

CLASSIC SCENE



May 2024



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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

April's Cars and Coffee

Coul House Hotel surrounded by HCMC cars and members on Drive It Day

Welcome to the May Newsletter

Inclusivity. That's a hot topic these days, and HCMC has certainly been included in the magazine world, with the recent string of features in Practical Classics, and this month we even got a Drive It Day mention in Classic and Sports Car Magazine, you know the one that the Historic Wheels Club members read? (Joking of course.)



4. Highland Classic Motor Club

Where: Beaulieu, near Inverness, Scotland

This 24-mile Drive It Day tour will explore parts of the Scottish Highlands, including Strathconon, Contin and Loch Meig.

It's free to join, however the club will be collecting donations for local charity L'Arche Highland, and you must register on the Highland Classic Motor Club website in advance.

The club will meet at Beaulieu Square at 12:30pm.

[Click here for more information](#)



Well our time in the sun at PC isn't over. I thought I'd write them a wee email to say thank you, as my experience of writing is that you don't often get feedback, but I never expected them to publish it. Maybe they're as desperate for content as I am! It's embarrassing how gushy it is, I must have been at the editors wine cellar again, but the essence of what I wrote stands.

In the same issue they review Sierra Cosworths. Driving position excellent - agreed, that's what first attracted me to them. God's own gearchange? Not mine. I know mine's not a Cosie but it has the same seating and gearbox. Anyway, in the which one would you have bit, Matt Tompkins goes for the rally one, as seen on their trip to see us. Craig Robb's Colin McRae rally one as seen at Cars and Coffee.



Although I personally missed Drive It Day, I hear it was as good as ever but with better weather. Around 40 Classics took part in a meandering scenic drive in the hills above Beaulieu and Muir of Ord, followed by a run up Strathconon to Meig Dam, parked up until continuing on to the Coul House Hotel in Contin. £140 was raised for our chosen charity L'Arche Highland in Inverness. There were also significant numbers of FBHVC Drive It Day plaques which contribute to their chosen charity.

It's worth I think, noting that I'm writing this on a wee break organised by Mrs Editor, and have had to steal a day out of our holidays to write the newsletter. Boo hoo, taunting rubbing of fists in eyes? Violins? The deadlines are becoming relentless and I'm busier than ever so I feel my time as editor might have to come to an end in the near future, certainly by the next AGM. Get your nominations in.

To end on a more positive note though, I hope to get my fix of the Beaulieu Hills at the next club night.

Your Editor

Ramblings from the Chair



Well, it's that time of year again – brush off the cobwebs and get the Classic out and back on the road for another season. Although, as I write, the rain is battering down on the Velux windows and the wind is howling – not very conducive to taking 'the old girl' out for a spin. However, I am pleased to report the Senator started at the first turn of the key earlier this week and a quick hurl around the block went without any kind of grumblings, rattles or squeaks, so here's hoping for another successful year. There is one job however – at last year's 'Drive It Day' I pressed the trip reset, so as to follow Callum's Tulip diagram – and the odometer (and the trip) ground to a halt. The car has a digital display and the only mechanical parts are in the mileage reading workings – oh dear! However, this seems to be a common problem on Vauxhall/Opel cars of this age and is caused by the failure of a small plastic cog at the back of the speedo. Lo and behold, the Autobahnstormers Car Club have had these remade by a 3D printing supplier and I now have one waiting to be fitted – I think the whole display comes out quite easily but fitting will be kind of fiddly – watch this space!!

Last month's meeting was quite an eye opener – I have nothing but admiration for Peter Naull – his talents for producing model house layouts in such detail (there was a tiny bicycle leaning against a section of railings!) to an Austin 10 pedal car and full size Austin 10 bodies in wood and metal are nothing short of amazing - see later for a report.

And to my final part of my car history – a bit downhill from the Ascona. I took over ownership of my father's 1983 Cavalier GLS Mk2 – a fine car with quite a lot of kit but no power steering or electric windows, strange for such a high spec. Then I started getting company car's so our own vehicles essentially became Mrs Chair's – a pair of Vauxhall Astra estates (they did everything asked of them), then a pair of Renault Scenics, the first a 1600 and was much loved, the second, bought new, a 1400 and was awful – dreadfully underpowered (despite having more BHP) and unreliable. Then came a Nissan Xtrail which was wonderful – 167k miles in comfort and which we had for 10 years and now, our current Xtrail, equally as wonderful, (at 106k miles) which we have had for nearly for 8 years. Mrs Chair has a VW Golf of which she approves.

This month's meeting is a road trip to a viewpoint, arranged by my good self, starting from Braeview car park, Beaulieu. If the weather is decent, bring a deckchair and we might even get a natter at the top. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Regards, Richard

April Club Night

Callum Beveridge

Inver Models - Peter Naulls - Nairn.

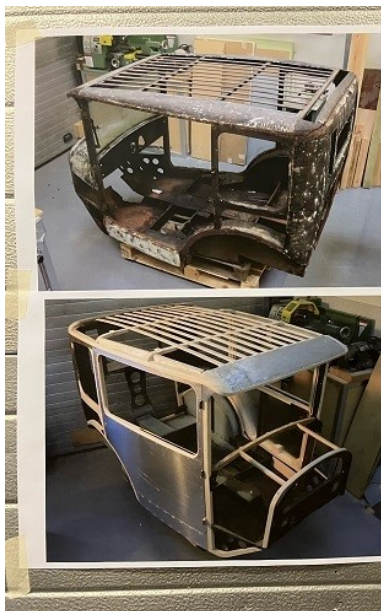
A group of us met up in the retail park with a view to sharing transport - which ended up with as many cars leaving that had arrived - sod the planet!

It was a relaxed drive to Nairn with a leisurely bimbly through town at the 20mph limit. Those muscle-cars can maintain 20mph it appears!

We were welcomed to the workshop with a brief history of the business and a run-down of the circumstances which has led to having an ash-framed Austin Seven body in the corner of the premises.

We saw a fascinating selection of architectural and motoring models and had a thoroughly good evening. I'm amazed that such work can take place in such a small and tidy unit - barely bigger than a domestic double garage.

Another gentle drive home, albeit in the dark this time, but nothing fell off the Dy-aDeuch and the recently overhauled rear brakes performed with nary a squeal.



Drive It Day 2024

Alan A. Goff



The meeting point for this years Drive it Day was the Beaulie town square at 1pm and as I only live at the top of the hill in Muir of Ord I thought that we would leave at about 12.50 and be the first there. Oops wrong, nearly the last. The turn out was excellent and even the weather was probably the best for many a year, dry



AND warm, a rare occurrence for Drive it Day. At 1pm the first cars set off and the plan of breaking up into small groups in fact was a big convoy. What was very pleasing on venturing up into the maze of roads above Beaulie was the number of people outside their front doors to give us all a wave. One house even had balloons festooned around their house. The route then took us past the Ord distillery and up through the Fairburn estate and past Fairburn House and into Glen Strathconon. This Glen was a regular route in my days with Tesco DotCom and there was always a problem to find any address. From Marybank onward the entire 17



mile long Glen has the same post code and no house numbers! SatNav just gives up after a few miles and you can't use a mobile phone to call because there isn't any signal. Not having been down the Glen for a few years I checked my phone and..... No Signal.

The only stop on the route was at the Dam and somehow we all managed to squeeze into the car park, where I had a little bit of a problem. I have renewed the handbrake shoes on the Lancia and getting them balanced and bedded in left the parking brake a little erm, insufficient. The problem being that the rear hub is a disc brake and a drum brake so the brake shoes are only used for parking. The only way to overcome this is keep yanking the handbrake on to bed them in. Can't complain too much, the last set of shoes have lasted 50 years and 86,000 miles!



From the dam we then had a short drive to the Coul House Hotel where we were made very welcome and fine weather meant everyone could sit out in the pleasant sunshine overlooking their excellent rear garden enjoying the coffee and biscuits.

A great day and many thanks to the organisers.

Alan

More Pictures from Drive It Day 2024



Out and About

A couple of number plate images taken in the same park a couple of cars apart. What are the chances? They were both black BMWs and the number plates are ten years apart but otherwise, the same.



Am I missing something here? Probably.

Cheers,
Jim Mackay



A certain Mini Neon of this parish was on it's way for an MOT, but after stopping off on the way the pesky thing wouldn't start.

Now that's a bit stressful. With a time slot waiting and the RAC unlikely to arrive in time an SOS call was made.

Our Callum Beveridge, now known as Rapid Assistance Callum, attended in 5 minutes and diagnosed a sticking choke lever so it was too rich

to start. After freeing it up, normal starting was restored. I'm not sure what happened with the MOT but it's not been refreshed this year.

Apologies to anyone affected by this story. We have an HCMC helpline number

0300 123 9000

Cars And Coffee



April's Cars and Coffee was well, a belter. Instead of a wee gathering of like minded car people for coffee and conversation, it was more like a full on Classic Car Show. It was rammed. Perhaps it

was the spring weather or the draw of the auto jumble but I'm getting worried how we'll fit everyone in at the next one. It shows that the difficult decision to discourage moderns a while back paid off, because there's simply not enough room. Next we'll have to cull Ford Escorts, because there were so many stunning examples I wouldn't be able to fit the (emerging classic) Ford Focus in next time. I'm joking of course, but where else could you complain about too many excellent cars turning up?



The autojumble added another angle and there were a fair few boot loads (or van loads) of car stuff to be grabbed. I got rid of about half of mine which was good going. The only downside for me is I didn't get to mill about as much or take too many pictures, but enough people came to browse my wares and some good craic was had.



I really liked this Lotus Cortina. Was it genuine? I don't know, nor really care. Knowing Cars and Coffee - Inverness it probably is. It looks great to me. I love the deep dish steel rims. They are so iconic. Someone out there will know more about this car. Please inform us.

Fleeting moments

Trish Brown

Not to feel left out, the Landie decided to cause some problems by breaking the speedo cable, giving a speed reading of zero right across the board. Not really a big problem as these days you can use your satnav to give an equally accurate speed reading. Problem is that you don't know just how many miles you travelled, the fuel gauge is a bit iffy and you can't calculate the mpg. A new speedo cable was duly ordered. Fitting (2.5hrs) was simpler than we initially expected. Online guides, including the Series2 Owners club all suggested removing the floor panel and tunnel to give easier access. After the third floor bolt was being awkward, we re-considered this course of action and then decided it was not required at all. Lift out the passenger seat, raise the utility box lid and he-presto you are looking at the end of the gearbox and the speedo connection.

Test drive shows an alarming tendency for the speedo needle to indicate +_10mph on the overrun. From past experience, this would suggest either worn gears in the speedo housing or the output shaft nut getting loose. We decided to investigate the output shaft in the Easter weekend. Undoing the propshaft went without a hitch for 3 of the 4 nuts, the last one kept spinning, not loosening nor tightening anymore. Fortunately we still have the gearbox of the replacement series 3 engine that was fitted, what ? 15 years ago? This still had the speedo housing and handbrake drum fitted (the handbrake drum incorporates the propshaft mounting). Inspecting this drum revealed that the propshaft is not mounted on studs, but on bolts which "lock" themselves in place courtesy of being tight up against the output shaft mounting. The bolts on this drum looked in good nick, so did the drum itself. With some cleansing later, we were ready to take off the old drum and replace it with the spare one.

Back under the Landie, the handbrake drum bolts came off very easily, but on pulling off the drum an alarming amount of oil started to leak out. The only ready to hand container was the drum itself and after the oil finally stopped leaking, we re-conned we got about a good pint of oil. Everything on the handbrake mechanism was soaking in oil. It is amazing that the handbrake was working at all! The job was starting to get bigger and we needed a rethink of our approach. Obviously some oil seal had given way, most likely the one on the speedo housing.

Back to our spare gearbox. Take of the handbrake mechanism, take off the speedo housing and clean up the lot. But we could not get the handbrake adjuster to free up. After some more head scratching, we decided to buy a handbrake overhaul kit. It would have new brake shoes, and not knowing how old the other ones are, they may contain asbestos.

A week later we are back under the Landie again, the old handbrake and speedo housing were removed and the nicely cleaner and overhauled ones fitted without a fuss. Only problem was the speedo cable which just would not site nice. There must be a teensy weensy wee difference between the two housings, even though

they have the same part number. Eventually we got the cable to sit decently. A quick run round the block confirmed the speedo was working. After refilling the gearbox/transfer box a further test drive confirmed that this time the speedo needle was steady as a rock. And that all just in time for Drive-It day.

Club quiz night— Answers to last weeks quiz questions.

- Strathpeffer branch closure (23 February) 1946
- Inflatable tyre first used in: 1888 on a bicycle
- Manufacturer: Radial
- Location: Tain, bridge over railway to the Links used for the Tain Rally.
- Highway code: No waiting
- Italian company: Alfa Romeo

HCMC to the Rescue

We were contacted by someone whose brother-in-law had passed away. His favourite car was the Toyota Supra mk4 and they were after one for the post service procession. A Cars and Coffee appeal established that it was as a very rare car up here with the two that we found locally both being off the road in storage. One that was



offered was still in a container having been imported from Australia. A lady in Fife was tagged who owns the Supra that featured on a recent "Car SOS" program. Determined to help, she tried many different dog sitting firms and even some doggy hotels to look after her car sick prone, aged blind dog but there were no places because of the short notice. She had planned to leave home at 6am to be up here for the Funeral in Alness but unfortunately had to give up. Then one Shaun Frame agreed to have his car taken up on a recovery truck owned by a friend so that it could take part in the procession. What a guy. The Family are incredibly touched by all the effort to make their wish come true and have thanked everyone a number of times.

The number of posts, tags and shares for this appeal were astonishing and Cars and Coffee Inverness has a lot of new followers. It is obviously a very sad occasion, but also heart warming that people will go to so much effort to help.



Speed Limits

I'm back on about speed limits with the 20mph limits in the starring role. In general I think the new 20mph limits are fine. (Spot the pun.) In town it calms things down and makes it safer and generally more pleasant for everyone. However - some places it's implemented seem to lead to driver frustration. Yes Nairn. So the A96 approach is long and slow now but I suppose doesn't really hold you up as, well, it's Nairn.

Recently I was leaving Nairn on a back road and there were fields a few houses by the road side, and yes a 20mph limit - for ages. Trying to be a good citizen, I followed the rules but got overtaken by some slow pensioner type car, you know a Honda Jazz or something. When the national speed limit was reached they accelerated to a road blocking 35-40. Frustrating. I did see that in Wales some of the 20mph zones have been changed back to 30's. Perhaps some common sense will prevail.

Anyone who's travelled north of Inverness on the A9 recently will have experienced the roadworks leading up to and including the Munlochy Junction. The speed restriction starts at 50, reduces to 30 and even goes down to 10mph at times. Now the signage wasn't the best and with the windy spell some of them were flat on their face, but there were still obvious signs. Some drivers have a kind of muscle memory for the old speed limit so speed up to 70 where the signs used to be, years ago. Others speed up to 70 where the more recent derestriction was, but in this story replaced by the massive 50 signs. The majority carry on at a steady 50, even through the 30 and 10 signage. So it has been quite alarming driving through roadworks with traffic varying in speed from 10 to 70 mph. The 70mph-ers get a right fright when they hit the ramp to find scraped tarmac and raised iron works. You could tell by the wobbly emergency braking.

Now I'm all for a bit of speed induced fun, but recently I've been going slow in my van, sometimes towing or sometimes just trying to eek out another 2 mpg. Ironically I am approaching junior pensioner age and do own a sensible Skoda Fabulous. Some of the roads I've been on recently I've driven for decades, and at a steady 48 with a bit of van height, I have seen things that I've never noticed before, big things like a river or smaller things like a track to a wee house, or a picnic area and not just the next apex. Yes, there's also less foliage but it's been eye opening. I think it's fair though, when meandering along, to let the speed freaks pass, looking on nostalgically as a younger version of you disappears ahead.

Now meandering along (in two senses) besides, apart from airing my frustration, remember when on club organised activities we are obliged to show a good example. And our insurers require it too, so 20mph it is, where posted. More time for folks to admire our cars I suppose.

HCMC Events

2nd May 2024 HCMC Scenic Drive Beaulieu The HCMC May Meeting is a scenic drive organised by Richard Lashley. Meet at the Braeview car park Beaulieu for a 7:30 pm departure. You know the one by the shinty field, that we've used a few times now. It's a trip to a viewpoint, so if the weather is decent, bring a deckchair.

6th Jun 2024 HCMC Scenic Drive. The HCMC June Meeting is a scenic drive starting at 7.30pm. Details TBC

4th May 2024 Highland Historic Commercial Vehicle Road Run Dingwall Auction Mart to Thurso. Details on HHCVRR Facebook Page or Call 07803907942.

5th May 2024 Forres Veteran, Vintage & Classic Vehicle Show. Grant Park, Forres 10 - 5pm. £10 to enter. Spectators free. Email patersonsharon@aol.com

12th May 2024 Cars And Coffee - Inverness Rollerbowl, Culduthel Rd. Inverness 2nd Sunday of every Month from 10am-12noon.

18th May 2024 Rotary Club of East Sutherland Classic Car Tour Depart Dornoch Dornoch to Gairloch via Strathpeffer, returning to Dornoch. Limited to 60 Spaces. Contact: Tony Gill 07904 719249 or rcoescartour@gmail.com

18th May 2024 Inverness Classic Vehicle Show Inverness City Centre 11am to 3pm with Parade down Inverness High Street to finish. Registered Vehicles Only - Limited Spaces. See Inverness BID website www.invernessbid.co.uk

19th May 2024 Inverness Car Show Dores, Inverness (Not to be confused with Inverness B.I.D. Classic Vehicle Show) Performance, modified, street, classic, retro & race car show on Sunday 19th May 2024 at Dores IV2 6TR. Details at invernesscarshow.co.uk

26th May 2024 Highland Folk Museum Vintage Day Newtonmore Arrive by 10am. Finishes 4pm. Classic Cars, Bikes, Raleigh Choppers, Agricultural Vehicles etc. at the Highland Folk Museum, Kingussie Rd, Newtonmore on Sunday. Entry Form online <https://www.hIGHLIFEhighland.com/highlandfolkmuseum/vintage-day/>