

CLASSIC SCENE



July 2021

Huge Turnout for PC Photoshoot



Club Officials

Chair: **Trish Brown**
Tel: 01862 832337
chairman@highlandclassic.org.uk
Secretary: **Bryan McIlwraith**
Tel: 01463 222839
secretary@highlandclassic.org.uk
Treasurer: **Ian Thompson**
Tel: 01463 790969
treasurer@highlandclassic.org.uk

Membership

Bryan McIlwraith
Renewals should be sent to Bryan at
67 Lochalsh Road, Inverness IV3 8HW
Tel: 07821 260774
bryanmcilwraith@gmail.com

FAIRLY NEW!!!

Webmaster

www.highlandclassic.org.uk
Webmaster@highlandclassic.org.uk

Editor

Calum Pearson
Bowersburn, Croftnacreich,
North Kessock. IV1 3ZE
Email: editor@highlandclassic.org.uk
Classic Scene is published on the
Thursday preceding the monthly meet-
ing. 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, In-
verness IV2 4NG. 01463 236459
ranaldsmith@btinternet.com

Copyright

Neither the Editor nor the Officers of
the Highland Classic Motor Club are
necessarily in agreement with opin-
ions expressed in this magazine.
Such opinions are entirely the views
of the author and imply no recom-
mendation by the Highland Classic
Motor Club.

All rights reserved. Apart from any
fair dealings as permitted under the
terms of the Copyright Design and
Patents Act 1988, no part of this
magazine may be reproduced in any
form whatsoever without the written
permission of the Highland Classic
Motor Club.

Cover Picture

What should have been a small gath-
ering for James Walshe's visit to In-
verness turned into about 100 cars
from HCMC and other car clubs in-
cluding many Cars and Coffee regu-
lars.

Read and see more in these pages.

Welcome to the July Newsletter

Well what a month. I don't think I'll have space to tell you about the lack of progress in your editor's garage this month. We have had three remarkable private meets starting with The Barns Highland Motor Gathering on Sunday the 6th of June which looked like the only show of the year. It is a closed, invitation only event and had been carefully planned to meet with approval from the local authorities. It was a lovely day and there were some amazing cars (and their owners) to be seen. More on this later in this Newsletter. I believe The Historic Wheels Club show will be held here too, later this year so it's not the only show after all.

Then on Sunday the 13th after a discussion with the owners of Rollerbowl we had a low key Cars and Coffee gathering. This was an informally organised event to try and control numbers, but after only a hint that Mr. Cars and Coffee himself might pop down for a coffee that morning, the car park was rammed with classic and performance cars. The queue for coffee and bacon rolls was nearly out of the door. Read more later in the Newsletter.

On a previous Saturday, the Highland Car Club 'Spring Run' left from Rollerbowl, showing it has become the de facto gathering place for car events, thanks to our Miles Vincent, and to Rollerbowl's accommodating attitude. I have (I hope) an amusing story. A friend of mine was at a song writing retreat at the old primary school on the Drumsittal Road. They were interrupted by a motoring related commotion outside and went out for a look. They were just in time to see a certain light blue Cosworth powered Ford Anglia going round the bend outside demonstrating some very enthusiastic oversteer. Later he asked me if it had been an HCMC run, but we are much, much more sedate, but yes it was the HCC Spring Run!

And then of course we had our Thursday club night with Bryan's regularity run, which I'm told (I was working) was really quite good. Hopefully there will be more on that later on. The Clachbeg Croft on the old Tore Road is run by friends and that evening they were trying to record an audio book. Unfortunately many takes were interrupted by a squeal of brakes, doors opening and closing some human commotion, and then more doors closing and revving engines. It turns out one of the clues was to get the telephone number off their sign. Fortunately they were able to see the funny side of it. Perhaps my own laughter was infectious? "Take 2."

Yet more car fun was to be found on the evening of Monday 14th June when Miles invited a few people along to meet up with James Walshe, the deputy editor of Practical Classics, for a low key photo shoot. I think it is fair to say that James was stunned by the 100 or so special cars that turned up. There will be more on this later, but the headline is that he was amazed by the sheer variety of cars much like it was on their trip to Lewis, and the pent up desire shown by people to get together and show off their vehicles after the long lockdown. There were many exciting cars we hadn't even seen before!

I hope there's no more June events, as I haven't got room to write about them!

Your editor, Calum.

Chairs Bitty

Here we are already halfway through the year. Where has it gone!? I am writing this just around the time of the longest day of the year. How depressing to think that the days are now getting shorter again. I feel that I haven't had time yet to appreciate the long evenings. Probably because May was a dreary wet month and I haven't been on holiday yet. At least our club runs help cheer me up.



Last month's regularity run was a little bit of a delicate affair. At least it was for us in the Smart. Not having much ground clearance, the Black Isle country lanes showed a surprising number of potholes, leaving us to madly weave around the place. We are in a sport car, but get overtaken by fellow club members who started the run much later than us. Needless to say we were nowhere near the leader board, but we weren't last either. From the A9 layby at North Kessock, the run took us past Kilmuir, or it would have if we hadn't missed the junction. From there via Bogallan/Allangrange to Tore. Onwards towards Fortrose, turning up hill just before Munlochy. Over Mount Eagle and a left turn at Breafindon, more left turns for Knockbain before joining the A9 just north of the Tore roundabout. A swift dash up the A835 before heading over to Redcastle. The last leg taking you along the shore to Charleston, finishing up at the car park in North Kessock. About a 35 mile round trip that should have taken (according to Bryan) about an hour. We were nearly half an hour later. The winner, coming in just under an hour (how did he manage that with the state of these roads?) Richard Lashley, with just 5 penalty points. Well done, Richard.

Our sparrows have been busy. Last weekend we noticed that the parents were suddenly very busy flying back and forwards with little titbits in their mouths. And right enough, when you peer through binoculars at the nest you can just see 2 little beaks inside. Happy families. The parents are also very protective, chasing off other sparrows who come to have a look.

You may remember that I mention Alice oiling up the door seals in an effort to help them seal better. So far this seems to be working, but mind you we haven't had much rain in June. Just the occasional short sharp downpour and a few drizzly showers. But so far so good.

What about our Landie I hear you say. Well, it is still with our mannie at the garage as I am writing this. Most of the requested jobs have been done. The outstanding one is replacing the UJ's on the half shafts. Some wag at a nameless dealer suggested that these could not be bought separately (should familiar?) and a whole half shaft is £700. Ouch, said our mannie and decided to check in with us. Nonsense, says Alice, grabbing our parts catalogue. See here, this is what you need. Brilliant, said our mannie and the UJ's have now been ordered from Craddocks. Hopefully not long now before the Landie is returned to our loving home.

The committee – well most of us – took the opportunity after last months regularity run to have a quick think about July's and Augusts club nights. The decision is that this month we will take a leisurely tour starting at Tesco Inshes and ending at Nairn Links. Bring your pudding / desert / cheese & biscuits for a celebratory nibble afterwards.

See you there.

Trish.

June's Regularity Run - A picture gallery



Practical Classics Photoshoot. Monday 14th June

Love it or loath it, social media is a powerful thing. Our Facebook is 'liked' by over 700 people. A few weeks ago I was reading a post about James Walshe of Practical Classics magazine taking his Citroen CX GTi Turbo up on a trip to Falkirk to find the garage where it was sold and then to Aberdeen to find the original owner, when up pops a comment from our Miles Vincent saying, "If you're ever in Inverness, HCMC would give you a warm welcome." From this wee acorn grew a substantial oak tree. I expected half a dozen club stalwarts to turn up at the car park at the back of the UHI but there must have been over one hundred from HCMC, Cars and Coffee and other clubs. (See front cover.) The atmosphere was electric - ironically without a Tesla to be seen. The range and quality of cars was just jaw dropping. James Walshe turned up in his CX and as he got out I swear his jaw did drop. I stuck to Mr Walshe like a sad fan boy for the first hour and saw his jaw drop a few more times. My highlight was "Wow a Hillman Avenger Tiger!" says he. "Yes and there are two more opposite," says I.



There were many other delights on display and I left James to his interviews so I didn't appear too needy or creepy and boy did he get some content for the magazine. Failing light, time and a chilly wind meant he couldn't get round everybody. Though I did force my Sierra XR4x4 into his notebook. It turns out they've just written a buyers guide.

One astute observation James made was on the sheer variety on offer. A similar event in Surrey would have had about 100 cars of similar marque. Boring! Apparently it was the same on their Western Isles trip. I think this is a function of lower populations up north and the inclusivity of clubs like ours. Plus it's just better.

A second observation was the pent up need for people to have car shows though to be clear this was an informal gathering that just happened to get massive.



And here is the CX Gti with a BX. Unfortunately Jesse Wigman came in his Dyane or we could have had an AX, BX, CX thing going on. There's Miles's Mini popping it's cheeky wee face in too.



Eventually it got darker and cooler and it was time to go, but if you want to see more look on the clubs Facebook page, or renew your subscription to Practical Classics. HCMC (or friends of) could be appearing for some time to come.

One last thing. This event was made special by the numbers and enthusiasm of those who turned up, and Miles carefully thanked all the different groups of enthusiasts who made the effort. But there is one person who's deft skills at social media and event planning made this such a spectacular evening. I mean just look at the location! I give you, our very own Miles Vincent. Well done. And stop blushing you.

(P.S. I'd like to include more pictures but there is a limit to how many I can fit in a newsletter. There are many more on Facebook and Instagram and those sorts of places.)

Well, it seemed like a Good Idea at the Time

Well, it seemed like a good idea at the time as they say, but as is often the case, later on it becomes apparent that things haven't been thought through properly. So what was the "Good Idea"? The NC 500.

I have just returned from a week at Clachtoll, a place that I have been visiting for over sixty years. In my opinion it's one of the best places on this earth, and although I freely admit that I haven't travelled the world to any great extent I just know that it's one of the best; or maybe that should be *used* to be! I first went there with my folks when I was about six, and at that time it was basically a bit of wild camping amongst the dunes. I do remember that my Dad went to one of the cottages nearby and asked how much the camping was, and was told "ten shillings" which he paid. The next day he was told by someone else that there was no charge because it was common grazing!

I know that one of the early presentations of the NC500 idea was to our own club, and that some of our members went on the inaugural run. I also admit that I've never *done* the NC 500 because I've travelled all the roads involved many many times in my leisure time. I've always been a tourist in my own country, which of course leaves me wide open to accusations of hypocrisy.

The problem is that the NC500 is changing the essential nature of the very environment that is its *raison d'être*. What I loved about Clachtoll, Achmelvich, Stoer point, Culkein, Polin, Oldshoremore to name but a few, was the wildness, the remoteness, the *inaccessibility* of these places. Most of these places were reached by twisty narrow single track roads. The singular *success* of the NC500 has meant that these roads are now carrying huge volumes of traffic that they were never intended to cater for. Not only the volume of traffic, but the type; camper vans, some of them with massive axle weight which must damage the road surface. One can only hope that there is never any money to widen and straighten these roads!

Beyond the number of vehicles is the type of some of the drivers. On our last visit we came past Clashnessie beach just as five sports cars were stopping in the layby. We carried on to Drumbeg and parked above the Secret Tea Garden (negotiating the badly parked camper van). As we walked down the Tea Garden we encountered these five cars blocking the road. This means that their time spent viewing Clashnessie was less than a minute. Not only were they now blocking the road to oncoming traffic, one of them had banging dance music blasting out of his open top car!

I have to admit that as I crossed the road between them I gave them a hand signal indicating that I believed they were guilty of manual stimulation. For this received a flow of invective to which I gave a further signal indicating that I thought the same thing twice.

As they pulled away there was a roar of exhausts from all five of them. Anyone who lives near the road must hear this Vroom Vroom Vroom day in day out. Indeed, given that many of these roads are just upgraded from tracks that wound from house to house, many people do live right by the road. One such house in

Stoer has signs in the window saying "Go Home, Stop NC500".

On top of the traffic volume issue there is a problem with waste of different types. Even the conscientious types leave bins overflowing; the less conscientious just tip it out of the window. But worse, far worse is the human waste. You can guarantee that every human that comes to the Highlands is going to want to wee several times a day, and probably poo as well. Given that there are virtually no public toilets nowadays you have to ask where's it all going? Well I can tell you; just look in the bushes at the back of any layby off any main road now and you can see the evidence. On top of that there are numerous reports of locals finding that camper vans have emptied their chemical loos into a ditch. It seems that when promoting this "Good Idea" nobody paused to ask if there was any infrastructure in place to support it.

Lack of parking right across the Highlands, let alone the NC500 is another issue. It is quite obvious to anyone who cares to study the figures that tourism is one of Scotland's main revenue earners. And yet not only do we not have toilet facilities, there is frequently nowhere to park if one wants to walk or just stop and admire the scenery. As a seasoned hill walker I know that one of the first questions for any expedition is "where can we get parked?" Just try finding somewhere to park near An Teallach in Dundonnell at a bank holiday weekend and you'll see what I mean. There are cars all over the verge! We don't need massive tarmac'd areas. In most cases a JCB and a lorry for a day would create rough parking for half a dozen cars.

Well, "All things must pass" as the maharishi said, and maybe we have had the best of it in days gone by. Again though, I'm probably just as guilty of hypocrisy as those who want indigenous tribes to stay as they were and don't want them to come into the modern world and wear T-shirts and Reeboks.

So is it Goodbye Clachtoll? Probably not, but we will visit much later in the year, so it *is* goodbye to the midsummer days of twenty four hour daylight, with the larks still rising above the dunes in the late evening and the almost flat calm of the waves gently splashing on the sand and rocks. Paradise Lost!

Bryan.



Out and About

"I wasn't going to catch this immaculate Hillman Hunter in my A40." says Jim Mackay.

I strongly suspect this is the same car we saw at the Practical Classics night and other occasions

I like how you can see a reflection of it in Jim's bonnet. Nice and shiny.

Cars and Coffee quietly returns, Sssh!



The recently refurbished Rollerbowl is open again and looking good which means it's OK to go and park in the car park, and go in for a coffee and bacon roll. And this means Cars and Coffee! It wasn't fully promoted as a Cars and Coffee event as it was supposed to be a low key return, it was just hinted at, but that was enough to fill the car park. It was lovely to see old familiar faces and cars again.

Above: Who'd have thought a bright red V8 Ford Mustang could be made a shrinking violet by a Mk1 Ford Fiesta? Perhaps it's the Gulf paint scheme?



This is the BMW 2002 Turbo I think I've mentioned seeing before it hails from the Ardersier area. It's not genuine, but who cares? Those cost around £70k anyway.

This performance orientated Toyota Corolla arrived. All I know about it is that it looked great.

George's drome has been out again, and this is what Cars and Coffee looks like from above.



If you ever thought we were exaggerating when we say there were over a hundred cars, start counting in the picture above, and that's just some of them.

There was a strong presence from the Imp fraternity. We did have a chuckle when after a demonstration of loud V8-ness from the Ford Pilot Hot Rod, there was a feeble but hilarious response from the off white Imp at the back of this picture. "Whirr!, Whirr!"



And I was told this LDV van (I want to say Convoy) is the only one of its type on UK roads.

Here's hoping that Cars and Coffee is back on the road now too.

Barns Highland Motor Gathering 6/6/21

The invitation only Barns Highland gathering was the I believe this first car show of the year. It certainly was for me. It wasn't open to the public to keep numbers down and meet the demands of the relevant authorities. You had to sign in for track and trace and it was nicely spaced out.

The fringe benefit was that it was a nice relaxing day out, and it was easy to talk to other enthusiasts. There were plenty of great cars on show so I'm just going to let the pictures do the talking.









I find classics are often about how you feel sitting behind the wheel and here are a few interiors.



And so I was offered a sit in an MGA and an MG Midget. I think it was a test just to see if I could get in, and yes I could. Both cars had a low, legs out seating position as you peer over the bonnet. I can see what all the MG fuss is about.



Me and My Car - It's a Triumph!



I was delighted to see Ranald Smith's Triumph TR4a IRS making an appearance at Junes regularity run. I know Ranald has been feeling a bit left out without a classic for club nights, but what a return! I just had to write a Me and My Car special for the Newsletter.

What is it? It's a Triumph TR4a IRS styled by Giovanni Michelotti and with the old swing axles replaced with trailing arms from a Triumph 2000 giving it Independent Rear Suspension.

What engine does it have? It has the correct Standard 2138cc 4 cylinder engine which is a development of the Ferguson TE20 tractor engine which might explain why it feels so torquey.

How long have you had it? Just 45 years. It's a 1967 car and I bought it when it was only 9 years old. I followed every rule in how not to buy a car and soon discovered it was seriously rusty. It was so bad that the rear suspension arms pulled out of the chassis - while it was being driven. [Now that's what I call Independent Rear Suspension - Ed]

What have you done to it? Well this is the second time it's been restored. The car was originally white. After the first restoration we did a 2500 mile drive to Somerset and the only problem was a loose fan belt. Unfortunately back in those days there wasn't the information or resources you can find now so it had to be restored again. Ormond Smith helped me with this. All the work was done ourselves.

When did you get it on the road? About three weeks ago. Bryan McIlwraith basically kicked my @r5e to get it done and at the end of May it went through an MOT with no advisories. Since then I've done 140 miles on the Highland Car Club Spring Run, the HCMC regularity run and trips to the supermarkets and Simpsons Garden Centre, so it's driven regularly.

Doesn't it look TR-iffic?



Left. Who remembers this?
The day HCMC volunteers
helped to lift the TR4a body
onto it's chassis?



HCMC July Club Night

You'll have had your dinner then?

A brief committee meeting was held (OK we chatted in the car park.) The idea of a run to Nairn was mooted, and some mention of a picnic also. but it was realised that most people would have had something to eat so it became "Bring a Pudding Run"

Meet at Tesco Inshes car park (Dobbies end) at 7.00 for tyre kicking before a run starting 7.30 via back roads ending up at Nairn Links.