

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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COVER PICTURE

A man at peace with the world.
Sun shining, mug of tea in hand
and headlights fitted with big
eyelashes.

Morgan sports cars. Do we have any in the club? Perhaps not. That's handy because I am about to upset some, probably most, of their owners. I hate the darn things. The somewhat accepted definition of a classic car is surely something a bit on the old side. So how can a brand new car be a classic, have a look at the following photo.



Brand spanking new, fuel injected Ford V-6, modern suspension, big fat tyres etc. Is it a classic? Well not yet in my book, maybe in 20 years time. Which brings me on to all 4 wheel Morgans. They are all based on an early 1950's car which even then was old fashioned. Wooden chassis, sliding pillar front suspension, cold, draughty and the roof lets in water when it rains. Move forward 50 years and Morgan are still making the same car but making you wait seven years before they condescend to make it. So can a new car, built to a standard of 50 years ago be a classic. Many will say yes. But will those same people say that a newly built kit car based on an old design is a classic? Unlikely.

Why don't I like Morgan's? Well to start with I can't get in them. I'm just over 6 foot tall but as skinny as a rake and to get in a Morgan I have to stand on the seat and jam my legs under the steering wheel before dropping into the seat. My knees are touching the underside of the dashboard and my knuckles scrape along the same dashboard because the steering wheel is so close to it. Have you ever followed a Morgan down the road? Even the most devout Morganeers say that the ride is awful and gives you back ache. I'm not surprised; they jiggle around and bounce up and down, especially the front end.

So there you go, that's this month's cat amongst the pigeons. Have you got a car that you love or loathe? If so let's hear about it. We could even start something on our web site forum. The forum is underused so let's hear your thoughts there.



THE PRESIDENTS CHATTY BIT

We were not at the drive-it day to Cromarty, but I hope that you all had a good time. Although from comments on our Forum I noticed that one or two off you got lost. Hopefully that won't be the case on our treasure hunt this month.

We are just back from our holidays in the Alps. Our merc has given us sterling service getting us there and back without a hitch. No, we didn't take the Smart. It is just too small when you want to take a large tent and all the other paraphernalia that makes up a camping trip. Apart from the first 2 days, it was lovely weather and it was a wrench having to pack up the tent to go home. Arrived home to discover that it must have been good weather here too as the garden had turned into a veritable jungle with knee high grass (no kidding). The mower had a hard time munching through that lot and although still not smooth everywhere we do have something resembling a lawn again. I am knackered now and need another holiday...

I see that we have a new member this month, Ray Hill with a lovely 1965 TRA 4a.

This month's meet is a treasure hunt / on-the-road quiz with a little prize for the person/team that gets most answers right. If there is a need for a tie breaker, please come up with a caption for the above photograph. **Please note that the starting point is the front car park at the Council's headquarters on Glen Urquhart Road, Inverness between 7.30 and 8.00pm.** For those who are not so keen on another quiz, the finish is at the North Kessock Hotel and treasure hunters should start trickling into the bar from about 8.45pm onwards.



Trish.

Drive it Day 2013

Liz had changed the venue for this year's Austin Spring Run as Nairn hotels were not interested in the custom. She struck a good deal with the Ramnee Hotel so Forbes it was. I made the decision to abandon the HCMC run and go with three nights at a 4 star hotel, tough one! Samantha's radiator had a small leak so I took it off for repair. The shop in the Longman was closed so it was off to the Carse where I tracked down another closed shop. At the garage next door one of the mechanics thought that Precision Engine Services had bought the equipment. Thus it was that I was their first customer. "Well, err, yes I suppose we could do it as we have the equipment". It was a good repair and reasonably priced. On the Saturday of the event, five Austins set off for a 90 mile run! Our first stop was at Burghead Headland Trust Visitor Centre which I had been about but not inside. We had morning coffee in the village and, as it turned out, lunch as well. Liz's car refused to start and gamely she had the carb bowl off for cleaning. There was no spark so I changed the condenser and points but stopped short at fitting another distributor. We volunteered to stay with Liz while the rest carried on to Cullen. We visited the local garage in our quest for a solution and happened upon a Scimitar, Fergie, Austin 10 and a Sierra! Eventually, the AA were called and her car was transported to Bill MacLennan's. He found a fault in the distributor baseplate and we had an enjoyable and leisurely run back to Forbes. The rest of the party came in late and tired. Sunday's run was more local and shorter with the bonus of visiting new places of interest; Knockando Wool Mill, Glenfiddich Distillery and the Whisky Line (railway between Dufftown and Keith). Somewhere along the way we lost another Austin to ignition problems and Samantha's starter stopped working. What a nuisance it is starting by handle. I had forgotten how inconvenient the whole procedure is. It could have been worse, it could have been raining. The Ramnee Hotel was excellent with superb food and Liz did a great job putting the week-end together; thank you Liz. Surprisingly, I didn't have a spare starter either with me or at home. On inspection it was obvious that the commutator was faulty, paper thin and broken. That I didn't understand, a dynamo, yes but a starter? Perhaps it was used to save petrol at one time! I took it for repair locally but they couldn't source a new commutator. They sent it away but of no avail. The storeman said that they don't repair starters these days but replace them. I decided to bite the bullet and have mine replaced. He smiled. I used to be a regular ferreter at autojumbles but times have changed and I sourced a replacement starter on e-Bay which cost more to post than buy. I put the two starters together and ended up with a working but noisy one. It sure beats the handle. Cheers, *Jim MacKay*.

MORE ASTON DRIVEL

Mean? Yes! Stupid? No!
(Another Aston Rip-off!)

My DB7 wears rather nice five spoke alloys which are not original, but are genuine Aston after-market replacements. Not long after I got the car I noticed that one of the plastic wheel centres had gone AWOL. I phoned up an Aston agent to get a quote. He should have told me to sit down first. Eighty-three pounds PLUS VAT. Yes, eighty-fxxxxx-three pounds + VAT for a small plastic centre, albeit emblazoned with the Aston logo. I did nothing about it (surprise, surprise) but last winter I noticed that another of the centres had disappeared. I examined the remaining two and found that they too were loose in their mounting and liable to drop out. Hmmm. Something had to be done but I was looking at a potential four hundred plus smackeroots for four little bits of plastic. Yes I know I'm a mean Scotsman but there are limits.

The wheels in question are actually made by OZ Racing. I went on to their web site, and there was a large selection of wheel centres. Critically, examination of my remaining two originals showed the OZ mark on the rear, and a number which corresponded with one of the centres stocked by OZ. I phoned them up and asked if they thought they would fit but they didn't think so. However, at £16, including VAT, plus three quid postage, it was worth a shot. I sent for one, and hey presto!, a perfect fit. I sent for the other three, and emailed OZ to tell them of my success (and hopefully help any other Aston owners who contact them). All done for just under eighty quid, but I have to live with the fact that my wheel centres now say OZ Racing and not Aston Martin. Oh the sacrifice!



I was feeling very pleased with this and related the story to Chris who cheerfully told me that one of his moderns had a tendency to shed wheel centres and he discovered that the top of a certain orange juice carton was a perfect fit. And I thought I was mean!!!!!!!!!!



My next money saving ploy didn't work though. I sent for a major service kit which cost £140 for an air filter, oil filter, 6 plugs and a sump plug. When it came I noticed that the air filter was made by K&N. I thought "A-ha, I'll save myself

some on the next purchase". I went on to their web site and put in the part number clearly visible on the filter, but got the "No matches" message. I then put in the make & model, and again got "No matches", and so I phoned them up and asked for the part number and was told that it wasn't showing on the computer. "What make of car is it for Sir?" the girl asked. I told her and then she said "Oh, I see. Aston paid for the tooling of that, and we're not allowed to sell it to anyone but an Aston agent" I felt the grip around my short and curls tighten some more!

Talking of cheapskate ingenuity can you work out what this is?



It's my patent under-car keeper-warmer. One winter I put the Aston away after a wet drive up from Perth. I happened to be in the garage some *two months* later and noticed that the wheel arches *were still wet!!!*. (How I love the Scottish climate). The above device was created as the result. It's two 30 watt greenhouse heaters fixed to a long board that slides under the car, so it consumes less than a light bulb, but it gives a nice gentle heat under the car all winter. I made one each for the Stag and the Aston. It's got to be better than an unheated garage.

Bryan.

THE HUGH FINNEY STORY Part 2

After ten years we moved to larger premises on another farm and Kay, who did the book-keeping, had a significant birthday looming. Her Mum had come to live with us but was having trouble getting in and out of Kay's Mini Cooper! So, a 4 door Morris Minor saloon was purchased – sight unseen – on a local radio station, MFR's Annual Charity Auction. Upon returning from shot-blasting, we proceeded to renew parts where needed and carry out mechanical improvements. As work slowly progressed we sent for a 1275cc Midget engine; a Sierra 5 speed gearbox and kit; and a pair of bucket seats re-covered in the same material as the original back seats. A friend who was a mechanical electrician converted and fitted a late wiring loom so that we could fit a Mini steering column and all the electric; a sports steering wheel; 2 speed wiper box with front and rear heated screens. The car was sound proofed, wax oiled inside and underbody, and 4 under wing covers were fitted along with an anti roll bar and halogen headlamps. Another friend, a mechanic, turned up with Midget disc brakes and servo to really put the "icing on the cake". The paintwork was done by Neil of course and it was agreed it should be Rover Nightfire red. She looked spectacular and was sure to turn heads. Needless to say, the 'surprise' went down a treat. Kay could now take Nan shopping but Nan liked to wait in the car park and "talk to the men who walk around admiring the car. Nan was in her element.



A close friend of mine had recently lost his father and I was asked if I would be interested in an unfinished project his father, a village mechanic had started. This Morris Minor was a convertible and had not been on the road for 30 years and would need major refurbishment. I decided to take it on as my "Pension Pot" as my health had deteriorated

and after 20 year, had been advised to retire.
Work went very well with no major mishaps. The car was fitted with the same electrical system as Kay's and only minor adjustments made to keep her near original but up to more modern standards. The modified head, re-bored engine and 1½" carburettor allows quick acceleration but having only done 1025 miles, is still being run in.
I have now been retired for 6 years and do not regret a moment of my life. We still attend local events and shows and enjoy seeing many of our achievements displayed in all their glory. Possibly the hardest job was trying to tell a customer that their pride and joy was not really worth the money and time it would take to make it road-worthy. I was honest with them and always tried to let them down gently.
My wife still has her car and we use the convertible for good weather only. Neil has now taken over the workshop and has adopted the van but prefers to do the modern vehicles now. My other son has bought himself a Morris Minor pickup in unrestored condition and uses it daily.
I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of the articles and technical tips over the many years. Thanks must also go to the many suppliers for their excellent service, all my loyal customers but most of all I must thank my friends and family (even the two girls, Helen and Sharon) for all their help and trust in me.

Hugh Finney
Classic & Vintage Restoration Service (C.A.R.S.)

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HCMC Events

Date

4th Jul 2013	Inverness Treasure Hunt
1st Aug 2013	Scenic drive to Old Mill Hotel, Brodie
5th Sep 2013	Visit to HM Coastguard, Inverness
3rd Oct 2013	Visit to Wheel Specialist, Inverness
7th Nov 2013	Car Ergonomics Talk—Bogroy Hotel, Inchmore
5th Dec 2013	Christmas night—Bogroy Hotel, Inchmore

TAIN CLASSIC CAR SHOW



The organisers of this years Tain Gala Classic Car Show had a major problem to deal with this year.....it wasn't cold and it didn't rain! A day of perfect sunshine and lots of classic cars and motorcycles. Many were the "usual suspects" (extra house points if you know what film that came from) getting an annual outing but there were lots of cars that I certainly hadn't seen before. The new gazebo went up, and down, with ease and looked very smart indeed. It's almost big enough to warrant being called a marquee!



It was also good to see some of our wives and children with us for the day. Amazing what a bit of sun can do. Hopefully they were not too bored with us tyre kickers wandering around muttering about polished wheel nuts and the latest 60's oddities in the Miles Scimitar.

LOCAL AND CLUB EVENTS GUIDE

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

18th/19th

MG Car Club's European Event.

Visiting Drumnadrochit between about 1pm and 4.30 pm on Sunday 18th August and Monday 19th August.

About 100 cars will be parked in the village car park and the adjacent field. 23 countries are represented among the participants.

31st

Fortrose Vintage Car Rally

Highland Visitors



Hugh Finney's Van As found and as finished.

