

CLASSIC SCENE



May 2026



Club Officials

Chair: **Richard Lashley**
Tel: 07707 518070
chairman@highlandclassic.org.uk

Secretary: **Trish Brown**
Tel: 01862 832337
secretary@highlandclassic.org.uk

Treasurer: **Ian Thomson**
Tel: 01463 790969
treasurer@highlandclassic.org.uk

Membership

Miles Vincent
Renewals should be sent to Miles at
72 Laggan Rd, Inverness IV2 4EW
Tel: 07805 389023
membership@highlandclassic.org.uk

Webmaster

www.highlandclassic.org.uk
webmaster@highlandclassic.org.uk

Editor

Calum Pearson
Bowersburn, Croftnacreich,
North Kessock. IV1 3ZE
Email: editor@highlandclassic.org.uk
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meeting. Please send articles by post
or email to addresses above.

Archivist

The club has an extensive archive of information relating to all aspects of classic car ownership. To access this please contact Ranald Smith at Hawthorn Cottage, 2 Burn Road, Inverness IV2 4NG. 01463 236459
archivist@highlandclassic.org.uk

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Cover Picture

Some of the Club Committee literally rolled up for the Cafe 1668 cheque presentation. It was a sunny day and I'm afraid Andrew is squinting not blinking.
More in my editorial introduction on the next page.

Welcome to the May Newsletter

April has been busy so far, with an excellent club night, charity work going on behind the scenes, several shows to attend and of course our Cars and Coffee. Finally we rounded off the month with an excellent Drive It Day.

On a personal level April saw the completion of my Panda weld-athon, and a successful MOT. I must say I am as pleased as with any car I have 'fixed up' in the past. It's quite an idiosyncratic car. Tall but small. Rev happy but slow. The steering self-centres with enthusiasm. It puts a smile on my face whenever I drive it and Drive It Day was it's celebration run, though the time sat unused hasn't been kind. A wheel bearing has become noisy, and since drive it day there's something rattling about underneath, possibly the exhaust - I haven't had time to look yet as I'm busy writing this newsletter.

I needed to get a proper classic to drive, so the Beetle has also come out of hibernation to be replaced by one of the Ford Focii, and the Sierra is on the ramp awaiting steering rack work. I got a second hand one, but annoyingly the actual rack inside is bent. Time hasn't been kind to the Beetle either, as the rust is starting to creep back in round the edges, nothing serious, but it will need attention one year soon. It's over 15 years since I last fixed it up. Good news though. Thanks to an accident in Morrisons Car Park a few years ago, and Park's Bodyshop, I do now have the paint code for it.

There's more on Drive It Day later, but our charity work needs a mention here. I recently arranged a photo shoot with the Inverness Courier to cover us presenting our 'comedy' cheque to the cafe. However, the photographer was over an hour late, (no bad feelings – newspaper staff are overworked and stretched due to cut backs) by which time we had to call it a day because of other commitments and the fear of traffic wardens coming. But all wasn't lost, and our amateur pictures have been sent into the paper. Steve Hanson is arranging similar escapades at The Oxygen Works, where we have a chance for Monday car gathering.

Finally, apologies for getting the editors email address wrong last month, I blame typing fatigue and a rushed deadline, the usual excuses, but what can I do, except resign and pass the baton on. I did send out a correction email, and I can't believe no-one has replied to me about the MGB Roadster project, owned by a well-known member. I would snap it up, but it's not a car near the top of my must-have list, and I mustn't have any more projects, at least until the current ones are done or given up on.

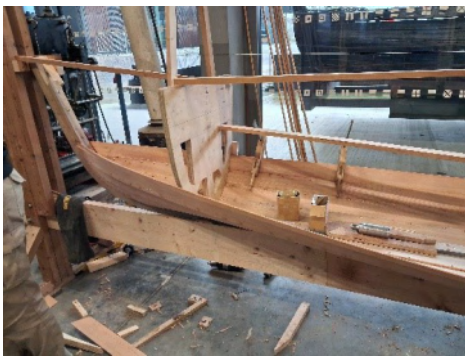
I recently had a hurl in John Nevyn MacDonald's splitty Morris Minor, and I loved it. I've always had a soft spot for these, but alas, I mustn't buy any more projects. That's what you might call a classic world problem.

Your Editor, Calum.

Ramblings from the Chair

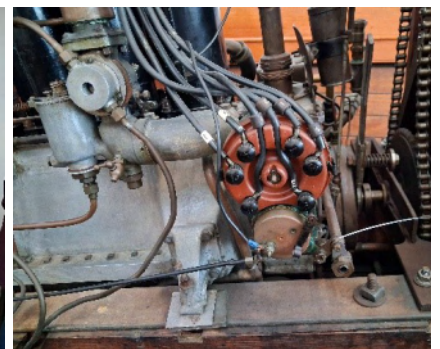


During the week before Easter, Mrs Chair, myself and some (adult) Junior Chair's booked a cottage in the Lake District – on the quiet side of Lake Windermere with a wonderful view over Lake Esthwaite. On the very wet Tuesday (50mm in 12hrs!! – well, it is the Lake District) we visited the Windermere Jetty Museum – what a fabulous place, all very new and spacious with a jetties inside the building. To start with we went into the workshop where they were building a traditional timber skiff, a long rowing boat comprising overlapping planks forming the hull. We happened to be there when they were fitting perhaps the most difficult plank of all – from the prow to the bottom side of the hull where it twisted to become nearly horizontal. They use 9.5mm thick larch boards,



steamed if necessary, chamfered at the overlap and fixed together at about 100mm centres with copper rivets. This particular board was chamfered vertically at the prow to form a smooth surface, tapered over its length, then chamfered along its length (from nothing to about 15mm) and then halved in thickness to accept the next board in a lapped butt joint. Absolutely wonderful workmanship. Then into the museum proper – historic boats of all shapes

and sizes, mostly finished in varnish (a minimum of 9 coats apparently and recoated every year ideally). One racing boat from 1922 fascinated me – it was fitted with a Rolls Royce Hawk, six cylinder aero engine from a 1917 WW1 airship, just magnificent – it had a top speed of 30mph. The engine is apparently in good condition and would run but the decision was made, due to its rarity, to keep it indoors as a static display. Then, another boat with a petrol engine fitted at an angle to match the slope of the propshaft to the propeller. In this case there is a clever mechanism at the prop, operated by a lever from the driving seat, to change the pitch of the propeller blades to enable forward and reverse motion. And of course, there are the steam launches which sailed the lake, mostly in private ownership by wealthy industrialists who had large houses



beside, or on islands in the lake. The last word in luxury, with velvet seating, stained glass cabins and even their own dinner services and cutlery. There is a story that one owner had his own captain who would steam the launch early in the morning and have waiting staff to serve him breakfast before disembarking for work on the 'mainland'. Mounted on the wall are a number of speedboats from the 1950's, constructed from timber and linen in the days before aluminium and GRP became the norm. And then there are the jetties where there are numerous boats afloat, including from Swallow and Amazon films, but all undercover, behind doors out into the lake. Again many gallons of varnish are on view!! We spent a long morning at the museum followed by lunch at the restaurant overlooking the lake – altogether a very enjoyable experience and I'm sure we didn't see it all.



Our May Club Night is a relatively short drive, the first of the season, starting from Braeview Park, Beaulieu to Muir of Ord, Contin, Strathpeffer and Dingwall before returning to Brahan Estate where we will visit Jim McColl at his workshop. Jim repairs and services Argo buggies and should have at least one 'opened up' so we can view the chain drives, clutches and brakes. Many of these vehicles come into the workshop in a terrible state, not having seen maintenance for many years. Jim also has a 2003 Land Rover Defender which is currently having a major rebuild on a new galvanised chassis. There are not many body panels fixed into position yet and I'm sure will be of great interest to Land Rover fanatics out there. That's 7.00 for 7.30pm, Thurs 7th May.

Finally, I must report that Mrs Chair's Golf has been in the wars again. This time it has a broken front spring, surprisingly not on the passenger side where it suffered wheel damage from potholes, but on the driver's side. I'm told it went bang just outside Beaulieu Primary School where there is just a gentle dip in the road surface. Aaaaagh!

Regards, Richard

News in Brief from Steve Hanson

Firstly a big thank you to Andy for planning Drive It Day. What a cracking route! I had a great day as I'm sure everyone else did. Top man. Thanks.

I've spoken with Jenni at The Oxygen Works and we've set a day for presenting the 'comedy cheque'. Monday 25th May at 2pm at The Oxygen Works. Can folk let me know if they are available to come along. Jenni is going to advertise it to her clients so with luck there could be a reasonable number of people there to admire our lovely cars. So the more cars the merrier. Thanks.

Finally I can confirm our trip to Ullapool in July. Following on from his talk last year, Boatbuilder Tim is opening his doors so to speak so we can head to his boat yard and see more of what he does. Sunday 19th July. Jonson & Loftus Boatbuilders, Corry, Ullapool. It's still a way off but can I propose meeting at the North Kessock service area (Harry Gow) just over the Kessock Bridge? 10am meet for a 10.30 off?

Cheers, Steve

April Club Night – Luxury Auto House

We had a very well attended April Club Night visiting the new premises of Luxury Auto House off Harbour Road in Inverness. You may have seen, or more likely heard their distinctive black GMC van with elaborate gold signwriting. It's been at many events and has that lovely American V8 burble. The owner also has a black Corvette C6 which probably how our Mustang owning events man Miles knows them - or through Cars and Coffee or that Instagram thing on your phone. With all that Americana you can see the similarity with those Californian custom houses you see on car programmes on the telly, and we are certainly privileged to have such a niche car business operating in Inverness.

There was some pre-event excitement when a couple of guys from the Netherlands rolled up towing an R30 generation Nissan Skyline RS-X Turbo they had just collected from Invergordon from an Instagrammer going the name of Micra Man. There's a whole other world out there on "Insta." Of course, in the flesh, being car people, they were lovely and quite taken with Callum Beveridge's Citroen Dyane / 2CV Mashup.



Anyway, back to the main event. Ricky, Hubert and Sean ushered us inside with offers of tea coffee and posh biscuits. We assembled in a big chatty throng, until Ricky finally got our attention and welcomed us to the chaos of their new premises. I thought it looked quite tidy compared to my garage, but then these guys are professionals and have standards. We started off on the topic of leather upholstery repairs and learned that leather finishes are much like a modern paint job, with base, colour and clear coat layers. They repair leather seats to the highest of standards and are the go-to place for a lot of main dealers in the area. It turns out that high end seats from high end marques aren't as durable as the once were. You can also have your seat electrics repaired or even retrofitted with heaters often for less than the cost of an original dealer option. We did find out that airbag stitching is difficult to rework. The requirements are stringent and the training and certification required are onerous. Something to be aware of for your more modern classics. It seems retrofitting say MX5 seats to a car without airbags avoids this problem.

Of course, any of us with older cars know that the foam underneath the covers can deteriorate. Sometime this can be rejuvenated with an application of steam to reform the structure, but often the foam needs replacing. Hubert gave us a rather captivating demonstration. It was a bit of a rush job for time reasons but, hey, if he can do that well in a rush, just think how good a job you'll get when



he's taking his time.

Then we moved onto the skills of machine polishing and paint correction. Machine polishing is a skill you can learn, and they occasionally run training sessions for a few hours which I imagine would be well worth the money. Of course, once you've got your car all super shiny you may want to protect that finish with a ceramic coating. Did you know this comes in a range of hardnesses like a HB pencil. HB would last about a minute - we're talking 9H or 10H here and keeps you shine for a year or two or 3 depending on the type of finish and your budget. If you really worried about the paint on your super-car, you can buy a treatment called paint protection film. All this is an anathema to me as my cars barely get washed. A trip to Tesco jet wash is about it. Oh, we were recommended to avoid any car washes that touch your paint, especially those big drive-through swirly machines. They will scour your finish. Even some hand wash stations are to be avoided. If you are super fussy about washing your pride and joy, guess who are planning to do some Saturday car wash drop-ins?

I think there is a significant show and shine, car modder ethos to this company but they have plenty to offer us classic car people too, like car immobilisers a trackers with Thatcham rating of S5 to S7 and the prices aren't as daunting as you'd think, especially if you consider you may get a discount on your insurance. They specialise in discrete i.e. hidden high quality sound systems to avoid you worrying about those early warning noises from the engine bay.

So, what else do they do? In their own words they deliver world-class customisation services including, Leather & Fabric Repairs, Custom Air Rides, Luxury Headliners, Custom Seat Belts (we were promised a discount on pink,) Custom Motorcycle Seats, Luxury 3D Car Mats, Electrostatic Flocking, Full Seat Re-trims, Custom Steering Wheels, Ambient Lighting, Heated Seat installations, Android Multimedia Screen Upgrades, Apple Carplay & Android Audio system integration, BMW, AUDI ,VW Coding, Interior & Exterior Styling Parts and Performance Parts including an online shop. Phew!

So yet again The Highland Classic Motor Club pulls it out of the hat. Another evening visit that promised to be quite interesting, and ended up being very interesting indeed. We made our thanks and gratitude known and there was the sound of a happy group murmuring praises as we left.

Now I must go and wash my cars. Apparently, I need two buckets.

Drive It Day 2026



This is one of my favourite events on our classic Calendar. This year we were heading to Grantown in a big loop. Over 50 cars were signed up but as we assembled at good old Rollerbowl in Inverness, there didn't seem to be that many. It turned out that many had decided to join us en route. We headed south out of Rollerbowl over the hills to Inverarnie joining the Farr Road from the A9 . It could have been chaos with Sunday cyclists, but luckily for us "The Etape Loch Ness" was on today so less bikes were out and about. However it was unlucky for those trying to get to Rollerbowl from the west.



Even though we were quite bunched up at the start, there weren't too many conflicts of road use so far. We turned left near Farr, to go up and over the Garbole Road. This is a bleak meandering moorland route and is beautiful. We did meet a young driver coming the other way but, although they had trouble manoeuvring back into the passing place, they seemed quite cheerful as we all squeezed past. I was near to last and thankfully got a nice smile. We also met some touring cyclists and some (motor) bikers, and it was all cheers and good will, with smiles and waves, which is a key point of Drive It Day, sharing the joy of old cars.

At the last minute we decided to access the A9 via Tomatin which worked well, as there was a big T-junction there in the 40 mph road works area. Plenty of gaps meant that egress was nice and safe. We soon turned left to pass through Carrbridge. I started to play a little game. Fiat Panda. Classic or not? People had started to come out and wave at the procession since Tomatin. Sometimes I got a wave but usually not. In Carrbridge I received my final judgment. A cute young girl was waving by the roadside, but as I approached, she rapidly withdrew her hand and threw me a scowl. She must have been about 8, but she knows a classic when she sees one.

I stopped to help a poorly VW Scirocco but they didn't need me, and somehow they fix it and were ahead of me by Grantown. I saw a few unscheduled stops for cars along the way, but nothing too serious, I hope. This is normal for Drive it



Day, as is spotting vehicles from other groups along the way. There were plenty of motorbikes out and I saw a lovely old Bristol (a 400 possibly) and imagined the driver not saying, "Oh look a Fiat Panda." After passing through Nethy Bridge for more waves, or not, the route picked up the A95 again and we arrived in Grantown for a bit of a festival feeling. There were dozens of classics parked up, many more than had set off from Inverness, and an American Pontic V8 previously seen at Motormanica and the Original cars and Coffee rumbled by, then there was an Austin Maxi (beige) going the other way and a (I'm going to say) vintage Rolls Royce and another Bristol possibly a 412, a squarer model in any case.

Tea and Coffee were served in a lounge area inside the Grant Arms hotel, where we were made very welcome. (As an aside, I think this might be where my parents first met.) As it was lunchtime, and because we deserved it, a lot of us visited the chip shop. The same one HCMC used one evening many summers ago when we did "Grantown for Chips" or patronised at many a Grantown Motor Mania. They did well to cope with all the extra sales, especially as the bikers got



in there before us.

After milling about and chatting I felt it was time for the next leg and as I seemed confident of the route I ended up leading a small convoy. We headed north the skirted the beautiful shores of Lochindorb and headed up over the Dava one of the best driving roads in the area. Then we joined the A939 to Nairn, and as pride comes before a fall, I got a bit lost here. It seems we were expected to go through Dulsie Bridge, but not on my map. I had a left turn for Cawdor, but unfortunately I picked the second left, spending far too much time on the Nairn Road. Still, it was pleasant driving.

We headed along the back roads to Culloden Battlefield where I pulled in to detach myself from my little convoy, assuming folk knew how to get home from there, and so they wouldn't follow me into Tesco's to get a bottle of wine for tea. My highlight of the day was driving over the Garbole road when at one elevated point I could see classics on every rise and curve for miles and miles. It was spectacular. Well done to Andrew Card for organising his second successful Drive It Day. And thanks to all the helpers, and of course those that came along because without the cars, Drive It Day would just be like any other day.

Two club classics at Lochindorb on Drive It Day



Fleeting Moments

Trish Brown

Car wise it has been relatively uneventful. Except for our other car. Once it came back from its MOT/service, we drove it for a day before we discovered a fuel leak.

Back to the garage it was. But with the part needing to come from abroad it was 2 weeks before the car was back on our drive. I took it into Inverness the next day, when the orange 'check water level' light came on. Of-course, that is the time that the box with all the 'spares' is at home, so filling the radiator had to wait until I got home. By which time the car was steaming, which was rather alarming. After cooling down, we added about a litre of water/antifreeze before taking the car to the garage.

Our mannie at the garage thought that the water pump had gone. I was not too sure of that as the temperature gauge had kept a steady 85c. In the end it turned out that the fuel filter housing had cracked. I suspect that the service, which included a fuel filter change, and the subsequent work on the fuel system was the last straw for this plastic housing. In our car this housing is water cooled, hence the steam, as the water was dripping onto the exhaust. And you guessed it, to get the replacement part takes ages.

Since then the whole Middle East business kicked off and petrol/diesel is getting expensive. But at least the petrol stations have not run out yet. I wasn't going to bother this year, but the fuel business spurred me into planting a few tatties again. I am also clearing some space for spinach – a nice and easy salad crop and will take a look through some left over seeds from last year to see what can go into pots. But clearing space means weeds and garden waste that needs to go to the dump. And the Landie is still not back.

Trish.

Cars and Coffee

There was a bit of a Festival of the Unexceptional vibe going on at this month's cars and Coffee, with a lovely old 'new model' Renault 5, a Morris Marina and for me the car of the day, a 1994 Renault Safrane 2.2L Automatic. Like the festival my comparison is based on, these cars are anything but unexceptional, but evoke pleasant memories of bygone days when it was always sunny and petrol was under a pound a gallon. It wasn't all good though. Vinyl seats could melt the skin off bare flesh in the summertime.

There were several other events on at the same time. I believe another Cars and Coffee in Inverness, The Highlander Track 'n' Show at Golspie, The Eighties/ Nineties Cars and Coffee at the Moray Motor Museum in Elgin and also The Buckie Car show had a prequel event for their annual rally in the form of, you guessed it, another Cars and Coffee. Now the 'Cars and Coffee' is a global phenomenon, but ours is the first original and best in the Highlands. Numbers were a little down and the rain came down a little, but it was still great, with plenty of craic and some old friends turning up. It's always about the people.



The Renault Safrane, always had a (noticeably younger) crowd around it. This is a good thing! There was an air of great enthusiasm too.

West Is Best

A general shout out to everybody, but particularly if you are in the West / North West. A group of us in Wester Ross have been talking about forming a group for outings, occasional weekend lunchtimes etc - because all of these seem to happen over East! So, we are going for a couple of initial trial dates. The first of these is at Ledgowan Lodge Hotel (Achnasheen) on Saturday May 9th between 12 noon - 3pm. Come along and help us get this off the ground! Classic / modern classic cars, motorcycles etc....all welcome.

Douglas Gibson

Rotary Club of Inverness CLASSIC CAR TOUR-SATURDAY 8th AUGUST 2026

- Starting and finishing in Inverness, the 170 mile route will include the Great Glen before returning north, via scenic Stratherrick and Strathdearn and into Badenoch. The return leg will cover parts of Speyside, Dava Moor and Nairnside.
- NO entry fee !! however, entrants are asked to raise as much sponsorship as possible. Charities benefitting from this year's Tour are Mikeysline and Sounds Familiar with remainder going to the Charity Account of the Rotary Club of Inverness which supports local, national and international deserving causes.
- Organised and run by motorsport enthusiasts for motorsport enthusiasts.
- Entry list now open and will close on 31st Julydon't delay!
- For full details, Regulations and Entry Form log into:-
"https://www.lochnessclassiccartour.weebly.com "
- Email Nicol Manson at lochnesscct26@gmail.com or by telephone on 07774 695640 (before 8pm please)

HCMC Events

2nd May 2026 Highland Historic Commercial Vehicle Run, Dingwall Mart to Newtonmore. Contact Mac Card for details

3rd May 2026 Forres Veteran, Vintage & Classic Vehicle Show, Grant Park, Forres 10 - 5pm. Spectators enter free. Registration Now Open:-
www.ticketsource.co.uk/forres-theme-day Clubs (max 20)
email FTD.Secretary@outlook.com Closing Date 08/03/26

7th May 2026 The HCMC May Meeting is a scenic run to see an Argo Cat restoration project at Brahan Estate. Meet at 7.00pm at the Braeview Car Park, Beauly for a 7.30pm drive to Muir of Ord, Contin, Strathpeffer and Dingwall then on to the Brahan Estate where we will visit Jim McColl at his workshop. Jim repairs and services Argo buggies and should have at least one 'opened up' so we can view the chain drives, clutches and brakes. Jim also has a 2003 Land Rover Defender undergoing a bare chassis restoration.

10th May 2026 Cars And Coffee - Inverness Carlton Bingo, Inverness IV2 3ED 2nd Sunday of every Month from 10am-12noon. A Quiet Social Gathering of 20th Century Classics plus interesting Modern Sportscars & Bikes. Park up, buy yourself a hot drink & snack from Carlton Bingo & check out what's in the Car Park. Find us on Facebook.

16th May 2026 BID 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 Margaret Laws 01463 714550
margaret@invernessbid.co.uk

24th May 2026 Highland Folk Museum Vintage Day, Newtonmore

30th May 2026 Ardersier Gala Classic Car Show and Parade, Ardersier