

CLASSIC SCENE



February 2024



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Cover Picture

I couldn't find an obvious cover pic-
ture this month, so I thought I'd
leave it blank and say it was a winter
scene in a blizzard. Instead I found
this picture of the A9. It's been a
funny old winter weather wise but
we did get some heavy snow as you
might expect. And then it was gone.
It was a sad year for snowmen.

Welcome to the February Newsletter

Happy February Newsletter day. I hope you're all starting to think about Drive It Day 2024 and getting those cars ready if you need to. That's one good thing about Drive it day, it gives you that deadline for the winter jobs. However my car projects have halted due to two new hobbies - my boat which is a floating money pit or it would be if it was in the water, plus I inherited a metalworking lathe. It's broken, but also very interesting so I keep tinkering with that instead of crawling about on a cold garage floor. I have a steering issue to fix on the Sierra and some minor welding, axle tube gaiters to fit on the Beetle plus a few wee other jobs. The pressure's on. The 28th of April will be here before you know it.

Carrying on with the Drive It Day theme, would anyone like to plan this years event? Or even just help out? Go on. It just involves picking a route that suits all comers from vintage to performance and shows off our vehicles to an adoring public, then a tea and coffee stop either enroute or at the destination. It can be very satisfying but the hardest part is predicting numbers for the refreshments. If you are taking part, please remember to sign up and do it as soon as you can.

In other news, I've recently got into those on-line car competitions but only when I see something I really want, which so far is a Mini Countryman, Mini Van, Mini rally replica, Audi RS6 (for the exhaust note) and even another Mk1 Focus - a fancy one. I only buy one ticket because you have to be in it to win it, but winning would create the headache of where to keep it. I don't think I'll be calling Gamblers Anonymous just yet. Update - the draws for the above have been and I didn't win anything. However there have been quite few winners in the Highlands in the last year or so, see the cracking Astra GTE in this months newsletter. There's also Mk1 Escort recently won by a lucky someone on Skye, an Aston Martin in Beaulieu, and a Mini won by Aaron from the Inverness Mini Owners Group. I'm sure there will be more. Me please. The thing for me is the tug on those classic car heart strings. Want, want, want. I'd really love a Mini van or Traveller so when the social media algorithm pushes an advert onto my phone, I can't not buy a ticket.

I hope you all enjoyed the auction night, I certainly did, and I'm sure you'll all agree it was great to see Bryan back in action. He's just the best auctioneer of car crap north of Tomatin. There were fewer lots this time and no Skoda water pumps (I think I missed a trick there...) but it all went well, on time and with no damage to any tables. See my scribbles about the night later on in this magazine.

Thanks again to all of you that contributed this month and every other month. I hope we are going to discuss the future of the newsletter production at the AGM, and if you fancy getting involved at some level, big or wee, please get in touch.

See you at the February meeting at the earlier 7:00pm, The Old North Inn, Inchmore.

Your Editor

Chairs Bitty

We had a slightly earlier start for the Auction, due to the opening hours at the Inn. With 2 auctioneers taking turns at managing the auction, there was good banter about the items for sale.

Although some books still sell well, the days of magazine sales appear to be gone. I picked up some Landie spares that Alice later classed as:

hmm and ah! and oooh yeah! I also picked up a post drill for which we now have space in the garage.

Haven't installed it yet as next door neighbour's mitre/circle saw is still taking up space of which I had a loan for the decking. Funnily, he doesn't seem to much in a hurry to get it back. Is that because of it's awkward size, neighbour?



Now here is a sad tale, depending on your view. With the brief spell of snow last week, I decided to let out my inner child (whilst Alice cleared bits of the drive to prevent a slushy mess the next day) and built a snowman. Admittedly, not a very large one, but sizeable enough that I could proudly pose beside it. The next day – Friday, when thaw had already set in – the snowman was starting to lean a bit. On Saturday, and this is according to Alice, the Amazonian head-hunters had been round as it's head has shrunk alarmingly and was also threatening to fall off backwards. By evening my snowman was headless. Sunday, when most of the snow had gone from our garden, there only remained a small clump of snow to remind me where my snowman had been.

Snow usually means that when (if) the little tractor comes down the street to clear the snow, a ridge is deposited outside our driveway. Snow is not an issue for our Landie. Whilst both the Smart and the Merc remained safely in the drive (my fortnightly works "lets all get together in the office" meeting got cancelled), Alice could take out the Landie without any problems. Snow drifts? What snow drifts! Pffff! OK, starting the Landie takes a bit more effort as you have to pump up the fuel first, but cleaning the snow off is lots easier, especially with the heated wind-screen. Can't say this enough, but it is one of the best investments into that vehicle. At this time of year it is the Smart that is really struggling. As a sports car with hood, it is prone to condensation. Ice will form on both side of the material and when the thaw comes it rains, which is why we put a towel over the ignition, so nothing can drip in. We had considered this to be a potential source for the water pooling in the passenger foot-well, but reckoned that if it rains in the car, the dampness should be pretty equally distributed in the car and it is not. We recently added a large piece of rockwool insulation (bagged of course), draped with a towel, to the boot area to see if that will reduce condensation on the single skin boot lid. It does make it a lot quieter in the car, but we will need to keep an eye on this in case it has an opposite effect.

Remember, this years AGM will also start at the earlier time of 7pm. If you feel like playing a slightly bigger role in the club then please put your name forward for a place on the committee. I there is some time left after the AGM, we may have a small quiz.

See you there.

Trish



Highland Classic Motor Club.

Annual General Meeting 2nd Feb 2023 Minutes.

Minutes of the last AGM were passed. Proposed Alice, 2nd Calum

President's Report.. 2022 was the first year where we could properly meet in person again. The Chair thanked the club/committee members for organising the various meets and runs in the past year, with note the meets organised by Roy, and the visit to Strathspey Railway organised by Richard.

Treasurer's Report. There was currently £2634 in the bank. Very little had been spent in the last year.

Secretary's Report. There were currently 71 paid up members, but there were 312 names in total. There appeared to be a core of some 70 who renew yearly, and a great number who sign up but never really engage with the club, don't pay a sub, and don't renew. Discussion ensued as to how these "floating" members could be encouraged to pay and stay.

Committee Members. The committee remains unchanged from last year as does the Newsletter editor and the Webmaster. The newsletter editor was given a vote of thanks for his work.

Passed Member. It was noted that Willie Murray, a long term member of the club had passed away.

MFR Cash for Kids. Miles reported that a large amount of toys and £600 of cash had been raised, for which he thanked everyone.

Cars & Coffee. Miles informed the club that he had concerns about some of the attendees at Cars & Coffee. He felt that some cars were less suitable and he had noted a certain "tribalism" developing. To address this he had posted on Facebook that the event was primarily for pre-2000 classics, and "sports cars". Inevitably this had created a bit of a backlash.

Calendar. The calendar of events was discussed;

March. Social evening. Zak offered the use of the pavilion in Avoch. A small contribution for heating would be required and it was agreed that a 50p charge per head would cover this.

April. A visit to Loch Ness Restorations. Also Drive it Day on 23rd.

May. Richard agreed to organise a run. Also BID day 20th May

June. Run to Ullapool. (maybe buy chips?)

July. Bring a pudding. Run to Nairn

August. Run to Grouse and Trout.

September. No decision yet.

Other Ideas. Richard agreed to explore the idea of a trip to the Dufftown Railway. It was also suggested that a repeat visit to the Inverness engine shed should be investigated. Bryan agreed to this.

AOCB. There being no further business the meeting was closed.

Auction

Well I think that went well. It's probably not for me to judge, but we sold some stuff and had a bit of a laugh. As I've always said, this is an evening made eye wateringly hilarious by Bryan's sharp wit, combined with humorous abuse from the bidders. Oh, and we sell some stuff too. I was delighted when Bryan suggested that we shared duties this year and the top hat made another appearance.



I think I was supposed to stack 'em high while Bryan auctioned them off but I got distracted. One item (I can't remember what) sparked an actual rarely seen bidding war. "See, that's how to work the room." says Bryan to me. Lucky with the item thinks I, silently. Sure enough we soon back to tumbleweed bidding.



If I have one complaint it was that we didn't have as much to sell as normal, but it kept us on schedule time as we had to be finished by 10pm (I think it was) for The Old North Inn closing up. There were other complaints about change, like signing on and getting a number, but that makes it so much easier to run so it's probably going to stay. Some people wished we'd kept the bidder also gets the unsold pile rule, but that was removed by popular demand.

I managed to purchase a 12V tyre inflator. Ideal - as the one I bought at last years auction burned out. We did find that magazines still don't sell, but books do ok. Tools and accessories are always popular, household bric-a-brac less so.

Start collecting for next year. I suggest keeping a box in the corner somewhere.



Membership

It's the beginning of the year and it's traditionally time to renew your membership though technically you get a year from when you joined. At £15 it's a bargain, assuming of course that we don't raise the fee at the AGM in February. I'm not too sure how that would work but maybe you will get a bargain if you pay before then? Extra incentive.

Anyway most years there's a bit of fuss around the process of paying fees so I'll talk you through it as best I can. It's all on the website you know.

[Home](#) [Events Diary](#) [Newsletter](#) [Gallery](#) [Membership](#) [History](#) [Forum](#) [Local Routes](#) [Archives](#) [Links](#) [Admin](#)

Membership

Membership is for 12 months from date of payment.

Membership fees are **£15** per year.

Payment can be made by cheque (made payable to 'The Highland Classic Motor Club'), by Standing Order or by bank transfer.

Please send cheques to:

Bryan McIlwraith
72 Lochalsh Rd
Inverness
IV3 8HW

a Standing Order Mandate form can be printed from here [Standing Order Mandate](#) and should be sent to YOUR bank, not to the HCMC.

Bank Transfer details: [Bank Transfer Details](#) .

Please complete the on-line membership form: [On-line Membership Form](#) .

As an existing member I did a BACS transfer. I already had it set up using the details behind the Bank Transfer Detail button above. You could send Bryan a cheque if you must but he'll either hobble down to the bank to cash each one individually, or more likely wait until the pile gets big enough to make the trip worth while. Once the treasurer confirms you've paid, he creates a payment receipt and this automatically marks you up as a fully paid member and gets you on the newsletter mailing list, so if you haven't been getting the newsletter email, you've probably not paid. Been there. Done that. Sorry.

And what do you get for your £15? Well event insurance is the most obvious benefit, but also we usually cough up for teas and coffee on Drive It Day and of course you get this fantastic newsletter. (Detractors can apply for the post at the AGM.) We also give to charities that have come to our attention for whatever reason. If you read Practical Classics you will know how this is interlinked with the Classic scene. Although it's all unpaid, you get a committee, who arrange the years calendar (sometimes with a light touch, I mean reactive in the face of adversity) ad hoc events like the recent Practical Classic get together and of course, Cars and Coffee.

New members can sign up by going to the membership menu and opening the Membership Form which can be submitted online. It asks various useful questions about you classic car likes and dislikes, and most interestingly what languages you can speak. I think this might be to do with marshalling events as you might see elsewhere in this very newsletter.

New Member Form

Member Details

* Surname
 * Forename
 Joint Member? ☐

Vehicle Details

Make
 Model
 Registration
 Colour

Once the form has been submitted, then pay your money as described earlier. The membership secretary decides whether to black ball you or not (unlucky if you are, as it's a low bar) then once your fee is confirmed you can come along to all our meetings and events guilt free. Probably the best £15 you've spent this year.

It's been asked before but we don't do membership cards, being a light touch club organisationally, but you should receive a receipt of payment with your membership number on it. This can be used for insurance discounts and the like. I've received mine, though when I registered HCMC membership with Lancaster Insurance (recommended) they didn't ask me for proof. The only other thing to mention about membership is the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). It is the law that we don't keep unnecessary data on individuals, so you should get an automatic email from the website once a year to confirm your details are correct. Once the HCMC mainframe gathers all your details it generates an algorithm to rival Meta and we can sell targeted advertising. So far our clients include Finnies and HRL.

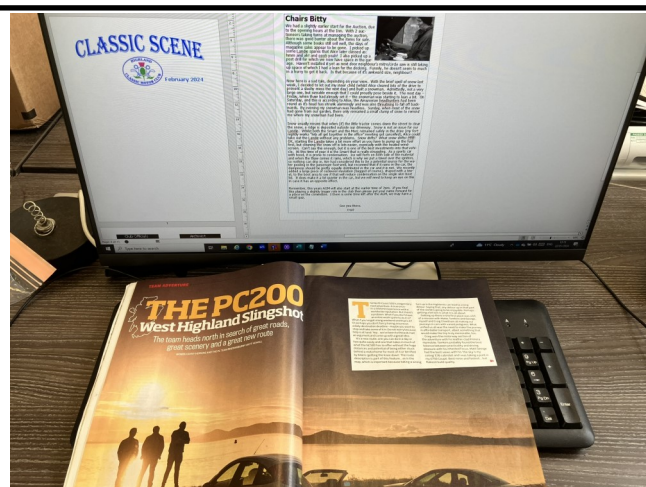
Practical Classics Magazine

The current issue of Practical Classics features the fruits of their Highland journey - page 24, The PC200 West Highland Slingshot. Essentially a one day alternative to

the NC500 and personally I think they've come up with the goods and I fancy giving it a go. Read the article for yourselves. The best way to show our appreciation is to buy the magazine.

The meetup with HCMC and friends isn't in yet but ... "This is just part one. A taste of what's to come for you guys - you're all featured in a forthcoming issue of the magazine!" *

Also unexpectedly Miles' charity efforts at Cars and Coffee gets a side bar mention to the Stirling and District Classic Car Club mega feature on page 12. (Never heard of them. Sour grapes? Moi?) Anyway, it reinforces what I was saying last month about the classic car scene and charity going hand in hand.
 (* Even my Focus?)



Cars and Coffee



It was lovely to see so many people along at Rollerbowl, for the first Cars and Coffee of 2024. There was a great selection of Classics, GTs, sports models and yet another On-Line Competition Winner! Check out his cracking Astra GTE that he will be hopefully joining us in again soon.

We also look forward to seeing the gorgeous Mk1 Escort that was recently Won by a lucky guy on Skye! He's promised to turn up when the weather warms up a bit. Drive Safe and we'll see you all again on Sunday 11th February



Your editor nearly bought this Reliant Ant online before Christmas and lo, here it is at Cars and Coffee.

The 6.4-Litre Chrysler 300C will certainly give you bragging rights at HCMC club nights. What size is your engine then? Oh is that all?



LeJog Rally 2023

Jesse Wigman



The annual Hero Events LeJog classic car endurance rally came past us again, heading north at the start of December. My dad and I and our Dutch friend Mark signed up to do some marshalling at a Timing Control Point. The conditions outside were really cold, with some snow higher up.



Before marshalling we went to have a look at the cars at one of their mandatory 2 hour rest points at the Coylumbridge Hotel. The first cars didn't arrive there until approximately 11pm, we were due to be at our timing control point for 2am (it was a long night). We had a good look around and it's always interesting to see what folk choose to rally in, especially when it's a long distance reliability trial. Lots of interesting cars and there was some spannering going on, things from bleeding brakes to straightening bumpers. It had been the hardest LeJog for many years -



- due to the harsh conditions, they had endured heavy snow and lots of ice further down south. About a third of the entrants had already retired by the time they got to Coylumbridge with many cars visiting a ditch or two along the way! We watched some of the cars leave and then headed to our TC point just outside of Essich.



It had rained hard earlier in the day and it was now well below freezing (-6 deg C) with the untreated back roads being sheet ice! I'm glad that we took my Renault Kangoo 4x4 van as the AWD system was certainly doing its thing to get us up the hill. We found our TC spot and initial thoughts were that they might cancel some of this regularity (section) due to the ice but the control car passed and everything was running as scheduled. It was fun doing the timing cards and most competitors mentioned how slippery the conditions were on the south side of Loch Ness. Some struggled going up the hill to get to our TC. Quite a few cars didn't make it through this regularity due to sliding off and most were late as they had to drive cautiously. It was great craic and I would thoroughly recommend going to marshall or watch. I was back in my bed by 5am and in work by 9am, haha! Unfortunately the event organisers have just informed us that they will be taking a break from organising the LeJog rally for 2024. Enjoy the pictures attached and have a search for "HERO ERA LeJog Rally 2023" on YouTube for a video that our friend Mark made. This will give you a good insight of marshalling at a Timing Control checkpoint.



The Time has Come

"The Time has come " the Walrus said,
" to face up to the truth,
You're far too old to work on cars,
You're not a supple youth!"

Yes my friends. I haven't quite had a Damascene moment, but more of a gradual realisation that my days of crawling around under cars are over.

It's a combination of several factors. The first being that due to a raft of medical conditions I am very weak and easily fatigued. My days of lifting gearboxes are over. Even changing a wheel taxes me to the limit. There is one last job of replacing the steering rack on the Stag, and I've already lined up a pair of helping hands to do this.

On top of this, if I lie under a car and tilt my head backwards too much I get nauseous. It's an age related condition where the arteries that feed the back of the skull tend to kink because they've become less flexible. It's called Vertebro-Basilar Insufficiency or VBI for short, or a Pain in the Arse alternatively.

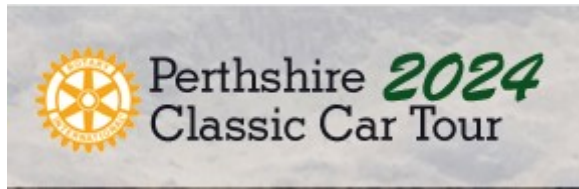
Lastly, the skin on the back of my hands is so thin that it tears at the slightest touch. If I put my hand into the engine bay for something like as not it emerges pouring blood.

I suppose I can still do minor fiddly jobs, but any major mechanicals will have to be farmed out. Not that I'm expecting much needing done to the Stag as I have replaced every suspension bush, and much else besides, and it now has a lovely smooth six cylinder engine. As for the Porsche that's a take-it-to-the-menders car anyway.

The irony is that I now have the best garage ever at my disposal; tons of space, an inspection pit, beams for lifting, welders, compressor, and almost every tool known to man.

After almost six decades of fixing cars it's going to be hard to get into the mindset of paying somebody to do the work but the writing is on the wall. [And in the newsletter - Ed.] Perhaps I can even see a garage sale coming up in the future. After all what's the point of all the tools if I'm not using them?

Bryan.



I was sent this event for the newsletter. If you've exhausted all the beautiful Highland roads why not try Perthshire? Although I'm defaulting to what I class cheeky humour, there are genuinely some great drives to be had in

Perthshire. Mrs Editor and I had a holiday in the Blairgowrie area and we're going back for more this year.

The Perthshire Classic Car Tour 2024, organised by the Rotary Club of Perth, will be held on Sunday 21 April 2024.

We expect over 100 classic cars to assemble at McDiarmid Park in Perth, home of St Johnstone Football Club, before being flagged off by the Provost of Perth & Kinross.

Registration is now open. <https://www.perthrotary.co.uk/entry-form/>

It promises to be a great day out with an extended tour route heading north from McDiarmid Park, Perth through rural Perthshire along the banks of Loch Tay and on to Glencoe where lunch will be served at the Isles of Glencoe Hotel. The return route will be south through Appin to the Connel Bridge, and then east through Taynuilt and Lochawe to Tyndrum and Loch Earn, before finishing at Crieff Hydro Hotel in time for Dinner and the Awards Ceremony with classic cars from Stephen Leckie's collection on display.

With the Dinner starting at the earlier time of 5.30pm and the event closing at 7.30pm, entrants are better able to head home afterwards if they wish. The price of the Dinner has been maintained at a very favourable £25 per person for an excellent two course meal and coffee. The Dinner is informal and makes for a really fun, sociable and memorable evening to round off the Car Tour, so please join your fellow car enthusiasts at Dinner.

Car Eligibility

All vintage, historic and classic cars, including modern sports cars are welcome.

<https://www.perthrotary.co.uk/tour-info/>

HCMC Events

Thursday 1st Feb HCMC AGM Old North Inn, Inchmore. **7.00pm Start.** Join in, review the year, make your complaints (we call that 'any other competent business.' That's your cue.) Help plan the 2024 calendar of your beloved club. The future of this newsletter will also hopefully be up for discussion. Remember turn up or you may be assigned a job! If you have anything for the agenda please let a committee member know. Same if you want to stand up or stand down from a committee role.

Sunday 11th Feb Cars And Coffee - Inverness Rollerbowl, Culduthel Rd. Inverness 2nd Sunday of every Month from 10am-12noon. A Quiet Social Gathering of 20th Century Classics plus interesting Modern Sportscars & Bikes. Park up, buy yourself a hot drink & snack from Rollerbowl & check out what's in the Car Park. Find us on FACEBOOK.

Sunday 18th February Informal coffee and chat meet at Cromarty cinema car park on the third Sunday of each month at 10am.

Some early show dates for your calendar...

28th Apr	'Drive It Day' 2024	Depart from Rollerbowl, Inverness
18th May	2024 Inverness Classic Vehicle Show	
26th May	Highland Folk Museum Vintage Day	
1st June	Ardersier Gala Car Show	
9th June	Caithness & Sutherland Classic Vehicle Rally—John O'Groats	
16th June	Tain Vintage Car Rally	
11th August	Historic Wheels, Brodie Castle	
25th August	Buckie Classic Car Show	
31st August	Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally	
15th September	Caithness & Sutherland Classic Vehicle Rally—Dunrobin Castle	
21st September 2024	Wheels of Nairn. Entry requests to be sent in the Spring.	

Apologies if I've missed anything, and as always, check the club website.