

CLASSIC SCENE



August 2026



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The club has an extensive archive of
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Cover Picture

Just some of the cars at this month's
Cars and Coffee at the Drumossie
Hotel.

Welcome to the August Newsletter

Hello and welcome to the latest newsletter. Yes it's late again, due to the usual time pressures but also evolving news which you will read about later.

I have had a busy old time in the garage too, but not with the fun cars. My wife's, I mean Mrs. Editor's, Skoda required a new wheel bearing which I think I may have mentioned previously. I had difficulty fitting it, as the tool I had ordered off Amazon a while back didn't fit correctly, so made an adaptor plate in the lathe. It wasn't pretty due to a skills shortage on my part, but it worked. The last job was to tighten up the hub nut, which habitually for me is f'in tight, but unfortunately not in this generation of VAG cars. So I stripped the threads. Another skills shortage. No worries, I'll buy a new driveshaft. Probably not a bad idea on a high mileage car anyway. I went to my usual suppliers and was shocked to find a new driveshaft cost between £800 to over £1000! Now I wished I'd read that manual. I managed to find a second hand one for £20-ish, which was sent by Evri, so that was a wait.

Meanwhile the Ford Mundane-O's MOT was up which it failed due to a broken rear spring. This was easily sorted, but the spring was broken in 3 places, and worse than that, it wasn't a recent break. I suspect it had been like that for a couple of years as the new spring restored the ride height to something more sensible and the old spring bits were quite rusty. Anyway, thanks to Highland Motor Parts and a reasonable £40 spend, I got a new ticket. The tester noticed a pressure sensor pipe issue on the DPF which I need to address before it triggers any lights, and finally, just yesterday, the back box fell off! I'll get the Mondeo jacked up soon for more repairs.

Meanwhile. Evri delivered the second hand driveshaft, which unfortunately had a split boot! I swapped in the one off the old driveshaft but had to use cable ties to secure it for now. At least the Skoda was finally on the road again. For now.

Then, driving back from the (excellent) Ullapool boatyard visit, I stopped off at Dingwall Tesco for supplies. Then Beetle wouldn't start. No cranking, Not even a click. I strongly suspect the starter motor or solenoid has failed. Thankfully Dingwall shoppers are very helpful and a push start got me home. I have only got as far as looking out a rusty old spare. Other than not starting, the Beetle is going well.

Meanwhile, the Panda 4x4 has been just fine, and a joy to drive, even though it is very slow. Speed isn't everything and we both love that car.

Anyway that's enough about me. If you want less of me, tell me more about you.

Happy classic motoring,

Your Editor

Ramblings from the Chair



Not a great deal of news on the vehicle front this month – too much to do in the garden in this nice weather and of course, there are holidays, short breaks and even days out to fit in – how on earth did I ever manage to go to work? Anyway, a short update on the Senator ventilation fan. I tried a temporary wire direct from the battery to various terminals – the fan operated at full pelt when connected, then at the three slower speeds when the wire was touched to each of the resistor coils (in a convenient location on the bulkhead). In addition I could hear (and feel) the relay clicking each time (backfeeding, I guess) the wire was connected. I reckon then, that the problem must lie before the relay – a likely candidate may be the rheostat in the dash. This is actually a slider control beside the temperature lever so looks like fun and games getting to that. More next month (maybe?).

Those of you who subscribe to Practical Classics might recall a 'Spotted' picture in the July edition of a Bedford CA pickup in pale green. Well, it just so happens that I saw that very vehicle, parked outside the greengrocer and fruitier shop in Clapham, when I was in London last year. I even took a photo, reproduced, here that I was going to submit to our own 'spotted' section in the Newsletter at some future date. What a beautiful restoration it is and a reminder what cracking (and plentiful) vans these used to be – I particularly liked the cab interior, very basic but with a touch of style in that the instruments were housed in a chrome panel, way nicer than the opposition's option of a fitting into just a painted dash. And

then that got me thinking to my own van driving experiences in the mid 70's. As a summer job, I drove an 18cwt Bedford CF van with sliding doors (famous on the CA) which was fitted with 1800cc 'slant four' Victor engine. What lovely thing to drive, front door slid back for ventilation and hardly a thought about safety – the main problem being that under sharp braking the catch could not hold the door open and it would slide forward and close with an almighty slam. I did like the minimalist dash panel, just two dials



in a binnacle which looked like an afterthought – in fact, quite similar to many modern cars of today. Bedford – fifty years ahead of its time!! On occasions, I drove the long wheelbase 35cwt version with double back wheels. This had the 2300cc Victor engine and had tremendous power – when empty it was easy to spin the back wheels, just terrific. And of course, the Bedford HA vans, used and

abused and, because of its lightness, way faster than my own Viva that I had at the time. One van, in particular, (and I can partially remember the registration XVX ???L) was the fleet favourite – for some reason it was the fastest by a long shot. We wondered if it had been fitted with an uprated engine in error – oh happy days. And all of the above is a very sad reminder of how the world beating British commercial vehicle industry was allowed to disappear over a remarkably short period. The nearest thing to a Bedford nowadays would be a Stellantis Eurovan – badged as a Vauxhall, Opel, Fiat, Citroen, Peugeot or even Toyota!! Now, I have been speaking to various members of the Club and it appears that there are a lot of stories out there – tales of misadventure, mishaps and work carried out to our classics over the years, all of which would make excellent features in future newsletters (as you know our Editor is always looking for content). However, I am aware that a lot of members are unfamiliar with just how these stories are prepared for publication and have perhaps opened up the 'Word' app on their computers, seen what looks like a minefield of symbols, titles and options, and quickly closed it down again. I used to be one of those people, despite having to write technical reports and the like for my work. I used to write it out longhand and give it to our office secretary or a junior (ie young person!) and they would transform into a document for issue. In the first instance, the Editor, myself and possibly some other Committee members would be prepared to accept hand written texts, notes and or photographs to turn into articles for the newsletter. For the future, and if members are interested, I would be quite happy to arrange a meeting to show how the 'Word' app operates. I am by no way an expert but can find my way around the basics – it is surprisingly easy but just needs experimenting with various options and a little perseverance to produce a workable document. The more it is used, the easier it becomes. Please speak to me at any of the Club meetings or email me if you are interested.

Regards, Richard

Editor: Following on from Richard's comments about submissions for the newsletter, I have to say I agree. Why let technology get in the way of a good story? If you have anything you wish to send in that is hand written or as computer folk say, hard copy, we would happily accept that and edit it for the newsletter. The clue is in the job title. Photographs will be returned. My only caveat is that there might be a longer turn around while I process these.

Our stories are important, and once they are in the newsletter they will be saved forever in our digital vault.

Club Night "You'll Have Had Your Tea"



The July Club Night was the now traditional, you'll have had your tea so bring your pudding to the Nairn Links run, also known as how many ways are there to get from the Culloden Visitor Centre to Nairn. This year (I believe) the route headed to the coast past Arderdsier, and one person said they found a road they had never been on before. 'Your Editor' missed the run due to a diary conflict but managed to attend the pudding bit in Nairn, and unfortunately, due to a lack of garage time and/or too many cars with issues I was in the Ford Mundane-O.



The weather was fairly kind and a decent turnout in the high teens plus others who had just come for the meet-up meant there was plenty of chat to be had, so much so that I forgot to eat my pudding until the next day. I liked that Mini Metro owned by club member Mark Patrick. It was a cracker, very evocative of that era, which is my era I suppose. A lot of these 'unexceptional' classics are coming into their own now.

All in all a good night and good craic. I wonder what route we'll take next year.



Fleeting Moments - Trish Brown

Finally, the Landie is back home. New thrust washers were fitted when the measured end float on the crankshaft turned out to be over 3mm, where it should be between 0.5-1.5mm. And again a new oil seal was fitted on the output shaft. This time pressed in on the bench, rather than on the vehicle. According to 'mate' doing the work, this one is also a better fit than the one he put in last November. We have not seen any new oil drips, so the works appear to have solved the torrential oil leak I mentioned last year. According to Alice, the engine also responds better. Well worth the wait.

The Landie has immediately been pressed into essential gardening service, by carting the stored up garden waste to the amenity site. And I can start looking seriously at cutting back overhanging branches, like the hawthorn which is sticking out into the street. And the catoneaster which is growing over the black currant. And next door neighbours cherry which is leaning on the shed.

Good news on the red currant front, where we had nearly a kilo of fruit. An absolute bumper crop compared to the measly few handfuls last year. Enough this time for 2 and a bit jars of jam. The strawberries are a little bit larger this year, all due to timely rainfall just as the fruit is setting. Ditto with the black currant, with not even half the bush harvested (3.5 jam jars). And someone is eating the blueberries and it's not us. They are ripening nicely, but we are now down to 28 berries.

We had a birdstrike with our Merc. A kamikazi Jackdaw, who did not survive the encounter. No damage to the bodywork or lights unit that we can see, but the passenger sidelight stopped working. In true modern car build style, you can't get to these lights unless you take the wheel arch cover out. We gave this little job to our mannie at the garage, who also replaced the indicator – "might as well do both bulbs when we're underneath the car". Made sense.

Trish.

Out and About



I spotted these recent work trip to Stornoway. The Ford Orion Ghia was actually spotted by a friend. The Ford Focus ST170 was immaculate and who doesn't like an old Volvo?

Beamish Reliability Rally 2026



In May 2025 Josie Marrelo, myself and friends from Stonehaven took part in the London to Brighton Commercial Vehicle run. Rather than do the same run in 2026 we decided to enter the Beamish Reliability Rally. This year we were joined by my son Adam and Stevie Docherty who were recruited as navigators.

Starting and finishing at the Beamish Folk Museum, entrants with pre 1956 vehicles are given a set of instructions to navigate a 160 mile route around the north Yorkshire countryside. Driver's are required to attend a number of check points where they are quizzed on Highway Code knowledge. It is fair to say all drivers needed to brush up on their Highway Code. The route itself comprises of many tight corners, hairpins and very steep hills. All designed to test vehicle durability and reliability.

Sad to say the route proved too much for the honey van. Shortly after leaving Beamish the van started to cough and splutter, lack of fuel appeared to be the issue. Bleeding the fuel pump outlet managed to get us to Barnard Castle where we thought we were underway, however reaching more and more hills it was evident that we were doomed. twenty miles in I decided to call it a day and retire and limped our way back to Beamish. Meanwhile a very sun burnt Stevie and Josie continued to charge around the course putting Josie's MG TF through it's paces. Without missing a beat the competitive pair claimed a score of 101 taking a bronze place out of 160 entrants.

On returning home Adam appointed himself as chief mechanic (never done anything on a car before) and set about investigating the fuel issue. Dropping the fuel tank and blowing through the fuel lines failed to find any problems. On removing the mechanical pump he discovered that the inside of the fuel chamber was full of scale. Scraping the fuel chamber clean and refitting the pump appears to have solved the issue.

I have considered buying an ultrasonic cleaner for such jobs as cleaning small parts but at the current time I am trying to reduce the contents of the garage to set up my new tig welder. Meanwhile Adam has decided to recommission one of the Austin 10 cars and run it for a few months on his return from Shetland in August.

Beamish living museum is outstanding and highly recommended for a weekend away. Plans for a return to Beamish and the rally are in hand for 2027.

Andrew Card

Visit to Jonson Loftus Boat Yard, Ullapool.



After the Tim Loftus Wooden Boat Building club talk in October, we were invited to visit their boat yard on the shores of Loch Broom, something I was personally quite excited about as I love boats.

We met up on Sunday the 19th of July at the North Kessock layby off the the A9 and there were a good number of eclectic classics. Others met us en route and some joined from the West Coast contingent, giving us an impressive number of 27 varied and very interesting cars. The 'temporary' traffic lights at Loch Garve gave us the photo opportunity above.



Once we arrived it took some time to squeeze all the vehicles in but we did and we roamed around looking at all the interesting items scattered around the boat yard until Steve Hanson introduced Tim Loftus who gave us run-down on the yard. As well as providing the premises for the wooden boat building, there is also hard standing for yachts for storage or repair. There was a trusty tractor and trailer to lift shallow draft boats and a large frame that slides on special (yeah I can't remember!) wood lubricated with tallow, and pulled up by a winch.



Tim explained the difficulty in obtaining the right sized and quality of milled timber and then showed us his massive saw mill and bed. Smaller sizes are cut with a chainsaw mill, which is essentially a chainsaw on a frame. Wood is bent into shapes to suit boat frames by steaming, and an old ships boiler provides the steam (and a sausage grill) which is applied through a pipe to sealed bags around the work. Very clever. But not only can they work with wood, they can cast and forge metal, and have a well equipped machine shop with a lathe and nice old pillar drill.

The aluminium landing craft, 'Claudia' pictured above has an interesting story. It is a modern landing craft which inspired the current owner of Tanera Mòr, one of the local Summer Isles, to buy it so he could land there and go ashore in his Land Rover. Some people just deserve to be wealthy! (Editor's opinion) Unfortunately someone applied copper based anti-fouling to the hull which led to some serious sacrificial corrosion. Commercial vessels need to be surveyed annually and this one failed on hull thickness. The only solution is to weld new metal in which is a huge job. Some of us suggested TIG welding, but apparently with aluminium that thick, MIG is the way to go. Although Tim has the skills a job of this size may be for someone else.

I can't end this article without mentioning this car. I mean it's hard to top an E-type Jaguar or an AC Cobra, but for a visit to a wooden boat builders this was the car to come in.



Owned by a boat building gentleman from Ullapool called Tophor, who is acquainted with our air cooled Citroën officianado, Callum Beveridge, it is as you can probably see a three wheeled Citroën special based on a 1974 2CV with a Ford Fiesta screen. It been recently recommisioned with a fresh MOT and a new coat of varnish. It's quite spectacular, you have to agree. (Oh yes, you do!) The way the lights are concealed is very clever.

Ranald Smith

One of longest serving and I would say, most likeable members of HCMC has recently received an extremely serious cancer diagnosis and I'm afraid his time with us will be limited. This is obviously upsetting to us, and I'm sure many would like to do something to help. Those of you who know him will know he is a life long collector and club archivist. Having recently paid a visit, the thing that is bothering Ranald the most is the burden that all his collections will leave on his lovely wife Joanna. So there is something we can do as a club to help which will make a big difference.

As car enthusiasts and people of a certain type, we will know and appreciate the (not neccessarily financial) value of his collection of things and are ideally suited to help filter items to the best place. To this end, I have scheduled a work party for Saturday the 15th of August, at 2pm at Hawthorn Cottage, 2 Burn Road, Inverness IV2 4NG. This clashes with the Balintore BBQ, so if you were planning on going to that, please do. I know Ranald would be upset if you sacrificed a good car event to help him instead. The plan is to try and clear his garage loft by moving things downstairs, and sorting out what can go to the dump, what members can take away, and what needs moving on. (There is a club auction coming up.) To that end I propose a few empty boots which we could fill and take to the dump, I mean the Recycling Centre. Please feel to contact me on 07762101067 or editor@highlandclassic.org.uk if you need to.

Work party. Saturday the 15th of August. 2pm at Hawthorn Cottage, 2 Burn Road, Inverness IV2 4NG

Cars and Coffee

This was your Editor's first attendance at the new venue, and I like it. I like the open space and the grassy areas giving it a different atmosphere, maybe a bit more relaxing. It was great to see so many familiar faces and to chat car nonsense with some strangers. You can't help yourself there are just so many interesting conversation starters, and of course that common interest that binds us. The only downside for me was I couldn't get round everything so missed a trip to the catering. I think it's polite to go and buy a coffee if you can. This blue Simca was the car of the show for me. It's very rare as most have rusted away. When I was a young lad I used to tear around a farm field in a stripped out Simca van and it was very, very exciting! Such a rev happy engine, and we couldn't break it. I wanted to buy it but it wasn't road worthy. For me, other



notable cars were the ERA Mini Turbo, possibly the ultimate road Mini, Peter's Buick and that Nova. So many people commented on that car. I would be Impudent if I didn't mention these two Rootes classics next to the Simca. Sorry about the Sierra but I love them. It was the sun visor on the Anglia that did it for me, and then in second place for me, the Ford Falcon Mad Max replica. I loved that film. There was

one downer on the day, as two drivers left in a high speed, anti-social manner. Please don't, as it gets us the wrong type of publicity.





Events News

There have been a few last minute cancellations this year, with the headline story being the Buckie car show with a shock last minute cancellation. However, thanks to the incredible support of their volunteers, local businesses, contractors, the local community and Moray Council - essential repairs and maintenance were completed and the show is back on. What a stress for the volunteers who run this show and it just goes to show how much goes in to organising these events. The future of shows everywhere depends on volunteers standing up.

I know it's not a car show but the Dornoch Highland Games have also been cancelled. The news reports that this is due to some financial irregularities and it is under police investigation.

Finally I read in the Inverness Courier that The Rotary Club of Inverness has cancelled this year's Loch Ness Classic Car Tour. They report that the late decision came after the rally received fewer entries than it needed to run, with date clashes and the cost of overnight accommodation suggested as contributing factors. I hope that the lack of publicity in this publication wasn't also a factor. In any case this is a shame, as they raise money for good causes.

HCMC Events

9th August 2026 Historic Wheels Annual Club Rally at Brodie Castle Morayshire.

9th August 2026 Cars and Coffee at the Drumossie Hotel. IV2 5BE 10am to 12pm. More details at the Cars and Coffee - Inverness Facebook page

15th August 2026 Classic Car Show and BBQ at Balintore Harbour. 1pm to 4pm. The last one was really good. Organised by our Hugh Skinner.

16th August 2026 An ad hoc scenic Sunday run through the Cairngorms. A circular route of just over 100 miles to the Lecht and Dufftown for a lunch stop. Leaving Inverness at 1000 hrs from the Drumossie Hotel. See Andrew Card for more details, though what more do you need to know?

22nd August 2026 Truckness at the Black Isle Show Ground

23rd August 2026 Helmsdale Vintage & Classic Vehicle Rally. Couper Park, Helmsdale, KW8 6HH

29th August 2026 Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally. Dingwall Mart to the King George V Sports Field, Fortrose.

30th August 2026 Buckie Classic Car Show, Linzee Gordon Park, Buckie

3rd September 2026 The last HCMC Thursday night run of the year. Leaving from the North Kessock Car Park. Meet around 7pm for a 7:30pm start. Full details tbc.

5th September 2026 Dingwall Rotary Vehicle Show at Cromartie Park

19th September 2026 Wheels of Nairn at the Nairn Links

1st October 2026 In a change to the usual schedule we will have an October Auction Night. Weather affected attendance last year. I have a feeling this could be a special event, so save up your money now.