

CLASSIC SCENE

MAY 2016



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CLASSIC SCENE

The next 'Classic Scene'
GOES TO THE PRINTER
on the Monday of the week preceding the next meeting
Please send articles by e-mail or typed.

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COVER PICTURE

Indoor Karting at Fairways.
Just six brave racers from the club tried in vain not to cause too much mayhem.

CHAIR BITTY MAY 2016



I was almost sorry that I didn't go karting last month as it certainly looked very exciting. Following a photo shoot – see if you can recognise the masked participants elsewhere in this edition – our 6 intrepid motorists lined up for the start. The “no contact” rule was mostly obeyed in the first session, although every now and then you could see the red mist getting the better of our racing drivers. The second sessions was definitely hotly contended. Not a grand prix style event, but that didn't stop our drivers from earnestly defending their position on the track. The best time was set by Chris Silver, with a respectable 28.71 seconds lap. AND he holds the lap record for a Senior Citizen Driver.

Having changed the clutch on our Smart, the next step was to reset the electrickery by giving the clutch a software “re-teach”. Alice duly took the car to Mercedes as our wee garage doesn't have the gadgets to do this. Got the car back, but gear changes were not as smooth as they had been when we took the car in. And the cruise control stopped working. Half way back up the road, at Ardully roundabout the clutch announces a major problem with “the 3 bars of death” displaying on the dash. This usually results in a total loss of gears but Alice managed to coax the car to the next lay-by. Restarting the car miraculously cleared this major fault, but the gear change remains all to pot. It is like the car is driven by a learner driver, revving up the engine before dropping the clutch. Oh, and a Lambda sensor gave up at the same time.

As we got the Lambda fixed at our local garage, Alice made arrangements to visit a Smart specialist in Fauldhouse. The Friday before Drive-It day we went down the road. Fairly uneventful until Inverness. Up until that point the car was behaving reasonably well with only exceedingly long gear changes of around 4 seconds. The car didn't like standing before the lights at Longman roundabout and the gear change was back to revving and dropping the clutch. And severe

One comfort break later at Carrbridge and the car is behaving again. Until Broxburn roundabout, where again we wait in traffic.... In desperation stopped the car on the side of the road, restarted it a few minutes later and yet again the gear fault appears to have cleared, which got us down all the way to Fauldhouse. At this point in time we are definitely suspecting a software problem.

At the garage it only takes 15 minutes to do the "reteach" of the clutch and we are off for a test run. The car feels a lot better and the cruise control is working again. Until we get to a traffic light and you guess it, the gears go wonky again. Back at the garage they decide to take a look at the clutch actuator thinking that it may be misaligned. As they are undoing the 3 bolts the rear bracket falls off. Ahh. The break doesn't look new, so I can only guess that the recent clutch change was the proverbial straw to an already weakened moulding.

No worries they said at the garage, we've got a breaker in the yard. Pinched the actuator of that, another 15 mins for the "re-teach", then off for our second test run. Changing ok? Yep. Traffic lights..... no problem. Cruise still working? No!!! Back to the workshop to check the software, cruise is definitely installed. Third test run and the cruise working. Weird. The run back up north was an anti-climax in comparison. And would you know, we drive this stretch regularly and never see a train. We saw 9 trains that day.

As planned the Smart was ready for the Drive-It Day. Excellent turn-out, with double/triple parking at the V8 cafe and the Slater Arms. And despite the forecast, No Snow! Sorry Miles you never got to use your snow chains. It was a gorgeous day, good sunshine and with Cannich a bit like a sun trap, I spotted a few members munching on ice creams!

This month's meet is a visit to Tarbet Ness Lighthouse near Portmahomack, usual 19.30 start. I heard mention of meeting up at North Kessock tourist information for the drive up – more of this on our website. There is a spacious car park at the headland, a hundred yards or so from the lighthouse. We do have a bit of red tape to complete on the night, which is those allowed up the tower will have to sign a disclaimer. Anyone with a fear of heights or heart condition will not be allowed up.

I will see you all on Thursday. *Trish.*

APRIL CLUB NIGHT KART RACING

The club visited an indoor kart arena for the April meet and all had a great night. The venue is run as a charitable concern to give youngsters a chance to succeed at something to help them develop their skills and give them a "leg up" to raise their self esteem. They have a chance to not only race the karts but to work at the venue. But it also is run as a business to raise funds for their excellent work, and as such give some aging racers a chance to show their skills on the track. Can you recognise the Highland Grand Prix Team members? What followed



was total mayhem for each of the races. A briefing for the combatants, sorry, drivers, was closely listened to but on the track the rule "Non Contact" was lost as the red mist descended. Left foot braking caused several "gentle nudges" as throttle pedal was mistakenly hit with the right foot thinking it was the brake. But a gentle touch on the kart in front was enough to reduce speed. Unfortunately the Kart which supplied the braking was inadvertently accelerated to a speed just under Warp Factor 7, usually backwards! And a certain "Silver Racer" set a new lap record for those who should be old enough to know better.

COULD IT BE THAT SIMPLE? COULD IT? OH FOR ***'S SAKE!!**

For those of you that don't know, the Aston has been refusing to start. It all began before Christmas. I've been working on the lock-up where it's stored because I'd realised that it was structurally unsound. In fact it was potentially on the point of collapse so I had to perform major surgery, which involved jacking the roof up with accrow jacks and rebuilding the walls one section at a time. Obviously I had to move the Aston out whilst I was working on the structure, but one day in late November it gave a cough on starting which was unusual. I moved it out, but a few hours later when I went to take it back in it refused to start. I had to push the bally thing in by myself.

Repeated attempts at starting were fruitless, and I realised that my worst nightmare had arrived. Us greybeards all say "Nah we don't touch them modern cars with all those electronics", but the reality was that I would have to tackle this head on.

Unfortunately things like Christmas, and then ripping the lathe and plaster walls out of our bedroom intervened, and it was really only in March that I was able to turn my attention to the problem. I was determined to be thorough and logical and not leap to conclusions. First up was the simple stuff. I checked every fuse, and also removed and bench tested every relay on the car of which there are loads. That didn't fix the problem but it did fix the electric aerial which hadn't been working for some time!

The next stop was one of the simple things that can be checked with no real equipment, and that is spark. I connected each lead in turn to a spare plug which was earthed and cranked the ignition. I definitely had a spark.

I sent for an OBD2 code reader (off ebay of course). I went the whole hog and got one that connects to the lap-top. The only problem was that it showed no Diagnostic Trouble Codes. (DTCs). So far, so unhelpful.

I started out by looking at the fuel side of things. I'd bench tested the relays to the two fuel pumps already, so now, by removing them I could hot wire the pumps to prove they ran, which they did. Next stop was to check if fuel was arriving at the Common Fuel Rail (CFR).

I uncoupled a union and with the starter engaged fuel gushed out. OK, but was it at the right pressure? The manual says it should hold 40psi, and to check this I sent for a fuel pressure gauge kit (off ebay). A lot of modern cars have a Schrader valve at the inlet side of the CFR, but guess which car doesn't? There was nothing to connect it to, so I had to remove enough bits of the CFR to get one that I could take down to Macgregor's Ind Supplies and find out what the threads were. They turned out to be metric air threads, so I bought a heap of ends, unions, angles and a T piece to allow me to make some kind of connection. I duly managed to do this but it took a whole evening of faffing about. Now with the ignition on I clearly had the required 40 psi.

Of course there is no-one up here that I can speak to who knows my car, and the only online forum that I could find had nothing of note. However, there are loads of videos on YouTube about fixing cars, and the principles can be applied to any modern car. I started watching them in my lunch hours and gradually narrowed them down to two guys in particular who were clear and concise about their approach. I was also popping round to see John Macdiarmid in the Carse who has been really helpful in all this.

So now we come to NOID lights. Eh, what?. Yes Noid lights. I'd never heard of them until a few weeks ago. Basically you get a kit (off ebay!!!) of these lights which plug into the injector harness. When the engine is cranked the light will flash showing that the ECU is telling the injector to open. All six injectors on the car were receiving a signal, and I checked the impedance of all the injectors and they were all 14.5 ohms which was within range. The NOID light test also tells you that the Crankshaft Position Sensor (CPS keep up!) is firing otherwise the ECU would not know to trigger the injectors. One final test which I ultimately did was to remove part of the air inlet and spray brake cleaner into it. Cranking the engine gave nothing which more or less ruled out fuel as the culprit.

So; I had fuel at the right pressure. The injectors were being triggered properly and I had a spark. Could it be that the timing was wildly out? It was possible that the CPS was triggering, but not at the right time. What about the timing belt? Could it have jumped some teeth? There was no history of a shunt or bad stall so that seemed unlikely.

Before going any deeper into the engine I had to pause and reflect. Now dear reader, think back to the beginning of the story. What was I doing? Moving the car in and out of the lock-up. Repeatedly, on rich-start running conditions without getting the engine up to full operating temperature. Could it be fouled plugs? Could it be all SIX? Could it be that simple? I'd checked for a spark, but that was with a spare plug, not the car's own plugs. I took one out and it certainly looked sooty, but all six??

I nipped down to Autostore and got six new plugs. When the old plugs (which had done less than four hundred miles) came out they all looked a bit black. I spun the engine over without plugs to clear the cylinders and then fitted the new ones. What would happen when I hit the key? Instant, glorious, technicolour, six cylinder super-charged ROAR, that's what. It WAS that simple. Oh for F****s sake. In mitigation I never thought I'd see six fouled plugs at once, but it just goes to show that you can never assume anything. I was also influenced by one of the videos where the guy was saying not to swap parts just in the vain hope that it would fix things. He reckoned that 75% of cars that came to him had had new plugs and leads, and he was advocating a proper diagnosis before needlessly changing parts. On the positive side, I now am no longer intimidated by the under-bonnet of the Aston; and I also have some shiny new tools on my shelf (which I didn't need, but since when has that been a problem?).

Bryan.

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A great story Bryan, and it did raise a laugh but only at my expense as well. The Lancia is very "touchy" when it comes to starting, it took me about 5 years to work out the right procedure and if you don't do it right it floods every time. So out with the plugs and a good clean later it will (usually, but not always), start. Also found that a quick squirt of carb cleaner cleans them nicely. It then decides it does want to play and starts. But not always. That's when the young kids in the road learn lots of new words. Usually starting with F and B!

Thanks again

Alan the Ed

THE EDITORS MONTHLY RANT

Over the winter period there has been lots happening in the world of classic cars, most of it centring on what is a "Classic Car" and something that has featured in this rant before, the thorny subject of Type Approval. First up is what is a Classic Car? FIVA, the Federation Vehicle Anciens, or something like that. (A bunch of Frogs who still like to think they rule the world but any rules they come up with only apply to someone else, not them). The definition they came up with is "*cars that are preserved and maintained in a historically correct condition and not used as a means of daily transport' as opposed to simply 'old vehicles'.*" Our own FBHVC immediately distanced themselves from this definition stating that it was far too restrictive. FIVA immediately back-pedalled (The French have plenty of experience at this but most of us call it a retreat!) and said it was for the benefit of the eejits in the European Parliament. But the eejits in the EU are pushing hard for LEZ's, low emission zones in city centres. Anything that doesn't have emissions that meet ever stricter standards will be banned. Fortunately FBHVC has already negotiated an understanding with central and local government that vehicles in the "Historic Vehicle" class should be exempt as the mileage they do is negligible. Type Approval also featured in these discussions and again it seems that the EU eejits don't like anything that doesn't meet type approval regs. And again the FBHVC has come to the rescue and a common sense approach seems to be the way to go. So fitting new made parts for your classic is ok. The adenoidal purists might turn their noses up at fitting a modern electronic ignition on your 1974 Lancia but if it runs better and cleaner, why not? But the one issue that I have raised in the past is that of hot rods and custom cars. A spokesman for FIVA says, "It is not FIVA's policy to exclude historic vehicles on grounds of age, use or condition. Neither do we differentiate between a Morris Marina or a Bentley. But it would be difficult to defend a vehicle that has been highly modified into a hot rod or something else. We have to convince a bunch of non-enthusiasts about the importance of preserving motoring heritage as a driving museum, rather than leaving them behind closed doors or reduced to trailer queens driven from one auction to the next." In my humble opinion the EU eejits have a good supply of thin wedges and a big hammer. Hot rods and custom cars first, then filthy dirty old cars.

DRIVE IT DAY 2016





Date**Venue****1st May 2016**

Forres Theme Day Grant Park, Forres
HCMC Club Display - See Our Forum!

14th May 2016

Inverness Classic Vehicle Show, Inverness City
Centre. LIMITED SPACES - SIGN UP NOW!!!

21st May 2016

Rotary Club of East Sutherland Classic Car Tour,
Dornoch. Limited Spaces.

5th Jun 2016

Rotary Club of Elgin Motorfun & Picnic, Cooper
Park, Elgin. 12 Noon to 5pm.
www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs

5th Jun 2016

Fraserburgh Vintage Car Rally, Fraserburgh
Leisure Centre. www.fvcr.co.uk

19th Jun 2016

Tain Vintage Vehicle Rally, Tain Links.
www.taingala.co.uk. Arrive by 10.30am (Entries
Deadline 21st May - Late Entry Charge on Day!)
HCMC Display - See Forum!

2nd Jul 2016

Gairloch Gathering Classic Vehicle Display, Big Sand
Campsite, Gairloch. Meet 11am Gairloch Pier.

16/17th Jul 2016

Trucknessie, Bught Park, Inverness. Part of the
Inverness Highland Games and Gala Weekend.

14th Aug 2016

Historic Wheels Rally, Brodie Castle, Forres
IV36 0TE. www.moraymotormuseum.org for
details and entry form. Note: NO LATE ENTRIES at
Brodie Castle. Pre-book or Arrive at Start Point.

27th Aug 2016

NEW FOR 2016* Highlands & Islands Transport
Show, Scatraig Farm, A9 Daviot by Inverness.

Exhibits include trucks, cranes and recovery vehicles of every deriva-
tive, light commercial, classic and vintage cars & motorbikes, classic
tractors and machinery, rally cars and much more. www.hitshow.co.uk

4th Sep 2016

Motor Mania at Grantown on Spey, Grantown on Spey

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