

CLASSIC SCENE



September 2020



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Cover Picture

Some new motors and an Aston.
I bet you can't park your new car in
a Tesco trolley bay like the Mini
Miles.
Derek Darnell has a new Saab 900
convertible.

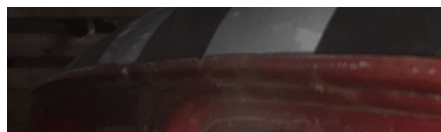
Welcome to the September Newsletter

Not much news from you editor this month, but thankfully other members have sent their excellent scribblings into the newsletter. I was on holiday in Arbroath for a week with Mrs Editor where we had our own wee house on the shore. The sun was out and it really did feel like a holiday. I took my bike on a tow bar mounted rack won at a club auction night and it was brilliant (thank you again Richard). Then I had another week messing about in boats at Fortrose, and I had to work too (boo hoo) so not much time for cars, however there is news of sorts from the editors garage.

The VW T5 van is currently winning a battle of wills. After soldering in a new abs cable and checking for continuity the diagnostics still say no, the left front sensor is still missing. (Editor swears profusely.) The back brakes won't bleed even under pressure and the engine seems to think the ambient temperature is 1000 degrees so the fan goes like the clappers. I know why that is though; the sensor is in the front bumper which is stored in the back of the garage. Definitely open circuit. Still - victory will be mine one day.

Recently I started putting some eBay carpets in the Beetle and then realised, the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Car Show substitute run is on Saturday (hope to see you there) and suddenly I have an unexpected deadline.

My other Mini (the old grey one) has a rusty roof due to being stored under a tarpaulin for a few years. I was offered a rusty mini shell with a good roof, and so collected it from Inverness after some very deft trailer reversing up someone's narrow drive. I was really chuffed with my manoeuvre but also realise that the next time it will go horribly wrong, especially if one of you are watching. So what I learned is that Mk 4 or 5 Mini's have different roofs to Mk3 ones. The top of the side panels are different with roof gutter that curls upwards. Mk3, it's in two parts and the roof gutter curls up and down. Can you see what I mean?



Driving up the A9 one lunchtime this month I saw two boat tailed vintage Bentleys being followed by a blue Aston Martin DB5. They looked great, so I pursued in the hope of a photograph for the newsletter. Fat chance. Even driving as fast as I dared in a license preserving way, they got to Tore roundabout ahead of me and then were gone up the A9, literally in a puff of smoke. I thought it was Darren McWhirter of HWC and historic racing fame but no, he was in Elgin working at Decora.

Chairs Bitty

It was nice to see some of you at our first proper outing since the lockdown. Derek showing off his new Saab 900 cabrio and Miles his new Mustang. After some socially distanced chatting, we set off counter clock wise round Loch Ness. The train of cars made a brief stop in Drumnadrochit to pick up a number of 2CV's from John/Hillary and Jess, before moving on to Fort Augustus. Sadly, we decided to turn back home from Drum. We had a very intense week and were both very tired. Neither of us felt up to another 2 hrs driving on twisty roads. So I hope that the rest of you had a nice journey round the loch – it was certainly the weather for it.



On the car front, it has been pretty quiet last month, with just the weekly topping up of batteries. Only the Skoda had a moment when the bonnet release broke off. With a bit of jiggery pokery and a long screwdriver the bonnet was released. As it turned out the release lever had broken off right at the locking plate. Our mannie at the garage suggested using wire, but I wasn't that keen on wires flopping around in the grill and potentially falling where you can't reach it. A cup of tea and brainstorming ideas later I had a go at making a new lever from some offcuts of wood. I couldn't get the new wooden lever to go through the hole in the grill – it needs to twist through and in doing so it broke. We then decided to put 2 ideas together. Our new bonnet pull assembly now has a wire connecting at the locking plate and a wooden lever to sit in the grill. All painted black so it can sit inconspicuous in the grill.

Now that the strawberries have finished fruiting I've made a start at propagating runners for next year. At least a third of the existing plants need to come out to make way for new plants to keep my strawberries healthy. And it is time for the bed to move somewhere else, but I haven't decided yet where the new plants will go.

We've harvested our 8 potato plants. First batch we dug up were cooked that very night – which were very tasty - with the rest of them stored in a box at the back of the garage. This was the first year that we attempted tatties and I am pleased with the results. Pleased enough that we'll repeat this next year. The onions too have been lifted and are hanging up in the garage until we need them.

With the winter months not long round the corner, the committee is considering what options we have and what we can do given the current and evolving Covid limitations. More on that in the next newsletter.

This month will see the last of our runs round the countryside as the nights are slowly starting to draw in now. We meet up in the car park by PC World, Telford Street at 19.30pm for a run round the firths and the Black Isle. Unfortunately, I won't see you as we have another engagement that night.

Enjoy your evening run.

Trish.

August Club Night Drive

I was away on holiday in Arbroath for the club drive which is a shame and no one sent in a wee story so I am just stealing information from Facebook. No problem! So the drive began at Tesco's down the Dores Road, Inverness.



We, no, they (or you?) headed over to the A82 on an anti-clockwise route to save the best roads 'til last. Oh and to pick up John and Hilary in their Bamboo 2CV, and Jesse (Dyane) at Drum, otherwise it would have been a short night for them.



The B862 back road out of Fort Augustus would have been taken, heading towards Whitebridge and some nice views.



Callum and his 'deux chevaux' Citroen special lead the way home via Foyers on the bottom road. There were mutterings from the back of a fast pace, but Callum assured us that he kept the car behind in sight. That car was Bryan's Aston Martin DB7 and he was surprised to find himself pushed to keep up with out breaching the boundaries of safety and legality. Apparently it's all about momentum through the corners. To be fair even with a crawling pace car, it can be difficult to keep up at the back, it's a known phenomenon of club drives. 40 at the front. 70 at the back. I hope you all had fun.



Barns Highland Motor Gathering

Sunday 2nd August

The owners of Barns Highland Campsite decided they had the perfect open space to host a low key classic car show. Having worked with the relevant bodies to allow the campsite to open they felt they were able to host a private classic car gathering on their own land. This was by invitation only, through several clubs including ours and there was someone at the unsigned entrance to repel unwanted guests and to beckon us classic drivers in.



HCMC members were contacted to meet up at Inches Tesco, yes Inches! It was a bit like going to a 1990's rave but in the daytime. Aceeed! I was sorted with a battery full of acid. Cal-lum had a colourful shirt on and with a pocket full of pills (ibuprofen for my back) we headed off to a field somewhere to meet up with lots of friendly happy people.



And friendly happy people there were. This was the first traditional classic car gathering in the area since Covid-19 and there was a sense of joy in the air. The numbers of people were obviously limited to allow for social distancing and to be honest some people were better at this than others however I felt the vast majority of people complied.



The first car that caught my eye was this 1966 Humber Sceptre possibly originally from Banff going by the registration. Just look at that frontage. My Dad had a Hawk when I was very small so I have a soft spot for these Rootes Cars.



Probably my favourite car of the show was this Aston Martin DB 4/5 owned by the McWhirter family. We've seen the car on club visits to the Moray Motor Museum but it looked even better outside in the sun. I didn't realise but this cars is unre-stored and looks stunning. But what is that through the front window? It's a genuine 1964 Mini Cooper S. It's a 970cc, one of only 1000 produced so to compete in under 1000cc categories. The original large bore 'S' was 1071cc and this one is very similar but with a short stroke crank. I asked the owner what the red line was and he looked a bit confused. "It doesn't really have one. The only limit is valve bounce." 10,000 rpm is perfectly achievable!



The owner has had this car for around 560

years and it has competed in many rallies including the 1970 Scottish International Rally and after a rebuild in several historic rallies.



Of course there were many other classic rally cars including this Avenger Tiger and Ford Escort Mk2.



At the Highland MG Owners pitch, this MGB wheel caught my eye. It is made by Dunlop with the aluminium centre riveted to the steel rim and was original fitment to MGB V8's. There is quite a demand for original wheels, and if anyone needs a set of 4 MGB Rostyles contact the editor. The Lotus Cortina wheels are iconic with their deep dish and smooth chrome hubcaps.



Over in air-cooled corner where the cool people hang out, was this lovely Karmann Ghia. I'm not usually a fan for reasons I can't explain but this example looked lovely in its maroon kinda colour. I'm not great on VW colours which might explain the Citroen shade on my Beetle.

And of course there were plenty of other classics to take your fancy. Here is a small selection.



From top left a lovely Mk3 Cortina (Twin headlights suggest a GXL maybe), a Ford Escort Cosworth RS (basically a short 4WD Sierra), some supercars, the Cannon-bawz Porschy thing with a 'Smokey' flashing blue light and a Renault Alpine GTA (or an A310 maybe) handsome anyway.

All in all it was great to be at a show even in restricted form and personally I felt the planning made it a safe place to be, better than a Tesco shop anyway! However we still need to be cautious, and I can't see a flood of events coming.

An MOT Story

Bryan McIlwraith

Let me tell you an MOT story. The Aston had been SORNed and out of MOT due to an overheating issue while I was changing engines in the Stag. It turned out to be nothing more than a failed thermostat, which was basically a get-out-of-jail-free card. Of course all the MOT stations were closed due to the lock-down. The first one I could get in early June was at a place that shall remain nameless (but it rhymes with Mini).

When I arrived at the testing station the chap told me I couldn't come in, which I expected anyway (more of which later). Before leaving I asked him if the rollers auto-reversed, because you're not meant to test the brakes with a limited slip diff on ordinary rollers. "Oh in that case I'll just run the car up and down the road here" he told me as I headed off to sit and read my paper by the firth.

When I came back the car was still on the ramp, but he shouted that it was finished, but to come over and he would point out a couple of advisories whilst we were under the car; so much for social distancing! But then he said (wait for it) "and your front callipers are seized. I could barely turn the wheels to test the bearings". But he'd just issued a Pass certificate!!!! They do say it's all "in the tester's opinion".

Anyway, that couldn't remain unfixed, so I thought I'd free off the callipers in the meantime and think about renewal later. Ho Ho Ho! The first calliper took two hours to give up the old pads, but it did eventually free off; however the other side was even worse and attempts at pushing the pistons back only resulted in damaging them irreparably.

By now you know this story. Jaguar discs £35 a pop; a pair of Aston discs £245 plus VAT and carriage of course, and so on and so on. Ah, but WHICH Jaguar callipers and discs? In this respect I can thoroughly recommend AUTODOC. Unlike most sites that carry a picture, they have a spec sheet with dimensions e.g. diameter of disc, and thickness. OK. Discs, callipers, pads and wheel bearings which came in at just under £400 (don't even ASK the Aston total price!). But it's never that simple. Removing the calliper retaining bolts took several days as they were well seized and almost impossible to bring heat to bear on. This was complicated by the need to retain the flexible pipe which not only is an Aston part, but it disappears into the engine bay and it would require removal of multiple gubbins to replace it so some *very* careful application of heat was required. Even having won the battle of disassembly nothing was straight forward. The ABS ring has to be pressed off the hub to allow the discs to be replaced, and of course the ABS ring is "NSS"- Not Supplied Separately, so if it breaks as they sometimes do.... Tom came to the rescue and performed said task without mishap. On top of all that there was an inner grease seal that was definitely Aston only and so I had to cough up the £40 for seals that should cost about a fiver each in normal world. Oh, and did I mention two five inch long brake pipes at £17.50 each? Nope! I've got a brake flaring kit and a coil of Kunifer pipe thank you!

So far so good. Now it was just re-assembly. Except....the outer taper bearing

supplied fitted perfectly, but the inner one was marginally too big. I won't bore you with the details of trips to bearing suppliers and measuring and re-measuring with micrometers, but after a couple of days of head scratching I finally won that battle too. So now indeed it was re-assembly and time to bleed the brakes. What a wonderful tool the Gunson Easybleed is !

I've road tested it and all seems well, but this episode has made me have a long think about the Aston. Sure it's been fun owning it, although I haven't driven it as much as I'd like to be honest. I've handled all the complex jobs that it's thrown at me and survived, but I'm beginning to tire of not only the complexity of such a car, but also having to be a super-sleuth to identify the parts needed every time to deprive Aston of their obscene profit margin. Perhaps it's time to advertise it, or even take it to auction (once this Covid nonsense calms down).

In the meantime I have secreted another project in my lockup. The perfect antidote to the Aston. A car I can get all the bits for, and I could fix it in my sleep. A late model, four door Morris 1000 in Trafalgar blue. Vroom vroom!

Hugh Skinners Austin Healey

Do you remember this picture in the Ruby Newsletter? It's founder member Hugh Skinners Austin Healey 100 all restored and on show with the HCMC at Alness. Well Hugh has left us a message and after a 15 year break and a second restoration NGA 535 is ready for the road again.



HCMC at Alness



Hopefully we will see them both at an HCMC event in the near future.

Out and About



I saw this old bus on my Holidays in Arbroath. It's a 1963 AEC Reliance with Plaxton B47F bodywork. (obs!)

It used be in the Bridgeton Bus Garage and is well know by our bus expert Kenny Barclay. It is now owned by the Angus Transport Group near Montrose and was out for a run. It made a great noise and a not insignificant amount of smoke.

This Triumph 2500 (I think) Estate was spotted at the Longman roundabout. It is believed to be a local car. Does anyone know anything about it?



And one for members of a certain age (45-50!) An Escort RS Turbo. These was quite something back in the '80's and are quite rare these days.



Silverstone and Gaydon Trip - July 2020

Tony Da Forno and Steve Matheson



The original plan was to attend the 2020 Festival Of The Unexceptional but due to Covid it was cancelled along with pretty much every other car show scheduled for this year. For the uninitiated, the FOTU is a rapidly growing annual event that celebrates cars that were sold in their millions between the late 1960s to the mid 1990s that are now a scarce sight on our roads. The vast majority of everyday cars like the Ford Escort, Vauxhall Cavalier or Datsun Sunny were sold mostly in low levels of engine and trim specification but sadly few of these cars remain today with only the high-performance or exotic versions of them surviving. It is these workhorses of yesteryear that the FOTU celebrates.

With flights and hotels booked well in advance, the decision was taken by Steve, John and myself to still head down south and make the best of the two days that we had. So it was Easyjet down to Luton airport on Friday night and a little over an hour after taking off from Dalcross we were in Luton and booking in to the Holiday Inn adjacent to the terminal. The next morning after picking up a hire car close to the airport, we decided to head over to the Silverstone Experience at the Grand Prix circuit, which was just a couple of junctions up the M1.



As we drove into the complex we passed various industrial estates that house many of the hi-tech research and development industries that support global motor sport, and along with countless hospitality venues Silverstone felt more like a small town. The Experience Centre is a brand new facility that was opened at the start of this year and must have only had a few weeks of being open to the public before lockdown was imposed. The day we visited was their first weekend back and due to this we enjoyed the luxury of no crowds or queues to contend with.



The first part we looked at was outside where we walked along a section of the old track and alongside the existing new circuit. One stand-out memory for me was standing right at the end of the Brooklands straight as it heads into the tight corner before Woodcote giving a real sense of how phenomenal the capabilities of modern F1 cars are at being able to pass through at speeds approaching 100 mph. Back inside we started to take in the Silverstone tour which provides a detailed insight into what goes on behind the scenes on race day, whether it be F1, touring cars, or Moto GP. There was plenty of insights past and present given by some of Britain's most decorated racing drivers including Jackie Stewart right up to today with Lewis Hamilton who incidentally, opened the center earlier this year.

Vehicles on display covered all types of motorsport from the post-war period to the present day and they were too numerous to list them all, but highlights had to be Nigel Mansell's Williams-Honda and Barry Sheene's Suzuki, complete with his helmet that a hole drilled into it for his cigarette!

Once the tour was complete it was back on the road for a short run up to Coventry where we spent the second night. Besides the automotive industry, the Midlands are equally well known for being the best place to have a curry in the UK so naturally we had to sample what the area had to offer and we were certainly not dis-



appointed. We were directed by the hotel receptionist to an old-school West Midlands Balti house that predictably was not the most elegant of dining environments but the quality and authenticity of an excellent curry with all the trimmings and a couple of pints each for a little over £20 per head was quite remarkable.

Next morning it was off to Gaydon to the National Motor Museum, and after an al-fresco McDonalds breakfast we arrived at the Gaydon complex. Besides the motor museum, this part of the world also houses the manufacturing and R&D facilities for Jaguar Land Rover and Aston-Martin.

Being a Sunday morning there was not much happening, so we had a drive around parts of the complex that we were able to without having to pass the security barriers. We managed to spot a row of camouflaged prototype Land Rovers and heading over towards the Aston-Martin facility we saw a very non-descript, slightly run-down industrial unit with a small sign on the front saying "Aston-Martin Lagonda Prototype store" – who knows what could have behind the door? Being the home of John's V12 Vantage, we had to get a photo of him outside the AML corporate entrance before driving into the National Motor Museum itself.



For a car enthusiast, Gaydon was simply breathtaking and it is impossible to put into a couple of paragraphs how fascinating the displays are and the fact that it housed so many cars from both the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust and also the Jaguar Land Rover Heritage Trust made it impossible to take everything in in just one day. Seeing so many iconic vehicles such as the first ever Mini "621AOK" Paddy Hopkirk's Mini Cooper "33EJB" or the first ever Land Rover "HUE166" it was a bit like meeting childhood heroes, and there was even the Trotters Reliant Supervan (the actual one not a copy) and the Queens personal Rover P5.



If you are interested in car design, you could see the prototypes of many British cars that have been produced over the years and also of those that never made it into production such as a booted Mini Metro or the original proposal for the Jaguar XJ220.



A couple of BL prototypes or the world's biggest Matchbox cars.



Pugh, Pugh, Barney McGrew, Cuthbert, Dibble & Grubb posted missing and what the Daimler Dart could have looked like. The Mk II would have been a lot prettier than the original (not difficult really.)

With flights from Inverness being booked well in advance for around £75 return, and a decent quality hotel such as Holiday Inn Express coming in at under £50 a night a couple of nights away can be had for not a huge outlay. Personally, I need to go back to Gaydon again as there was simply too much to see in one visit and there is also the Coventry Transport Museum and the National Motorcycle Museum in the same area for the next time.

Most of all though, it was the great company shared with Steve and John that made the weekend for me and is what sharing the love of cars with like minded people is all about!

Tony.

Everyone's favourite, the Marina ----->



Feeling tired and a little worn out?



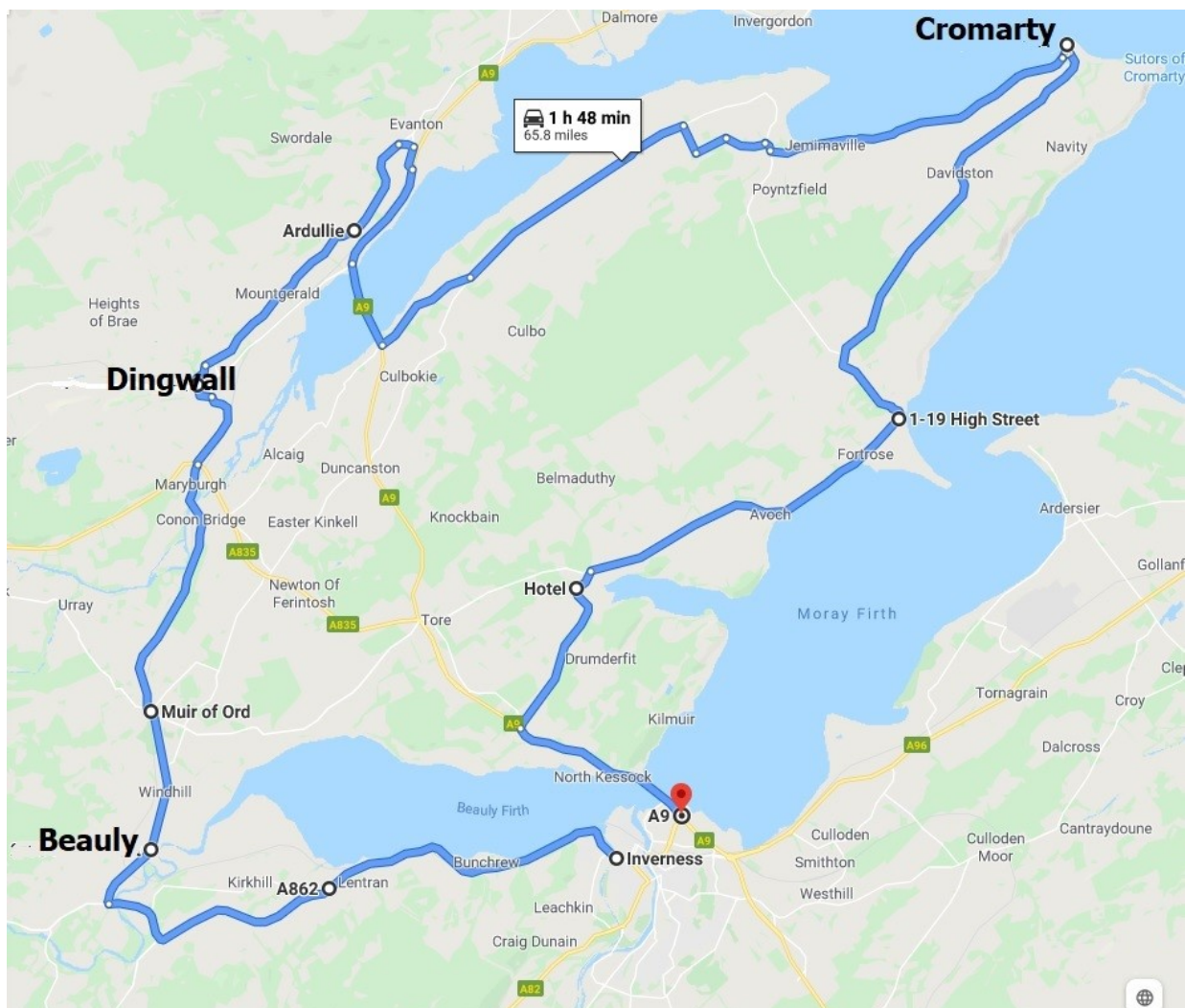
Not with the HCMC you're not. This Goodyear 560x15 has been spotted and sent in. It has plenty of tread!

If this is the rare rubber you've been looking for send an email to editor@highlandclassic.org.uk and we can supply you with the location.

September Club Night

Tour of the Firths

On Thursday 3rd September the club night is a run around the Firths and the Black Isle: Meet up at PC World, Telford Street, Inverness at 19:30 then through Inchmore to Beaulieu, Muir of Ord, Dingwall. Take the high road via Ardullie, then back over the Cromarty Bridge and first left to Cromarty. The final leg is to head back to Inverness or wherever you live via Rosemarkie and Munlochy.



LOCAL EVENTS

The Moray Motor museum has been having some low key socially distanced Cars and Coffee style meets in Elgin on a Sunday near the end of the month. Check out their Website or Facebook page for more information.

Saturday 29th Aug 2020	Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Black Isle Road Run	10:30 departure	More info from info@fortroserally.co.uk or Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/fortroseclassics
Thursday 3rd Sept 2020	Tour of the Firths Club night drive	Inverness to Dingwall to Cromarty to Inverness	See this newsletter for details of Facebook or the website.

I'm afraid there's not much on the calendar but your committee will be meeting up soon in a virtual way to see what we can do in the darker months.