

CLASSIC SCENE



August 2025



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The club has an extensive archive of information relating to all aspects of classic car ownership. To access this please contact Ranald Smith at

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Cover Picture

I had some difficulty coming up with a cover picture today but having just come back from visiting Bryan at home, where we discussed his Stag (it's a keeper,) I thought this might be a nice way to think of him. He's on a long road to restoration but he is making progress.

Welcome to the August Newsletter

Your editor missed another club night due to work commitments and yet another Cars and Coffee due to boating commitments, but has still been working away on if not classic cars, old cars, bangers. The Fiat Panda 4x4 is progressing very slowly, but the (surprisingly good) Mondeo has been getting lots of attention due to a rapidly approaching MOT deadline, but before that one of the cars in the fleet had a breakdown. Mrs Editor has a Skoda Fabia 1.2 TDI that we chose to take on our annual holiday to Argyll. About a fortnight before we left I'd received one of those emergency calls, because the Exhaust flexi hose had failed. The new part includes a DPF and was quite expensive so I 'just' welded in a generic flexi pipe. The car was stinking which I put down to high temperature emissions of a broken eco engine and two weeks of motoring went by without further misfortune.

Then when we were driving down the A82 I thought I noticed a bit of clutch slip. And then I definitely noticed some clutch slip. The rest of the journey was completed using as little torque as possible. Once wife, dogs and luggage were delivered to our holiday destination, I drove it back home and swapped it for the Mondeo. A friend at Loch Ness Restorations (Nessie Autos) owed me a favour and so the car was abandoned there, and the last leg home made using my Saltire Card on the buses. I arrived home, had a quick bite to eat and then drove all the way back down to Oban again. We had our holiday, and on the way back home popped in by Dochgarroch and collected the Skoda complete with new clutch. How good was that?

Next job was MOT prep for the Mundane-O. All it needed was a new wheel bearing, front discs (big, so expensive) a front calliper (cheap), pads (cheap), and some welding on the back end of the drivers sill. All this was completed just in time for the test. On Monday morning I got a message. "work on your vehicle has been completed". Normally it says your car has passed it's MOT so I returned to collect it with some trepidation, but no it had passed and with only slight play on one suspension joint to worry about.

My MOT testers are really good, and I go so often, we're all pals now. They are really good at making sure my repairs are up to standard and are safe. And if they are not I get mocked. And rightly so.

Currently the Beetle, the Sierra, the Mondeo and the Skoda are all going well, so I'm going to take it easy for a few weeks. Maybe just some light work on the Panda which I'd like to be ready for the winter. Then there's a couple of Minis and some Ford Focus's to look at. And the VW Van. I'm going part time at work soon, which is just as well.

I'd like to say a special thank you to Jim Mackay this month, as the newsletter is mostly filled with his content. Cheers - Jim!

Happy Classic Motoring

Your Editor

Ramblings from the Chair



This month I will tell a heart warming story of a Singer Gazelle. A long long time ago (OK, about 23 years ago) I was the proud owner of a dark green with pale green flash 1961 Singer Gazelle, TSL 767, which I bought from a garage in Ullapool having spotted it, in the passing, when returning from a business trip. I recognised it as a car which had lived in Cromarty but had passed into the garage owner's hands simply for the registration number (which, if I remember correctly was PE and four numbers) and which was transferred to his Transit. The car was very solid but slightly down at heel and responded well to a good cleaning, polishing and changing the plates to the traditional black and white type. I had it for around two years and it still looked good from 20 feet but it needed a proper restoration – slight rust on the front wings, peeling varnish on the dashboard, damaged furflex door seals and the like. At the time I had a young family, doing a house extension and really not having the time, facilities or the finance to undertake any serious work. I advertised it for sale at the Alness car show and was approached by a slightly odd couple who wanted to buy it as a surprise present for their nephew in Strathpeffer, I think. Not perhaps the best of homes, but I let it go and regretted my decision shortly afterwards. Over the following years I hoped I might see it again but to no avail. I did contact the Singer Owners Club who replied that it wasn't currently owned by a member but was last known to be in Northern Ireland. And at the time, it was taxed – the old car lived on. So roll on to a few weeks ago and a picture of a Gazelle being sold at Mathewson's (not mine), I simply typed



Singer Gazelle TSL 767 in to Google and lo and behold, two pictures of the old girl appeared at a website called BookAclassic. This is a website for anyone who wishes to hire a classic car (either self driven or chauffeur driven) from lots of different locations in Britain – it appears that owners can register their cars at BookAclassic. The Gazelle is

resident in Taunton, Somerset and can be hired for £99/hour, minimum of two hours – she looks to be in a lovely condition with gleaming paintwork and chrome. I did send a message to the owner via the website but as yet have not had a reply – it is possible that as I did not request a hire, the message did not reach the owner. There was a map showing cars location but a search on Streetview did not really identify any similar types of houses shown in the picture in that area. I will continue to look for the car and perhaps contact local car clubs for clues on its whereabouts. I suppose ultimately I could make a full hire enquiry – but Taunton is

just so very far away. [Ed: But it is nice down there.] Watch this space for further revelations.

The July Club Night's Treasure Hunt turned out to be a non starter (bit like some classics!!) due an administrative issue. However, the disappointment was tempered by a hastily arranged scenic drive – with a supernatural theme. See my report later in the newsletter. And now we have a Treasure Hunt in reserve for a future date!

This month's Club Night is a scenic drive in Moray prepared by Graeme Bremner – although he may not make it due to a house move, he has assured me that the route will be left with some responsible person. It appears that we will meet at The 1645 Inn at Auldearn (formerly the Covenanters) for a drive down to the River Findhorn gorge and back by a different route. That's 7.30pm on the 7th August. See you all there.

Regards, Richard



July Club Night

Richard Lashley

We were all gathered, 7.30pm at Tesco, Retail Park but due to work commitment the Huntmaster couldn't make it, and being the light touch club that we are we didn't manage to get the Treasure Hunt details in time. However after a quick 'Plan B' discussion we decided on a drive over Nairnside and over Drumossie/Culloden Moor, and back to Asda for a bit of a chinwag. Route agreed, and it turned out to be a good one and we have a treasure hunt in the bag for another day. Win win.

We set off, turning up through Culloden, past Smithton then up through Balloch and down to Nairnside. First stop - Clava Cairns. Well, like many of us, I had not been there for many a long year and was quite an eye opener for some. We parked up in the lovely tree lined car park and made our way over to the three chambered cairns erected some 4000 years ago and discussed how they were built with just manpower – an impressive feat considering the number and size of the stones. The discussion then continued on to similar sites, in Orkney, Caithness and Sutherland and then the Standing Stones at Callanish and one of the best preserved Brochs in Carloway, on the Isle of Lewis. Then we got on to the supernatural – Culloden battlefield is not far away and the area is believed to be haunted by Jacobites fleeing the massacre. A subsequent online search revealed that there have been frequent sightings of a ghostly Jacobite soldier muttering 'defeated'. Apparently, such spectacles are best seen on the annual anniversary of the Battle (April 16th).

Back to our vehicles and onward, up the hill with a fine view of the Culloden viaduct, to the minor road from Cawdor to Daviot on the south side of the River Nairn (and fine views across the Strath) until we met what was the 'old' A9. Another right turn down to the 'new' A9 – unfortunately I missed a left turn which would have taken us on a very small road and through a short tunnel under the dual carriageway here. Not to worry, a left on to the A9, followed by a right off it and we were on the back road to Fort Augustus. On the left we passed a small Forestry Commission car park where there is a beautiful circular walk on top of an esker (a large gravel ridge formed by a receding glacier dropping out sands and gravel) with a pond below. Unfortunately time did not allow us to make a visit here (and the first part of the walk is a little strenuous!). We carried on to make a right turn at Inverarnie and up on to Drumossie Moor where we could see evidence of recent wild fires – how I fear for wildlife caught up in such. On the left of our route and at a short distance away (not quite visible from the car) is Loch Ashie and another hotspot for supernatural events! A further examination on the web reports that on 1st May each year the spirits of a fallen army are said to manifest on the shores around Loch Ashie and on the moors to the east (just where we were). Apparently, there is a ghostly re-enactment of a battle involving horsemen and foot soldiers clashing in silence before vanishing. Some believe they are warriors of folk hero Finn MacCumhaill. Now there's an idea for a Club event – Ghost hunting at Loch Ashie !! – When does the next 1st May occur on the first Thursday of the month? We continued over the hill with lovely views of Inverness in the distance until we reached the distributor road and turned up in to the Asda car park where we gathered in the evening sunshine to talk about our favoured subject – classic cars.

Despite our initial disappointment at the failure of the Treasure Hunt, we all agreed that the night turned out exceedingly well and was enjoyed by all who attended.

Bon Accord Steam Fair

Jim Mackay

15th June 2025



We had a super day out here in the grounds of Castle Fraser near Aberdeen having missed the wet conditions on the first day. There was a big turn-out of steam engines and the kids were invited to tug o' war a traction engine. They swarmed in to the ring and gave it their all; what fun. It's just a great setting and there were fresh doughnuts available! What's not to like?

Cheers, Jim.



Fleeting Moments

Trish Brown

After having been on holiday for a week, the Merc suddenly gave us a red 'low brakefluid' 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 brakepipe. 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 a Landrover. We made one wee kid very happy when he was allowed to 'drive'.

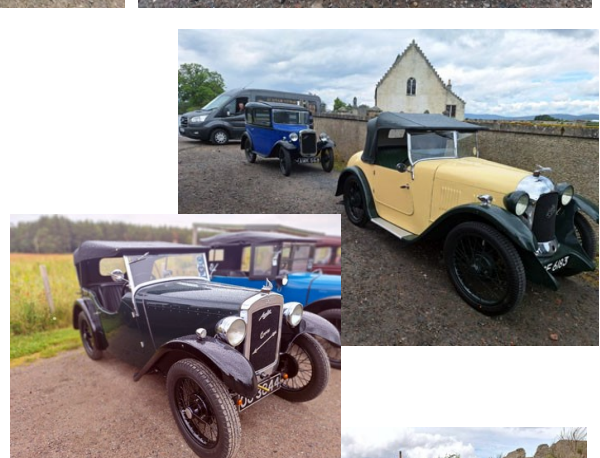
Despite the forecast, the weather at Tain was not too bad, just the odd shower here and there, but it was funny seeing people diving under their umbrellas or making a beeline for the big marquis, only to re-appear the minute the rain went off. There was a good turnout of vehicles at the show, not many 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.

Austin 7s

I happened upon a gaggle of Austin 7's heading to Grantown. Most models were represented so it was a wonderful display. My parents first car was a green 1937 Austin 7 Ruby with embellishers on the spoke wheels. Up until that point they used the David Brown which had two seats.



Cheers, Jim.

Out and About

Lying in a field at Insh on the B970 is a Bristol 401? and an articulated, tracked vehicle with no obvious identification but I think it's a Bandvagn 202 all-terrain and amphibious, tracked vehicle made in Sweden There was no-one about which, maybe, was just as well! Cheers Jim Mackay



[Ed: The mind boggles. Who runs a Bristol and a Swedish All Terrain vehicle?]
Also spotted by Jim Mackay at Ballinluig, home of the legendary Motor Grill.



I've resigned.

After some thought I have decided to step down from the committee. With the move to Moray and full time working I just can't commit the time. I am also going to be renovating the house and probably won't be in a classic motor for the foreseeable future. I am officially stepping down as a member of the committee. Hope to see you all out and about and I still intend to make appearances at Cars and

Coffee. Regards and many thanks, Graeme Bremner

Cars and Coffee

Jim Mackay

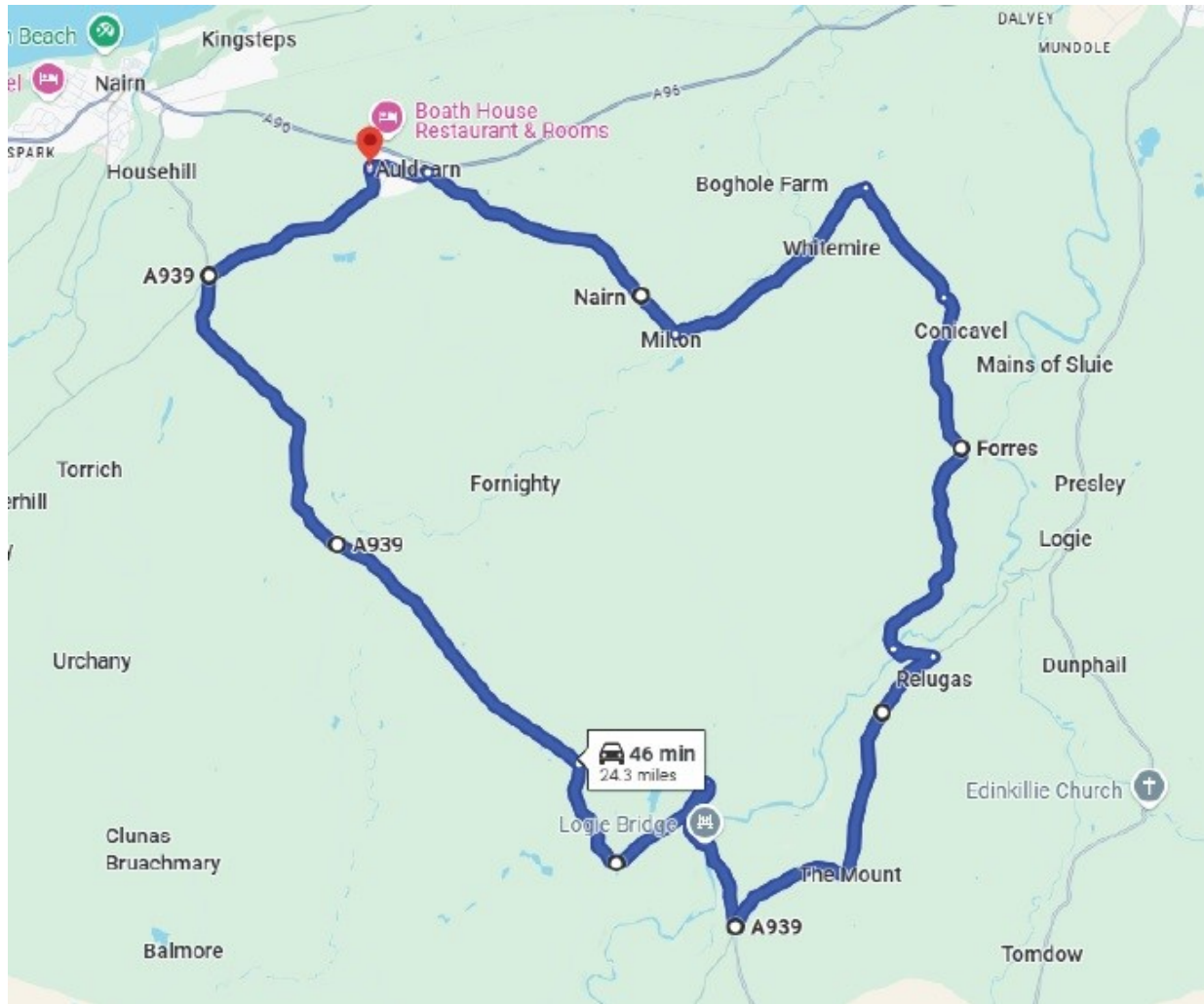
Superb weather for this meeting and again a varied selection of vehicles. Dave Straube has been busy uprating his A40 and was pleasantly surprised at its performance round the Little Ferry Circuit, Golspie. Shades of Pat Moss and Xoe (recently sold for £45,000). There's a bit of me quite envious, I'd enjoy the driving bit but not all the faff before and after. So, good on Dave.....it keeps him off the streets!



Cheers, Jim.

August Club Night

Meet at the 1645 Inn Car Park in Auldearn for a 19:30 departure on a 24 mile anti-clockwise loop and return there for possible refreshments or just head home.



Head west on B9101

Turn left onto A939 and through Littlemill

Head south on A939 towards Logie Bridge

Sharp left onto B9007 at Ferness

Via The Mount, Relugas Mill

Turn Left to Daltullich Bridge

Then right to Conicavel

Left at crossroads to Whitemire then Milton.

Moyness Road towards east end of Auldearn

Left onto B9101 in Auldearn and

Return to 1645 Inn at Auldearn

HCMC Events

7th August HCMC Circular Scenic Drive Auldearn Meet at the 1645 Inn, Auldearn for a 7.30pm circular scenic drive.

Don't turn up at the 1930 Inn for a drive at 1645.

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 glmotors@aol.com Check entry form for Deadline.

10th August Cars And Coffee - Inverness at Rollerbowl, Culduthel Rd. Inverness
2nd Sunday of every Month from 10am-12noon.

23rd August TruckNess 2025 Black Isle Show Ground. Details at
www.trucknessinverness.com or on Facebook at Truckness 2025.
Classic Cars Welcome.

23rd August Balintore Harbour Classic Car Meeting Gathering from 1pm - 4pm
to catch up and get the craic. Pop along and join them.

30th August Fortrose and Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally.
Begins at Dingwall Mart at 10:00 then
King George V Sports Field Fortrose from 1pm.