

CLASSIC SCENE



July 2009

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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.

Archivist

Ranald Smith
The club has an extensive archive of information
relating to all aspects of classic car ownership
including technical advice etc. To access this,
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Cover picture

A 'Finney' Morris Minor Van at Tain

THE CHAIRMAN'S BIT

I watched some of the coverage of this year's Le Mans on Eurosport and was mildly surprised that six of the first ten cars were diesels. Will car enthusiasts soon be called diesel heads? And will we soon see an entry from a taxi cab company?

I attended Le Mans on three occasions in the 1990s. There were some great entrants in this period, the McLaren F1s were in their prime and for an aural treat you couldn't beat the wonderful rumble of a V8 Panoz or the scream of a Ferrari.

I attended with a group from Suffolk who took the camping extremely seriously, spending a week at the circuit. There was a mess tent run by a bloke who owned a café and a games tent where you could race on a huge Scalextrics track. And not to mention the satellite T.V where you could keep up with the race taking place behind us! Being an electrician I was in charge of electricity which was taken from the nearest convenient streetlamp (don't



try this at home). A few of us also took bikes so could ride around the circuit to watch the race from various vantage points. The Marshals were always friendly and if you appeared out of the woods would normally let you get very close to the action. A brilliant way to spend a week.

To answer the usual embarrassing (to me) question I have broken the back of the rewire and one good day should finish it. Mind you it could be several bad days instead! Which will just leave the small problem of the MOT.....

Michael
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This Months Meeting

Thursday 2nd July 7:30 for 8pm departure from
the car park in Conon Bridge for a run to the
Edderton Inn

EDITORIAL

Hello,

A bit of a mini theme this month—in line with the 50th celebrations that are taking place in the next few weeks.

Miles has turned his attentions to Mini Mishaps on page 6, while Gary Bailey gives us the low-down on his Mini Ecosse on page 9.

We were given the ‘grand tour’ of Garys car at the last meeting which was a brisk run to the Altguish Hotel. We’re repeating the formula this month with a road trip to the Edderton Inn, starting off in Conon Bridge for an 8pm off.

I drove down to the ‘Heart of Scotland’ Air Show in Perth the other week—at the invite of the organisers who wanted some ‘different’ cars to adorn the runways. There were only a couple of dozen cars there, but it was good to meet and talk to enthusiasts from other clubs for a change.

Last weekend was the Tain Rally, and we were blessed with good weather for the entire day, despite the earlier forecasts of heavy rain.



Luckily, I left the roof off and managed to top up my tan at what turned out to be a very good show in an excellent venue.

In the next few weeks, there’s the Forres Show and Brodie Castle—lets just hope the weather is as good for them.

If you don’t see me at the monthly meetings, you can write to me at the address inside the front cover, or email me direct at ClassicScene@bevs.org

Callum

HIGHLAND CLASSIC MOTOR CLUB **Monthly meetings (1st Thursday of every month)**

2009

July 2nd	Road run via the Edderton Inn
August 6th	Road run via Dores Inn
September 3rd	Road run via Gun Lodge Hotel, Ardersier
October 1st	Club visit to Autohead Engineering
November 5th	Club Night
December 3rd	Club Night/Christmas celebration

2010

January 7th	Club Auction
February 4th	AGM

(Further details to be published in ‘Classic Scene’ prior to the individual meetings)

Local Events Diary

Here are some details of 2009 local events that may be of interest to our members

June

27th Ardersier Gala—Turn up from mid-day onwards

July

11th/12th Scottish Transport Extravaganza at Glamis Castle

19th Forres Theme Day—Veteran, Vintage and Classic Vehicle Show

19th Knockhill Classic SpeedFair

August

2nd Moray Muscle Show, Inchberry Hall, Mosstodloch

9th Historic Wheels Rally—Brodie Castle

15th Dunrobin Castle Vintage & Veteran Car Rally. Edward Mackay 01431 821296

29th Fortrose Classic Rally and Fun Day

29th/30th Auto Spirit—Culzean Castle

30th Ford/Capri Show—Grampian Transport Museum, Afford

September

5th Dingwall Street Fair

6th Motor Mania—Grantown on Spey

19th Working Vintage Rally and Display, Daviot Fram, Nr Inverness

19th/20th Selkirk Rally

October

3rd/4th Fraserburgh East to West Commercial Run

If you notice any errors or omissions, please let the editor know.

Sundays Tain rally



MILES' MEANDERINGS



Apparently the Mini is 50 years old this year so I thought that being a Mini driving Club Member I would share with you a couple of amusing anecdotes that I had heard involved Minis.

The first was from an elderly chap who resided all his life near Helmsdale. Although he worked on the land it wasn't just what grew in it or under it that proved to be a great source of additional nutritional value to the diet of himself and his family, the odd bit of venison or rabbit were eagerly consumed and Salmon was a great luxury.

It was during the purloining of some said Salmon that the story unfolded. Now this chap and his friend were fairly adept, by all accounts, at acquiring the odd fish but with the need to move on pretty swiftly to avoid detection they were trying to think of more efficient ways of carrying out the deed. Then they had a most explosive idea!

So having acquired a nominal amount of explosive material from a nearby quarry they set off up the Glen: in his Mini Van! Great for transporting explosives and subsequently a rather large number of

slightly singed Salmon. The deed was indeed carried out far more efficiently than before.

Well, euphoric with their slithery haul and no doubt with adrenalin still pumping they set off in the Mini Van with gusto down the Glen again. The steep, winding and single tracked Glen.

Now, if you are able to picture the interior of a 60's Mini Van there really isn't much to it apart from a pretty flat floor and two deckchair-like seats at the front. So when, still travelling at a fair rate of knots down the single track road they met the local chatty Policeman out on his rounds, the ensuing enthusiastic breaking (always needed in a 60's Mini anyway) rather caused their load to shift. Rapidly forward into the front foot wells!



Thus followed a fairly stilted conversation through the drivers' windows of the two vehicles as the Mini's occupants steadily shovelled handfuls of Salmon from around their ankles back towards the rear of the van in some hope of enabling them to continue their homeward journey safely and without further delay, let alone a night

in the cells! As far as I know this was avoided and they all lived happily ever after.

The next nugget was told to me by a bloke I met, who before moving to Brora, was, in a previous life, a British Leyland Test Driver! Now there's a job. I'm sure he could write a book of amusing anecdotes on that subject alone without having to think too hard. He drove them all and swears that they were all as bad as each other!

And yes, he assures me that they had a very efficient system of recovering the vehicles and drivers that were regularly unable to complete the test runs under their own steam.

This time the vehicular subject of our mirth is the high performance British Leyland Off-Roader produced solely with Military compatibility in mind. Yes, the Moke.

Now, a momentous day had arrived for BL and as part of their presentation to the Military Hierarchy gathered at a certain airfield (yes airfield), there was to be a demonstration of the Moke's primary sales feature; its ability to be inserted into battle along with ground troops from the air!

Everything had been planned down to the finest detail and BL had even carried a highly successful dry run the week before, so expectations were high for a faultless show stopping finale.

What happened next was indeed show stopping and fairly final (at least for the Moke). The Star Car exited the rear of the enormous transporter Helicopter at the

allotted altitude and the oversized parachute deployed gracefully into the blue sky and its rapid decent began.

The idea was for the Moke to land firmly but elegantly on the ground on all four wheels, ready for the accompanying troops to leap aboard quickly and get on with their attack and indeed the test run had proved this to be a highly probable outcome.



However, the Moke hit the ground with such a force that the four wheels shot off and with most of the interior attachments were jettisoned at high speed towards the four points of the Compass, including in the direction of the Stand where the previously seated Military Hierarchy were now involved in a rather spontaneous and dishevelled retreat out of harms way!

It transpires that on this occasion it had been the Air Force Ground Crew who had loaded the Moke onto the Helicopter, complete with two dirty great steal girders inserted under the body, parallel to the axles, to reduce the vehicles movement in flight, thus adding greatly to its weight and rendering inoperable the rather essential suspension elements of the Moke for when it touched down in the Airfield.

My ex-British Leyland Test Driving contact isn't quite sure what level of business that particular day's demonstration was able to generate for the struggling Corporation.



ideal starting point to collar a few of our members for their experiences; all I had to do was hang around the entrance of the Beer Tent, so I will regale you with some of those next month.

The underlying themes seem to be drink-driving in Minis, crashing Minis and having sex in Minis! Some of them even involve doing more than one of these at the same time in Minis. For looking at you I wouldn't have thought that some of you would have had it in you (Eh, Mr. Mann!)

In the mean time if anybody wants to add their amusing version of life with a Mini feel free to E-mail me at:

milesvincent@btinternet.co.uk

These two incidences aside, it seems that if you question almost anyone regarding a story involving Minis then they invariably have at least one, so that is what I've been doing. The Tain Classic Rally was an

The more the merrier so don't be shy.

Miles.



1979 MINI ECOSSE - CUSTOMISED REBUILD

This Austin Mini Special was first registered in 1979, and underwent a total rebuild and refurbishment over a period of five years from 2000 to 2005, at a total cost of £12000!

The vehicle was rebuilt to a customised specification, with the bodyshell being taken back to bare metal, repaired, strengthened, primed and then professionally painted in an oven in Rover Trophy Blue metallic. All DVLA documentation has been correctly completed with an original registration date of 2nd October 1979 still applicable.

New sub frames were strengthened, and painted prior to fitment. All parts were obtained new from Minisport and Minispare, in the Midlands. When the new sub frames were fitted, new cones, adjustable suspension, gas shock absorbers, cross-drilled and vented brake discs with alloy callipers, and braided hoses all round, were also installed.

The wheels are brand new chrome 13 x 7 Ultralites with 195 low profile Bridgestone tyres. Four brand new Wipac driving lamps, with protective covers are also fitted.

The 1293cc engine and gearbox are from an MG Metro, and were both fully reconditioned by Minispare at a cost of £1500. The unit is lightened and balanced with a Stage 3 head and strengthened gearbox, linked to a race / rally camshaft. The car has an MG distributor with electronic ignition, and the carburettor, which was commonly used on Metros, is a brand new HIF44. All other engine parts are also new, and there are many chromed parts within the engine bay, which fully set the car off. A power isolator switch is also fitted in the boot, to protect battery life, when the car may be lying idle for long periods.

The interior is a one-off, specially built by a professional upholsterer, who concentrates on the automobile industry. The black leather bolster Recaro sports seats are fitted with blue

Alcantara, (very expensive Italian suede) inserts, and trimmed with blue piping. The interior roof cloth also matches the Alcantara trim. A stunning Autotechnika chrome-grip leather steering wheel is also fitted. The professionally trimmed dashboard incorporates a flip-down head set with screen, which provides Clarion radio/stereo, with Pioneer speakers, full network television channels, a DVD player, CD changer, MP3 compatibility and satellite navigation, operated by remote control, and housed neatly beneath the rear seat. Four auxiliary power outlets are fitted beneath the nearside dashboard. The car is also fitted with a remote Category One Thatcham immobiliser and alarm.

This is a truly unique Mini, which has received the full Scottish theme treatment, right down to the professionally painted St Andrews flag on the roof, hence the model name of "Ecosse"! There are many other "Scottish" themes, including a St Andrews flag bonnet badge and customised valve caps, and an embroidered St Andrews flag / Lion Rampant flag and Scottish thistle motif on the rear parcel shelf.

The vehicle was put back on the road in 2005, and within 6 weeks, had successfully completed a 1200 mile round trip to take part in the London to Brighton Mini Run. The car is only licensed for road use from April to October each year, never sees rain, is garaged, under a protective cover, and has driven just over 3000 miles since the restoration was completed four years ago. It has already won 3 separate trophies at classic Mini shows, and has been featured in Miniworld magazine. It is currently insured for a guaranteed value of £10000, and on a restricted mileage of 3000 miles per annum, costs around £100 for fully comprehensive cover through specialist insurers Adrian Flux. Fuel economy is around 40mpg depending on driving style.

Gary Bailey
(photograph opposite)

Highland Heaps

Restoration projects spotted in and around the Highlands.





This Sunbeam has seen better days



This Austin's throwing off its tyres

If you're brave enough to want to rescue one these 'heaps', contact the editor for more info



A Bentley waiting to board the ferry at Uig



Citroën 'Godess' spotted in Dornoch