

CLASSIC SCENE



March 2021



Air An Rathad

Translating as 'On the Road' the March meeting is a talk by Donnie Mackay (centre) on what was Scotland's only TV Car Show.

Club Officials

Chair: Trish Brown
Tel: 01862 832337
chairman@highlandclassic.org.uk
Secretary: Bryan McIlwraith
Tel: 01463 222839
secretary@highlandclassic.org.uk
Treasurer: Ian Thompson
Tel: 01463 790969
treasurer@highlandclassic.org.uk

Membership

Bryan McIlwraith
Renewals should be sent to Bryan at 72
Lochalsh Road, Inverness IV3 6HW
Tel: 01463 222839 (Work)
01463 232144 (Home)
bm@invernessosteopaths.co.uk

Webmaster

www.highlandclassic.org.uk
Webmaster@highlandclassic.org.uk

Editor

Calum Pearson
Bowersburn, Croftnacreich,
North Kessock. IV1 3ZE
Email: editor@highlandclassic.org.uk
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ing. Please send articles by post or
email to addresses above.

Archivist

The club has an extensive archive of
information relating to all aspects of
classic car ownership. To access this
please contact Ranald Smith at
Hawthorn Cottage, 2 Burn Road, In-
verness IV2 4NG. 01463 236459
ranaldsmith@btinternet.com

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Cover Picture

Air an Rathad TV presenters.

Welcome to the March Newsletter

March is usually a hard month to find items for the newsletter and mid lockdown it's even harder so thank you to everyone who sent articles in this month. We had our AGM on Thursday 4th Feb over Zoom and due to the unusual circumstances it was shorter than usual. Well I say usual, in ye olden days, I believe the AGM could be spectacularly short!

Your editor has been hard at work, but actually at work as well as in his garage (get me talking about myself in the 3rd person!) It seems to be a different kind of lockdown to the first one and while the morning traffic is light it's definitely busier than Lockdown 1. To be fair to my employer we have a fancy image scanning thermometer machine, socially distanced work spaces and I get a lateral flow Covid test twice a week and so far so good. A teacher friend of mine got Covid and was floored for 6 weeks and still doesn't feel right. You don't want to catch it.

I am sure all you ardent fans of the newsletter may remember that in the January issue I led with a wee story on electric cars and modifying a Mini into an EV. Well this month Practical Classics lead article is guess what? Electric Classics. I'd sue them for copyright, except I probably nick more ideas out of their magazine over the years.

In the garage, guess what? Yes still painting and sanding the VW transporter but maybe by the time this goes out I should have finished the bits I'm working on. Three out of four panels are done and only because I got an annoying we run on the last one. Am I happy with the results? Well not really. 'Good enough' is what I'd say. I have the rusty dented tailgate to do next and then I can start on the interior.

I don't think I've mentioned my spray gun saga? I was using a Parkside (a Lidl special via club auction) spray gun, but it refused to pass any air. The wee valve was faulty. So I bought another the same (good for spares you see). On trying the new one out, there was paint everywhere, all down the paint gun and over my hand. It turns out the 'new' one was missing the seal around the needle so paint flowed straight past it and made a terrible mess. No problem. The seal was sourced from the old one. Sorted? No. Although it now worked it had an annoying habit of keeping on spraying even when the trigger was released. And then I found it had a terrible spray pattern. It supposed to come out as a nice lozenge shape. This one's shape defies geometrical description it was so bad, and I thought it was just my technique. So I dug out my old fashioned suction spray guns, Two of them had terrible spray patterns too, and this was in spite of serious cleaning and checking of orifices. A wee touch up gun was OK, but the nozzle size didn't like the primer filler and got clogged up. So that was me 5 guns down and despondent. I bought another off Amazon and although cheap and very, very similar to the Parkside ones, it sprayed just fine. It turns out you can blame your tools.

Your Editor

Chairs Bitty

Here we are getting on for the end of February and the cold weather finally looks like it has moved on. It was a cold night outside for our AGM, where we had a turnout that is comparable with meeting up in person. As not much happened last year club wise, there wasn't much to report. We are still in credit, subscription is not changing, neither is the committee and event/meeting wise we decided to take 2021 as it comes along. We do have 2 online talks lined up for the next 2 meets to break up the winter monotony.



We had a decent fall of snow this month of nearly a foot. Nothing as drastic as out west or the mountains, but seemingly enough that the Council only came round to plough the street when the bin lorry needed access, nearly a week later. And the bin men decided that they still did not like the look of the street and ended up dragging the bins up to the lorry at the top of the street. Up until that point it was pedestrians only, including the postie. When it came to our weekly shopping trip, with our Landie getting out was not a problem for us. Just needed to clear the vehicle and brooom, away we go. Although the roads had been cleared in our area, the back road to the A9 was only passable with care as snow drifts had covered the road again. It got better as the day wore on. Then the thaw set in and 4 days later all the snow had gone and the snowdrops came out.

I finally managed to get to the leeks again. Up to now the ground had been pretty frozen solid and with the snow they had completely disappeared. So when they reappeared I was surprised that they had managed to grow a little in that period. Or maybe I hadn't seen them for so long it just seemed that way. Anyway I will need to keep an eye on them as with the warmer weather they can quickly run to seed. I am also keeping an eye on the rhubarb as it is likely to start sprouting. In which case I am going to cover it with a bin liner again for forced stalks.

Yes, our Christmas lights are still on. So is that of our neighbour, though by now we are the only 2 in the street that still have the lights on. I've repositioned one of the strands and draped it over a picture. It gives a very nice backlight effect and I am thinking of just leaving that one where it is. Talking about lights, the council has been busy in the village replacing most of the sodium lights with new LED ones. Which means that the one outside our house also got replaced. It is at least a metre taller and puts out a heck of a lot of light, focused down the way. I am not sure whether I like it. I have a feeling that our neighbours across the road may not, because it shines almost directly into their bedroom.

As mentioned earlier, this month we have an online talk from Donnie about 'Air an Rathad', the one and only Scottish car show. It has been billed as "things you always wanted to know about cars shows, but that they never tell you". As you know by now it is a zoomie thing.

See you there,

Trish.

VW T5 Transporter Buying Guide

A club member got in touch to ask some advice on buying a high mileage T5 Transporter I assume after reading my monthly editorials on painting and sanding.

My van was cheap as it came with a lot of serious dents and it was essentially a non-runner with a faulty alternator, faulty ABS and a terminally leaking power steering pump. The mileage isn't that high, around 140,000 if I recall. Oh, and no service history although I knew the previous owner, so I know it was very over due!

As for how many miles is too many? Well it seems these vans are good for over 250,000 miles if looked after and well serviced. I guess there's no hard and fast rule but the 1.9 and 2.5 engines do seem quite well made. I don't know about the newer 2.0 one at all. Vans with 170,000 miles are still selling for good money often £6-7000 or way more for an actual camper which tells you something.

Which one? The T5 Transporter has many body types, with high and low roof models, long and short wheelbase, tailgate or barn doors. Volkswagen even produce their own camper van, the California, plus there's the passenger carrying Caravelle model. As a halfway house between a work vehicle and family car, there is the Transporter Kombi, which is what I have, with a sliding side door and more seats.

There's another aspect to consider. Is it classed as a van by the DVLA or a passenger carrying vehicle? Mine's classed as M1 which I believe means it can travel at car speed limits. The web seems to be full of conflicting stories but a friend of mine got a ticket for going over 50 on the A9 contested it with his M1 status and won.

Engine choice? Pre-2009 the T5 was offered with a four-cylinder 1.9 TDI with either 84PS or 102PS or a five-cylinder 2.5-litre unit with either 131PS or 174PS. Mine is the 2.5 131PS. The 1.9's are said to be quite sluggish and my 2.5 certainly feels it has enough go to be able to overtake if you needed too. The 1.9 has a timing belt but the 2.5 has timing gears and a direct drive to the alternator via a Gates Coupling - basically a short fat rubberised tube with teeth on the inside.

Mechanically they are pretty robust but dual mass flywheels are unreliable and EGR valves can fail. You can buy a 'delete kit' to remove the latter, but then you might see a very visible increase in emissions. I decided to keep mine. Other than that I guess it's just general consumables. Oh, engine access is a nightmare!

I have found the VAG-COM VW specific diagnostic software invaluable. I would have found it very difficult to bleed the ABS pump on mine without it. It's not cheap though at around £200 for a two car license version.

Body work wise they are not supposed to rust too badly unless they have had accident damage - like mine. The area at the rear of the sills i.e. near the back wheel, is worth looking at. Early T5's have a problem with little galvanic pimples in the paint work. The fuel flap panels rust and you can get wee rust spots where the rubber door stops hits the bodywork. The door handles and tailgate release are made with something that seems to react with the bodywork and cause corrosion where they meet. Mine has that. Big time. The door check assembly can make noises if not maintained, and then eventually fails. So check these things and if it looks good it probably is good.

A double edged sword with these vans is that they really hold their value, so it will cost more to buy one but you'll have a lot less depreciation. I think this may be to do with the very active VW scene and the 'coolness' of the original T2 air cooled campers. I was asking some local VW enthusiasts for advice and one witty reply was, "Buy a Transit instead and treat yourself to a proper holiday with the change."

Out and About

An ex-US Mail Post Van is not something you would expect to see parked in a village on the Black Isle.

This is a Jeep DJ (or Dispatcher) which were built in huge numbers by JEEP under its various ownerships (Willys; Kaiser Jeep; American Motors) between 1955 and 1984. Despite being simplified versions with lighter chassis, two-wheel drive etc, they were expected to run for 20 years or more and many were rebuilt two or three times. They were apparently slow, noisy, uncomfortable and evil-handling, especially in wet or wintry conditions.



As far as I can establish, the various series over the years had straight-four or straight-six engines, so the twin exhausts (and the V8 badge!) suggest that this one has had a heart transplant.

Finally, of course, it's RIGHT-hand drive so that the postie can simply drive along and pop the mail in the box at the entrance to each property without having to get out – which also explains why post-boxes in rural and suburban areas are normally at a uniform height.

Chris Silver

This STI is just round the corner. My son had one and it was a hoot.

Jim Mackay



Ramblings

Jim Mackay

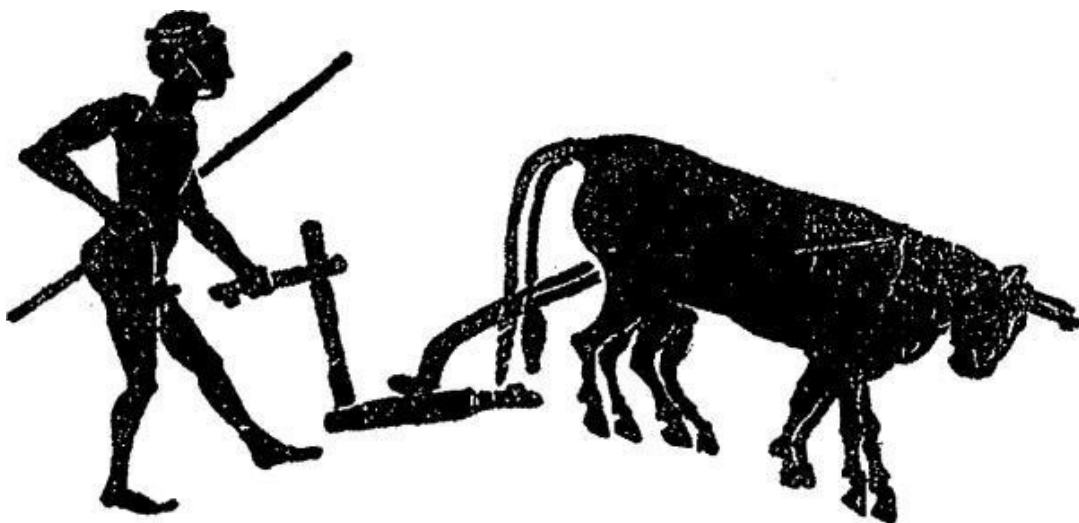
I'm in awe at Roy's output taking a fortnight to a project that takes me years. My Amanco engines are still soaking in diesel 30 years on and my 50's Raleigh is a rough runner requiring a new tube which I have but haven't fitted. I started working on my tractors last autumn but they've been shelved with lock down. The Healey is abandoned meantime and reading Hugh's Healey article hasn't helped the motivation. I do have some grandchildren's bikes which they have grown out of and need to be moved on come the summer. So there you have it, bang up to date but I do have five vehicles on the road but not on the road if you see what I mean.

I took my MGZR for an MoT which had covered 450 miles since the last one. That doesn't mean there was nothing to do as ferrous oxide is a constant regardless of mileage. The cat had fallen apart but it welded together fine and as all the brake callipers were replaced within the last couple of years and the discs are coated there were no issues there. It works out at about 10 pence per mile for the MoT! I remember Samantha costing £1 per mile one year. I did contemplate laying up the MG and replacing with an electric town car. I could have a Nissan Leaf with a range of 50 miles which would be adequate but then I read an article written in 1895 which stated that electric vehicles (I say "vehicle" because the word "car" was not coined) run on accumulators had a range of 50 miles. Add to the equation that I live on a hill and the cheap electric car just isn't a goer. Now a Tesla or similar is quite different and that instant power will be addictive and expensive.

Congratulations to Trish on winning Bryans quiz. It was a couple of days before I had some spare time to complete it despite one clue going up the stairs before going along the corridor! Was that boustrophedon? It appears the word was derived from the route an ox takes whilst ploughing. These Greeks were far more advanced than I thought because it wasn't until 1968 that we bought a reversible plough. And then it dawned on me that these ancient ploughs were no more than a prong which marked the soil enough to plant seeds in.

Cheers,

Jim MacKay.



Ancient Greek Plough.
(Gerhard, *Trinkschalen und Gefässe*, pl. 1.)



Highland Classic Motor Club.
Annual General Meeting 4th Feb 2021 Minutes.
ZOOM Meeting 7.30

Apologies: Ranald, John McKenzie

Present, Callum B, Ian T, Graeme, Liz B, Calum P, Chris, Roy, Richard, Alan, Alice, Trish, Jackson, Bryan.

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

President's Report.

2020 had been an exceptional and difficult year. It started well with a fascinating talk about Rosemarkie Man by Simon Gunn in March. Then the pandemic hit and meetings had to be abandoned. There were a few unofficial runs by some members, but club activity largely ceased. The newsletter however remained a valuable way to keep us all in touch. At the latter end of the year some Zoom meetings were held which also helped. Hopefully the coming year would be a better one.

Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer reported there was £2164 in the club account. There had been no expenditure on Drive it Day, or other meetings. There was a drop in income from subscriptions of approximately £300. The accounts had been inspected by Trish and found correct.

Chair

Trish indicated that she was willing to serve another year as Chair.

Secretary.

Bryan indicated that he was willing to continue for another year. Membership stood at 45 at this time a drop of about twenty, which reflected in the Treasurer's Report

Committee Members.

Ranald, Roy, Miles, Callum B, Graeme, Calum P (newsletter Editor) all agreed to stay on as committee members.

Suggestions for club activities were invited by the chair.

Cars & Coffee.

Miles reported that there had only been three meetings due to the pandemic. He was unsure as to when the event might resume. There had been an online event for MFR's cash for Kids that had been successful, and the Drive and Wave event at Christmas had attracted twenty cars and raised £630.

March Meeting. Calum agreed to organise a Zoom meeting with radio presenter Donnie Mackay.

April Chris Silver will give a talk on the Black Isle railway

Other Meetings. Drive it Day on the 25th April was discussed. It was felt that a simplified version of the event might just be possible depending on the pandemic regulations being eased slightly.

May/June. Bryan agreed to arrange a regularity run of some sort.

Other visits were proposed (all dependent on easing of restrictions) : a prison visit (Jackson), PLD Smiddy. Ashgrove Body Centre.

AOCB.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.

AGM Review

Calum Pearson

The AGM seemed to work quite well over Zoom. There were a couple of shout out questions asking if we were quorate and on constitution (me - I've never seen it!) and the consensus was that we were, with 14 attendees.

One of the main topics of discussion were the number of members who had not paid their dues yet (including me!) which are still at the bargain rate of £15. You can do this on the club website at <https://www.highlandclassic.org.uk/public/membership/fees.php>

Speaking of which there is an issue with the website displaying 'Internal Server Error' instead of useful club stuff. I'm afraid for now you just have to refresh the web page a few times until it works. F5 is a handy keyboard shortcut.

There is another technology issue in that if you haven't paid your dues we can't really email you the links to our online meetings and even if you are a member there are GDPR regulations to consider. In the unlikely case of you not wanting to receive club emails perhaps you could let someone know. I'm sure there's a better way of doing it but we are a light touch organisation!

As Trish mentioned in her bitty, we are going to have to play it by ear with club events due to Covid, but there was a lot of talk about driving based activities that we could do in a socially distanced way. Bryan even though a regularity run might be possible. Suggested visits were the Thornbush Slipway, Autoglass, PLD Smiddy and the Ashgrove Body Centre.

The FBHVC Drive it Day is scheduled for April the 25th but at this stage it's unclear what form that will take. It is unlikely to be the traditional get together with a tea and biscuit stop.

After the AGM was closed there was a bit of general chat and Graeme Bremner talked about his offshore work on the Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel The Anasuria. It was very interesting and hope maybe just a wee taster for now.

There was one quiz question. "Where's the quiz?" Unfortunately the quiz organiser had been unable to prepare in time due to work commitments so it was cancelled at the last minute, though time would have been tight anyway. I'll gloss over this as I promised not to mention it.



The Anasuria FPSO

The days of yore

Alice Brown

I was reading about Land Rover trialling the other day and a story came back to me. It was about a report in a local rag in the Borders about strange lights in the sky being spotted in the sky outside Hawick.

The colours noted were blue, red, orange, brilliant white and green which came and went over the course of three hours. People were perplexed.

Not so the people of the Scottish Land Rover Owners Club. At the time the incident took place the SLROC were holding their annual Hawick night time safari, an off road time trial. Being off road and a night time event, all manner of lights had been fitted to the Land Rovers. Naturally, as these vehicles merrily bounced their way over the course, beams of light would be send out and up so to speak.

A great deal of hilarity and guffawing ensued when the reports appeared in the paper.

HCMC March Club Night

Thursday March 4th 07:30 PM

By Zoom

<https://bbc.zoom.us/j/97715942778>

Former presenter Donnie Mackay will give a talk on what was Scotland's only TV Car Show 'Air an Rathad' which will be '*s math sin*' (from which the English word smashing is derived). Don't worry long term petrol head Donnie can talk very, very well in English.

Many of the cars featured are the same ones from Top Gear of the period and there are tales to be told if we can get round the non-disclosure agreement. This is a great chance to find out what happens behind the scenes of any car programme, because they're all the same really. Plus Donnie can talk very, very well.