

CLASSIC SCENE



May 2025



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Classic Scene is published on the Thursday preceding the monthly meeting. Please send articles by post or email to addresses above.

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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

The National Geographic goes to the Muir.

A nod to our British Geological society talk and the various Easter gatherings at Muir of Ord.

Welcome to the May Newsletter

Your editor is feeling a little cranky. With too many cars and not enough time (which is going to change!) I have disposed of a scrap Focus Mk1 which is helping with my sense of balance, but before that I had to move things around. My favourite Focus Mk1 has been lying idle for a while and now, though the engine cranks, it won't start. That's a job for another day. The Panda 4x4 cranked very slowly and would not start but a quick battery charge sorted that. The VW T5 van has had an odd thing where it cranks slowly for the first turn and then is normally OK and starts fine. No longer - it cranks slowly and charging the battery doesn't help, and jump starting just causes very warm and soft jump leads. I think the starter is kaput. Or hopefully just an earth strap. The Sierra cranks but takes a while to fire after being idle for a few weeks. I suspect the fuel filter so that's in progress. So with a diminishing collection of starting vehicles I dug out to old Beetle. It fired on the first crank and ran and idled on the third. That's never happened before, as normally the carb needs primed after a winter's storage. Who cares? A success is a success. It's also running quite well. I have fully recommissioned her by pumping up the tyres, putting in fresh fuel and treating the bodywork to a £4.00 trip to the Tesco jetwash. If only everything was as reliable as a Volkswagen. Mind you my £250 Mondeo has just completed another round trip to Yorkshire (with two obligatory stops at Ballinluig Motor Grill) and returned 63mpg cruising at a steady 70 on the cruise control. Where possible of course, so not at Tomatin, or Perth on the A9.

In other news, it's lovely to see all the classics vehicles coming out of winter hibernation. I really enjoyed our British Geological Society talk and now having a suitable vehicle on the road I also enjoyed meeting a few folk at Muir of Ord on Easter Sunday.

I have finally concocted some sort of Newsletter article template which our illustrious Webmaster will put on the club website. It's a bit basic, but hopefully it will help. As I say in the template, something is better than nothing.



And finally, and I don't know why I'm doing this to myself, but how about a caption competition.

So much for the anonymity of my position as editor.

Here's my starter..

"What do you mean you all read the newsletter while sitting on the throne?"

Happy classic motoring.

Your Editor

Aka Calum (one L) Pearson.

Ramblings from the Chair



Well, they say pride comes before a fall – it certainly does. Let me set the scene, - it's 10am on the 1st April and I am just leaving the Post Office with my (hypothetical) tax disc for the Senator – ok, my PO receipt showing the cost - £0.00. That's right, my classic is now a Historic Vehicle and the tax is now free. When do you ever leave a Post Office without feeling that you've just been ripped off? So, straight home and the first outing of the year (and first since the removal, repair and reinstallation of the petrol tank). The car starts first time and off we go up the hill – 200 yards later there's a bit of a falter, then another (and, of course, a following car appears) but we make it to the passing place before we stall. Oh dear. It'll just be air in the system I thought, so we try again and this time we get another 200 yards to the junction before it falters again but we just manage a U-ey and get to coast back to the house. So, back under the car where the pipework exits the tank via the pump and filter in a convoluted series of one U and two S bends, under electric cables, and lo and behold, the problem was easy to see. A length of pipework that I had replaced was slightly too long and had 'squashed' in the middle of a bend – to add insult to injury, it also had a very slight twist, just to make no fuel would flow through it! A swift bit of work with a screwdriver and a Stanley knife made sure that the pipe now ran in a smooth curve – and the car roared into life. Perhaps it's a good thing that I was never a 'proper' mechanic! However, that is not quite the end of the story – the fuel gauge has now stopped working. Maybe the frequent rotation of the tank when it was removed has damaged the sender unit although I have had a look at it and it seems ok at first glance.

On another matter, I had two recent occasions where members have tried to contact me by mobile phone to no avail. Guilty as charged – I had not changed my details in the membership section on the website nor even in the Newsletter heading page – all now corrected. Could I ask all members to check their details given on the Club's website and amend them where necessary.

Last month's meeting was a talk by Professor Ian Basham about his work with the British Geological Survey in Africa and Asia – very entertaining and even with the inclusion of a classic car, a Mark 1 Ford Escort! His work included surveys for the Karakoram Highway linking Northern Pakistan with China, 810miles long and reaching over 15,000ft in height - making our own A9 pale into insignificance. I'm amazed (and ashamed of my ignorance) that such projects exist.

May's meeting is a scenic drive to the head of Glen Affric where we will visit a small 'run of river' hydro electric scheme. My nephew has fairly recently started working for a company who services and maintains a number of these schemes and, with the permission of his superiors, has agreed to show us around the generating house and tailrace. We will be leaving from Braeview car park, Beaulay at 7.30pm, Thursday 1st May. Hope to see you all there.

Regards, Richard

Fleeting Moments

Trish Brown

The little ignition motherboard came back from repairs and has been re-fitted to the Merc. The car it is starting beautifully again. That is one fixed.

Now we get to the winter blues story for the Smart. As cars do, some problems appear to leap at you and so did this one for the Smart. One day I am still driving around, happy as Larry, the next evening, as soon as we reverse out the of the drive, we both go "what is that funny sound?". We got as far as the end of the street to turn onto the main road. The end of the street has a lowered kerb and again there is this scraping sound. We both looked at each other and agreed that we needed to inspect this first.

Back in the drive, a look under the car showed that the intercooler was virtually hanging on the road. You could get about 2 finger widths between the two, where there should be at least 6 inches. Well, that put paid to our night out! This being early nights in late February, we waited until daylight to get a proper look at things.

Next day rain cancels play. Eventually there is enough of a gap in the downpours to give us a few minutes to look underneath the car. That revealed that the mounting bracket that holds the intercooler in place had broken right at the intercooler end. When properly mounted the intercooler sits at a slight angle, tilting forward at the top. With the bracket broken off, the intercooler basically hung straight down. Not wanting to take any risks, it meant that the Smart too was off the road until this problem was sorted.

It took our mannie at the garage less than half an hour to amend the bracket and re-fix it to the intercooler. Mind you, we had to wait for almost 2 weeks before he had time to look at the car in the first place.

Out and About Part 1



MGB Seen at Braes Ullapool
It looks nice with those chrome bumpers but is a little rusty.



VW T2 Van seen on Market Street Ullapoo. It's a bit of an Animal.



An engine block found in a remote spot by Loch Ewe on the west coast.
What is it from?

March Club Night - Professor Ian Basham

Last months club night was a very interesting talk by Dr Ian Basham from Fortrose and formerly of the British Geological Society. To say it was interesting is a bit of an understatement, it was part travelogue, part life history, part geology



lesson, part anthropology, part history and even included the odd classic car and road just for us. And to top it off it was delivered in an easy captivating manner.

You might think this wasn't a suitable topic for classic car club, but the fifteen or so members that attended would disagree. There was a general consensus, of enjoyment. Perhaps we are just an eclectic group with a thirst for knowledge of all sorts and it was so well delivered.

I took some notes to give those that missed the evening an idea of what the talk was about but I can't guarantee much accuracy. Hopefully it'll give you a good idea and if it's your thing it might be possible to catch him again somewhere, or do some Googling.

Our host started with his early life at Fortrose Academy and then studying mineralogy at Aberdeen University. Then he joined the British Geological Society at its Nottingham H.Q.

He was sent to Ghana, formally known as the Gold Coast but also the Slave Coast. There was a deviation into the grim world of the slave trade, of colonial castles and caves used as holding pens for slaves before they were shipped overseas.

The mission on the occasion however, was to survey for quartz ore containing aluminium.

On arrival his luggage went missing but fortunately he had the foresight to pack a few essentials in his briefcase. Several attempts at retrieving the luggage failed, and so our protagonist went to the airport himself to be told his luggage wasn't there, but behind the clerk sat, very obviously his suitcase. This was his introduction to the bribe culture prevalent in most African countries at this time.

We were shown his, (well actually theirs as his wife, Sheena is with him) first car a Mini Minor. The heat in Ghana affected the battery but he had a bit of trouble locating it at first! He's more of a rocks and minerals kinda guy.

Next slide. We're in Freetown, Sierra Leone and the famous cotton tree which marks the site where freed American slaves returned and settled.

It's very different to Ghana with tin roofed wartime accommodation. We were shown pictures of the delivery of a spectrograph. It was overly packaged and fully encased in aluminium as the last one was dropped into the sea, forever, as it was being ferried from ship to shore. It was a heavy thing and the doorways too small, but with the aid of some impressive tribal chanting, all obstacles to its installation were overcome.

In a nod to the audience we were shown their second car, a Mk1 Ford Escort. It had reliability issues but a recommended change from Ford to Champion ignition components sorted that out.

Sierra Leone was famous for its diamond corruption but also its richness in heavy minerals, gold, tin (from cassiterite ore), and red garnet.

Next slide. We're taken to Saudi Arabia where Professor Basham and the British Geological Society are prospecting for tin, though our audience quickly spotted an early Range Rover in the scene.

Another slide, and we're looking for Uranium minerals, and because they are radioactive a Geiger counter is used. It looked perfectly safe to me! The Professor became an expert in this field and started working with the International Atomic Energy Authority, and delivered lectures at conferences.

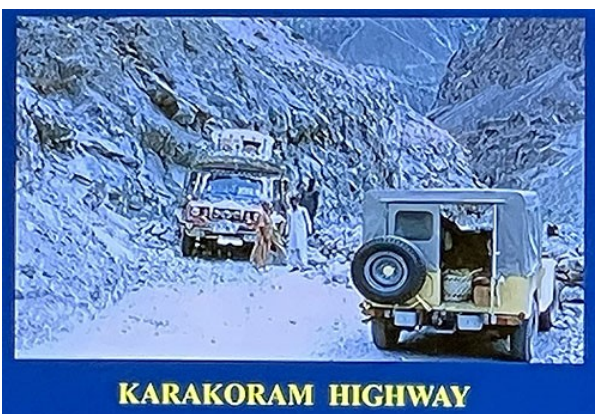
New slide. It's Hyderabad in southern India and another luggage disaster, but this time there was no room for essentials in his briefcase as it was full of mineral samples. I can't read my own writing here but this just seems to be the High Commission, handing over his passport and £20 and waiting a week.

The nearby Golconda mining area is famous for high quality diamonds including the famously large Koh-I-Noor now in the Crown Jewels.

In a nod to motoring, it was pointed out that in this part of the world, cows have priority over other traffic. We were also shown a picture of the legendary Hindustan Ambassador, based on the Morris Oxford.



Now we're taken off to Pakistan and a geology lesson. 180 million years ago the world looked very different with continental plates setting off on their journeys at about 15cm a year. The India plate headed towards Asia scooping up debris from the sea floor until they collided and made the Himalayas. There is still a north-south fracture line which was the source of the recent Myanmar (formerly Burma) earthquake. The stress release was felt over the length of this fracture line.



KARAKORAM HIGHWAY

We have crossed over into Pakistan and pictures of the Karakoram Highway that connects

Pakistan with China. We were told (if I've got it right) that the Pakistanis built the road and the Chinese build the bridges. It was hard work and the Pakistanis were allegedly relieved to go and fight India in Kashmir for a rest. In one paragraph we have geography, history and a human story.

The next pictures show prospecting at the Skardu Sands, near Attock and the confluence of the Kabul and Indus rivers.

The talk moved into the Khyber pass which connects Pakistan to Afghanistan. This is a tribal area of the Patan who lived in fortified dwelling who had a strong code of conduct. Cross them and you were dine for but when accepted they feel duty bound to be the best hosts and protect you. They have a cottage industry making copies of fire arms, originally Lee Enfield Rifles and in this pictures Kalashnikov's so they were well armed. A wee history lesson taught us about the Anglo-Afghan wars of the 19th and early 20th centuries aimed at keeping Russian interests out of India. There is a painting in the Tate call 'The Remnants of an Army' depicting William Brydon seemingly the last survivor of the defeated Bengal Army arriving at the gates of Jalalabad in the first of these wars. His grave is in a Rosemarkie churchyard.

Another classic road is the Grand Trunk road which connects Kabul in Afghanistan through Pakistan and India to Myanmar. It was described how Moghuls used this route to migrate through the seasons.

In the city of Lahore, Pakistan we were shown a picture of Kim's Gun made famous by Rudyard Kipling in his novel 'Kim'. Lahore had some of the biggest and most beautiful mosques with outstanding craftsmanship and Islamic art.



Another slide and it's Baluchistan province of Pakistan for some Uranium exploration. It was essential to negotiate safe access with the local tribes. An earlier expedition didn't do that and it ended badly. In the Sulaiman Mountains, uranium could be found in black bands in the rocks.

For safety the members of this exhibition were kept in a camp under guard. Professor Basham was discomforted by the number of well used guns and knives.

And finally the evening draws to a close with a trip to Hong Kong where in 1991-to 1994 there was a project to construct a geological map of the area. The original Kai Tak airport had an airport that ended abruptly at the sea and was a bit un-nerving, especially when a plane slid off the end and was left there for too long before it was blown up to hide it.

We were shown pictures of the Chek Lap Kok island and then how it was flattened and land reclaimed to build the current Honk Kong International airport.

And that was the conclusion of the talk, and a fascinating career. After much murmurings of appreciation, and thank you speech from our chair Richard it was time

Cars and Coffee

Jim Mackay



Another Cars and Coffee and Ford Model T steals the show. It's an unusual 1922 Centre Door Sedan. As the name suggests it has a centre door on each side with the drivers seat and luggage space at the front and a seat at the back for the passengers.



Of course the Bristol is a super car but I was drawn to the modified Minor, what fun.



(Ed: That Minor shifts!)



And the classic Classics were out in large numbers.



Wings and Wheels

Miles Vincent



What better place to visit on Easter Sunday than Easter Airfield, Balintore for their latest "Wings & Wheels" Event? The sun shone bright and after 11am the airfield started to fill up with wee planes landing from all over Scotland for the "Free Fly-In Day."



This was the second time that Classic Cars had been invited along for the visiting Pilots to take a look at during their lunchtime stopover and there was a pretty good turnout considering a last minute call out to the Classic Car community. The next one is on the 21st June so pop it in your diary now!

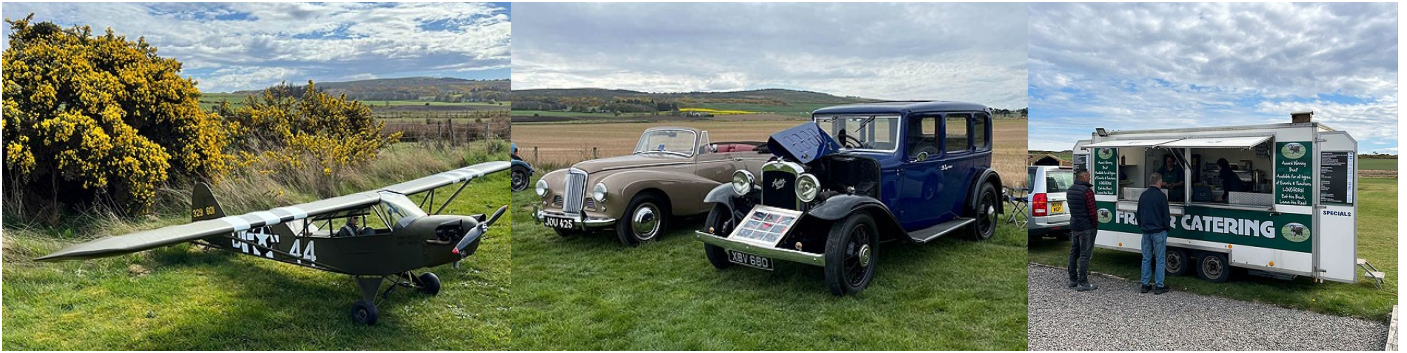
Local enthusiasts had got their Classics on-site early and there were also good number of vintage tractors brought along by local entrants of the "Highland Historic Commercial Vehicle Road Run" whose next Event leaves the Dingwall Auction Mart on Saturday 3rd May destined for Carrbridge, so look out for that too.



Other Classics rolled in from noon and soon there was a nice display to match that of the many light aircraft now lined up on the field. It was very interesting seeing the constant stream of planes taking off and landing the whole time that we were there but my personal highlight was watching the 1963 Hotchkiss Jeep driving to and fro across the airfield guiding all the planes to their parking spaces. I must get me a "Follow Me" sign and some flags for my Jago Jeep when it's roadworthy



ready for Cars And Coffee - Inverness!



"Wing & Wheels" is a great joint event for the plane and classic car owners and I would highly recommend you stick it in your diary and head to Balintore for the next one.

Miles.

Highland Folk Museum VINTAGE DAY

Sunday 25th May 2025
10.00am - 4.00pm

Come and join in the fun
at our annual Vintage Day.

Enjoy vintage cars,
motorbikes, stationary engines,
buses, tractors, choppers, lorries,
auto jumble, BBQ, stalls and more
- fun for all the family!!

Entry by donation,
car parking charges apply)

If you would like to exhibit
please get in contact for an application form

Highland Folk Museum,
Kingussie Rd, Newtonmore,
PH20 1AY
01349 781650
highland.folk@
highlifehighland.com

 **highlife**
highland
na gairdealachd

**MAKING
LIFE
BETTER**

Tain Vintage Car Rally - Get Ready...

The HCMC will be having a Club Display at the Tain Classic Rally again this year which is on Sunday 22nd June 2025.

Would any Members who want to park on the Club Display along side our Event Shelter please contact Steve Hanson or Miles Vincent and reserve a space ASAP.

Please note, though, that if you park on the Club Display your Classic will NOT be judged. If you DO wish your Classic to be judged you are to book it in individually as usual, with the organisers, using the appropriate Entry Form from them and then PARK ON THE FIELD.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfC9rJFAPs5-GqoWQ0VJLx1VFnpXxiyAEo3AKJynTuvgzTTgQ/viewform>

If you are parking on the Club Display you DO NOT need to fill in a form but we DO need to know names and numbers. See Steve or Miles at any HCMC Meeting or at Cars And Coffee - Inverness or Contact Steve at steven_hanson@tiscali.co.uk

You will need to get your Show Number too so please make sure that we have your up to date contact details. Thank you.

Out and About Part 2



There was a nice MG Midget at the Ballinluig Motor Grill on your editors recent excursion south in his Mondeo (which isn't worth picturing).

This Fraser Nash BMW 328 "FLM 9" was the 1939 London Motorshow car and spotted by your Editor at the Gretna Green services off the M74. It looked and sounded amazing. I thought it was a replica. Nope it's the real deal. Impressive.

HCMC Events

27th Apr 2025 'Drive It Day' 2025 Rollerbowl to Shandwick Inn Local Highland Run to support FBHVC Dive It Day 2025. Pre-Register on HCMC Home Page.

1st May 2025 HCMC Scenic Beauly Drive & Visit meeting at the Braeview Car Park, Beauly (Signposted between The Square and the Fuel Station) and setting off at 7.30pm to see a small local Hydroelectric Site

3rd May 2025 Highland Historic Commercial Vehicle Road Run Dingwall Auction Mart to Carrbridge. Details on HHCVRR Facebook Page or Call 07803907942.

4th May 2025 CANCELLED!! Forres Veteran, Vintage & Classic Vehicle Show Grant Park, Forres

13th May 2025 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 some interesting Modern Sportscars & Bikes.