

CLASSIC SCENE



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CLASSIC SCENE

The next 'Classic Scene'
GOES TO THE PRINTER
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Please send articles by e-mail or typed.

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COVER PICTURE

Derek's very yellow Saab
96.
No idea who's driving it.

CHAIR BITTY MARCH 2016

The AGM could be better attended, but members made up for that with some excellent ideas for things to do this year. So keep an eye on that calendar as some events are still subject to confirmation. The club is in good health. A lot of work has gone in tidying up the mailing list which will save the club some expenditure in printing and posting. It also allows the club to fund, or part fund some events that are chargeable, like this months visit. And on the subject of this month. The meet is to the Seaforth Highlander Museum at Ardersier, organised by your editor. For security reasons the Army has requested a list of everyone attending and if you are not on that list you do not get in. You can not turn up on the night, so even if you are just considering coming along you **must** let Alan know. You have been warned!

Not really much to say on the car front this month as they have been behaving themselves (urgh, that sounds as if our cars have a terrible reliability, not true. Just temperamental). The Smart has come out of hibernation early and has been to the garage for some maintenance to replace ageing mounting brackets on the intercooler. A further visit is scheduled for ditto replacements on the secondary airpump. This time it was my bicycle misbehaving. Here I was cleaning and oiling the chain, linkages and anything that looked like it could do with a drop of oil. And just as I was about to declare myself happy and do a last test of the gear changes and....PLING...goes the gear cable. Luckily Alice has a bicycle too, which I borrowed for the week. I got a new cable from the shop in Grant Street, Inverness and fitted it the next weekend. Once I worked out how the gear mechanism comes apart. Easy on the dérailleur, that is just a nut+bolt, but the gearlever?? Eventually found 2 tiny little screws underneath, but I had to take my glasses off to see them. Had to search in the house for the small screwdriver set that Alice uses for your computers (don't tell her), undid the screws without dropping them (did that when trying to refit them), the top comes off and he-presto. The rest was a doddle. Except I tightened up the cable too much and only got 5 out of 7 gears. But by gently letting the cable out I managed to get that lined up too. With hindsight the cable must have been on its way out for a long time as the gear change is now very smooth. And dare I say it, the ride seems smoother too. I found myself wandering around town for my lunchtime walk last week thinking that spring was in the air. It was a beautiful day, warm sunshine on my face, snowdrops coming out, buds on the trees. But no, I am mistaken. Today I am cycling to the station, it is cold and it is snowing. The one silver lining is that it won't be long now before I can turn off the dynamo powered lights on my bike in the morning. As mentioned above, this months meet is at the Seaforth Highlander Museum at Ardersier. It is an early start, make sure you are there by **18.45pm** for a 19.00pm prompt start. See you there.

For the Love of Cars – a TV experience

The following article appeared in the Saab Owners Club "Driver" magazine last Spring; our esteemed Editor caught sight of it recently and asked if we could share it with you all, so here goes ...

It was back in July 2014 that I received one of 'those' phonecalls ... You know the kind ... " I got your number from so-and-so and wonder if you can help ?"

The caller was a very pleasant young lady called Lizzie, who went on to explain that the TV production company she worked for was looking to film with a Saab 96 for the second Channel 4 series of "For the Love of Cars". They wanted to film a road trip from Inverness to Applecross, to sample the local seafood there, and did I know anyone in the north of Scotland who had a 96 (or maybe a 95) in 'pretty good condition' ? I genuinely believe at that point she had no idea she was speaking to just such an owner, but I said I would see what I could do !

Now, my own list of SOC members and others in this part of the world contains only a handful of 95 or 96 owners, and some of their cars I knew were off the road, so a quick call to the Saab Owners Club V4 Registrar ensued to see what he had on the Register and the list of 'possibles' rose to a more credible 30 or so. After a round of phone calls (and some very enjoyable chats with kindred Saabing spirits), the company, Love Productions, had their requested list of owners who lived in reasonable striking distance of the Highlands, whose cars fitted the bill, and who were available on the dates in question and willing to give it a go.

I should mention at this point that the intended route took in the Bealach na Bà ('The Pass of the Cattle'), a historic drovers' pass through the mountains of the Applecross peninsula in Wester Ross in the Scottish Highlands. The road is similar to those through the great mountain passes of the Alps, with gradients of over 20% (or 1 in 5 in old money) and some very tight hairpin bends. It lays claim to being the greatest ascent of any road climb in the UK, rising from sea level to 626 metres (2,054 ft), and is the third highest road in Scotland. By mid-September 2014 the TV folk had decided they wanted to use my yellow 1972 Saab 96 – a decision which I think had more to do with

my proximity to Inverness than to any particular merits of the car itself ! It was around this time that it dawned on me that they wanted the presenters to drive the car too ...

A schedule of filming over two and a half days in early October was set and ... hang on, with barely a week to go, the producer decided they needed a male passenger on the first day. So I contacted a friend and fellow SOC 96 owner in Aberdeen, who was delighted to join us for the day and who, as a retired policeman, had 'previous' in handling the walkie-talkie communications between the Saab and the film crew's Land Rover.

It was a dreich start as we met Jeremy and Jamie, the Director and Assistant Director, at Muir of Ord station, but thankfully the weather improved dramatically as we headed north-westwards through Contin and Garve into the majestic scenery of the north-west Highlands. Now ordinarily, brilliant sunshine is a real bonus in the north of Scotland, and it does make for great television, but it also became an uncomfortable liability. The director wanted us to wear the same dark, heavily padded jackets that the two presenters would wear the next day ... the Saab did not take kindly to the numerous lengthy stops en route, while the TV crew agonised over camera angles ... and the only way to relieve the rapidly climbing temperature gauge was to turn on the heater ... full blast ! Thankfully the engine temperature returned to normal as soon as we moved off, and no coolant was lost.

Filming was done using a camera mounted on the front of the film crew's Discovery, another on a tripod and a number of 'fag-packet' sized cameras stuck variously to the bonnet, doors and rear panels of the Saab (I was amazed to be told that each of the memory cards held two and a half hours of High Definition video). There were stops for scenic shots at Loch a' Chuilinn and Strome Castle, then back to Lochcarron for lunch (tasty home-cooked food at the Waterside Cafe) before the Saab girded its mechanical loins for the run to the top of the Bealach and its magnificent views across to Skye and Raasay, with the distant bellow of rutting red deer stags. Sounds dramatic, doesn't it !

The 96 behaved superbly throughout, negotiating the hairpins and hill climb three times in total until the director was happy, with only the barest scraping of the off-side mudflap on the steepest turn to give any cause for concern. Then home, sadly in pouring rain once we'd left

Achnasheen; so a chamois leather dry off in the garage, check the fluid levels and get ready to do it all over again tomorrow.

The next morning dawned with thick fog as the Saab and I made our way to meet the rest of the crew and the two presenters, Philip Glenister and Ant Anstead, at Inverness airport. We had special dispensation to park right by the terminal, filming there for a couple of hours (really !), waiting for the fog to lift and briefing the presenters on the quirks of the V4 - column gear change (unusual these days !), the Klippan static seat belts (hmm, odd !!) and the freewheel (downright weird, and definitely locked off for the descents !!!). Then the convoy was off, on the same run as the previous day with Ant and Phil taking turns to drive between stops (what a strange experience, watching your pride and joy rapidly disappearing into the distance).

The Saab behaved impeccably again and, apart from some light-hearted banter about the colour, was complimented by all, being variously labelled a 'cool car' and 'fun to drive'. And the offside mudflap stayed firmly in place (a good decision to fit those stainless steel reinforcement strips last summer) ! The weather was excellent once more (apart from thick cloud which quickly descended for a while when we reached the top of the Bealach, necessitating some more 'running' shots from the Land Rover for continuity purposes); but there was nothing like the amount of retakes and hanging around that occurred the previous day (so no overheating). Down the western, slightly less hairy, side of the Pass, before spending the night in Applecross (being extremely well fed and watered at the Inn – some great wines, local ales & whiskies, and a really excellent & enormous seafood platter) ... then an early start next morning for a full Scottish breakfast (also superb) and to film some 'wind-up' footage with some stills by the loch-side, before taking the 96 back over the 'Pass of the Cattle' one more time and a gentler 60 mile run home for a well-earned rest .

The whole experience was really enjoyable ... interesting, hilarious, exhilarating (if at times a bit tedious) and I was delighted how well the 42-year old V4 performed ... but the best bit of all was the 'Bealach' itself, a wonderful driving road in any vehicle (though surely best in a Saab!) **Derek Darnell .**

The 'Nordic Cars' episode of "For the Love of Cars" Series 2 was shown on Channel 4 in May 2015 (I have a few copies if anyone would like one); the whole series is now available on DVD.

LANCIA ENGINE REBUILD Part II.

Last month saw the engine dismantled and various bits cleaned and/or refurbished so next up was putting it all back together again. Lots of magazine items give the good advice of photographing everything so that when it's time to put them back together you will know where it all goes. Excellent advice. So why didn't I do that! "I'll remember where it all went. I know what I'm doing." I'm sure we have all heard and said that. So it's no surprise that I had to sit down and work out what went where several times.

The first item on the agenda was to fit the new rings onto the pistons. No problems with that one, the rings went onto the pistons with ease. Just as an aside, have you ever tried to break a piston ring on purpose? Just make sure you wrap the ring in a big piece of rag first. I knew that they were made of cast iron and the likelihood is that they will shatter rather than a clean snap. When I unwrapped the ring it had in fact shattered into about 6 or 7 pieces, so be very careful when fitting them to a piston, if it does break bits will fly everywhere.

I was advised that the bores should be deglazed and that the best way of doing that was with a honing tool that fits onto an electric drill. A quick search on e-bay reveals that they are very cheap so I bought one and used that. It only takes a few seconds to run the hone up and down the bore leaving a nice smooth matt finish. Just remember to cover the crankshaft completely and to use lots of oil in the bore and then a very thorough clean up afterwards.

Fitting the pistons back into the block did create a problem that I can now look back and laugh at it, but at the time it was a real "Now what the xxxx do I do?" You will remember the pistons with their wonky tops and the flat top to a V4 block, so when it came to easing the piston into the bore they are going in at the same angle as the V. So a ring compressor cannot be used.

In fact the advice in the Lancia workshop manual says do NOT use a ring compressor, finger pressure only must be used. So the leading edge of the ring is eased into the bore, then using fingers only, gradually compress the ring and push the piston into the bore. By the time you have the bottom ring almost completely into the bore, you now have to compress the oil scraper ring. And you have now not only run out of spare fingers you also have to push the piston down into the bore. Tricky, but it can be done.

I wear gloves when working on the car (I'm a bit of a wimp, but I like clean hands) and a couple of times the finger tip of the glove got trapped between the edge of the ring and the block. It's almost like a scissor action. So I took the gloves off, after all, reassembling an engine should be a very clean job. So as I'm squeezing the rings into the piston groove I'm also pushing down the piston into the bore with my thumbs, the piston moves down a fraction....and the fingernail of my left index finger is now trapped between the ring and the bore. Well trapped, I can't release it at all! When the glove got caught I simply pulled my hand out of the glove and was able to ease the piston up a bit and free the glove. But that was for the bottom ring and I could use both hands to move the piston. Now I have only got one hand free and it's the top ring that's trapped my finger. New rings are tight and with only one hand I can't grip the piston to pull it up! Everything is liberally covered in fresh oil as well. Now what do I do? Jane is in but I can hear the vacuum cleaner going so she can't hear me. Looking around for some kind of tool or anything within reach to try and move the piston all I can reach is a Stanley knife! Looks like I'm going to have to amputate my finger. But all is well and I've still got a full complement of fingers. After lots of tugging and being able to rotate the piston slightly I managed to free my finger. But a tiny sliver of finger nail is no doubt now working its way around the engine.

Things progressed quite well for a while. The new big end shells were positioned after a hefty splash of fresh oil and the con rod bolts tightened to the correct torque. Again lots of oil was splashed all over the cylinder bores and the engine turned over by hand to coat the bores.

Next up was to reassemble the cylinder head, this involved the cams being refitted and bolted down onto the head by their retaining clamps. Now came the next problem. Getting the head back on, complete with new gasket, fitting the timing chain around the cam sprockets and fitting the split link back into the cam. The engine is tipped over at an angle of 45° and the head may be mainly aluminium but it's still pretty heavy and every time I got the head nearly into place, the gasket slipped off. The head is held in place by bolts not studs in the block, so I can't hold the head and gasket in place and replace some of the bolts. Not enough hands! And I still have to feed the timing chain through a very narrow opening in the timing case and wrap it around the cam sprockets.

After much thought, studying of the workshop manual and a few cups of tea it's obvious that the timing chain won't fit through the narrow gap between cam sprockets and the head. The gap is too small. After another cup of tea there was a loud clang as the penny dropped. I had fitted the cams back into the head before I'd put the head in place onto the block. Remove the cams and there was plenty of room for the timing chain and a lot less weight to fit head and gasket into place. So cylinder head back on the bench and remove the cams and rocker shafts.

It's now a lot lighter and there's plenty of room to get the timing chain through the head and to be able to hold the head and gasket in place and get a couple of bolts in place. Lancia engineering again. There are two bolts that are fatter than all of the others and these are used as dowels to position the head and gasket on the block. Back on with the cams, line them up on the timing marks and refit the timing chain. A quick compression test revealed an excellent 155psi per cylinder.

Coming up next. Cleaning and servicing the carburettors and rebuilding the inlet manifold, with just 11 gaskets to replace. Lancia over engineering strikes again. And do you think the blooming thing would start!

It's all in the timing!

My Varley Woods

Ranald Coyne

Since I was 18 I was always interested in old cars, I went to school at Sedbergh in Yorkshire, and I remember in my last year at school, before I even knew what Vintage was, a friend and I ran (normal transport at Sedbergh) to Barbon to see the hill climb. I was particularly struck by the Itala, I still am whenever I see it.

I joined the Navy after I left school and my first car was a 1929 Morris Minor, cost £10, I am afraid I rather pushed it and the engine seized up. The next year I went to Cambridge, still with the Navy, and bought a 1930 Austin 7 special from the brother in law of a naval friend. This was succeeded by a Morgan plus 4, a Singer le Mans and a 1928 Lagonda 14:60 which in these days was cheaper than an old MG. A second Lagonda followed; a 1680 drophead to drive while working on the first one. Then another Singer le Mans and a very non original Vernon Derby. I met Su, and life changed forever.

I proposed to Su then went off to East Africa. In Tanzania I needed a car and the best value in 1962 was a 14 year old MG TC for £30. The next year when she finished college, Su came out to Tanganyika and we got married; the best thing that ever happened to me. Two years later with no future in newly independent Africa, and no money, we came back to UK and settled in Morayshire. We sold the first Lagonda for £500, a fortune in these days. A couple of years later we bought a Rolls and sold it very shortly and bought another fairly clapped out TC. We then heard of a Lagonda which belonged to a pilot at Lossiemouth. He had completely stripped it into 4,600 pieces and then in his plane he lost an argument with a hill. I had a very long talk with his father and eventually bought the 4,600 pieces of jig saw puzzle Lagonda for £10 and a promise to rebuild it and keep it for at least 10 years. I sold it 15 years later in running order. A few years later and feeling richer I bought a 16:80 Lagonda, the first fun car for which I paid over £100. I paid very much more for this car in 1991 with a 1946 licence on the windscreen and a pickup instead of a back seat. I spent the next few years restoring it.

In 1999 I retired up to Arisaig, sold the Lagonda, bought a 1952 classic wooden yacht and had a great time sailing about 16000 miles, all around the Western and Northern Isles, over the next 16 years. In 2014 at the age of 75 I decided enough was enough and sold the boat. A few days later I started looking at cars and found that while boat prices had remained static vintage cars had gone through the roof.

I looked at a 1924 Lagonda which both I and the Lagonda Club thought was too expensive. An advertisement for the Varley Woods caught my eye so I did an awful lot of homework and research and went to Leominster and bought it at an auction, the only bidder. I arranged a delivery by road for £360 which I thought very reasonable. Having got it home I investigated what I had bought and was quite pleased with what I found. It appears to have worn very little over the last 95 years. It does need quite a lot of work but nothing major. As far as I can gather it is the only Varley Woods left in the world. I have spoken to an elderly lawyer in Angus whose father bought one new, in 1920 and I have seen a photo of this, a two seater but no one knows anything about it now If anyone knows of another VW in any condition I would really like to know.

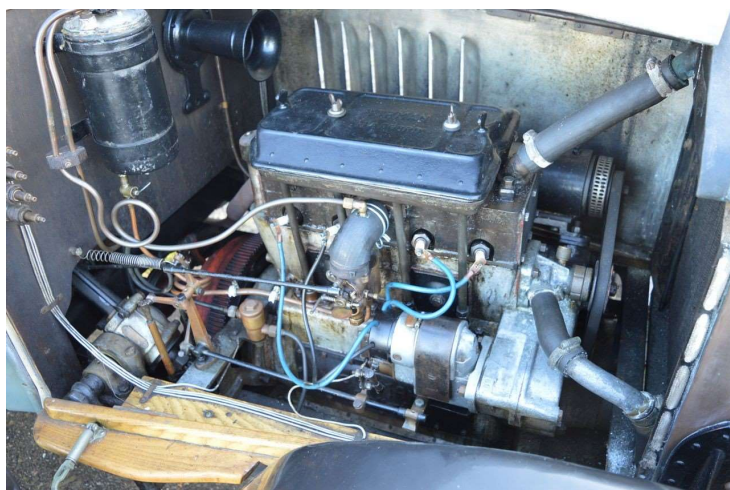


She was bought new by D James of –rdrent, Richmond Surrey in July 1920, and sold on 5th May 1927 to W. Collins, 23 Park Place, Greenwich, S.E.10. I am told that she was unused from 1929 and was next heard of derelict in a field in Cressage , Shropshire in 1954. In a letter to the Vintage and Thoroughbred Car on May 1954, J.A. Ashby (a Lagonda man) wrote that " The death of a publican in a small village near Shrewsbury 4 vintage cars were sold ----including a 12 hp Varley Woods PB 6903, last registered in 1929, in very good condition except for paintwork and tyres. The engine was quite free and could be turned over. Copies of several letters to the Editor of Vintage and Thoroughbred car in May and July 1954 are available.

She was purchased by Jack Gibson, an architect in Cardiff. He did some repairs and I have spoken to someone who has been in the car with him several times and describes it as surprisingly nippy and fairly high geared. He is Kelvin Price of Cardiff, I met him at Beaulieu, purely by chance last September and he has filled me in with a lot of detail. In 1962 Jack Gibson sold the car to John Robinson of Shrewsbury, who, I understand, did a major rebuild. He certainly had the head off and obviously had new cylinder head gaskets because I inherited a brand new one. Two different sources have suggested that he used Rover or Jaguar pistons. Unfortunately John is no longer with us. He sold the car to Alan Brown (17.08.1988) who didn't appear to do very much or know very much about it. The last time I spoke to him on the phone I asked him how much he used it, he said 3 or 4 times a year usually 3 or 4 miles. I purchased the car from Alan Brown on 26.11.2014 at an auction where I was the sole bidder.

When I bought her she was registered as having the 63mm bore but I was assured that she was in fact 69 mm. Shortly after I bought her I got an email from Australia recommending that I contact Derek Jones, now retired who was the last chairman of Dormans before they were taken over. He is a mine of information and told me that this car was a special order, when purchased she was specially ordered with a bore of 75mm, a quick look at the spare cylinder head gasket confirms this, so she actually has a capacity of 2.1 litres. It appears to be several years since the car was last used on the highway, it had a 2010 licence on the windscreen and I hope to rectify this very shortly, with some trepidation as our drive is short but steep

Now 15 months later I am still very happy with the car and know a lot more about her. I have taken a lot of things to bits but never touched the engine it runs so beautifully. The carburettor was a problem it has a Claudel Hobson carb and a spare. I had never heard of them but eventually someone suggested I should contact someone in Orkney who has 3 contemporary Sunbeams and he put me onto the Sunbeam register and many of them have the same carb and a member who has an engineering works, he overhauled the best carb for me with significantly improved performance. I am still missing a speedometer, driven from the front wheel but am on the track of one. I am still waiting for the return of the charging circuit cut out which is being overhauled. Electrics are basic, no dip. Rear wheel only braking, but very nice and fun to drive.



HIGHLAND CLASSIC MOTOR CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

4th February 2016 – 7.45pm. Old North Inn, Inchmore

Present. Trish Brown, Alan Goff, Jane Goff, Callum Beveridge, Mark Wilson, Miles Vincent, Ian Thomson, Alice Brown, Bryan McIlwraith. Derek Darnell, Tom MacCallum, Liz Bligh, Douglas Hird, Ranald Coyne, Ewen Stirling, Ivan Murphy, Grant Anderson, Frank Ross. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, including our new members Ranald Coyne, Ewen Stirling and Ivan Murphy

Apologies. Apologies were received from Ranald Smith Hughie Urquhart, Gordon Jamieson Calum Pearson.

2. Minutes of 2015 AGM. The minutes were passed as an accurate account of the 2015 AGM. Proposer Miles Vincent, seconder Tom McCallum.

3. Matters Arising.

The Club has bought bumper badges which are on sale for a subsidised price of £15. The Chair thanked Ian Thomson for his great work in getting the badges sourced and purchased.

4.Chairman's Report.

The Chair reported that we had a busy year, although 2 visits didn't happen (visit to PortalRover and Cairngorm Brewery). The club visited Burghhead, the engine shed in Aviemore, Inver Models, Autohead Recon and Calum Pearson's Garage, the Chair thanked all those who organised these visits.

5. Committee Reports on 2015

5.1 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported a balance of £2157.70 at year end, he reported that this was down on last year, mainly due to the purchase of the badges, the club banner and funding for refreshments on Drive It Day. Noted that the proceeds from the auction was down from the previous year.

5.2 - Membership Secretary Report

Bryan McIlwraith informed the meeting that the club has at the moment 65 paid up members. There is a new membership system being developed by Callum Beveridge which has allowed for the mailing list being drastically reduced, now only 18 members receiving a printed newsletter in place of 40.

5.3- Events

Miles Vincent informed the meeting that the Club has had a presence at many of the Classic Car Shows across the Highlands, using the Club's events shelter. If any member wishes to use the shelter at events, they should contact Miles. He went on to reiterate to look at the club forum for the up to date information regarding shows and events.

5.4 - Website

Callum Beveridge informed the meeting that the new membership system will be in place in due course, with the facility to search for members and their vehicles. The security and data protection concerns have been addressed as part of the design of this system.

6. Determination of Annual Subscription.

After discussions about the subscription, it was agreed that current level of £15.00 will remain. Proposed by Ian Thomson and seconded by Bryan McIlwraith.

7. Election of Office Bearers.

Liz Bligh proposed to elect the current Committee and Office Bearers, this was seconded by Grant Anderson. All Committee members and Office bearers were re-elected unopposed. Noted that both the Webmaster and Editor would like to stand down. Members are requested to put their names forward at the next AGM.

8. Members Feedback and ideas for future visits

The following calendar for 2016/17 has been agreed with members, although some visits are subject to confirmation:- Please always check the latest club magazine or club website.

Date	Event	Who to Organise
3 rd March	Visit to Seaforth Highlanders Museum/Pub	run Alan Goff
9 th April	Wooha Brewery, Nairn	Callum Beveridge
5 th May	Tarbetness Lighthouse Visit	Douglas Hird / Trish Brown
2 nd June	Drive each others cars, Brockies Lodge	Club membership
7 th July	Black Isle Treasure Hunt	Tom McCallum
4 th August	Regularity Run, Inverness	Bryan McIlwraith
3 rd Sept	Kinloss Air Museum	Mark Wilson
6 th October	Visit to George Sutherland, Edderton	Bryan McIlwraith
3 rd Nov	Pub meet	Club Members
1 st Dec	Quiz & Secret Santa, Old North Inn	Callum Beveridge/Club Members

2017

5 th January	Auction Night, Old North Inn	Trish Brown/Bryan McIlwraith
2 nd February	AGM, Old North Inn	Trish Brown

Other events not run by the club highlighted were:

Drive it Day, 24th April. Provisional start point at the V8 Cafe, with a run round to Beaulieu via Strathglass. Tea and Coffee at the Slaters Arms in Canich. The members agreed for the club to fund the refreshments.

9. AOCB

Xmas: The membership were asked for their views on secret santa, or xmas dinner. The general feeling that the secret santa was good, but the xmas event did need better support, as did the Auction.

The meeting was informed that if anyone wished to organise a weekend trip, please feel free to do so, this was in response to a number of enquiries regarding weekend runs.

There was discussion about the possibility of another drive it day later in the year. It was agreed that this would be organised as a trip to Fort Augustus, possible in September. Callum Beveridge agreed to organise this. The publicity for this would be by word of mouth at the various events the club attends during the year and at this year's Drive It Day. Inverness car show is being held on the 7th May this year and members are advised to register early as last years show was over subscribed.

Grampian Transport Museum in Alford are holding a How Many Are Left event on the 26th May this year.. This is for vehicles who number less than 200.

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EDITORS MONTHLY RANT

Not much room left for my usual rant. (Hooray I can hear you all shout!).

This months club visit is to the Highlander Museum at Fort George. Meet at 6.45pm for a 7 to 9pm tour. Because we are visiting an active Army Base they have required me to supply all names and vehicle numbers prior to the visit. If any of the non email members want to attend you **MUST** let me know before the visit. Also the club is paying for the visit at a cost per person. If you just turn up out of the blue on Thursday and the Black Watch do actually let you in you will have to pay!

And finally. My rant is squeezed onto the back page because I do actually have plenty to put in the Newsletter this month. Quite a bit is my own engine rebuild saga with at least another part to go, but that doesn't mean I will refuse any more. To those of you who have supplied articles, many thanks. To those of you who haven't written a word...WHY NOT. So get those fingers going and send something, anything that will keep the Newsletter full .

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