

# CLASSIC SCENE



September 2009

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**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.

## Archivist

**Ranald Smith**  
The club has an extensive archive of information  
relating to all aspects of classic car ownership  
including technical advice etc. To access this,  
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### Cover picture

*Liz Blighs Austin 10 Conway at last  
months meeting*

## THE CHAIRMAN'S BIT

The state of the car industry came home to me the other day when I decided to say goodbye to my 98 Mercedes E class estate and part ex it for a van to use for work. I wasn't expecting a lot but six hundred quid?! I was quite incredulous but on checking with a couple of other sources this was in fact the correct trade/auction price. Nothing is worth anything anymore.

The Priory Hotel in Beaulieu seems to be a popular stopping off point for continental tourists with classic cars and bikes, I've often seen groups of MGs, Healeys and the like parked outside but last week I spotted a Citroen DS convertible (I've forgotten the proper name for it) on French plates. It was the first time I had ever seen one in the flesh and I thought it looked brilliant. You know sometimes you spot something and it just makes you smile, well this was one of those moments. And naturally I didn't even have my phone with me to take a picture.



For one reason or another I have managed to miss the last few meetings but I will be at the Fortrose Fun Day, so if you are reading this Saturday morning I'll see you later!

**Michael**

*michael.oz@btopenworld.com*

## This Months Meeting

Thursday 3rd September 7:30 for 8pm departure from the Culloden Battlefield car park for scenic run over the hills to the 'Gun Lodge', Ardersier

## EDITORIAL

Hello,

Apologies for last months newsletter—I ran out of colour toner! The outing was more successful with a trip to the Dores Inn,, via Farr and via Charles Perrins house (he was out). A beautiful evening and a great route. Liz Bligh brought her Austin 10 for its first outing in many years.

We're off to Ardersier this month. Meet at the Culloden Battlefield Car Park for an 8pm departure. We've got a route planned to take you through the wilds of Galcantry and its suburbs.

I saw of lot of you at the Historic Wheels run to Brodie Castle a few weeks ago. It was a good turn out of cars with a lot of new entries in evidence.

I've also braved the Citroen Specials Rally to Applecross recently. The weather wasn't that kind to us, but as people had come the length and breadth of the UK to join in, we made the most of it. I couldn't actually see anything from the top of the Bealach, but at least the 100 mph wind kept the midges at bay until the next



morning.

This weekend is the Fortrose Vintage Vehicle Rally, kicking off at Midday from the Dingwall Auction mart. Cars can arrive from 10am before heading off for a magicaly mystery tour of the Black Isle, before landing at the playing fields in Fortrose. There's a record number of entries, and the weather looks as if it will hold off, so it should be a good day.

If you don't see me at the monthly meetings, you can write to me at the address inside the front cover, or email me direct at [ClassicScene@bevs.org](mailto:ClassicScene@bevs.org)

**Callum**

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### **HIGHLAND CLASSIC MOTOR CLUB** **Monthly meetings (1st Thursday of every month)**

#### **2009**

|               |                                         |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------|
| September 3rd | Road run via Gun Lodge Hotel, Ardersier |
| October 1st   | Club visit to Autohead Engineering      |
| November 5th  | Club Night                              |
| December 3rd  | Club Night/Christmas celebration        |

#### **2010**

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| January 7th  | Club Auction |
| February 4th | AGM          |

*(Further details to be published in 'Classic Scene' prior to the individual meetings)*

## Local Events Diary

Here are some details of 2009 local events that may be of interest to our members

### September

- 5th Dingwall Street Fair. Contact Donald Mackenzie 01349 861009  
6th Motor Mania—Grantown on Spey  
19th Working Vintage Rally and Display, Daviot Fram, Nr Inverness  
19th/20th Selkirk Rally  
27th Roseisle Show. Call Danny Duncan 01667 455078 or Gordon MacKenzie 01343 541665

### October

- 3rd/4th Fraserburgh East to West Commercial Run

*If you notice any errors or omissions, please let the editor know.*



***An immaculate Talbot Sunbeam seen at Brodie Castle***

## Miles' mini Meanderings



Right, so the Mini is 50 and we were finding out how this little Icon had made its mark on our members lives, although it seems, as we discovered last month, that over time it has been HCMC members that have made their mark on the poor little fellow!

Between us we have raced them, rolled them, overloaded them, crashed, smashed and generally abused them, but all the while we have ensured that we have had fun in them as well and in more ways than one if many of you are to be believed!

On that subject it was while watching Top Gear recently when, of all people, Brian Johnston, the lead singer of rock band AC-DC, shed some light on how it was even possible to contemplate anything more than a little heavy petting in the mighty Mini. Apparently it was all to do with the early sliding front windows and the young lady's (well maybe not if she's doing it in a Mini) ability to pop a foot out of each one! Must have been kind of chilly during a Highland winter...

Anyway, what have I got for you this month? Gordon Murdoch told me that he got shunted and T-boned in a Mini, apparently outside the same pub, (how

unlucky is that!) but he didn't give me any more details so it doesn't make the greatest of stories.

Jim Lorraine-Smith was more forthcoming, he had some experience of Minis and on one occasion had borrowed his little brother's Mini Pick up at the last minute (there's those commercials again) to go to a wedding. The only problem was that he had to park around the corner as it came complete with the rear bed full of straw bales and other assorted rubbish.

He also told of a friend of his who was tooling along in his Mini one day and when approaching a set of corners that led to a mile long straight he was overtaken in a flash by a long low sports car. Realising that it was one of those fancy new E-Type Jaguars he decided to get a better look at it and floored his Mini through the corners in a bid to catch up, but when he rounded the final corner and joined the straight all he could see were the two little red brake lights of the Jag slowing at the far end. Gutted.

Then John Mackenzie told me this.

While working for a Glasgow garage one day he was sent out on a breakdown call with a crazy Irishman named Paddy, in an old Austin Gypsy recovery truck, to collect an ailing Minivan. When they arrived the van was found to have no power at all and would not start, so they decided to tow it back to Glasgow behind the Gypsy.

Now, John knew from previous experience to keep the tow rope as taut as possible

behind Paddy because he had a frightening habit of just dropping the clutch when it was time to go, resulting in a pretty violent jerk if you were in the vehicle being towed behind (or was that just how he described Paddy, I can't quite remember). Anyway they made it into Glasgow and were waiting to cross the river on a bridge that held four lanes of traffic in each direction. Paddy had pulled up at the Red traffic lights next to a large lorry and John was sitting behind him with the rope nice and tight.

It was at this moment that a very tall, smartly dressed Businessman, complete with Bowler Hat and briefcase, which had made it onto the central reservation from one side of the busy road decided to cross the remaining four lanes to the other.

Lanes one and two were negotiated without incident and he had gathered a fair turn of speed with which to complete the rest of his journey between pavements. About now John realised that Mr. Bowler Hat had not spotted the tow rope suspended 12 inches above the tarmac like a piano wire between the Austin Gypsy and the Minivan so he tried to warn the fellow with the horn. (The fellow didn't have the horn, John had the horn, no, what I mean is, he was pumping his horn...Oh never mind!)

It was at this point that John was reminded that the whole reason for him being in the Minivan, on the end of a rope, was because it had absolutely no power and therefore no horn! Picture him, crouched forward, staring desperately through the windscreen at the running man, while all the time frantically prodding a Bakelite button

which just results in a feeble clicking noise to be heard only in the cramped confines of the Minivan's cabin!

Well, the chap went down like a sack of potatoes!

He was propelled past the front of John's bonnet and landed squarely in front of the Lorry in lane four, spread-eagled on the tarmac. John could only look on, aghast, as the man's Bowler Hat and briefcase were catapulted into the gutter before him; however, the most amusing part of the incident was the look of complete indignation that the Bowler Hatless Gentleman threw the lorry driver, of all people, after he had leaped to his feet again.

Then Paddy dropped the clutch!

The light had turned green and before John could attempt to offer any sort of apology his powerless Minivan shot forward like a rocket, leaving the man standing in front of the lorry in lane four completely unaware of what had been the cause of his embarrassing tumble. The evidence of which had just been speedily removed in one swift yank.

John could only watch the scene recede in his rear view mirror while he gripped the steering wheel for dear life and tried to keep the tow rope as taut as possible. He was still only a passenger along for the ride behind Paddy's hurtling Gypsy!

Here is to another 50 Years of fun in Minis.

**Miles**

## ***Caithness and Sutherland Vintage Vehicle Rally***

I was delighted and honoured to receive an invitation from the Chairman of the Caithness and Sutherland Vintage Vehicle Club, Edward Sutherland, to attend the 40th anniversary of this fine Vintage Vehicle Club at John-o-Groats on the weekend of 13/14 June. His worthy team of Jock Mackay, Bert Macleod and Tony Hagon had obviously worked extremely hard to make their 40th Anniversary event, full of interest, with excellent venues to visit, (and savour.)

This year, Brian MacInnes, my co-pilot, Shades, my mutt of some fifteen years, who goes into deep sulks if I don't take him on every jaunt in the Sunbeam, and myself, John Oliver, No 1 Region Organizer of Stardust, (Sunbeam Talbot Alpine Register) for Scotland and Northern Ireland) decided to head North to mainland Scotland's furthest vintage car rally, an event neither of us had ever attended.

The first calling point was the famous and world renowned Glenmorangie Distillery at Tain, Ross-shire. The memory of these old and beautiful stills, with the bouquet lingering with you, always last. The second choice of the rally organizers was the wonderful and unique "Falls of Shin; the oasis owned by local hero Mohamad Al Fyad, entrepreneur and owner of Harrods, where hopefully the visitor had time for a five star, (but inexpensive lunch,)

served by pleasant and enthusiastic staff; sadly the famous salmon pool and falls, were tranquil, too early in the season to watch these

magnificent silver creatures jump the length of themselves and more, to gain the ultimate Utopia.

Tony Hogan, Bert MacLeod, and Jock Mackay, the Chairman's rally teams organizers had got it right, their hard work and commitment to their hundreds of entrants and visitors over the weekend, had a host of other delights to visit and enjoy on their way north; delighting in the far North's incomparable scenery and visitor attractions; I was intrigued wandering the streets of Wick and Thurso, discovering some unequalled architecture, enjoying the town's hospitality, in this unique part of Scotland.

For those who know and are familiar with the North of Scotland, it always gives them the warm "Coming home feeling," for others, to whom this part of the world is a new (and often strangely intense experience,) and where cloven footed quadrupeds outnumber the two legged version by at least ten to one, wander among the vast uncultivated areas, (sheltering behind battered and derelict cottages of long forgotten inhabitants forced to seek new worlds,) from the harsh elements that howl out of the east: We know they will come back, for the warmth and generosity of the highlander is legendary.

Brian and I stayed at the tiny port of Scrabster, the jumping off point for the Orkney Isles, our hotel, the Ferry Inn, sits right on the harbour edge; from the outside it has a two star appearance, but we find the accommodation has a more comfortable three star feeling; the staff are

definitely four star, but when this 'far north' hostelry has a packed restaurant, anticipation of something special sends bells ringing; the food is clearly very special.

It had to be "to hell with the diet;" my better half was not watching over me like an over ripe vulture, ready to 'piecemeal' my selection of the superb culinary art of the hotel's chef. The lobsters and crabs and giant prawns had travelled all of one hundred yards from the now moored up fishing vessels, the fishermen packed the bar, mingling the taste of the brine with their favourite uisge-beatha. My haddock was the length of the platter, covering in a beer batter that put on weight before eating; the chips, ("may God forgive me") were obviously cooked in goose fat, so more-ish every mouthful was a sin, and the

Aberdeen Angus steak, home fed, not only came the desired rarity, but the waiter even asked, "and how thick do you desire this tender morsel Sir;" When did you last hear those pearls of culinary reverence.

Brian and I were at peace with the world, and if we achieved nothing else on our trip north, we had found heaven and rapture in a tiny corner of Caithness. The breakfast was a true trencherman's "Scottish Affair." If one can handle it, the plate had eight mouth watering items, with all the accoutrements; Shades, my dog, got to lick the plate, (speaking metaphorically.)

This article is supposed to be about a vintage rally, forgive me for going off on a tangent, but to me, this is what the Scottish Highlands is all about, 'the unexpected,' that feeling of being wanted and pampered



and looked after: And for the classic car enthusiast, road experience of the past, single track roads, gradients, so steep, more than a little thought had to be used to negotiate these highways and byways. When one is down to 'first' on the Berriedale loop, with many twists and turns, listening all the time to the singing and screaming of your side valve 1185cc engine, (that's mine!) A new rattle, a low growl? panic tends to set in, and certain muscles are known to twitch, knowing the nearest garage is probably some twenty or thirty miles away, and your mobile phone proves useless, (no signal for the last ten miles, and the last red boxed B.T. landline is at the bottom of the hill that is at least two miles away; but useless, for they no longer take coin of the realm, because some B.T. genius decided only reverse calls can be made to save money, and no local M.P. has objected to this short sighted and clownish behaviour. One can consider reversing one's pride and joy up the (sometimes) 1 in 4 or 5 gradient, then shudder, remembering you have cable brakes, worm steering, and a weak heart, a very nervous passenger, whose right foot is about to go through the already weakened passenger floorboard. All the worries to subside once one reaches the open road again. Ah! the joys of modern day travelling, in a seventy year old car.

Back to the rally; There are certain places in Scotland that could be enhanced for the visitor, John-O-Groats is incomparable, not a lot to get excited about. As a venue it has everything the visitor desires for a day out, although the original hotel has had promises showered on it as long as I can remember, sad really, for the building itself, if refurbished, could enhance this pinnacle of Scotland's image greatly.

Sunday, the rally day, one could see little of the Pentland Firth or the Outer Isles of Orkney, and none of it's exciting and very varied wild life; it came as a disappointment to those who had travelled the hundreds of miles in there rare and splendid vehicles, for there really was some very handsome, very unique, and very beautiful machines that Edward Sutherland had enticed to John-o-Groats.

My heart went out to Chairman Edward and his team; the hundreds of exhibitors, probably thousands of visitors, all experiencing horizontal winds, stinging rain, squall straight off the Pentland Firth, and a large grassy field getting saturated. Let us hope that most visitors felt as I did; my revered and aged Grandfather Fred, and my first mentor, used to tell me as a boy, "there is always a silver lining to every day," and Sunday 14th June, 2009, was no exception, for BST 310, my 1939 Sunbeam Talbot Ten was awarded the coveted Caithness and Sutherland Visitors Cup, presented by Chairman Edward Sutherland.

A most memorable visit for many reasons, experiences to be savoured and talked about for months to come. Many thanks to the people of Caithness and Sutherland for the finest of hospitality, especially at the Ferry Inn, Scrabster, and Edward and his team's splendid cordiality.

**John Oliver,**

Scottish Organizer for Sunbeam Talbot Alpine.



*A very tidy Jag on the recent Edderton run*



*A Marlin Berlinetta seen at Brodie*



*View of Citroen Specials from wing mirror*



*Another Special—a stunning Bentley Special at Brodie Castle*