

CLASSIC SCENE



March 2026



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The club has an extensive archive of
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Cover Picture

The John O'Groats start of the 2026
Rally Monte Carlo Historique and the
anniversary Monte 100 Classique.

Welcome to the March Newsletter

I don't really have much to say this month, as I've (literally) been bogged down with bathroom DIY. In an effort to get the floor level I have been using laser guides I bought from Bryan McIlwraith at the club auction one year, which was thought provoking on several er, levels. In case any newer members have missed it, club stalwart Bryan hasn't been keeping well and has had to step down from any club involvement. In the end though I found a spirit level and a straight bit of wood worked better, which is maybe why Bryan was selling the laser in the first place, or maybe I just lack the skills.

In between plaster and screed drying, I have managed to progress with the seemingly endless welding on the Panda. It now has a new sill and repaired inner sill on the drivers side. It's not restoration quality, but I'm quite pleased with it and I think my welding and fabricating skills are improving. I think there's light at the end of the tunnel now, or that could just be an arc after-image burnt into my retina, and I am looking forward to getting the thing back on the road. Unfortunately this era of Pandas are notorious for rust so I like to think I have saved this one for another 10 years or so, after which I assume the welding will recommence.

Yet again the Newsletter deadline has snuck up on me and so, yet again it is a bit rushed as you can probably tell by the panic inspired drivel on this page. Mrs Editor wondered if we could go bi-monthly which I hope means every two months and not twice a month. I know other clubs only publish quarterly. Food for thought anyway. I'm still getting the hang of this new software which is forcing me to keep things relatively simple which may be a good thing. And finally for this paragraph, at the end of this newsletter you will find a bit of guidance of submitting articles. Don't be shy. I only regret publishing one article in all these years and that was down to the rather gruesome subject matter, rather than the quality of the writing. As my MOT tester says, "Minimum standards apply here."

In a desperate attempt to fill this last paragraph I looked back at last years newsletter. I was getting my Sierra ready for Drive It Day, which is ironic as this year, that is behind schedule, Richard the Chair (that sounds regal) had a fuel tank leak. The Drive it Day registration 2025 was live on the Newsletter and it still is, but if you follow the link it brings you to the 2026 registration, so get signed up. Getting an idea of numbers really helps with the organisation.

Drive It Day last year was a cracker, with our trip north to the birthplace of HCMC, The Shandwick Inn.

Now what car should I enter this year? I have a feeling it might be something Italian.

Your Editor

Ramblings from the Chair



This month I have a tale of woe for you – all to do with the absolutely awful state of our public highways. In that very cold spell in January, Mrs Chair, driving her VW Golf, was taking me to the Airport in the dark and in thick freezing fog. Between Muir of Ord and Tore we hit, not one, but two very deep potholes (we think). Neither of us saw them despite our rather slow speed given the conditions. Fortunately, no warning light was illuminated and a very brief look at the wheel at the time showed no damage – perhaps we had got away with it. But no, two days later when the car was out again, the low pressure warning light came on (annoyingly, not immediately but after a few miles of driving) – luckily when she was passing through Muir of Ord and Graham Mackay's garage. Thank you Graham for changing the wheel!! So, as I was away, Mrs Chair took the car to a well known national Tyre Centre in Dingwall with the offending wheel and explained about the pothole impacts and could they have a look and perhaps repair the tyre if possible (the spare is a spacesaver – so not ideal). They promised to phone her when the car was ready, but didn't, so after three hours in the cold she returned to the garage to find the car had indeed been sorted. They explained that they had taken the tyre off could find no damage to the tyre nor wheel and simply refitted the tyre with some sealant on the bead. Come back if there is any further problem they said! Actually there was – they had forgotten to replace the spacesaver in the boot, phoning just when she arrived home – Mrs Chair was not pleased! Roll on another two days and my good lady is back at the Airport to collect me – front tyre quite soft. However, she had brought the tyre pump with her and after a bit of inflation we made it home safely. The following day I removed the wheel and was quite horrified to find it buckled on the inside rim, easily seen to the naked eye, and a cut high up on the tyre sidewall rendering it a write off. So, the service from a national tyre centre was truly diabolical – refitting a write off (and dangerous) tyre to a buckled wheel and charging £30 for the privilege. Needless to say, that at the time of writing, I have had no reply to my letter of complaint to their head office. I shall never use them again and can only recommend that fellow Members avoid them like the plague. And for the next shock – a replacement wheel from the Stealers (sorry Dealers) would come in at a cool £945. It's a very nice black and silver multi spoked alloy but only a 16 inch – I shudder to think how much one of those big ones would cost. A search of our favourite internet auction site bought me a near perfect second hand wheel for £200 from Northern Ireland and with another £108 for a new tyre (from the other Dingwall Tyre Centre), the whole sorry saga was brought a to conclusion. On another matter with the same car, I managed to change the oil during a less cold day – and I remember the hassles from the last time I did it. My ramps are too steep to fit under the front spoiler, so I had the car jacked up fairly high on

one side. Then there are nine self tapper Torx screws and three Torx bolts to enable removal of the underbody tray and then a cable and pipe to pull away from underneath the oil filter before it can be removed. Nothing in life seems to be simple these days.

Our next meeting is at the Oxygen Works which is behind the Police Station, just to the side of the Rose Street railway bridge. They have a hyperbaric chamber which can deliver pressurised oxygen (like when divers come up from very deep water) to patients and assists oxygen delivery to tissues with low blood flow. This procedure promotes healing and reduces swelling which is ideal for persons with severe wounds, radiation injuries and carbon monoxide poisoning. I also believe MS sufferers can benefit from the treatment. It should be a very interesting meeting – I look forward to seeing you all there on March 5th at 7.30pm

Regards, Richard

AGM and Photo Night

Richard Lashley

As in previous years, our February meeting was the AGM, the minutes of which can be found later in this newsletter. We had a turnout of 18 members (and three apologies) which I feel was slightly greater than of late – not a huge amount to report and, as a Club, we seem to be holding our own. Membership is fairly static at about 100, similarly for the bank balance which is healthy and it appears that the gathered members are satisfied with the general sense of direction. We have lost two Committee Members (Graeme Bremner due to work commitments and, very sadly, one of our founder members, Bryan McIlwraith, due to ill health). However, we have gained one, John MacDonald – welcome! Afterwards, we had a Photo Night and looked at some old cars which had been presented by members. First up was extracts from Roddie Main's old albums – the first being that of racing Mini's (and his own Wolseley Hornet) at various locations such as the Snowman Rally and other Scottish Championship venues. The second album contained some more general photos of cars at local car meets and included a very young looking Roddie in front of the Ecurie Ecosse team workshop vehicle in that lovely metallic blue colour. We had photos from Calum Pearson, Zak Eastwood and Chris Silver, all showing their own cars (or their fathers) from their youth (and looking very youthful themselves!). In addition, we had a great selection from John Mackenzie – a few showing his (very fast) Mini from the days of when he worked at Jackie Stewarts garage near Dumbarton, his much loved Sunbeam Rapier and much hated Consul Cortina Mk1. However, the 'photo of the night', which generated much discussion, was of his policeman father, himself in short trousers and a Jowett. The photo was taken in 1955 at the bottom of the steep climb over the Bealach na Ba, on the road to Applecross (note the road is unsurfaced) and features, what research suggests, is a Jowett 7 (or 7/17). Apparently this car was fitted with a horizontally opposed, two cylinder, water cooled engine which was renowned for its ruggedness and reliability but did not have a water pump and relied upon a thermosyphon for cooling. It looks to be a very hot day at Applecross and the car has overheated (note the open bonnet) – perhaps the steep climb and slow progress was just too much for the available cooling. [See later in the newsletter for the full story - Ed]

Draft Minutes of the 2026 AGM

5th Feb 2026 at the Craigmonie Hotel, 7.30pm

Members present: Trish Brown, Alice Brown, Richard Lashley, Chris Silver, John Mackenzie, John Eastwood, Michael Fraser, Roy MacGregor, Norman MacFarlane, Roddie Main, Ian Thomson, John MacDonald, Ian Thompson, Alan Goff, Miles Vincent, Callum Beveridge, Steve Hanson, Mark Wilson

Apologies: Calum Pearson, Graeme Bremner, Andrew Card

Minutes of the last AGM were accepted as accurate. Proposed: Roy MacGregor, Seconded: Alice Brown.

Chairman's report. Richard welcomed everyone at the meeting. He briefly recapped the activities of the past year, in particular the drive out to Glen Affric and the interesting talks given by Prof Basham, Tim Loftus and Mark Wilson. Noted that 2 committee members resigned during the year, Graeme Bremner due to work commitments and Bryan MacIlwraith due to ill health.

Treasurer's report. Ian confirmed that overall, there has been a slight decrease in club funds this year by £96.83, mainly due to our purchase of new flags.

At the end of December 2025, the club had £2986.30 in the bank. Trish was able to confirm that she had inspected the accounts for 2025, and these were found to be in order.

Members Secretary's report. Paid membership is remaining steady around 100 members. There are still a few members who pay cash or by cheque. The treasurer reported that the bank is now charging for these pay-in methods. A note to be circulated in next month's magazine to encourage these members to move to standing order.

Election of office bearers:

Chair: Richard Lashley indicated he was happy to continue in this post. This was unanimously accepted by the present members.

Secretary: Trish Brown indicated she was happy to continue in this post. This was unanimously accepted by the present members.

Members secretary: Miles Vincent indicated he was happy to continue in this post. This was unanimously accepted by the present members.

Treasurer: Ian Thomson indicated he was happy to continue in this post. This was unanimously accepted by the present members.

Webmaster: Callum Beveridge agreed to remain as webmaster. This was unanimously accepted by the present members.

Editor: Calum Pearson, via an email to the Secretary indicated he was willing to continue in the post but also 'would be delighted if someone would take over'. This was unanimously accepted by the present members.

It was noted that the editor had moved to new publishing software as the Microsoft product is no longer supported. Committee members reminded the general members that a good magazine depends on members contributing regular articles and submitting them in good time before the due date.

Callum, Miles and Calum to get together to produce guidance to make it easier for members to submit articles in a format that most supports our Editor. Callum to post this guidance on the HCMC website.

Ordinary committee members: Roy MacGregor, Steve Hanson, Andrew Card and Mark Wilson all indicated a willingness to continue as ordinary members. In the light of the resignation of Graeme and Bryan, John MacDonald put forward his name. This was unanimously accepted by the present members.

AOCB

Miles reported on the presents (2 van loads) and monies (nearly £900) gathered by the club and at Cars & Coffee for MFR Cash for Kids. In addition, a further £1180 was collected for MacMillan Nurses.

Noted that dates for local shows are on the club's website, with the next 5 events highlighted on the Home page.

Drive it Day is on 26 April, with proposed destination of Grantown, travelling as much as possible via the old A9. Members can register for Drive it Day on the club's website to give us a sense of numbers.

Noted that various events have been lined up for the next few club meetings – information on the club's website. The committee will convene on 19 February to discuss this year's calendar of meetings.

Noted:

March: Visit to the Oxygen Works, with proposed donation of £250

April: Visit to Luxury Auto House

May: potentially treasure hunt. During May, a Saturday visit to Ullapool (Johnson & Loftus Boatbuilders)

The AGM closed at 8.25pm.

Rally Monte-Carlo Historique and Classique 2026



Last month I promised you an update of the 28th Monte-Carlo 'Classique' rally departure from John O'Groats which marks the 100th anniversary of the first Scottish start in 1926, featuring the Rt. Hon. Victor Bruce who won the rally in a two litre AC Tourer. There were actually two events the Monte Carlo 100 Classique, with the Historique running alongside it.

52 Cars were scheduled to start at John O'Groats including number 433, a 1993 MGRV8 driven by Tony Smith and navigated by Richard Jenner who while well known to HCMC is a stalwart MG enthusiast and core member of the Highland MG Owners Club.

The 1500 mile journey is essentially a very long regularity rally, and the Scottish leg had check points in Inverness, Stirling, and York before catching the ferry at Hull. On the day of departure we had agents along the route keeping an eye out for the cars, and also at their lunch stop at An Talla, Dochgarroch on the western bank of Loch Ness.

There was quite a gathering of usual suspects at the first Ness Walk checkpoint including your editor who popped over to get a last minute cover picture for the previous newsletter. It was exciting to see some of the cars arrive, though I couldn't stay too long, as I had a newsletter to finish!

Fleeting Moments

At the time of writing we are still waiting on progress with the Landie. We did manage to catch the gentleman who is to undertake the work as he stopped beside us on one of our countryside walks. To cut a long story short, he hasn't started yet, but promised it is due to be looked at next week.

Meantime it has been a bit of a swapping game with our mannie at the garage. Our other car was in for some remedial work, which it was still due from when we purchased it from our local garage in August last year. But because our Merc was in for its suspension work, that remedial work got put back. And back. And back. Finally, now the Merc is back, the other car had it's time in the garage. Then the Merc was back in, this time for a brake service. We felt the braking was a bit poor, not a surprise given how long it took to get the car back from the garage last year. Braking is much improved now. And no sooner is the Merc back, then the other car goes in for a service and MOT. Could not do that any earlier because the MOT end date was end of February.

So all that is outstanding is the Landie. Watch this space. We are.

Trish Brown

Guidelines on Submitting an Article

Guidance on how to submit an article for the Newsletter has been requested by several members. Over the years I have become quite adept at converting the various file formats that arrive in my inbox. Unfortunately there isn't a simple copy and paste solution as the Newsletter requires laying out and editing to size. I am currently using software called Scribus.

<https://sourceforge.net/projects/scribus/>

Please feel free to download this free software and try it out, especially if you want to try your hand at editing a newsletter. This one preferably.

The easiest way to submit an article is in some kind of text format, most obviously Microsoft Word but anything really. Pictures are best sent separately in jpeg format and sized to 500 pixels wide. This seems small but we have to keep the file size down for the website.

You can reference your picture in your article by saying [filename.jpeg] in your text so I'll know what goes where. Filename.jpeg is the name of the picture file you have attached in your email to editor@highlandclassic.org

Cars and Coffee



We're getting quite used to our new home now. It's still wintry weather with associated salt on the roads so like every winter, there are more moderns than classics in the car park, but as I've said before, the people are there, the craic is good and the cafe is cheap!



As you may know I have a bit of a thing for a Mk1 Ford Focus and there was one there. Not pre-2000 do I hear any detractors say? Maybe not but it was launched in 1998, and has been getting a lot of press recently. This silver example was owned by a young lad who was with his Mum. I made my way over and got a bit chatty and over excited. Before I knew it, I had swapped numbers and donated a set of coil-overs I had previously inherited. I can just about remember when I was young and some old guy gave me some Mini bits for free. In the circle of life, I am now that old guy.



Of course there were other cars in the shadow of the Focus. The Peugeot 309 diesel was very interesting and I believe is up for sale. They are still a good, economical drive, and not something you see very often now.

I'm sad to say I parked my Mondeo in the car park of shame next door. Apparently I wasn't the only one, but at least I did make engine noises as I 'steered' through the entrance, easily avoiding kerbing my trainers.



I can't wait for the weather to improve and we can show the car park the full splendour of a packed morning. It has been useful having a quieter start to the event as we are getting used to it, and can make some small improvements. Remember it's a gambling venue, so unfortunately that means no under 18's inside the building and members only after 12:00.

West Coast Classic scene

I thought I'd put together a wee article on the Classic car scene across here in the West (specifically the Gairloch area, where I am – but this applies to most of the area around here as well).

As some will know, I've been putting together groups of what I would term "interesting" vehicles at the Gairloch Gathering for several years now – success or failure seems to hang mainly on the weather! We've had years with between 30 – 40 vehicles, and years with.....ummmm....about 5, two of which were mine! Last year? Well, we cancelled it at short notice - again, weather related. This year? Not happening at the moment. But I find myself sitting wondering what we need to do here to get regular meetings of enthusiasts to try and generate more active interest? I regularly cast envious eyes across east at all the trips out, weekend drives, and regular social events that take place why can't we do something similar in the West!

It's not really a lack of interest in cars as such. What is a wee bit frustrating is that there are actually a number of interesting vehicles tucked away here in garages and lock ups that rarely see the light of day – although I don't imagine all these are on the road just now, it would be possible to have a turn out consisting of a TR6, a PA Vauxhall Velox, TVR, a couple of Morris Minors, MGB, MGB V8, Rover 216i Cabriolet, Hillman Imp, 2 or 3 Porsches, an XJS, a very early 1950's VW Beetle, and (now) 3 Alfas.....plus numerous motor bikes. That's just the ones I know about. There will be others!

What stops this? I'm honestly not 100% sure. There seems to be a sizeable clutch of folk here that are perfectly happy to have something a bit different for occasional weekend solo jaunts, but aren't really interested in participation in mutually enthusiastic company – and the other issue with some is that we have a busy tourist season here, so (understandably) it's not always possible to find the time for an outing. So the main difficulty I see myself, at least, seems to be how to generate a more proactive level of enthusiasm in promoting ourselves and the area through our vehicles, whether these are cars, bikes, tractors or whatever.

SO - I wonder if there would be any support for forming a "West Coast", vehicle club movement to start occasional meetings between Ullapool - Lochcarron and nearby areas?

Perhaps I can start through this article, and through the local Classic vehicle movement that I'm aware of? I've also shared this in an email with others across here to see what return comments arrive in – potentially ranging from "What a great idea" to "Bugger off, not interested".

All comments ARE welcome – please send to douglasg@burach.org.uk

Douglas Gibson



The Bobbies Car

by

**John
Mackenzie**

My father often proudly mentioned the fact that he did not have to sit a driving test in order to obtain his driving licence. The Road Traffic Act of 1934 made driving tests compulsory from 1st June 1935 although there was a lead-in period from April 1934 until that date in June 1935. So Dad became a motorist from the early to mid-1930s.

Dad's car ownership didn't start until sometime after WW2. We lived on the Isle of Lewis during the war years with dad serving as a police officer in both Stornoway and in Back. Being so young I only have hazy memories of his car ownership on the island. His first car was very small and could have been an Austin 7 or a Morris 8 or even a Ford Y. After some time, his transport was upgraded to a larger saloon but again I have no idea of the make but Morris or Wolseley spring to mind. However, this period of car ownership was about to come to an abrupt end. Ten days after his purchase the steering broke on a trip to Stornoway and the car was badly damaged. I remember that it was towed back to the police station at Back in a very sorry state. Back to Back was an often used phrase. Dad was of course a member of the Ross and Cromarty Constabulary. The various counties each had their own police force, quite unlike how things are today. The Isle of Lewis and Harris is, as you know, one island but Lewis was part of the county of Ross and Cromarty and Harris part of Inverness-shire.

On the 10th of February 1949 dad was posted to "mainland" Ross and Cromarty where he would serve as the local police officer in the village of Lochcarron for the next seven years.

The local bobby's beat in Lochcarron covered an area of 22 miles to the east as far as Achnasheen and several miles west of the village and included Kishorn, Shildaig and the Applecross peninsula. The constabulary didn't provide transport of any kind in order that the local officer might carry out his duties. There wasn't even a pedal cycle provided. After some days a pedal cycle was acquired and for almost one year this was Dad's only transport. However, all was about to change! Dad acquired an autocycle engine which was added to his trusty bicycle and now he became a motorist once again. I remember the autocycle, but I have no recollection of the "vehicle" ever bearing registration plates. Perhaps since he was the only law enforcer for miles around there was little need for such trivialities. I do recall that Dad could claim a mileage allowance when using the autocycle in

order to carry out police work. The amount paid was decided by the engine capacity of the vehicle and in this case my father received one penny farthing per mile and that was in pre decimal money! (that is one and a quarter old pennies!) I don't remember exactly how long the autocycle remained in service as it was soon to be replaced by a Leeds registered 1934 Jowett Twin motor car. (HUA 400) The Jowett was found in a garage in Shildaig and had been dry stored throughout WW2. Following a few minor mechanical repairs and a hand applied coat of Valspar paint the little car was pressed into service while doubling up as our family saloon. The Jowett would become known as "Who-aah". The Jowett would serve as Dad's transport for the next 6 or 7 years. The engine was a two cylinder model and was similar to the engines later used in the small Bradford van of the 1950s and 60s. From memory I think the cubic capacity was in the region of 800cc. The engine was water cooled but the Jowett didn't have a cooling fan. The accompanying photo taken on a hot June day in 1955 on the Bealach na Ba, was snapped during the first of several cooling down stops before reaching Applecross. On that June day, mains electricity was being switched on in Applecross for the first time, and a large fair was planned in order to mark the occasion. Dad had to attend as he was the local constable. I remember the local MP announcing that this was the most important day in the history of Applecross since St Maelrubha landed on these shores to build his monastery in 673 AD. As I recall the top speed of our family Jowett was about 45 mph. Our Jowett proved extremely reliable and served us well before being replaced by a 1936 Vauxhall 10 (JS 6155). I wasn't happy about the arrival of the Vauxhall as I was adamant that dad should buy a more modern motor car. The Vauxhall must have arrived about 1960 by which time dad had become police officer in Fortrose. I learned to drive with the Vauxhall plus I took a few lessons in Macrae and Dick's Morris 1000 motoring school car. Lessons then cost ten shillings but as staff we were offered a generous fifty per cent discount. (5/- or twenty five pence in today's money) The Vauxhall ten proved every bit as reliable as it's predecessor but was eventually replaced by a red Morris 1100 saloon. (TST 943) By this time Dad had retired from the police force, so the Morris didn't become known as the Bobby's car. The Morris gave mum and dad good service until my father sadly passed away in May of 1969. In 1974, Alan Dunbar who was car sales manager in Cordiner's Garage in Inverness, offered me the Morris for £10 as he had taken dad's old car in as a very bashed and battered trade in. I decided against buying the car and still have some regrets as I would at least have retained the registration plate.

HCMC Events

5th Mar 2026 HCMC Visit to The Oxygen Works The Oxygen Works, Burnett Road, IV1 1TF Inverness. 7.30pm for a talk on their Hyperbaric Chamber and other facilities. Follow the signs on Burnett Road all the way to the right hand end.

8th Mar 2026 Cars And Coffee - Inverness Carlton Bingo, Inverness IV2 3ED 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 Carlton Bingo & check out what's in the Car Park. Find us on FACEBOOK.

2nd Apr 2026 HCMC Visit to Luxury Auto House Address TBC as they are moving premises. An interesting night with experts in detailing, upholstery, coilovers, air ride, wheels, audio, media screens, dashcams, trackers & immobilizers. 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start

12th Apr 2026 The Highlander Track 'n' Show at the North of Scotland Kart Club, Littleferry, Golspie. Tickets from thehighlandereventmanagementltd.com
A day of Fast Cars, Food & Entertainment.