

CLASSIC SCENE



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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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CONTENTS

3. Windscreen fitting tips.
4. La Presidente's Chat
5. The Editors Bit
- 6-7. Riley Restoration
- 10-11 Gairloch Gathering.
12. More on anti freeze.
14. Hugh Finney's Story.

COVER PICTURE

Austin spotted by our Webmaster.

OUCH!!!

Last issue, the Editor was telling you all about the roof of his Lancia and how he'd stripped and resprayed it, and I can confirm that it looks very smart indeed.

What he ***didn't*** tell you was that in order to make a good job of it he'd removed the screens, but when refitting the rear one,,,,,,,,, ***this*** happened! **Ouch!**

BM



I know that I have been asking for contributions for the newsletter but this is not exactly what I had in mind. Always remember that if you are ever using a rubber hammer to very gently tap the screen rubber into place.... Hit the rubber and not the glass.



La Presidente's monologue



Hats off to the volunteers (!) of the RNLI. There is dedication for you. 2 years training before you are allowed out on the boat into action. And if you are based in North Kessock that means out in all weathers in an oversized rubber dinghy. Cup of coffee? Don't have time to fill the flask, mum.

Our visit to the RNLI station in North Kessock was well attended. Staff at the station made us feel very welcome and had loads of tall stories to tell. I marvel at peoples ingenuity at finding cheap but effective solutions in the face of non existing budgets, dressing rescued people in bin liners to help them warm up was one of them.

Our Smart is back on the road. Only threw 1 tantrum with a flat battery which just wouldn't hold charge anymore. And the car demonstrated this on its second outing by breaking down half a mile up the road when all of a sudden you lose drive as the gearbox goes into save mode. All is resolved with a shiny new battery. We are now once more experiencing the joys of topless driving.

This month we are going for a scenic run to Cromarty. Details of where to meet up etc, will be elsewhere in the magazine.

Trish.

The Editors Chatty Bit.

As I am writing this the sun is shining and there's not a cloud in the sky. Is this summer? Oh did you miss it? You must have blinked. Hopefully it will last more than a few days, but only yesterday they had to shut the snow gates at Braemore. We will have to wait and see. My threats to include some articles about dismembered bodies seems to have worked as I have had several articles and pictures sent to me recently. Some I have had to serialise while others await a later edition. But keep sending them! We are well into the tourist season now and various classic cars are beginning to tour our roads. Only yesterday (Thursday 23rd) I spotted no less than four of the Bentley Boys passing through Inverness, the occupants looked absolutely frozen in the open topped cars, but the cars looked and sounded glorious.

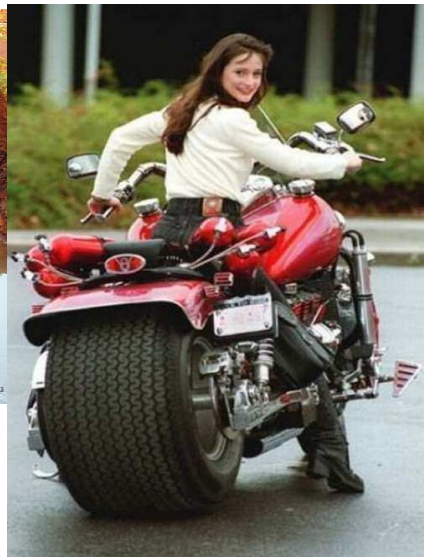
Stop Press! (I've always wanted to say that!)

Ranald has sent an excellent introduction into the full story of Roy McGregor's full restoration of his Riley RM. The full story of the restoration will be continued in later issues of Classic Scene.

This month's motoring madness.



"Is that the AA? I think I've flooded the engine."
(Don't laugh too much,
that's how I wrote off my
Alfa GTV. Ed)



No, I don't know why.

UNDER MY BONNET THE RESURRECTION OF A RILEY - VPB 664

In last month's newsletter there was a page of photographs of some of the cars which took part in Drive it Day in April. Most are well known to the club but if you look at the photograph in the bottom right hand corner you will see a car which may not be familiar to some club members, at least the newer ones. In fact you would be forgiven for thinking that the car was on the run at all. If however you stopped at the car park in Drumnadrochit during the run you would have seen it parked there. It is a 1954 Riley RME 1 ½ Litre and it belongs to a long standing member of the club, Roy MacGregor.



This car has been subject to a twenty year, yes twenty year, restoration and is back on the road after approximately 40 years. It is quite frankly a car which should never have seen the road again – it is a car which has been brought back from dereliction through the efforts of one man. Why should I have any special interest in this car – well I used to own it.

Those of you who know me will be aware that despite my many motoring interests my first love was, and still is, the Riley RM series produced between 1945 and 1955. I bought my first Riley in 1972 when I was a student at Aberdeen University. £85 she cost me, taxed, MOT'd and running albeit with a rumbling big end. It took me three engine rebuilds to realise that the reason the big ends were failing was that the crankshaft has narrow oilways and during each rebuild had not been cleaned out! The fact that the main bearings were white metal was also a problem, not when the car was current when many garages had the facility to line bore, and hand scrape bearings, but by the time Rileys achieved banger status white metalling was a dark art only carried out by specialists with the attendant expense.

You would be hard pressed to find a Riley advertised in the classic car press these days yet in the early seventies they were just old cars which nobody wanted. They were readily available, still to be found in scrapyards, and there was a choice of cars for sale, even locally. Difficult to imagine now but blue chip classics were being driven by students as their every day transport – cars which spring to mind are TR2, MG TD, Jaguar XK140, Triumph Roadster Sunbeam Talbot and of course Riley RM. This has nothing directly to do with Roy's Riley but it puts in context the classic car scene of the time. Different days! Classics were driven every day, some in parlous condition. Don't let the concours queens you see at rallies today fool you – they didn't always look like that. My first Riley which should have had a vinyl

roof was covered in black underseal. (the roof that is!!) Remember borrowing tyres for your car to get through the MOT?

By the mid seventies I had a total of four Rileys (nothing changes does it?) one of which I had been informed was for sale in Nairn for £150. The car was lying in a builders yard and although a bit tired was complete and started first time, although guess what, the big ends had gone! I drove the car back to Inverness and it was safely stored in a car port adjoining my Mum's garage. I don't know what I was really going to do with it as at the time I was still running my first Riley. In 1978 I sold the car to a very good friend of mine in Aberdeen who had plans to restore it. However his plans came to nought and as car enthusiasts can be the kiss of death to many a fine car the car languished in the open for several years and deteriorated to the point where it was to all intents and purposes a wreck.

Fast forward to 1990 or thereabouts. By this time I had graduated to a 1951 RMB Riley 2 ½ litre which I still own. However every time I saw VPB I winced and eventually arranged to take the car back, the reasoning being at the time, I think that I would restore it as a partner to my own RM. One Saturday Bryan (Macilwraith) – God how that man dips in and out of my motoring experiences - and I trailed a



Triumph 2000 behind my own Triumph 2.5 PI estate, once owned by Bryan, (Very incestuous this classic car business) down to a railway arch garage in Glasgow. We offloaded the car and then headed up to Aberdeen to pick up the Riley and thence back to Inverness. The car was safely deposited in a garage I rented at Hilton Hospital. That was a very long day as I recall. Whilst I have to say that subsequently I did nothing to the car, in my defence the car didn't deteriorate any further – it couldn't!!

Now enter stage right the bold Roy MacGregor. At this time the club used to meet in the Novar Arms in Evanton and at one of the monthly meetings Roy was mentioning to someone that he was looking for a Riley RM to restore. Whoever it was pointed to me and said "there is the man you want to speak to" Oh Roy what a big mistake. Over he came and explained that he was looking for a Riley to restore and that he understood I had one for sale. I did admit to having a Riley which was surplus to requirements so to speak, but I immediately informed him that it was too far gone to be a viable project. "That's just what I am looking for" piped up the young Roy. In short the more I tried to dissuade him the more interest he showed. Right, I thought, I'll let him see the car – that'll sort him out. We saw it one evening the following week. It was dark and with no power in the garage Roy 'inspected' the car by

torchlight. B..... me he seemed even more interested! Right I thought again, I'll let him see the car in daylight – that'll finally do it. Yes, you've guessed it he was even more interested.

A price agreed and the car was trailered off to its new home in Lewiston.

You would be right in thinking that this so far has had precious little to do with Roy and has been more about my involvement with the car but I hope it shows a flavour of the classic car world we inhabited in those days. We were young, daft, had little knowledge, full of unachievable plans, certainly little money, and cars like these were readily available, and cheap. We did have however enthusiasm – in spades. It was indeed fortunate for VPB that she landed in the hands of a one Roy MacGregor.

Yes twenty years is a long time to restore a car but Roy's restoration has been continuous with no significant break in the work. There are two reasons I think for this. Firstly Roy has done all, and I mean all, the work himself. Secondly, Roy helps people, and with his multi tasking skills there is hardly a household in Glenurquhart that hasn't had a boiler repaired, a lawn mower fixed, bathroom suite fitted, or car repaired by Roy. He is the most willing person I have ever met. God he has done more work on my Riley than even I have! Come to think of it he fitted our bathroom suite as well. In fact if I was ever in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean in a row boat with no oars I would like to have three other people in the boat, Roy, Bryan and another of my friends, Jimmy. They would think of something, make something and we would survive, of that I am sure. Bryan sensitive soul that he is, spoiled it all however by saying that when we were starving they would all eat me!! To the best of my knowledge apart from some engine machining work and the purchasing of parts e.g. bumpers, Roy has done everything himself. As you may know these Rileys were of a pre war design (the reason why in 1945 it was one of the first new cars on the market) Thus they have a wood framed body on a chassis. The fabric/vinyl material is not glued to a solid roof, rather it is stretched over a perforated metal roof (a weight saving measure) I have said many times that it would be a shame when Roy's car was finished because people would think that it merely had a good respray etc. Most of the core restoration work lies underneath and is therefore covered up. Sections of woodwork were replaced, the rear window frame replaced, boot floor replaced, door bottoms fabricated and replaced. etc.etc. There is nothing, and I mean nothing, on the car that has not been replaced, restored or refurbished – nothing. Yes we are fortunate that the Riley RM Club has a superb spares service. Like many classics today virtually anything is now available, unlike the seventies when these cars were at an all time low with no spares available. The Riley RM Club, like many other one make clubs, was formed with the express purpose to keep the cars on the road. In those days perfectly good cars were being scrapped simply because in some cases basic spares were not available, not because

they were in poor condition. Also before the classic car boom of the seventies onwards quite simply nobody wanted these cars. To give you an example in the early seventies a pal and I found a Morris Oxford MO (envisage a big Morris Minor) in a scrapyard in Aberdeen. We paid £10 (£5 each) drove it out of the scrapyard and with NO work, other than routine maintenance Colin drove it as his only car for the next fifteen years! As I said before – different days!

The heartwarming aspect of this restoration is that Roy singlehandedly has saved a car which had genuinely passed the point of no return. It doesn't look as if it has been over restored and has a lovely authentic look. I know Roy will not be offended if I say that this was not a restoration where money was thrown at it. It was carried out in a relatively small wooden garage with not a great deal of space to work in. Roy works long hours with considerable travel time on top. So after he has finished helping other people he has not had unlimited time for the car. It has been a genuine labour of love and it is absolutely wonderful.

So Roy, restorer, metal fabricator, welder, woodworker, spray painter, French polisher, engine rebuilder, gearbox rebuilder, electrician, upholsterer, sewer, trimmer, and coachbuilder - we salute you! We hope you and Linda have many years of enjoyment with the car and enjoy many gourmet picnics!

Riley - As Old as the Industry As Modern as the Hour

Riley - for Magnificent Motoring

Ranald Smith

For Sale



Jaguar XJS 3.6 (1988)

Burgundy, 49000 miles recorded, Jaguar Service History up to 47000 miles. 11 months MoT, 5 months Tax. Cream interior, all walnut dash renewed, heated seats, electric windows and



Slight rust on rear chrome bumper, drivers door and front drivers wing (paint slightly bubbled)

Looking for £4000 ono.

Contact Chris Scholes 07774226020

THE GAIRLOCH GATHERING

The Editor asked if I could provide a short article on the "Gairloch Gathering" for you all...object of the game being to persuade everybody what a great idea it would be to take the drive over on June 29th with your car / bike / commercial! Of course – here it is.

Seriously, though, the GG is a great day out with stunning views across to Skye and the islands in one direction, and the Torridon mountains in the other - All we have to do, really, is to provide decent weather.....

There's Pipe bands, kids and family entertainment, loads of local groups have stalls, food / refreshments etc. On the Friday evening, we have a family ceilidh with Black Rock Ceilidh band, and Saturdays highlight is "Skerryvore" – camping, B&B, and hotel accommodation is easily available locally – in fact, the "Gathering" is held on Big Sand campsite, so you don't have far to travel back to the tent!



Cars... we started out a few years ago with some local vehicles – it was amazing what came out of the woodwork. Cars I'd never seen on the roads before, despite living here for 25 years. A 60's Velox? Sunbeam Stiletto? Even a supercharged Morris Minor!

Two years ago, we started looking at branching out a bit – some cars came over from Inverness and a great time was had! Last year, we managed to increase the numbers again. A turn out of some 35 vehicles! Now this may be a personal thing, but although I have been a classic car nut for all of my adult life, I'm more than happy to admire any machine that's just that wee bit different to the mass produced material that runs around the roads these days. Last year we had a Land Rover Fire Truck mixing with a 30's Morris and a 2012 Nissan GTR, and I don't think any of them have less credibility than the others. I heard a wee lad saying to his pal "*That's not a classic car, what's that doing here*"...come back and say that in 20 or so years time. What will be a classic car in the years to come? I'll put money on a Nissan GTR being one of them, and perfectly valid in this company.



The Highland Classic Car Club has opened my eyes to the variety of wheels on the roads in the area – here in Wester Ross, we have a galaxy of fascinating cars that travel through the empty spaces we have here – it would be great to have some of these on display for the Gathering. To do so, please contact me on douglasg@burach.org.uk OR call 01445 712085. I am quite happy to monitor the weather and let everybody know if you are going to be scorched or drowned... we're not so daft that we assume everybody wants to drive over in rain then be showered on all day, so nobody is obliged to appear!

But if you do come over, we assemble at Gairloch Harbour on Saturday 29th for 11am, then drive to the Gathering site for 12 noon. After that, you can walk around, enjoy the show, stay for the evening or just go back across to places east.....entirely your choice!

Douglas Gibson

**FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE
CLASSIC VEHICLE RALLY
Saturday 31st August 2013**

You are invited to enter the 11th Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally, which will be held in the Fortrose Academy Sports Field, situated within the historic Royal Burgh of Fortrose.

***PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS EVENT WILL AGAIN START
AT THE DINGWALL AUCTION MART CAR PARK.***

You should aim to arrive at the auction mart (half a mile outside Dingwall on A862 Maryburgh road) from 10:30am, where refreshments and bacon rolls will be available. From 11:30am you should enjoy a leisurely 60 minute "scenic tour" to Fortrose, following the directions in your entry pack. Further light refreshments and Entertainment will be available on your arrival at the rally field in Fortrose and throughout the afternoon.

As this is a non-profit making event there is an entry fee of £6 PER PERSON to cover costs. Please forward the appropriate amount with your entry form & make your cheque payable to "Fortrose Classic Car Rally".

The closing date for entries is Friday 23rd August.

Please note that you will NOT receive a postal response, on receipt of your entry but if you wish to include your e-mail address then we will e-mail you an acknowledgement.

UNLIKE PREVIOUS YEARS, Entry packs will be POSTED to you approximately 10 days before the Rally and will include your windscreen number, refreshment vouchers, road run directions and raffle tickets.

It is a requirement of the Scottish Vintage Vehicle Federation that all vehicles entering the rally have third party liability insurance. We are unable to allow vehicles access to the Rally Field without this cover.

We very much look forward to receiving your entry and to meeting up with you on the day.

In the interests of public safety, please note that entrants are requested to arrive at the Rally Field before 1:00pm. The Rally will finish at 4:00pm. Should you require to leave the field earlier, please inform a Marshall who will arrange for you to be safely accompanied to the gate.

***Gordon J Stewart, Rally Secretary 07941 184055
frcrally@mypostoffice.co.uk***

4Life" ANTI-FREEZE :

Interesting article about anti-freeze last month. I have used "4Life" in the MG ever since I got it in 1996, also in both Bristols and the Mini will be filled with it, too.

I buy it through the MG Owners Club and it claims to be "suitable for performance and classic cars". The only ingredient listed is "ethanediol" and it claims to give 10 years' protection as a coolant and/or anti-freeze with a boiling point of 180C and frost protection down to -42C. It gives corrosion protection for cast-iron, brass & aluminium, preserves hoses etc and is PH-balanced. It also changes colour to warn of head-gasket failure etc.

But enough of the commercial! I have heard that this is the same stuff as used by Toyota and possibly other manufacturers and I think it is the same as "ForLife" which I first heard of in the early 1960s. Certainly, I remember it then because it was red rather than the usual blue.

When my father was demobbed in 1946, he bought a new Standard 8 convertible which he kept until 1963. It seemed like a godsend when the local garage told him about the new wonder-product which could be left in the car year-round and gave peace of mind in the winter without having to check



constantly whether the anti-freeze was sufficiently strong.

Even though the car was always garaged, I well remember the nightly winter ritual with a paraffin heater under the sump, often a second one hanging beside the radiator and my father's old army great-coat covering the bonnet. (The coat still hangs in the shed at my late parents' house.)

My father insisted for years afterwards that his cars were filled with "ForLife" until it became obvious that even BL (he only bought British!) had caught up with something similar (though he was always slightly nervous whether it was as good).

The photograph shows my father with the car in 1955 on a trip to Skye. I'm not sure exactly where it was taken but it looks like somewhere on what is now the A87(T) between Broadford and Sligachan.

Chris Silver

Classic & Vintage Restoration Service

Hugh Finney

After many years as a classic car enthusiast and most of my life in the Motor Trade I began to re-evaluate my life in the mid 1980's. What would happen if I went self-employed – I had a wife and 4 children to account for. Would there be enough work for me – it was very risky. I has restored a Morris Minor saloon for my eldest son, Neil and a Mini for my wife, Kay. I was always being asked for advice and felt there was a niche in the market but would it be big enough? Having thought it all through and discussing it with the family I finally went on my own. I was allocated a grant and I managed to find premises on a near-by farm. The building had been derelict for many years but it soon became habitable and with help from all the Family we finally got going. I need not have worried – the work came steadily rolling in and before long Neil was asked if he would join me. He had just finished a panel beating/paint spraying apprenticeship and as Cellulose paint was being withdrawn Neil took over the 2 pack paint and always did a magnificent job. The work was very varied but we never got tired of restoring the Minors and MG's. We did so many MG's that we proudly gained Club Recognition for Scotland. One day a logger acquaintance told me of a van he had uncovered in a peat bog. My ears pricked up when he mentioned that the drivers' front window opened outwards, so I asked him to retrieve it. Using a log grab he managed to free the vehicle and deliver it to the workshop. It was a Morris linesman van and in a sorry state. It was left in the corner of the yard until my younger son, Mark who was still at school, started to slowly strip it. The cab was the only thing that could be salvaged and was sent away for shot-blasting. Upon return what little that was left was put into a store room until we could afford to spend more time on it. After all we still had livings to make.

Not long after this, a customer brought me a Morris Minor van for complete a restoration and as I started work it stirred me into thinking how mine would look. So I sent away for a new chassis and back panels from Henrics and very slowly started to put her back to her former glory. Kay proceeds to try and keep the original registration number but after nearly two years was told it would have to be an "age related" number despite the fact that we had proof via the Minor LCV Register. She has now been on the road for nine years and is in constant use.



Is this the van that Hugh is referring to? I found this photo that was taken some years back at the Kirkwall Car Show.

Part 2 next month.

LOCAL AND CLUB EVENTS GUIDE

JUNE

- 1st Kirkhill Gala Day
2nd Fraserburgh Vintage Car Rally
6th Scenic Drive to Cromarty
16th Tain Vintage Vehicle Rally
29th Gairloch Gathering. Contact:-
Douglas Gibson at douglasg@burach.org.uk

JULY

- 4th Inverness Treasure Hunt**
13th/14th 39th Scottish Transport Extravaganza at Glamis Castle

AUGUST

- 1st Scenic drive to Old Mill Hotel, Brodie**
11th Historic Wheels Rally, Brodie Castle
18th Dunrobin Vintage Car Rally
31st Fortrose Vintage Car Rally

SEPTEMBER

- 1st Grantown Motor Mania
5th Visit to HM Coastguard, Inverness
7th Dingwall Street Fair.
Contact Donald Mackenzie 01349 861009
7th/8th Knockhill Classic Speed Fair
14th/15th Selkirk Rally
22nd Roseisle Rally

This Months Meeting

Thursday 6th June. Scenic drive to Cromarty.
Meet in North Kessock car park at 7.30pm.