

CLASSIC SCENE



May 2020



Morris Leslie
AUCTIONS



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The club has an extensive archive of information relating to all aspects of classic car ownership. To access this please contact Ranald Smith at

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Cover Picture

A lovely Lagonda at the 2017 Orkney Rally—Jim Mackay.

Morris Leslie Auctions.

And Sir Stirling Moss.

Apologies for the flagrant disregard of copyright.

Welcome to the May Lockdown Newsletter

It 'May' not surprise you that there isn't much news this month as classic car ownership isn't key to keeping Covid-19 at bay. Fortunately I have a few articles squirreled away or seemingly forgotten or erm, misplaced. And so it is that we have Jim Mackay's report from the Orkney Car Show in 2017. Jim's lovely black A40 called Toby is from Orkney. My wife and I had a lovely holiday in Orkney last year. My lovely Black Sierra XR4x4 is from Orkney so I'm in discussions about a trip to the show in the Sierra next year, assuming we get through this pandemic by then.

You'll be glad to hear the last of the editor's Clio as it is now sold to a soldier who came back from overseas to find he couldn't get his car MOT'd. The car is now helping out with military Covid-19 deployment by transporting a him to Fort George every day. I'll never try a Wheeler Dealers type of project again. There's no profit in it, but at least I saved a car and made someone happy. Sounds like a Mike Brewer quote.

One advantage of social isolation is that there is plenty of garage time. After an over due tidy up, I dismantled the spare 205 GTi which has been waiting for years for this. The great thing about reckless dismantling is you get a good feel of how a car is put together, though I am sure to forget all this new knowledge by the time I need it, long after the wee cuts from pressed steel edges under the dashboard have healed up. Using hand sanitiser doesn't half sting by the way.



Your editor.

Chairs Bitty

Being in lock down, it is certainly noticeable that it is a lot quieter on the road. We notice this during our necessary travel, i.e. our weekly shopping trip, where we can count the number of cars we see on the road on one hand. But it obviously doesn't appear to apply to the RAF and other air forces who still fly around on their practice bombing runs into RAF Tain. We spotted the French last week, this week the Yankees were around – their planes are so much noisier.



Alice spent last weekend putting her little Smart back together again. She had removed the carpet some weeks ago as it was getting rather damp on the passenger side, with a persistent leak round the quarter-light. That leak into the car has been sorted – or at least we think it has as there has been no further ingress of water during recent rain showers. The carpet has had several weeks of drying out in the garage/over the washing line depending on the weather and has been fitted back into the car.

My Skoda has come back from the garage. You may remember that we took the car to our local garage in early March for a brake service. I also mentioned again that there was still a clonk at low speeds and oh, there also seems to be some oil leak. All has been duly investigated and repaired. The oil leak was down to a leaking seal at the back of the engine and as usual, the wrong part arrived from the dealers. Our mannie at the garage sometimes wonders whether the dealers parts department just pull something of the shelf that looks vaguely like the requested item.

During the servicing of the brakes a sticking driver side calliper was identified. Then in the course of replacing the calliper the driver side's shocky was found to be faulty. And in the course of replacing the shocky the driver side cv joint fell to bits. A bit of a domino effect going on here, but at least it explains the clonk noise.

Working from home gives me that extra hour in the afternoon to do a bit of pottering around in the garden. That and with the long Easter weekend we have cleared out some very leggy bushes to make way for a few raised beds. I've stuck in some potatoes and onions and sown some seed for courgettes, carrots, green beans and radishes. We have also put our name down for some "pot luck" vegetable seedling mix, which we should get in the next week or 2. We're not the only ones, our

neighbours on both sides have also put in raised beds. I can only hope that this is not going to be some veggie raising competition.

The other advantage of a garden is that you can get out of the house without needing to worry about this social distancing. I feel sorry for people who live in flats and don't have this "luxury". We do go for an evening walk most days where we wave at anyone we see around. As we live a bit rural, our walks usually means taking a look at the young lambs in the fields. Every day a few more appear, so the farmer must be very busy with the lambing on his farm. We are not the only ones checking out these youngsters and we usually meet one or 2 people/families out walking too. It is amusing how we carefully keep to "our" side of the road, but take the time to exchange a few pleasantries. I think this is one benefit of the current situation, people are more inclined to stop and talk to each other.

And here for the downside of the continuing country wide lock down. Where last month I still had great ideas of "social distancing, hey, we can still take our cars out for a drive". Now I fear that public opinion or more likely, the police, will look at our cars and say "hang on, that isn't necessary travel...." although to us of course it is. I have therefore reluctantly decided that this months road trip to Ullapool is cancelled. We'll keep looking at the situation as it develops. There are hints that the lock down may relax a little in late May. If this is the case, then an evening out in our cars is looking on the cards. Here's hoping...

Stay safe

Trish.



The engine in last months Classic Scene is not recognised by me but the Morris Oxford Series 2 is. My grandfather bought one new trading in his Austin 10. The Morris was very modern, black with red seats and column change which allowed for three up front. My uncle took me out for a run and reached 80mph, very impressive. His father wouldn't have been impressed as the car wasn't run-in. Remember running-in new cars? Cars driven up from the factory were well run in! Grandfather never got the hang of the column change and just accepted whatever gear was selected. He was deaf and, as the car was well insulated, he had to rev the engine to hear it. Comedy. I was about 10 at the time and I used to turn the car for him when he visited.

Jim Mackay

Orkney Rally 2017

Jim MacKay

Toby the Austin A40 was registered in Orkney so it was always the plan to take him back home to hang out with his old pals!



The rally is sponsored by Northlink Ferries so there was a good deal on the sea crossing. Nothing to stop us then. Well, yes, there was the rather slow journey to Scrabster and back at about 40mph which I didn't fancy. We booked accommodation to break up the journey! Monte Carlo, no chance, this was only a hundred miles or so but it did have Berriedale Brae. In the end we didn't manage 40mph because of the number of lay-by stops to let traffic passed. The sea trip on MV Hamnavoe was excellent and a lot faster!



The rally is very informal and there is a wide range of exhibits. A hundred years of Ford tractors was the theme and there was a 1917 Fordson on display.



There may have been a hundred tractors there. Cost of shipping meant that tractors didn't leave the islands and scrapping was not viable. I've only ever seen one Bean but there were two on display!





Our return was hampered by one of the front brakes biting and locking on which wasn't a big deal at these slow speeds. Believe it or not it was caused by one of the wheel cylinders leaking. Honest. I sourced new wheel cylinders and brake shoes which sorted the problem but hasn't improved the braking much. I suspect the coil is next for replacement and then I'll be able to say that re-commissioning is complete.....for the time being.

Cheers,
Jim MacKay.



MORRIS LESLIE CLASSIC AUCTION.

Bryan McIlwraith

Getting up at seven o'clock on a Saturday morning is not my idea of fun, but sometimes needs must. I picked up Steve at 8 sharp and since the Volvo had been fuelled the night before it was straight onto the A9 for Perth. The omens were not good however. A grey sky loomed threateningly overhead and sure enough around Newtonmore a flurry of snow hit us. Although it eased off, at Drumochter summit you could see the high wind starting to drift snow across the road. What would our return journey be like? Ballanluig soon beckoned however and a swift pee, followed by bacon rolls and coffee (notice how the loo is high on the agenda for me nowadays!).

After Perth we took the Dundee road keeping an eye out for signs for Errol. I'm not sure we ever did find the right way in because we seemed to go along a lot of back roads but eventually we found plenty signs for "Classic Auction". Admission is by catalogue only at £5 a pop (cash only) as you drive in. Plenty of car parking to be had and there were Marshalls to guide you. Then it was follow the people who seemed to know where they were going. The auction hall is actually two massive industrial sheds. A PA system can be heard throughout both of them, and there are monitor displays of the car being auctioned. There were over one hundred and sixty lots for sale and the variety on offer was amazing. I have to admit that I am bored witless by the average classic car show, but this was so different. Cars of all types and sizes, all ages, from excellent to basket case, and you could pop bonnets and have a good root around (there were a couple of "Do not sit in vehicle notices" but only a couple).

The facilities were good too. There were several burger stalls, and one sit down café. Part of the fun of a day like this is eating the kind of stuff you know you shouldn't! The loos were excellent which made a change from the usual "don't touch anything that isn't your own" type.

So, what of the auction itself. The catalogue gives a guide price, and frankly they were on the high side. To be fair, it was early in the year, but not many cars made the hammer price. Quite a few were "close, come and see us later". Looking at the auction results online, 69 sold out of 162 lots which equates to 43%. I would guess that about 30% sold on the day, with the rest being negotiated post-auction with the seller at below the guide price. To take an example; an Aston Martin DB7 Vantage Volante with a guide price of £30K-£34K is listed as sold at £31005. It did not make the reserve at auction so this must be the sum agreed post-auction (including the buyer's premium of 5%+VAT). Some simple maths shows that the

agreed price was 29,250 + 1462.5+ 292.5 (honest, it's easy). The bottom line is that someone paid £31K for the car. Now a brief trawl of ebay shows that you can pick one up for this money anyway, but from a dealer where there will be some sort of warranty. I always thought that the ethos of an auction was that the lot would be below market price because it's bought "as seen". I would chance a couple of grand on an MX5 or such like, but an Aston without a test drive?; I don't think so. Perhaps it's gone to a dealer who can bung another five grand on top and cover themselves for any faults.

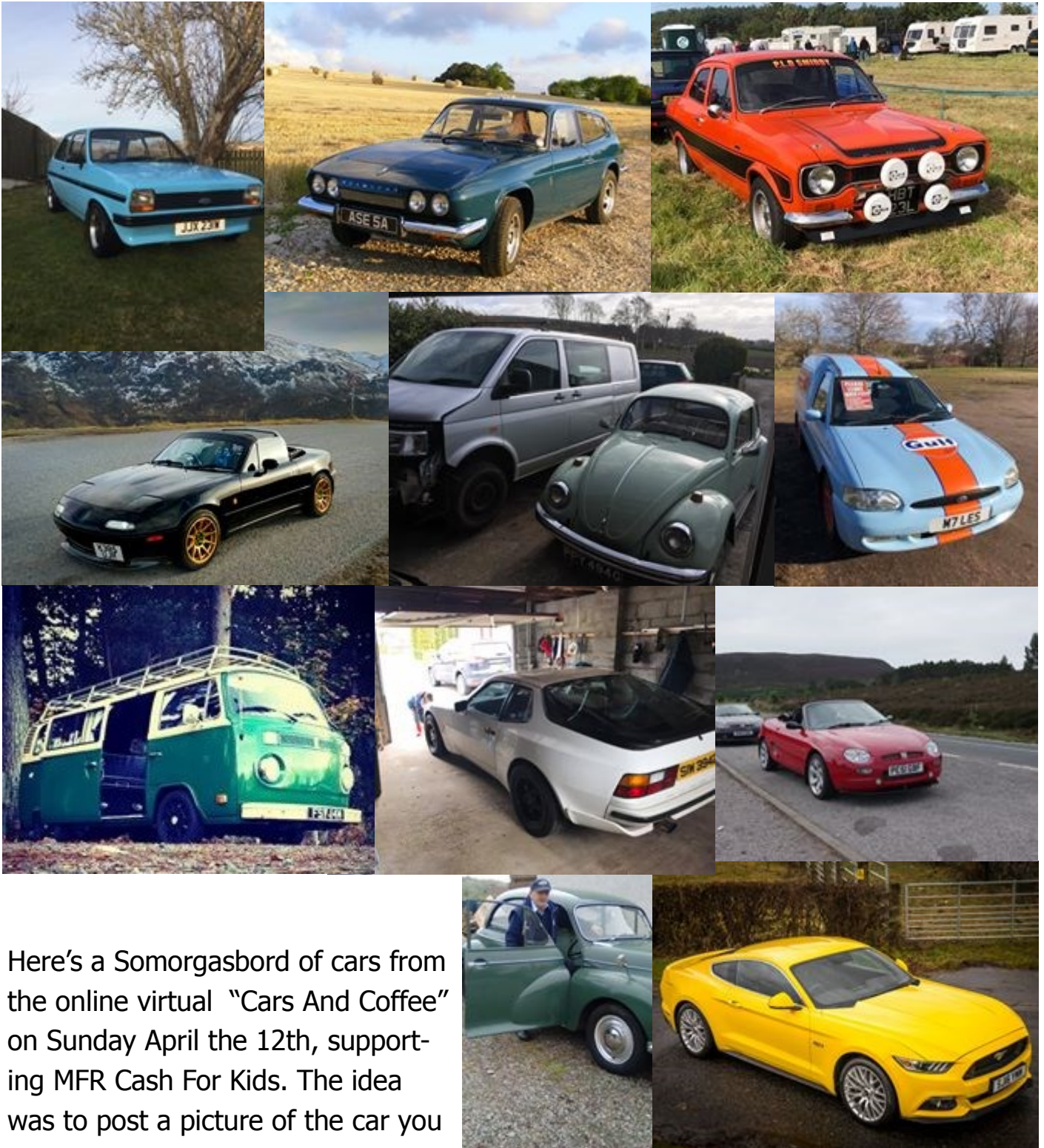
There were two (yes two) TR250s in the sale. For those not in the know, the TR5's Lucas fuel injection would not meet the US emission standards so Triumph put a 2500 lump on carbs in place. As such the 250 is not really rated in this country as a "real" TR, and of course these were both left hookers. Guide price was 20-25K on one, and 25-27K on the other. I pointed out to one punter who was looking at one, that the front of the sill was welded to the lower wing which it definitely shouldn't be, and that the top of the sill was decidedly wavy suggesting that this was an oversill and that iron oxide might reside below!! Hmmm.

But the star of the show by a long way was the STAG. In orange, yes THAT orange. The catalogue described it as condition 4 (of 1-5), and that was being kind. It had rust in abundance. I don't mean a bit of rust on the seams; I mean great lumps of rust bursting out everywhere. The wings were blown, the door bottoms were blown, the sills were gone, which means you can be sure the floors and chassis legs were in the same state, the windscreen surround... OK you get it. The guide price was 6K to 8K! I said to a guy standing there that this was ridiculous to which he replied "Well if it doesn't make that I'm taking it home!". It was the owner! Carefully removing my foot from my mouth I wished him luck and moved on. When it's turn came the auctioneer said "who'll start me at five thousand?".and somebody did! And then it crept up, and up, and up until the hammer fell at £6,200!. I really could not believe that someone paid that much. Perhaps they only saw the catalogue picture and never inspected the car. In all honesty I reckon the car was only fit for breaking for spares. I would dearly love to know what happens to it in the long run.

So, all in all was it worth the trip? Oh yes. It was the best day's entertainment for a long time. Far better than any classic car show. Loads of cars to examine, lots of crack, bacon rolls, all day breakfasts; what's not to like? Maybe we should get a minibus down some time as a club outing?

Bryan.

A Virtual Cars and Coffee



Here's a Somorgasbord of cars from the online virtual "Cars And Coffee" on Sunday April the 12th, supporting MFR Cash For Kids. The idea was to post a picture of the car you would have taken on the Facebook page giving people the chance to do something on Cars and Coffee day. We also had a donate button so instead of buying a roll and coffee, you could give something to Moray Firth Radio's Cash for Kids to help them through this difficult time. As I write we raised £395 which is fairly spectacular. I bet that yellow Mustang saved about £50 by not going out.

Miller, Sinclair & Sutherland,

c/o Y Beer Garden,

Pentland Hotel,

Thurso.

Weel Folkies, You'll notice a slight change till wir address as y lounge bar es closed meantime. Y hotel hes set up a carry-out an we hev till drink en y beer garden. Gluhwein, toddies an curry chips es very popular. Hit looks like y clubbie meetins will hev to be postponed an so we'll all congregate en Tesco's carpark, wind down y windows an blether jist like y old days. En y plus side, we're all getting paid till work en wir garages. There's a mixed message from Boris here. En y wan hand he's givin us y chance till get all y classic car projects feenished an en y ither hand he's tellin us till keep all y classics off y road. Does y right hand know what y left es doin?

Up here, North o' y Ord, we've always hid social distancing. We're more likely till be nearer a sheep or a coo than a human so no change for us chiellies.

We're kept busy wi all y blocked toilets seein as toilet rolls hev disappeared off y shelves . Y hidden cisterns jist don't hev y flushin power till deal wi newspaper an glossy magazines. I widna be surprised if y BL Chiellie hes sold hes Practical Classics for y aforementioned purpose!

Y mystery deepens, read on. Wattie at Cooster Mains wis self-isolatin an pit an order intill Tescos. He decided till go fir y thousand sheet toilet roll an ticked y box fir nine thousand sheets (9 toilet rolls). Y Tesco larry driver es well up till speed at Cooster an leaves y order en y shed if Wattie es oot. Hit wis some days before Wattie started lookin for y toilet roll order an found hes grain shed fill o' toilet rolls. Not 9 toilet rolls, nor even 9 thousand toilet rolls but 9 thousand 9 packs. Business es good so y toilet rolls can stay en Wattie's shed.

Best Regards, *Wundy Miller*.

Out and About - if you're a key worker.



I nicked this picture from one of my internet groups, as it popped up just after I asked last month, 'When was the last time you saw a Maestro Van, Starsky?'



And these two were a tip-off, seen in North Kessock on my cycle to work. A TVR 350i and a Vauxhall Chevette 4 door saloon - late 70's maybe early eighties.

Celebrations



Former club member and Rosemarkie resident Alex Mann was 90 on the 4th of April. Belated good wishes from HCMC!

He was nominated for a mention in the newsletter by one of his friends in his club, and why not? We like to celebrate.

This picture was taken at his 80th birthday celebrations.

Practical Classics Magazine is 40

I remember noting the launch of Practical Classics in 1980 when I did the HCMC 40th birthday Newsletter last year and this month's issue celebrates their 40th birthday. The May issue of the magazine celebrates every one of those years, and it makes quite a good read in my opinion.

They recently polled their readers for their top 40 practical classics, being defined as a classic which is easy to fix, use and live with in current times (well not these exact lockdown times.) I thought there some interesting and possibly controversial results so I'll highlight a few. Buy the magazine for the full list and to find out what's number 1.

- 4. Mazda MX-5—described as a British sports car in disguise.
- 7. Porsche 924—quality, looks speed. It has everything, apparently. No 944's
- 8. Just for me, the VW Beetle, often not seen as a classic but has it's own scene.
- 10. MG T/F another relatively modern entry and beating this one...
- 13. Ford Escort—a peoples car for Ferrari money.
- Followed by a number of Triumphs but wait for it...
- 17. Austin Allegro. Described as a Marmite car, and I do like Marmite.
- 32. Just for me, the Ford Sierra. A truly well thought out Practical Classic. Told ya!

A peoples list like this is always going to have some controversy but that's what makes them interesting, or annoying, but a good read in any case.

Tain Gala Association

Tain Vintage Car Rally Announcement — With regret this years Vintage Car Rally, due to be held on Sunday 21st June 2020, is cancelled due to the current situation.

Sir Stirling Moss dies at the age of 90

He is widely regarded as one of the greatest racing drivers of all time, even though he did not win a F1 World Championship, he won 16 of the 66 F1 races he competed in and became the first British driver to win a home grand prix in 1955 at Aintree.

Moss was regarded as a motor racing all-rounder and racked up a total of 212 victories in all categories. He was an outstanding rally driver and in 1955 set a new course record in winning the famous Mille Miglia, a 1,000-mile race around Italy.

He suffered two huge crashes but survived in an era when many of his peers didn't. Moss was effectively forced to retire from top-level motorsport in 1962 after a crash at Goodwood left him in a coma for a month and partially paralysed for six months. However, he continued to race in historic cars and legends events until the age of 81.

Jackie Stewart is quoted as saying, "He walked like a racing driver should walk, he talked like a racing driver, he looked like a racing driver and he set a standard that I think has been unmatched since."

Of course there is the famous, "Who do you think you are? Stirling Moss?" line used by traffic police all over the country, which allegedly was used on Stirling Moss himself, much to his amusement. Here are some quotes from the man himself.

"It is necessary to relax your muscles when you can. Relaxing your brain is fatal."

"If God had meant for us to walk, why did he give us feet that fit car pedals?"

"If everything is under control you are just not driving fast enough."

"The best classroom of all times was about two car lengths behind Juan Manuel Fangio."

"It's hard to drive at the limit, but it's harder to know where the limits are."

"It is better to go into a corner slow and come out fast, than to go in fast and come out dead"

"In order to finish first, you first have to finish."

LOCAL EVENTS

Take your Classic to Tescos	Once a week for essential supplies only.	At your nearest store.	Other supermarkets are Available.
Take your Classic to work	Daily if your work can't be done from home.	A9, A96 or A82.	Key workers only.
Sit in your Classic in the garage.	Anytime.	Please send in a picture.	Garage owners only. Exceptions will be made.
Sit in your Classic in the drive.	Remember the 2m social distancing.	Please send in a picture.	Open to most members.
Dream of driving a Classic.	In your imagination.	Route 66, Stelvio Pass, or the Bealach na Bà, anywhere you like.	Open to all members.