE CHAIRMAN'S BIT

Well I've got through Christmas and have just got Hogmanay to negotiate before everything is back to normal. I have spent most of the festive season either moving snow from one place to another or carrying water out to horses in fields, lovely.

I charged the Grantura up a couple of weeks ago thinking I'll move it around a bit before the clutch sticks solid but I think the snow is a bit too deep for a car with about three inches of ground clearance!

George Macdonald contacted last month to say that he had bought a 1972 Triumph TR6 in black. It's a re-imported LHD model which has been converted to RHD. I shall look forward to seeing it out and about.

There are two new members to welcome this month. Hugh Urquhart lives in Croy and is the proud owner of a 1975 Dolomite Sprint, a 1979 LWB Landrover and the small matter of four Range Rovers! The second new member is David Morgan who most of you will know as the editor of



Motorsnorth, the weekly motoring supplement published by the Courier. David has recently bought a 1936 Riley Kestrel Sprite Special Series sports saloon. David also mentioned in last week's edition the troubles that Saab are having at the moment (he has owned several over the years), having been hung out to dry by GM and struggling to find new owners to take over the business. Having owned various TVRs in the last 24 years I know only too well the consequences when a great car company is poorly run.

Happy New Year!

Michael

michael.oz@btopenworld.com

This Months Meeting

Thursday 7th January 7:30pm. Annual Auction of Motoring related items. North Kessock Hotel.

EDITORIAL

Hello,

Welcome to the ‘Teenies’ or whatever this decade is going to be called. The last meeting of the ‘Noughties’ was a Christmas do at the Old North Inn with Secret Santa and his elves. A good night was had, and we didn’t all suffocate in Sausage Rolls this year.

This month's meeting is the club annual auction of automotive goodies. This is generally a ‘lively’ evening with the chance to pick up a bargain or divest yourself of unwanted Christmas presents. 7:30 pm sharp at the North Kessock Hotel.

The Highland Car Club are running their Great North Winter Challenge over the weekend of the 23rd and 24th of January, centred around the Inverness area. The Saturday common route travels to Inverness via Applecross. The Classification Test on Saturday night includes a mountain circuit, and the event finishes on the Sunday with Driving Tests at Inverness. Further details from their website:

www.highlandcarclub.co.uk

Prior to this, on Jan 20th, there will be a talk by Richard Noble on Operation Bloodhound in



Elgin. This should be a good evening, and there’s talk of hiring a bus if there’s enough interest. Contact John Mackenzie (01381 621180) if you want to go.

Membership renewals are due at the next meeting, but you can save the club some money by opting out of the paper copies of this newsletter by subscribing to an email-only version on our website:

www.highlandclassic.org.uk

This will also save me the trouble of printing, folding and stapling more than 100 newsletters every month!

Callum

editor@highlandclassic.ndo.co.uk

HIGHLAND CLASSIC MOTOR CLUB

Monthly meetings (1st Thursday of every month)

2010

January 7th	Club Auction, North Kessock Hotel
February 4th	AGM and Quiz Night, North Kessock Hotel
March 4th	SGL Group visit, Muir of Ord
April 1st	Highland Printers visit, Dingwall
May 6th	Cannich Workshop Visit
June 3rd	Ice Cream Run to Strathpeffer
July 1st	‘Drive Others Cars’ night—Brokies Lodge, Kiltarlity
August 5th	Scenic Drive to Whitebridge (Avoiding Black Isle Show)
September 2nd	tba
October 7th	tba
November 4th	tba

(Further details to be published in ‘Classic Scene’ prior to the individual meetings)

Local Events Diary

Here are some details of 2010 local events that may be of interest to our members

Jan

- 20th 'Richard Nobles Bloodhound Project'. Lecture in Elgin Town Hall. 7pm for 7.30pm. Free lecture by Richard Noble on his Bloodhound Project where he hopes to reach 1000 mph for a new land speed record.
- 23rd-24th Great North Winter Challenge. Scotland's Monte. Run in association with Highland Car Club. See their website for more details.

April

- 25th 'Drive It Day' 2010. Local run in conjunction with the FBHVC to blow away the cobwebs

May

- 1st Highland Historic Classic Commercial Vehicle Rd Run. Meet in Inverness at 9am for run to Ullapool Contact CharlieMunro21@btinternet.com or 01349 882220
- 2nd Forres Theme Day (New Date!)

June

- 6th Fraserburgh Vintage Car Rally
- 20th Tain Vintage vehicle Rally

July

- 10th/11th Scottish Transport Extravaganza at Glamis Castle
- 18th Knockhill Classic SpeedFair

August

- 1st Moray Muscle Show
- 8th Historic Wheelsl Rally, Brodie Castle.
- 28th Fortrose Vintage Vehicle Rally

September

- 4th Dingwall Street Fair. Contact Donald Mackenzie 01349 861009
- 5th Motor Mania—Grantown on Spey
- 18th/19th Selkirk Rally

If you notice any errors or omissions, please let the editor know.



A new concept from...the USA. Street-legal bumper cars! Classics in their own right, built on Quad Bike technology. I'm not sure that I'd want to travel the length of the A9 in one though!



RESTORATION OF A 1954 RILEY RME



which it turns out was owned by Chris Silver in a previous life) I wanted to see if I had the patience for restoring an older and more difficult car.

I trawled the Miller Classic car guide had decided that the car I wanted was a Riley RM, here I made my first of many mistakes. First I did not read all the Info available, I did not join the club for the marquee I wanted, and I did not investigate the Construction (Wooden) of the car, Instead I decided I liked the look of it, so I wanted one.

At a club meeting of the time I told the club members of my preferred marquee I was directed to the oracle namely Ranald (The Collector) Smith.

Well I Felt sorry for it, Don't you?

Like many members I look forward to the Club Newsletter with anticipation, interest and guilt, Guilt that another month has gone by and I haven't contributed to the effort that others are putting in to its production.

I was stirred into action following a very pleasant visit from Ranald, Miles, Chris and John MacKenzie recently,

They came down to Drum to see what progress I was making with my Riley.

For those who don't know, and there can't be many, I have been restoring a Riley RME for 16 years and only a very few have actually seen it, many may have heard about it, and heard about it but not seen it.

As the intrepid quartet had expressed an interest and braved the journey to see it, I now intend to bore you all with the tale so far, so you can blame them.

It all started in 1992 when I joined the club in 1992 I had just finished restoring a Dutton kit car, (Lotus 7 Replica of sorts



Ranald just happened to have a couple of Rileys, his RMB which he still runs in and a lockup at Hilton Hospital an RME. He bought the RME in the 1980s and sold it to a friend from University, Norman Glen in 1983, Norman dismantled the car with the greatest intention of restoring it, however he lost interest and it was left outside with a tarpaulin over it for a number of years. Ranald took pity on it and took it back but

by Dec 1992 it was in a very sorry state.

The picture shows the car as they say in the sales slip, "AS SEEN".

Being fair to Ranald though he did try to put me off, saying things like it is only good for spare parts and now that you've seen it in daylight I won't be disappointed if you changed your mind.

My second mistake, I did not to change my mind, and a price was agreed I bought it in February 1994, With lots of enthusiasm I took it home where my wife thought I had finally lost what little Sense I had.

The Restoration Begins

Those of you who have restored anything will know that you start by taking things apart, label everything and Photograph everything and put into boxes. Digital cameras were not common if around at all, and 35mm photos filled boxes.

As I dismantled and removed the rusty metal outer I found that the inner timber frame had very little timber left in it, it was nearly all dust. The Chassis however was solid.



I Stripped all the interior and most of the Bodywork off the chassis and with a heavy duty wire brush on a large grinder.(My wife has a photo of me



looking like a panda after one particular session of this) I removed the Rust, painted it with primer then smooth Hammerite.

This Photo was of the car at its most dismantled in primer. I then started the rebuilding, I out all the rusted panels like these...



...and fabricated new ones which were fabricated checked for fit then MIG welded in place.I Cut out what was left of the boot floor and welded a replacement. A large plank of air dried Ash was purchased from a local sawmill and I had it cut into various sections from which I could make the replacement parts.

Then with electric Jig saw, planer and electric file I made each replacement timber sections, one by one using original as pattern. I did have to buy the two A posts and the back window as they were either too far gone to get a pattern from or they were too complicated but they did cost £240.

The whole car is constructed of Ash Timber The sills, A frames, C frame, roof, bulkhead, doors frames and scuttle these are in turn covered with a steel construction screwed on. You replace the timber and screw the steel to it, however each piece of steel had to be repaired, bits had to be let in or the whole thing replaced.



The doors are timber framed and the steel is nailed on top. I needed to replace the bottom third of three doors and two thirds of the forth. I had never skinned a door before so was very pleased with the results.

The front Suspension which is a torsion

rod system, was next, cleaned restored, replace seals, paint and fabricated new copper brake pipes.



The Rear semi elliptical springs were taken off cleaned and taken into the back garden.

Here I dug a pit and placed each spring in it where I battered the !!!! Out of them with a sledge hammer. Each one was paired with the same one from the opposite side to ensure the car sat higher but level.

It was starting to look like a car again.





lid followed.

I stood back and thought I was getting somewhere till I listed what was still to be done. Metal Roof, vinyl cover to roof, engine, gearbox, wiring loom, lights, Semaphore Indicators, windows, door locks, winder mechanism, paintwork, chrome, steering column, steering wheel, Interior etc etc...

...To Be Continued.

Roy Macgregor

Next the steering rack was overhauled and refitted. The front and rear wings were stripped to bare metal patches made and welded in, sills and Boot lip, channel and

Regarding Miles' article in the November edition of Classic Scene (apologies for the delay), I confess to being one of the 'Kildary Five'. As I recall Kelvin Skinner and his brother Hugh, both from Shandwick were also present with respectively their MG TD and Jag XK150. Alas I cannot remember who the other two present were.

Membership must have picked up pretty quickly as the attached photos from 1980 show. They were taken in the car park behind Dingwall High St. and are from a meet and run to Strathpeffer I think.

The MG TD is Kelvin's the MGA FHC in the middle was mine (later sold to another member



Kevin Barry. Where is he and the MGA now?) The MG TF came from Invergordon way, the Riley RM is Ranald's but the others are now mysteries. In the background is my everyday brown Saab 96 and Tom McCallum's Peugeot 504 both of which would be classics in themselves by now!

Dave Charles

30TH BIRTHDAY

Yes indeed Miles, the club is thirty years old. It seems to have slipped under the radar, but October could well have been our 30th Birthday. I cannot be sure that my memory of events from all those years ago is entirely correct but this is how I remember them.

To set the scene I should go back a couple of years further. Ranald Smith and I had known each other in school (he was head boy and I was a cheeky first-year). Shortly after returning from studying in London in 1976 I bought the remains of a TR4A to rebuild. (Oh the naivety of youth. It was a heap of scrap, and only fit for spares if truth be known.) I had heard on the grapevine that Ranald also had a TR4A which he was rebuilding. I accosted him one day in Church St and so was formed the unofficial Inverness branch of the TR Register. I would go up to see his project (which he genuinely was doing), and then we would repair to the bar of the Beaufort Hotel.

I don't remember who spotted the advert for the club, but anyway we decided to check it out. I believe we actually attended the third meeting. Jim Mackay and Tom McCallum were there having attended the previous one, and I think that Dave

Charles was there. Prior to that I think there had been one informal gathering. Thus was born the Highland Classic Motor Club, and those five names are still on the membership list today. Of course many other names have come and gone. In the early days there was quite a contingent from Easter Ross, and so many of the early meetings tended to be north of Inverness, often around the Evanton area. The Skinner brothers, Hugh and Kelvin were founder members and very active for long enough. Kelvin had an MG TD, and Hugh an XK 150, and latterly a Healey 100/6. Dave Charles is still with us today as an honorary member. (Hi Dave). If Dave had a fault, it was that he couldn't bear to see a car scrapped. Good sentiment, but it meant that we would go and "rescue" some heap of garbage from behind a barn on frequent occasions. Back in those days we had plenty of enthusiasm but limited equipment. We would borrow Jim's trailer which was just a modified caravan chassis with no ramps, along with some bits of tow rope and set off on these missions to save some rusted seized heap. Dave wasn't alone, and in truth we were all guilty.

Many a Saturday was spent with Dave or Ranald, towing some illegal banger home. We would get covered in mud and oil, but



it was good crack and it always ended up in a bar somewhere. Nowadays it's too sophisticated with trailers equipped with wimp devices like ramps and winches. We did things the hard way because we had to. Of course we could take out bolts with our teeth, and tear sheet steel with our bare hands too. Ahem

Having formed the club there was an initial burst of enthusiasm, and the first years produced quite a few events. I remember an Autotest at the Evanton Airdrome and there were about ten cars there, some classics, some moderns, and some in between like my old 2.5 PI. Rumour has it that only one "classic" had a tax disc!

There were also some more adventurous outings. There was an overnight at Ullapool when we stayed at the Arch Inn, and managed to get ejected from the bar at about one in the morning because we wouldn't stop singing and carrying on. Mr Smith came down to breakfast the next morning but didn't eat any as I recall! There was another overnighter at Gairloch, staying at the Old Inn, and carrying on to Inverewe Gardens the next morning where we had an autotest and "concours" shown in the photo (delusions of grandeur or what?).

The line up is as follows; Ian Fraser; MGB, Dave Charles; MGA, Richie MacDonald; MGA (Richie used to run around with a licence plate that read MGA 627; if you checked his tax disc the vehicle was actually MAG 627F!!), Bryan McIlwraith; Triumph Vitesse, Bill Ritchie; Hudson Terraplane, Tom McCallum; Froggy Sprite.

The mid eighties saw a bit of a decline in the club fortunes. Numbers attending fell away, mostly I believe because we were caught up in more mundane things like bringing up kids, and also house-building. This was the boom period for the self-build houses, and several of us were doing it. I remember many a meeting where the handful that were there spent most of the time talking about joists, trusses and dwangs, and cars weren't mentioned at all. For a period the club was daft enough to let me be chairman. Whilst holding this august position I pioneered the two-minute AGM;

"There being no minutes from the last AGM there will be no minutes read or adopted. Any one else want to be chairman? No? Thought not. Mr Treasurer, do we have any money in our account. Yes. Good. There being no other competent business I declare this meeting closed". I'm not joking. That was exactly how it went!

Numbers picked up again at the end of the eighties as the classic car boom began, and a second wave of enthusiasts started to filter in. Gradually numbers climbed through the nineties and by the millennium there was a good solid core of members. Some come and go, others are pretty constant, but overall the club now seems to be rock steady. The membership now spans a broad spectrum of ages, and the vehicles owned are many and varied. One of the club's strengths is that we have always welcomed people whatever their level of interest, or whatever vehicle owned. I hope it stays that way.

Bryan.

THE CANNICH BODY SHOP

Funny I was reminded recently of the saying, what goes around comes around.

This time last year, a work colleague phoned me up to say he had seen a Riley in the scrap yard at Muir of Ord, he told the scrap yard owner not to sell it till a Roy Macgregor had been in to see it.

A couple of days later I went in and was confronted by the biggest pile of junk I had ever seen, Miles Highland Heaps photographs were concourse compared with this. It was at one time an RMA but had been neglected, just a little, and there was a few bits missing.

Once bitten as they say, so I walked away, I am surprised that my friend recognized it as a Riley.

But to help out the Riley Registrar I noted the Registration Number and contacted him to say it was scrapped. I was surprised when I was contacted and asked if I could get the Chassis and body number for his records.

I went back to Muir of Ord a few days later to be told it had been sold, Sold? I

said, Yes Sold.

Nine months passed and while sitting having a coffee and biccys after giving blood at the Blood transfusion service in Drum high school, I got talking to a guy at the same table.

Turned out he lived in Cannich, worked in a small workshop next to his house and made Aluminium bodies for cars. Mainly E types, XK120, Frog eye Sprites, etc, etc.



This gentleman is called Craig Chapman and his business is called CC Coachwork. Craig and his son work together at The Bothy Kerrow Cannich.



(email cc_coachwork@hotmail.co.uk or contact me for phone number and further info.)

Turns out Craig was finishing a Jaguar XK120 at the time, which I did not manage to get out to see before it went to its new owner. However his next project was to be a special built on a Riley RMA chassis, yes the very same one from the scrap yard.

I visited Craig a couple of times and was made most welcome. The last time I was out I saw a Mini with Aluminium bonnet, doors, boot, roof and swing arm rear suspension, an E Type bonnet, and I got the opportunity to roll a piece of aluminium in the wheeling machine. I also photographed the RMA special as it neared completion and attach a couple of the general views.

I have asked Craig if we can have a club visit to which he has agreed and this has been provisionally booked for May next year when he hopes to have

an E type on the go.



In the meantime if you are interested in progressing a Riley based special, it is for sale. If you require any other fabrication work please contact Craig on the info shown above, or contact myself for more information.

Roy Macgregor



Highland Heaps

Restoration projects spotted in and around the Highlands.



Mk1 Escort



Dusty Reliant Scimitar



Viva GT



RS2000

*If you're brave enough to want to rescue one these 'heaps',
contact the editor for more info*



Cars at the 1992 Alness Rally



More entrants at the '92 Alness Rally



1942 Chevy coach—The only one in...New Zealand!