

CLASSIC SCENE



April 2024



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Cover Picture

A cover picture of a cover picture of
us at Dochgarroch back in Novem-
ber.

I strongly recommend buying a copy.

Welcome to the April Newsletter

I missed the quiz night due to processing another family bereavement, and I STILL haven't had time to work on this idea of a template and a reporter pool, as I've been otherwise occupied. I promise it will be in place by the next AGM or you can sack me. Thankfully Trish stepped up to the plate, with a story.

And more newsletter apologies, there is a change to the April club night. I printed the information I had when I wrote the newsletter, but someone somewhere had forgotten about the model night, and we were then scheduled for a pub night. Basically what I'm saying is it's not my fault! While crying in the corner.

The current edition of Practical Classics is a biggie for HCMC and the Highlands. We are all over it and I highly recommend you buy a copy. I was surprised to be featured again (I know) and with the Ford Focus too! I had avoided getting interviewed on the basis that the car is not worthy despite my emerging classic banter in these pages. But there it is. So it must be a classic. Plus Matt Tompkins is a very nice man. There were plenty of other more worthy cars not printed, yet! I suspect they will all appear in good time. It was interesting to read their copy (newsletter editor speak for words) as it was sometimes a bit off the mark with name spelling or little details, but I guess that is a side effect of taping all the interviews, which is a side effect of not having enough time to take exacting notes. The plus side is they interviewed nearly everyone, and for me, the main thing is the sentiment of what they are saying is spot on. Hopefully the same applies on these pages.

There was a sunny day in the middle of March and I felt inspired to tidy out my garage, which inspired me to finally replace the burst drive-tube gaiter on the Beetle, which inspired me to finally fit the new (well replacement) battery which inspired me to get her running. It took more cranking than normal to get the petrol through, but that turned out to be gummed up jets, half cured by some brake cleaner. I got the engine running and was inspired to go to Cromarty for John MacKenzie's low key Cars and Coffee. The idle jet needs more cleaning - diagnosed by the lack of idle. The last time I drove the Beetle was Drive It Day 2023, when the battery failed and finished my run home earlier than I would have liked. The breakdown note was still on the drivers seat!

Drive It Day this year is stopping off at Coul House in Contin but we can't arrive until 2:30pm. I found out why. The Highland MG Owners have also booked it for their Drive It Day. Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, they booked ours. Make sure to let their tyres down! Wait no - they can't leave then.

Because of the afore mentioned bereavement, I have been involved in trying to sell a rare Lotus Sunbeam. We got the owners club involved and someone came along to value it. This local person (anonymous for editorial reasons) has five of them! The Highlands never fails to impress when it comes to classics squirreled away in someone's shed.

See out there,
Your Editor

Ramblings from the Chair



Greetings all, I am writing this the day after Mrs Chair and I have returned from visiting family 'down under' – in Cairns, Queensland and in the capital, Canberra to be precise - suffering from 'jetlag' after 22hrs of flying (with a 2hr break for refueling) from Sydney to Heathrow. The hour and twenty minutes up to Inverness afterwards seemed an absolute doddle. We had a great time – snorkelling off the Great Barrier Reef, watching day old turtles racing across the beach to the sea and a trip in and over the tropical rain forest in a gondola followed by a return train ride, being the highlights. As always, I was on the lookout for classic cars and, with moderate success. There should be some photo's and a short report on my findings later in the newsletter. With all this gallivanting I missed the quiz night at Av-och but I believe it was a great night in that cracking venue – I'm sure there will be a report to follow.

Ah, yes, back to cars and to continue from last month, my first car – a three year old Vauxhall Viva in Henley Blue, the very base model at a cost of £675. No passenger sun visor, no carpets (just rubber matting), crossply tyres but I loved it. I did upgrade it slightly to rectify the shortcomings above – I do have a figure in my head of about £60 for a set (5no.) of Michelin ZX tyres including fitting. And yes, it rusted like crazy – even at such a young age I replaced the front wing dirt shields behind the wheels which had rusted through. The wings themselves had rust staining behind the headlights which was inaccessible as the wings were welded on. Rattle cans of spray paint were a frequent purchase. I kept the car for a couple of years before upgrading to a metallic green Vauxhall Chevette – same engine and gearbox as the Viva but a significant improvement – cloth seats (beige and folding rear), heated rear screen, clock, two speed wipers and electric screen washers. Again, I kept it for about two years before trading in for a two year old Opel Ascona, 1.9SR Berlina in Pastel Blue – yes, I thought I'd made it. Full instrumentation, velour trim, Rostyle wheels with low profile tyres and even headlight washers and wipers. And it could go like the wind! This was my 'forever' car which I did keep for ages until the inevitable rust took hold – I had hoped to restore it but wife, house and kids got in the way and it went to the great scrapyard in the sky – a very sad day on its demise. - **to be continued.....**

So, next month's visit is to Peter Naulls workshop in Nairn to see his model building and full size Austin Seven body construction – sounds like a very interesting meeting. See you all there.

Regards, Richard

Classics 'Down Under'

Richard Lashley

As mentioned earlier, I was in Australia earlier in the month and kept an eye out for some classics. Despite being informed of a healthy classic scene, spotting was not as easy as expected – I have a suspicion that a lot of cherished vehicles are kept under cover to keep them safe from too much sun and heat – a bit like ourselves who protect our cars from rain and frost (and salt). However, with perseverance, I found the Austin J van, in a kitchen shop showroom of all places. – I believe these were exported in the 1950's as 'knockdown kits' and assembled near Melbourne. This one had been restored in the company's livery and was in near perfect condition.



Still on the hunt, I gatecrashed the monthly meeting of the Canberra Antique & Classic Motor Club (very much like our own Club!) in the hope of spying something of interest. Speaking to members, they said 'oh no, we bring our modern's to these meetings'. Nevertheless, I got talking to Ben in the 1965 Singer Vogue (his wife's car ap-

parently), who informed me that the car is absolutely original – what a great example. There was also the Fiat 500 parked up, looking beautiful in an unusual colour but I didn't get to speak to the owner. And then a more modern classic turned up – a Mazda 626 from the mid eighties – this used to belong to an ex-



pat English couple who looked after it well. Now, when did you last see one of those in Scotland – I think they were all consumed by rust probably more 20 years ago. I was invited in to their meeting, all about starter motors apparently, but unfortunately I did not have the time



to attend. The following Sunday their Club was to have a drive out and BBQ at a local beauty spot (now there's an idea!). Finally, in the Museum of Australia in Canberra, the white 1955 Holden Special sedan was on show. This was an updated version of Australia's first mass produced car in 1948 – and Holden's beginning – very similar to a British Vauxhall Wyvern of the same date (albeit with much larger engines, this being a 2.15 litre six cylinder). This particular car was owned by the same lady until 1980

when she was unable to see out of the rear window.

What a great location to be a classic owner – and I'm sure the locals do not realise this – no rust, no worries about taking a car out in the rain, great driving roads and, perhaps, best of all, no potholes!!! On our travels the number of potholes could be counted on the fingers one hand and there seems to be no ironwork in the carriageways. I think the services are located in the wide verges and footways and gullies in towns tend to be side openings in kerbs or gratings located in the concrete combined edge strip/kerb. On country roads, wide verges with shallow gradients to a low ditch seem to be the norm.



Club Quiz Night

Trish Brown

I started putting the quiz together for February, in case we had some time left over after the AGM. By that time it was just a wee quiz of 20 questions. But as there was a lot of discussion at the AGM there was never time for this "relaxation". The quiz therefore got carried forward to March. But to fill a whole evening, I needed a few more questions - another 40 questions. After testing on Alice, I was confident that it was not too difficult. The quiz had a total possible score of 88 points over the following rounds:

- ☐ Transport in the highlands ☐ Motoring history
- ☐ Car badges ☐ "Where are you" pictures
- ☐ The Highway code road signs ☐ And more general motoring questions.

An uneven number of members turned up on the night and my idea of groups of 4 went right out of the window. Instead I split folk into teams of 3x3 and 1x4. Now, I can't speak for the other members, but I generally got the impression that a good night was had by all, although there were a few sighs and groans, including ironic shouts like "and where are the difficult questions?".

Winners of the quiz (mind guys, you will be asked to do a quiz next year) were Miles, Callum and Ranald with 55.5 points. Bringing up the rear were John, Mike and Ian with 31.5 points.

To give you a flavour of the questions, below is one question from each round for you to try your hand at. And no cheating by using the internet! For added excitement, give yourself no more than 15 minutes to answer all questions.. I'll give the answers next month.

1. When did the Strathpeffer rail branch close to passenger services (year).
2. When was an inflatable tyre first used? (1846; 1873; 1888; 1896)
3. Name the manufacturer



4. Where are you?



5. Highway code definition of this road sign



6. A company once known as "Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili" or "Lombardian Car Factory" is now better known by what name?

Fleeting moments

Trish Brown

Things have gone a bit topsy turfy in our car pool. The usually reliable Smart decided to throw a gearbox error just yards from the house and ended up needing to be pushed to the garage down the road. Our mannie at the garage initially suspecting a wiring problem, but after connecting the diagnostics, the fault code pointed the finger at the gear positioning sensor. A new one is on order.

The Merc is settling down now it has new struts and bottom arms at the front. We decided to do the wheel alignment as well – and yes it was well out, but that was only to be expected after our mannie demonstrated just how wobbly the old bushes were. And as there was still some vibration, we also had the wheels balanced. Turned out that the weights had all fallen off. Pretty poor glue pads on these weights if you ask me.

Spring is definitely in the air as our neighbours had their lawnmower out first weekend in March and again last week. A little too early for me, although what is left of the grass does look like it can do with a trim. Most of the grass seems to have turned into moss this winter. But with spring in mind we did buy a thornless bramble as I fancied some different fruit. It is in a large pot as I haven't decided yet just where it will go in the garden. I suspect something else may need to give way first. And I still have to repaint the shed's doorknob so I can refit it. Opening the door by pulling on the sharp end of a screw is not ideal.

HCMC "Auto-Car-Jumble-Boot-Sale!"

At our next CARS AND COFFEE - INVERNESS meeting, on Sunday 14th April, "Highland Classic Motor Club" Members are invited to fill the boots of their Classics with Motoring related items and sell them at the Club "Auto-Car-Jumble-Boot-Sale" from 10am to 12noon. So, dig out your Car Parts, Driving Accessories, Motoring Literature or Toy Cars etc. sell the lot and make room for more!

Selling? Please park to the left hand side and rear of Rollerbowl.

Not selling? Have some pennies at the ready to find a complete bargain or that elusive part you've been hunting for everywhere.

N.B. This is purely a CARS AND COFFEE - INVERNESS add-on and not a public Autojumble so No Trade please and HCMC Members get preference for insurance reasons.

Joining the Highland Classic Motor Club is simple, just pop over to www.highlandclassic.org.uk and Click on Membership. It's only £15 per year.



Out and About



It's bird themed this month. That's my van, in Forres.

Polo Heater

"It's easy to be wise afterwards" was an expression used by one of the neighbouring farmers and it has been brought to mind recently. The heater dial controlling the flow of air wouldn't go all the way round on the Polo so there was no air to the footwell. This, I thought, was not acceptable in my perfect world so a fix was required. I was prepared to sacrifice an afternoon in a good cause. The afternoon turned into days and the days turned into weeks. Nobody told me that the heater is the first thing installed in bodyshell and everything else is lumped in on top of it. Well now you know! The facia had to come out so the steering wheel had to come off. Just two little clips through the holes at the back of the steering wheel releases the air bag. It all sounds so simple and it would be simple if I knew what I was doing. Many trials and swear words later I found a You Tube which showed the clips and it was simple then. Every electrical connection was different and all fought to remain in place. Trim to come off was the same; nothing but nothing came off easily. Once the facia came out I realised that that's what it was, just a facia, a cosmetic covering. The heater unit was as far away as ever but with better access, I managed to turn the dial all the way round but something was catching. Silicone spray didn't work, the borescope revealed nothing and so, with my life running away, the decision to put everything back was made. Heat is now distributed as it ought to albeit with a bit of force. If only I had put a bit more effort into turning the dial in the first place!

Everything is now back in place except for one screw so I have a screw loose, of course I have.

Cheers, Jim MacKay.

Cars And Coffee



Another Sunday and another no show by your editor. I was chatting to a non member explaining what HCMC is. "We organise Cars and Coffee". "Oh that's really good." he replied. Well it is but it's nice to hear I said sometimes. And where else are you going to get a military crane thing, mixed in with some 70's classics and some fancy performance cars too?



1943 WARD LAFRANCE M1A1 WRECKER

The Ward La France M1A1 Heavy Wrecker is a seriously well equipped vehicle, with outrigger jacks, front (20,000lb) and rear (30,000 lb) winches and a powerful slewable crane.

Designed to recover tanks and heavy vehicles, the fully kitted M1A1 arrived at the scene ready for work with a vast toolkit, all the heavy recovery gear you could ask for and welding gear.

Able to tow a tank on an "A" frame, bizarrely the M1A1 is actually only rated as a 10 ton wrecker. This is actually decided by the lift capacity rating of the crane – but in reality this was often exceeded by quite a lot.

The distinctive bumper was designed to break down trees and other obstacles.

2,925 M1A1's were built during the Second World War by Ward La France and 840 identical models were built by Kenworth.

The powerful but gas guzzling Continental 22R engine at less than 2.5mpg, has often in civilian service been replaced by a more economic diesel engine.

Although you can drive it on a normal licence, the sheer length and of the M1A1 suggests it's far more suited to an HGV driver and its certainly not for the faint hearted as its not got power steering.

No self respecting convoy should leave home without an M1A1 as there is no WW2 military vehicle it can't recover.





It's always nice to see the Rootes section. One day I will master all the Imp variations! Pick-ups vintage lorries and that crane again. Eclectic.



And it will always be a home for a classic Ford.



And who doesn't love an old Land Rover. Personally I have missed out on the joys of ownership but I have had a lot of fun in other peoples without the maintenance worries. One day maybe there will be space for a Land Rover in my life.



Drive it Day 2024 - Sunday 21st April



This years chosen charity is NSPCC's Childline® to help a section of society that has needed huge help and support during the pandemic – vulnerable children. Lockdown has magnified all sorts of societal problems and the long days and weeks trapped in broken homes or abusive environments have put vulnerable children even more at risk.

Buy your fundraising plaque here: <https://www.driveitday.co.uk/>

National Drive It Day was created by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs in 2005. It is the occasion when historic vehicle enthusiasts and the public at large have the opportunity to celebrate the One Thousand Mile Trial organised in 1900 to prove the viability of the new invention, the motor vehicle. It's also a chance to raise awareness and support amongst the public for the historic vehicle movement and keeping transport heritage on UK roads.

This is the first of two Drive it Day features, and shares the official FBHVC line. We have our own take on the next page. Note the date. It is the 21st, not the 28th as previously reported. There was an erroneous announcement out there somewhere because many people have picked up the wrong date.

HCMC Drive It Day — 21st April

Over the last couple of years, "Drive It Day" has provided an opportunity for many member clubs to hold events in support of FBHVC's work.

The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Club is most grateful for this support and urges organisers to remember that the purpose of 'Drive It Day' is for us to be seen and appreciated by the public. This years 'Drive It Day' takes place on Sunday, 21st April.

To show support for this event in the North of Scotland, the Highland Classic Motor Club is organising a run for all classic car owners in the Highlands.

We will be assembling in Beaulieu at the Square from 12:30 for a 1pm departure to take us on a route that takes us through the Highland landscape finishing for coffee and biscuits at a country house hotel.

The route this year is approx 24 miles, going from Beaulieu via the hills to Muir Of Ord then onto the Fairburn Estate and travelling up Strath Conon to the Meig Dam utilising mainly single-track roads.

We will stop mid-way at the dam for a 20 minute break before continuing to Coul House Hotel in Contin where refreshments will be provided. Please do not arrive at Coul House before 14:30

Familiarisation of the route in advance is essential.

The route is mainly on single-track roads with some moderately steep hills. Depending on your vehicle, you may wish to travel to Coul House Hotel via a more conventional route, but please don't arrive before 14:30, as they won't be able to accomodate us until then (Coul House Hotel, Contin, Ross-shire, IV14 9ES)

There are various venues in Beaulieu that provide lunch, snacks and hot drinks prior to setting off.

As in previous years, all cars **MUST** be pre-registered for this event as spaces will be limited. Entry is open to all vintage, veteran and classic vehicle owners whether a member of the Highland Classic Motor Club or not, and is still free-of-charge.

This year we will be collecting donations for a local charity - L'arche Highland - <https://www.larche.org.uk/pages/category/larche-highland>

For further details, see The Highland Classic Motor Club website.

HCMC Events

Thursday 4th Apr 2024 HCMC April Meeting. In a change to last months listing (!) we are now (or possibly always were) visiting Inver Models - Nairn. Unit 11a3, Balmakeith Industrial Estate, Nairn IV12 5QW - Peter Naulls workshop in Nairn. Peter is producing Austin Seven bodies in addition to his models. <https://peternaulls.co.uk/>

Sunday 14th April Cars And Coffee - Inverness Rollerbowl, Culduthel Rd. Inverness 2nd Sunday of every Month from 10am-12noon. A Quiet Social Gathering of 20th Century Classics plus interesting Modern Sportscars & Bikes. Featuring this month only **HCMC "Auto-Car-Jumble-Boot-Sale!"** Fill yer boots with car related items and see if you can find a home for those items you've been tripping over for the last year.

Sunday 21st Apr 'Drive It Day' 2024 Depart from (TBC) Local Highland Run to support FBHVC Dive It Day 2024. You MUST Pre-Register on HCMC Website Home Page.

Wednesday 10th Apr 2024 Classic Cars & Coffee & Cakes Highland Classic Car Hire, Forres, IV36 1EP. Take an evening drive in your Classic and drop in for Coffee & Cakes.

Sunday 14th April The Highlander Track 'n' Show North of Scotland Kart Club, Littleferry, Golspie Tickets from thehighlandereventmanagementltd.com A day of Fast Cars, Food & Entertainment