

CLASSIC SCENE



March 2023



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The club has an extensive archive of
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Cover Picture

The cover is our tribute to Willie
Murray, a well kent face who passed
away recently.

Welcome to the March Newsletter

Well that's another AGM passed and I'm still in the editor's chair. No one else seemed remotely interested in taking over and had their excuses prepared in advance. Maybe next year. As I haven't been removed from the post I take it that you are all happy with my talk of Ford Sierra's and emerging classic Focus Mk1's. I'm starting to think about getting one of the Mini's going again this year as that is my favourite all time car and I've owned one since I was about 18. Back then they were still a current car and being a teenager I modified it to extremes. De-seamed body shell, fibreglass front end, resprayed in tartan red with a white roof. 1400cc engine, wildest race cam (nothing under 4000rpm), weber carb. It was a fast thing. Faster than Peugeot 205 GTIs and Capri 2.8 injections. So I guess I was a bit of a boy racer, but I never liked the cruising scene. In my home town of Elgin (mainly) loons used to drive a circuit up and down the High Street in the evenings. The council had conveniently fitted a roundabout at each end and there was the island of St Giles Church to drive around. There were a lot of Ford Escort XR3i's!

And my point? My modified Mini was the beginning of my love of cars which has blossomed into a love of classics. I was thinking about the parallels of my youth and today's youth and the cycle of classic car life. Certainly XR3i's are collectable classics now. The cliché is for older people who may now have a little money to buy the dream car of their youth. In 20 years will members be drooling over Ford Fiesta ST's?

So my conclusion is we should be encouraging these tear away youngsters with their love of cars but like back in the day I'm still not that comfortable with the cruiser retail park scene with the loud exhausts and bang pop remaps. (They should do that the old way with a 320 degree camshaft!) As a reformed boy racer I now object to anti social driving, but everything has it's place and eventually some of these youngsters will drift over to the Highland Classic Motor Club, and enjoy a leisurely club run in their Mountune Fiesta ST.

Enough theorising. In the practical world of your editor's garage I was fixing the clutch pedal on my Sierra (which you all love hearing about) and didn't really find much wrong with the plastic self adjust quadrant. I had a bit of trouble refitting the clutch cable which is when I realised it was pretty much seized! That'll be the problem then. I ordered and fitted a new one and funnily enough the clutch seems much better now. Next on the list is the hesitant engine and stiff steering in th straight ahead position. Plus some rust prevention. And then the Beetle, and then in the summer hopefully a Mini! Roll on 'Drive It Day' on the 23rd April.

One last thing. Remember it's time to pay your subs, a bargain at £15 for a year.

See you out there soon,

Your editor

Chairs Bitty

The AGM did start a little late and we had more to talk about than I thought. This was followed by a fiendish quiz, the first round alone was on Triumph wheel-trims (I ask you, who would now about that, apart from other Triumph owners). Three more tricky rounds followed before we ran out of time. The highest score was less than 50%, which gives you an indication of the level of difficulty. Many thanks to Zak, Ian and Michael for putting the quiz together. The winners will have to think about next year's quiz.



Our Landie has made it back to our driveway. Skimming the manifold made it sit perfectly. A few new gaskets later and the Landie was back together again, but the frapping was still not resolved. We can't see anything amiss with the manifold, but obviously it is not 100% kosher. In the end Alice bought a brand new manifold and studs, which did solve the problem. The vehicle is now so quiet, I did not hear it coming into the driveway when Alice brought it home from the garage! However, the work did disturb the exhaust, which is now clattering off the chassis as one of the hangers has given way. Ah, never one thing is it?

The Merc too had some further attention lavished on it. New rear tyres (again) were fitted as this pair only lasted 4000 miles. There is something going on here. First set 16k, second set 9k, this set 4k? Is there some half life going on? We asked the tyre fitters to also do a 4wheel alignment and check the rear suspension. Both passed with flying colours, so we are still scratching our heads on the tyre wear. Certainly the new tyres took care of the little rear end wiggle we were experiencing, but with the new tyres on we noticed a wiggle from the front. We took the car up to our local garage so our mannie could have a look at the front suspension and 2 arms were looking marginal, so he has them replaced too. It all feels a lot better now, but we are keeping a close eye on those tyres!

I had a bit of a domestic incident. I may have mentioned in the past that our old fridge/freezer is now in the garage. With the very cold weather, I had adjusted the timer on the freezer (the thermostat had given up the ghost many, many years ago) as it was freezing well over -30C and I'd rather not have freezer burn all over the food. But I forgot to adjust it again as the outdoor temperature went back up. So, when I happened to be in the garage for something else last week, I happened to glance at the freezer's readout, which said -2. However, a quick look confirmed that the contents were defrosting. Fortunately, it is just fruit, but it did result in me having to do some emergency jam making, until I ran out of sugar and pots. Only 1 small bag of strawberries and some apples were sacrificed to the compost heap. A quick defrost and clean of the old freezer later and we are up and running again.

This month we are meeting in Avoch Pavilion for a blether at our usual time of 19.30pm. The pavilion is behind the Station hotel and has a wee car park next to it. As it is a private members place only, we agreed at the AGM that there is a £0.50p a head charge to pay towards the lighting and heating.

See you there,

Trish.

February AGM and Quiz - Old North Inn

It has to be said. The AGM was poorly attended. I counted 9 but then two stragglers appeared apparently held up by poor service at the bar. There was even discussion about whether we were quorate or not. For the hard of understanding like me that means having enough committee members to make decisions, as defined in the club constitution. We decided yes.

Proper minutes will appear later when I get them but for now hear is a summary as I remember it.

There was some discussion about the passing of Willie Murray and what we could do as a club, though we understand he didn't want a funeral, but is worth noting the many nice sentiments expressed.

Ian Thompson had sent in his apologies and some financial numbers, and our bank balance is healthy if down a bit on last year after a worthy charitable donation.

Our chair Trish chaired the meeting and summarised 2022 which we all agreed was a pretty good year considering we'd just come out of the pandemic. Roy's visits to Jack Meredith and Craig Chapman were particularly praised as was Richard's trip to the Strathspey Railway. Upon which there was applause.

There are no changes to the committee and I am still newsletter editor. There followed newsletter praise, more applause and my red face.

Membership fees were discussed and will stay at £15 which is good as I've already paid mine. The payment process was discussed as many people find it tricky to follow. We were blessed with the attendance new member Ian McNeill (Welcome!) (He has a Morris Minor.) and so he was asked how he found joining. "No problem." After the AGM I hope he won't be looking for the leaving process!

Membership fees are due! <https://highlandclassic.org.uk/public/directory/a-member-search.php>

The future club nights were discussed. March is a social and thanks to Zack we decided to try a new venue at the sports Pavillion in Avoch, behind the station hotel. We have to pay for heating and lighting which is fair enough so bring 50p each.

April — A visit to Loch Ness Restorations. Mainly motorbikes but it's a very interesting place.

May— Richard Lashley will organise a run out Beaulieu way.

June— I believe we're driving to Ullapool

July— You'll have had yer tea. Bring your pudding to Nairn links buy an indirect route.

August— A repeat drive out to the Grouse and Trout, near Farr. (It's not far but it's not near either.)

And that's as far as we got. December is probably bowling at Roller Bowl, January Auction Night (Who knows, Bryan may return.) and February the next AGM.

Now of course these are all the suggestions, but check the website for the accurate details. This is the master source of information, which we do our best to keep it up to date and I copy events from there into the newsletter.

We got onto discussing events and Miles had a monologue on the types of cars starting to attend Cars and Coffee and he was worried that the magic that makes it so popular might go. There's more on that later in the newsletter.

Drive it Day 2022 had 44 cars entering and cost the club £300 for catering. (I think that's right anyway.) This year it's on the 23rd April and we encourage you to pre-register here <https://highlandclassic.org.uk/public/events/did.php> Getting an idea of numbers in advance really helps with the planning, so please register and register early.

Saturday the 20th May is the Inverness BID Classic Car Show. Entries are now open at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CVS2023>

Calum Beveridge is looking for help to organise Drive It Day. This year would be the perfect chance to learn how it's done. It's not that difficult but just needs a bit of time researching a route that will suit everything from vintage to sports cars, and a venue for our half way cup of tea and tyre kicking social.

Also looking for volunteers are the Inverness BID team for help on the day and/or for the planning stages. This is both a worthwhile cause and worth doing. It's a big deal on the Inverness calendar and you'll be part of that. Again contact Callum Beveridge if you're interested. You are interested you are interested you are interested I am interested I am interested.

And I think that's all I have on the AGM. Hopefully it will tally with the minutes!

And so onto the quiz, set and run by Zack Ian and Michael. Obviously this was really intense and competitive so I didn't take notes. We were 3 teams of three. Me, Alice and Richard. (two of whom have excellent knowledge), Miles Callum and Ian, and then Randal Trish and Bryan. Bryan called someone a dunderhead (it's forgivable, passions run high at the HCMC quiz) so I took great pleasure in renaming their team name the Dunderheads when we scored them. It had no effect. They still won.

Very disappointingly and almost causing mutiny rioting and general unrest, we had to stop at 9pm with two rounds still to go. If we're lucky we might get to run the final two rounds at the March meeting but quiz was run and the Dunderheads are the official winners.

Out and About

The Fiat Panda was in an Italian ski resort car park complete with snow tyres. I edited it on my phone and lost the original, hence the image! I used to hire this model, also Seat Marbello when we had sun holidays in Spain. Cheers, Jim.



SPCT VINTAGE CAR SHOW

HELP AND INFORMATION NEEDED

I saw this post on Facebook and thought it right to share. Most folks I've mentioned it to are already over committed but someone who reads the newsletter might be interested. It would be a nice addition to the calendar.

The SPCT team are looking for information and help from anyone who would be interested in the possibility of starting an annual vintage car show in the stunning setting in the grounds of our Spa Estate. (Strathpeffer Pavilion)

We are appealing to anyone in the vintage car clubs/world for any information, contacts or if you would like to head up and organise the event on behalf of the SPCT, we would be delighted to talk with you.

For more information or to discuss this please feel free to contact the SPCT.

Contact: Fraser Mackenzie

Frasermackenzie@spctteam.com



Austin Healey 19

Jim MacKay

My new front wings were not a pair as I discovered when I trial fitted them. Initially I thought that the front shroud had been damaged but when I put the new wings together it was obvious the top contours were different. Don't they use a jig? Yes they do! I sent one back to be re-shaped and, though not perfect, they fit well enough with a bit of filler!

The second-hand doors fitted well but the bottom edge was curved out too much. When I tried to rectify it, I discovered lots of rot below the filler which would surface sometime on my nice paint. It was a bodge repair with no easy fix so both doors were abandoned in favour of the badly fitting aluminium ones; back to the drawing board!

When Austin changed to cranked hinges the positioning was changed as well so I had to cut out my restored hinge plates, replace and reposition and fit new cover plates. Of course the doors didn't fit but at least the hinges were in the right place, I think.



Cars And Coffee

12th February

Following on from the AGM discussions on reshaping our Cars and Coffee for the Future with and emphasis on pre 2000 Classic/Retro Cars and particularly interesting prestige Sports Cars I'm copying the post from the Facebook page.

Following concerns being raised at the "Highland Classic Motor Club" AGM regarding the direction that their Event is taking we have been asked to make the following requests to everyone attending CARS AND COFFEE - INVERNESS.

As it is their Membership Subscriptions that finance the Event the HCMC ask that visiting Clubs / Facebook Groups no longer display Banners, Flags, Signs etc. and that their followers refrain from wearing Club/Gang Hats, jackets etc.

This is for the comfort of everyone attending and to keep the Event as warm and friendly as possible. They feel that it is starting to look a bit "Tribal" out there.

Cars And Coffee - Inverness was set up for HCMC Members to enjoy a chilled couple of hours together chatting with like-minded owners of pre-Year 2000 Classics, plus the odd particularly interesting modern Sports Car and we would like to reign it back in towards that ideal before the busy Summer Meetings.

As well as all the Classics we have limited space to accommodate some modern sports cars such as Porsche, Maclaren, Lotus, Maserati, Ferrari etc. American Muscle cars and some high quality Show Cars.

It is felt that there are plenty of other local events catering for modified moderns etc. and we would encourage people to support these. We cannot accommodate everyone and are having to make this hard decision to be a bit more specific about what turns up to our Event. This is for everybody's safety and continued enjoyment and we thank you in advance for your cooperation and your understanding.

I trust as a club we all think this is fair. It hasn't been an easy decision to make or message to deliver and there was a bit of a back lash on social media. I think judging by the selection of cars that attended the very next meeting it was the right thing to do.

See the next page for some lovely pictures.



Astra

Jim MacKay

Jamie, my son in New Zealand, booked a month long holiday here during the festive season so I agreed to look after their transport needs. Normally, they would have had the use of the ZR but it went "down the road" two years ago and we've been managing with the campervan each winter: anything or animal that was no longer required on the farm went "down the road" ie sold on or scrapped. I had several choices available, hire, borrow, buy expensive or buy cheap. Of course I decided on the latter, being as it were in my nature. I soon realised that there is no cheap car out there



with an Mot. Maybe most members would consider £2000 cheap and it is when compared with the prices of the thousands of cars on the forecourt down in the Longman. Anything less than that was 20+ years old and waiting to dissolve before my eyes before it could bankrupt me with fuel, insurance and licence costs. OK, so it's a non-Mot then and I'm perfectly capable of doing a quick repair. Well, maybe, some thirty years ago but not now and I have standards!

One of my neighbours had 59 plate, 1.4 petrol, Vauxhall Astra sitting around for a long time so I approached him. He had had the car from new and there was a long list on the fail certificate. He bought a replacement in the form of an electric MG and just didn't see himself ever getting the Astra repaired. He agreed to let me have it just to see it back on the road. It started and I drove it round to my carport. At this juncture, I have to add that my wife, Irene, was not in favour of me spending time on an old car when I could afford to hire one or even buy a decent one. Getting one for nothing didn't seem to have any weight and perhaps she was right. Perhaps.

There was another 59 plate Astra available just down the road. It looked abandoned so I arranged to take it away for nothing. I charged the battery but the diesel lump refused to turn so I abandoned the idea and phoned Tom. He took it away and freed off the engine so it might be back on the road sometime.

Now these Astras are very sound structurally, the suspension components are rusted out but there is little in the way of rust on the body, even where the paint has been chipped; 13 years on and the doors are intact! I replaced brake discs, rear brake pipes and springs, a couple of tyres and a front calliper. The engine leak looked like a crankshaft seal which I didn't fancy doing so farmed it out only to be told it was a leaking top cover gasket. A bottle of additive scraped it through the emissions test and I had an Mot.

I didn't mention the dog which had lived in this car and left enough hair to stuff a mattress but then I wouldn't, would I. Wearing a boilersuit was not an option so I spent many an hour cleaning the interior, even bought a special hair removing gismo. I didn't mention the dents but then I wouldn't, would I? The first owner parked the Astra in a space at the bottom of his garden and one day he jumped out of his van, went into his house and the van proceeded to run down the steep drive. I hit and pushed the Astra round against a lamp-post and came to a stop on the other side of the road! All that carnage I left alone because it doesn't affect the driving and, hey, it's winter and it's dark. Finally, the car was ready for my family to use and it only cost me £800! What! £800. My first car was £57&10 shillings.

Willie Murray

The club is sad to say that on the morning of Sunday the January 29th Willie Murray passed away. It is understood he didn't wish for a funeral service but someone said he might take his final journey in the back of his Traveller.



He was a regular face at shows and events, and so many have expressed kind words and good memories. The Highland classic cars scene won't be the same without him.



Drive It Day 2023

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**Yesterday's Vehicles
Supporting Today's Children**

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See the FBHVC page here <https://www.driveitday.co.uk>

Register for the HCMC event here <https://highlandclassic.org.uk/public/events/did.php>



**Saturday
20th May 2023
11am-3pm**

Come along to Inverness City Centre
and see vehicles from all eras on display at
our popular annual **Classic Vehicle Show**.

Watch the Grand Finale parade of vehicles
pass down the High Street.

Vehicle entry is free but space is limited.
Contact Margaret Laws at Inverness BID
for more information.
e: margaret@inverness.uk.com t: 01463 714550





ROTARY CLUB OF INVERNESS LOCH NESS
CLASSIC CAR TOUR - SATURDAY 3rd JUNE 2023



The Loch Ness Classic Car Tour has become an established high-quality event in the Scottish Classic Car Tour calendar. Once again, we have planned a new route for 2023, this time taking in the odd section of North Coast 500 in addition to other enjoyable and scenic roads in Ross-shire and Inverness-shire including the iconic Loch Ness.

This non-competitive event which allows entrants to travel at their own pace is open to classic and vintage cars, also more modern cars of a sporting nature with the maximum entry being restricted to 65 vehicles (excess entries will go on to a waiting list).

The Car Tour is being organised on behalf of the Rotary Club of Inverness Loch Ness to raise funds to be split, in 2023 between Maggie's Highlands Cancer Care and the Charity Account of the Rotary Club of Inverness Loch Ness which supports many local, national and international charities. As before, there will be NO entry fee, however entrants are encouraged to raise as much sponsorship as possible which will aid the aforementioned charities.

Full details on the event, Regulations, Entry and Sponsorship forms are on the Tour website <https://www.lochnessclassiccartour.weebly.com> "

Entry Forms can be downloaded online or by contacting Nicol Manson at nicol.manson@btinternet.com or by telephone on 07774 695640 (before 8pm please)

-o0o-

HCMC Events

2nd Mar 2023 Social evening The Pavillion - Avoch Meet at the Pavillion - Avoch for the traditional time of 7:30 (behind the Station Hotel see map below)

12th March 2023 Cars And Coffee - Inverness

Rollerbowl, Culduthel Rd. Inverness 10am to 12 noon Every 2nd Sunday of the Month. A quiet Social Event for all Car Enthusiasts. Park up, buy yourself a hot drink and snack from Rollerbowl and check out what's in the Car Park. Chat to old friends and make new! Find us on FACEBOOK.

