

CLASSIC SCENE



July 2025



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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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

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Cover Picture

A Bridge Too Far.

Bridge over the River Quine.

Bridges Jones Diary.

A car breaks down on a bridge, half
in Inverness-shire, half in Nairn-
shire. Who has jurisdiction on The
Bridge?

Actually this is from the club night.

Welcome to the July Newsletter

I started off the last newsletter with a comment that there was a lot going on and the newsletter composition was very busy, and so I apologised if I missed anything. It's just as well, as I missed Steve Hanson's excellent write up of the Hydro Scheme visit. Worse than that, I had even asked him to write it! By way of explanation, every month I take two weeks off editor responsibilities and then go back on duty about two weeks before the publishing deadline. The first task is to write a list of all the news, and then I go through the email inbox matching up all the contributions. Last month Richard sent in a Hydro Scheme write-up as well as Steve, which must be a newsletter first! Two contributions. I found his first, so that got published. It didn't take long after the publication for this error to come to light! What a sinking feeling and *then* I recalled asking Steve to contribute. Fortunately he was very gracious about it all, and I've printed his this month, because, well, it's good.

A few grammar errors were found in last month's draft by my designated proof reader. I don't think my grammar is too bad, but we were never taught it at school because of the 'modern' methods adopted in 1970's education, and I do have a problem with the subtleties. Mrs Editor is a total grammar fascist, (but in a nice way). Also I think my brain works better using a pen rather than typing. I swear I have dyslexic fingers. Finally it is very difficult to proof read your own work and by the time the newsletter is written I have lost all enthusiasm and just want it published and gone. Problems eh? Who fancies taking over the editor role now then?

On a more positive note I hope the overall content of the newsletter makes up for the imperfections. I can only aim for a B grade as that's what I got for Higher English.

In other news and in an area I feel much more competent, the work on my Sierra I mentioned last month seems to have paid off. The new fuel filter has improved the engine's running, and the car's performance (for what it is) is back. The wheel alignment has made it feel a lot more sure footed, but all this work has highlighted a problem with the clutch or possibly the gear box. In normal driving, I can change gear quite easily but in more spirited driving, using higher revs, the gear changes baulk or crunch. Even dipping the clutch without changing gear causes a crunching noise when the pedal is lifted up again. I suspect a dragging clutch. I have already changed the clutch cable, and the plastic self adjusting quadrant which is a known weak point, but I fear it's now time to inspect the clutch. It's a Ford MT75 'box if anyone has any ideas...

I took the Sierra to the Tain show where our excellent club stand failed to win any prizes. Jim Mackay made a good point. We don't have enough information about our vehicles or club on display. Next year, we will do better, and bask in that winning feeling. I really enjoyed the show though, and the pizza was nice.

See you out there somewhere in the Highland classic scene,

Your Editor.

Ramblings from the Chair



Well, earlier this month Mrs Chair and I found ourselves in Perth at Potfest (no, not a smoking festival – it's all about pottery!!) and I noticed the posters for the Tay-side Classic Motor Show on the Sunday at Errol Airfield – I couldn't miss that now could I? The show is combined with the usual Sunday car boot sale covering a large area with permanent and semi-permanent stalls which you had to walk through to get to the show field – all rather strange. I reckon it was a little bigger

than the Tain show and it was good to see a 'different' range of cars with a few very interesting exhibits. When was the last time you saw a Seat 500 estate (built by licence based on a Fiat 500) – just look at the suicide doors - and apparently the engine was rotated by 90 degrees to reduce its height to get a load platform. I found myself particularly attracted to the BMC ranges with a lovely Farina Riley 4/72 and a Wolseley 6/99, both in



lovely condition and a Wolseley Landcrab. And who could resist the Citroën DS Safari? Absolutely huge. Commercials also featured – the Mk1 Transit took my fancy with the early white lower

grill and indicator surround – this one being a 1970 build, some five years after introduction. It superseded the Ford Thames – this one being a campervan with just 47k miles on the clock. And there was a rival – the very traditionally coloured VW camper with opening windscreens – just beautiful and yet so common sixty years ago. Interestingly, the one make clubs included both Lancia and Alfa Romeo with some very rare and expensive machines – the red Lancia Fulvia (behind the flag) was a GTE Zagato. There were many more but it would take up the entire News-



letter (and more!) to include photographs of them all. However, I feel one final photo should be included – a 1955 Ford Zephyr Zodiac convertible in maroon and cream – just how rare is that? I failed to photo the registration plate but I am almost certain this particular car features in the opening credits of Bangers and Cash and a quick check of their website reveals that RYU 170 was sold in April this year. It was such lovely weather and with a great collection of vehicles, I think Mrs Chair will find it easy to persuade me to make a return visit to Potfest next year.

The June Club event was the Pudding Run to Nairn – and the weather was a great improvement on the past couple of years (no gloves, waterproofs or umbrella's required). Trish prepared a cracking route – over the 45 years I have lived in the area, I thought I was familiar with all roads to Nairn, but no, there were some I had never been on before – and I was not alone – thanks all round to Trish.

July's meeting is a Treasure Hunt, arranged by Andrew Card – July 3rd at 19.30 – see website for starting location. See you all there.

Finally, at this time of year, we start thinking of events for our winter meetings – if any members have any ideas or contacts about possible venues, please contact myself or any committee member for taking the proposals forward. Locations do not necessarily need to be vehicle related – for example, we once visited a double glazing manufacturer – and it turned out a brilliant evening.

Regards, Richard

'Pudding Run' Club Night Thursday 5th June



For once your editor could make a club night. It was the annual "You've have had your tea, but bring your pudding" run to Nairn which gives us the opportunity to explore the back roads of Nairnside. My weapons of choice were a fudge Yum Yum, and my recently polished Ford Sierra which was a loose 1980's match with Richard's Opel Senator.

Trish Brown planned the route and showed a series of loops and

wiggles on an OS map before departure, which was far beyond the capabilities of my memory. There were about 6 or 7 cars I think, which is an ideal number for the narrow back roads, and an easy number to keep together when you can't remember the route.

Of course when you're driving along you don't really experience the loops and wiggles as the road (hopefully) stays out in front, and it feels like quite a linear journey. That was a lesson for me.



As each turn revealed the next bit, I found myself saying, "Oh, that's nice." "Pretty" or "What a view." Of course it helped that the weather was good. In our events calendar we often promote a scenic drive somewhere, but this doesn't really justify the beautiful scenery driven through at a leisurely pace with like minded friends in their classic cars.

We rolled up at the Nairn Links car park, and as members climbed out of their cars, there were universal comments of how lovely a drive it had been. Full marks to Trish Brown then!

My car of the night was Graeme Dunbar's Sunbeam Alpine, a 1600 if memory serves. It was the first time I'd seen this car (and the owner!) and what a car to have in the club. It was obviously cherished and looked amazing, plus I always think they have that James Bond factor. Of course movie producers have an eye for a photogenic car.



Tain Vintage Car Rally

Sunday 22nd June



With a wet forecast looming over us, we set off individually and then in small groups and then as processions into the show area at Tain Links. I particularly enjoyed the sense of growing anticipation as cars slipped into our group from side roads. By perfect timing I arrived after the event shelter was erected, but I was also relegated to back row parking as a consequence. I believe we had 24 vehicles, A Davey Broon tractor AND a stationary engine. (Thank you Jim Mackay). Our new feather banners looked the business (Thank you Steve Hanson) and I would say we had the best looking club stand in years. Even though the judges didn't quite agree, members of the winning stand did. We had a truly eclectic mix of cars reflecting the nature of our club. I was very proud of everyone.



Though it was warm and humid, there wasn't as much rain as forecast, but when it did rain, it really did, a perfect day for t-shirts, an umbrella and waterproof footwear.

As ever there was a vast range of vehicles on display, which was sometimes a bit overwhelming as it was easy to miss something. What follows is just a sample...





Some fine examples of grass Routes classic motoring.



Two above for Mr. Cars and Coffee - Miles Vincent.



In the winners enclosure with the inimitable Tom McCallum who did a great job under quite difficult circumstances; Like herding cats, I mean classics, which is actually harder.

Fleeting Moments

Trish Brown

After having been on holiday for a week, the Merc suddenly gave us a red 'low brake fluid' warning after we came home. Given that Alice thought the brakes were probably due for replacement, we quickly topped up the reservoir before setting off for shopping, never thinking more of it. On the way back the same light came on again – hmmm obviously something more serious then. Next day it is back to our mannie at the garage, who replaced the passenger front brake pipe. Sometimes 'they just go', but we think there may have been contributing factors. Like...

The Merc also got a set of new tyres just before our holidays, but the balance was well out, becoming quite noticeable over 50mph and almost undrivable above 65mph. Due to opening times and holidays we did not get back to the tyre fitters until after the brakes were fixed. The tyre fitters were embarrassed by just how bad the balance was: "it would have been better without weights". They blamed their machine and got it recalibrated, before rebalancing our wheels. Back to smooth driving again.

The Landie is back with us and has been motoring about the area for the past few weeks again, including the usual trips to the amenity site to dispose of garden waste. It is also a bit quieter now, probably because it no longer leaks oil from the transfer box. When, at the Nairn Pudding Run, Miles asked for entrants for the Tain show, we put the Landie forward. By the time we showed up with the Landie and the Smart, the designated area for the club was full, but we managed to squeeze in at the very end of the line. The Landie attracted quite a bit of attention, mainly from other Landrover enthusiasts and people who remember their parents having one. We made one wee kid very happy when he was allowed to 'drive'.

Despite the forecast, the weather at Tain was not too bad, just the odd shower here and there, but it was funny seeing people diving under their umbrellas or making a beeline for the big marquis, only to re-appear the minute the rain went off. There was a good turnout of vehicles at the show, not many empty places that I could see in the field. There was even a foreign entry with a Citroen DS from the Netherlands – they were here last year and decided to go on holiday here again just so they could enter their car in the show.

When the time came to go home, the Landie decided to have an off moment by refusing to start. Broombank Landrovers, just 50 yards across the field, kindly used their Discovery to give a tow start. Embarrassingly, the moment was captured on camera by a club member.

For another completely different story. You all know that we grow some strawberries, sufficiently that I can make jam. So when the time came to open a new jar, I was taken aback by just how suspiciously easy this jar opened up. My first thought was that it must have gone mouldy if it was not hermetically sealed, but no. The jam looked ok, but was rather sloshy. Still suspicious, I had a cautious lick from the back of a spoon. Jam should not taste fizzy or smell boozy. Alice had a wee lick too and pronounced it was more like a strong liqueur. Luckily, I still had another jar left in the cupboard.

Wings and Wheels 2

Jim Mackay

I took Samantha down to this event and I enjoyed the informality. I wandered round all the hangers which were open and got an insight into owning and flying a light aircraft, some lighter than others. I'm not into planes in any way other than getting into an Airbus A320 but, looking into the tiny cockpit, man and machine, I get it.



This second occurrence of Wings and Wheels was on the 21st June at Easter Airfield, Balintore.



Cheers,
Jim Mackay

May Club Night to Glen Affric Hydro Power scheme.

A big thanks to our chairman Richard for arranging a cracking drive last Thursday evening. And to his nephew Michael for allowing access to a hydro station up Glen Affric.

Approximately 10 cars (don't quote me) met in Beaulay. Always nice to see an eclectic mix of cars... and people! We head out to Cannich then up Glen Affric in convoy. The mixed weather forecast brings spells of beautiful evening sunlight together intermittent rain. The road beyond Cannich is new to me and doesn't disappoint. I'd heard lots about it. Stunning scenery combined with an engaging drive as the road narrowed and climbed.

Around 30 miles later and close to an hour of driving we re-group at a carpark just short of Loch Affric. Then the short walk to the hydro scheme pump house. A partly sunken concrete building. We enter.

Centre stage is a big red thing! We soon learn this is the generator. There's a big blue pipe that brings the water from the river some miles up the hillside. Important looking hydraulic pipes and electrical panels. And out of site, below our feet, the all-important turbine itself. Retired civil engineer Richard describes the hydro scheme in broad strokes, having had



a career in designing such builds, amongst other project. And Michael gives us more details about just what we are looking at. To keep concise, I'll bullet point!

- Pump house... utilitarian concrete building. Lift off concrete roof for installing/removing the generator etc. Very noisy when the system is running... which thankfully it wasn't.

- Big red generator... Power output = 2MW (I think). Not sure how to put this into context. Not big, not small?

- Big blue pipe...24 inches in diameter. Gasket hanging on the wall. Biggest I've ever seen!

- Water pressure in the pipe... 17.5 bar (Imagine pumping your tires up to 253 psi!!!) Pressure is so high due only to the 'head' i.e. the water is taken from the river a long way up!

- Turbine...clever design of 'cups' on a wheel that are hugely efficient. Not the old paddle wheel you might imagine!

- Water jets... 6 of these equally spaced around the turbine wheel. All with an adjustable nozzle not unlike the jet in your carburetor. So, controllable, very high pressure water spinning the turbine.

- Generator RPM... and this to me is the clever bit. 600 rpm. At which point the electricity produced is at exactly 50Hz. Which matches what comes out of

your wall socket. So only when up to, and locked at, 600 rpm is the big red lever thrown to connect the generator to the National Grid. Actually, disappointingly, there isn't a big red lever. I think it was a small unassuming button on a control panel. Hey Ho.

Other interesting stuff... fail safes for everything! Too much water. Too little water. Auto shut down incase of power cut to the station. Passage ways and space below the floor for maintenance of the turbine. Systems to reduce rocks and grit coming down the pipe. All very clever!

So all in all a very enjoyable and informative evening. We step outside at 9.45 to find the sun has set. Carefully down the winding glen road still through intermittent rain. Always a challenge in a car with skinny tires, brakes that were only ever considered 'barely adequate' even back in the 50's, candles for headlights, and window... less wipers... more smudgers.

I got home to Nairn at 11.15 with 108 miles on the clock and a big smile. A great way to have spent a Thursday evening. Thanks again to Richard, Michael and all that came along.

Steve.



Out and About

An MG TF, a Subaru Legacy, an International 965 5.7 litre 4WD beast. And, erm someone getting a tow at Tain.



Battery Charger



I have a smart battery charger, not a smart battery but a smart charger for a battery. We got on very well for a number of years until it stopped working, no fault code, no obvious fault, no blown fuse, no burnt wires and no YouTube help.....so far. This charger was automatic with the option of choosing the amperage manually, kind of the best of both worlds. I sourced the model in B&Q but it was no longer available. I wonder why? I could not find a similar charger so I moved with the times and bought a smart charger with no manual options. It did not want to know any battery showing more than 11.9 volts! It certainly couldn't deal with a leisure battery and split charger. I left it on till the cows came home, they came home several times, in fact one of the cows died it was on so long. There were so many managers in that charger that nothing got done. Where have I heard that before? I switched it off packed it up and returned it amid cries of "But we haven't finished assessing the battery condition yet".

I have bought a brick, heavy and nicely painted with an ammeter, you know, the needle thing. It's much the same as my old farm one which is still working 50 years on. I make the decisions and it carries them out with no "ifs and buts".

I like it that way. I like to be in control.

Cheers, Jim MacKay.

Cars and Coffee

This months Cars and Coffee turn out is filtered through the eyes of regular contributor Jim Mackay and further filtered through the eyes of your editor as I don't have room to publish everything he sent in. I seem to have filtered most of the modern performance stuff!



"I liked the Minivan but I wouldn't have one because I couldn't stand up in it! The 205 GTI is the less common 1.6 but goes well as I remember. I still feel bad about passing an MGB roadster who's driver was giving it "Yee Haa" on the A82. I did have twice as much rubber on the road though.

Cheers, Jim MacKay."



I like this Mini Midas and wish I had been there to see it in the flesh, well, GRP. Based on a Mini, they were lighter and more aero dynamic and were pretty sporty in their 80's hey day. A friend of mine had one with an upgraded Metro turbo engine in it and it went well, but it did break down a lot!



Here's a selection of other nice cars...



HCMC Events

3rd July Treasure Hunt Meet at 1930 at the Tesco Retail Park
The route will be approx. 35 miles, with 25 clues and questions.

12th-13th July The Scottish Transport Extravaganza Weekend
Glamis Castle
Entry Forms at www.svvc.co.uk or call 01307 840311

13th July Cars And Coffee - Inverness at Rollerbowl, Culduthel Rd.
10am-12noon. Find us on Facebook

8th—10th August DubNess - The Gathering of the Vans
Clune Farm, Dores, Inverness
Camping for your van or visit for a day
<https://www.facebook.com/DubNessGatheringofthevans>

10th August Historic Wheels Club Annual Rally
Brodie Castle Morayshire
Details and entry form from Lisa Minshull 01343555157
or glmmotors@aol.com Check entry form for Deadline.