

CLASSIC SCENE



October 2009

Office Bearers & Committee

Chairman: **Michael Osborne**
Tel: 01463 871473
michael.oz@btoopenworld.com
Secretary: **Ian Nixon**
Tel: 01349 866178
irf_nixon@hotmail.com
Treasurer: **Ian Thompson**
Tel: 01463 790969
ian.judith@virgin.net

Committee **Roy MacGregor**
Jim Lorrain-Smith
Ranald Smith
Miles Vincent

Membership

Bryan McIlwraith
Renewals should be sent to Bryan at 72 Lochalsh
Road, Inverness IV3 6HW
Tel: 01463 222839 (work) 01463 741632 (home)
Bmcilwraith@osteopath-highland.co.uk
Please let Bryan know if you have an email address

HCMC Homepage

www.highlandclassic.org.uk
Webmaster - **Ian Thompson**
ian.judith@virgin.net
Tel: 01463 790969

Editor

Callum Beveridge
47 Old Mill Lane, Inverness, Highland
IV2 3XP Tel: 01463 231787
Email: ClassicScene@bevs.org

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,
please contact the archivist, Ranald Smith, at
Hawthorn Cottage, 2 Burn Road, Inverness IV2 3NG
Tel: 01463 236459
Ranaldsmith@btinternet.com

Copyright

Neither the Editor nor the officers of the Highland
Classic Motor Club are necessarily in agreement with
opinions expressed in this magazine. Such opinions
are entirely the views of the author and imply no
recommendation by the Highland Classic Motor Club

All rights reserved. Apart from any fair dealings as
permitted under the terms of the Copyright Design
and Patents Act of 1988, no part of this magazine
may be reproduced in any form whatsoever without
the written permission of the Highland Classic Motor
Club

Contents

- 3 The Chairman's Bit
- 4 Editorial
- 5 Event Diary
- 6 Doors Open Day
- 9 The Aston Bites Back
- 11 Highland Heaps

Cover picture

*Austin K2 truck owned by J A Cousins of
Kirkhill*

THE CHAIRMAN'S BIT

The show season has now finished for another year with Fortrose, Dinwall's street fair (sorry I can't remember the proper gaelic name) and Granton's Motormania. I couldn't get to the latter two but The Fortrose Fun Day was another very successful event although the wind did try to scupper the whole thing early in the day. The idea to first meet at the Dingwall Auction Mart before the run worked really well with most entrants turning up for a bacon roll and a natter. In fact I think the Auction Mart could work well in its own right as a meet (The HCMC tyre kicking and bacon roll day?). Thanks must as usual go to the organising crew from the Black Isle led up by John MacKenzie and also to Callum and Miles. Callum spent many hours designing and printing up the entrant packs and Miles for collecting goodies from clients and sticking them into bags. Keep it quiet but I think both of them were employing child labour!

I must also welcome quite a few new members this month so in no particular order;

Barry Clark from Beaully (1983 Golf GTi Mark 1), **William Fraser** from Inverness (1969 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow), **Willie Murray** from Muir of Ord (1970 Morris Traveller), **Edward Ritchie** from Invergordon (1972P6, 1985Maestro,



1989BMW 320i), **Colin Forbes** from Inverness (1974 Citroen DS23) **Eddie Ritchie** from Invergordon (1972 Rover P6), **David Benge** from Carrbridge (1968 BRA/MGB), **Julian Macbeth** from Kingussie (1975 Vauxhall Viva), **John Walsh** from Stuartfield (1979 Lotus Eclat), **Jim & Kerrin Williams** from Ardesier (1972 Rapier & 1992 Mini), **David Brown** from Easter Bogbain (1956 Wolsey, 1965 Jaguar, 1969 Volvo)

Finally we need one or two volunteers to compile the quiz held every year after February's AGM. Newer members are more than welcome to have a go! Just speak to any committee member for details.

Michael

michael.oz@btopenworld.com

This Months Meeting

Thursday 1st October 8pm. Pub run to Munloch Hotel.

EDITORIAL

Hello,

Last months run was a bit of a wash-out and the consensus was to head directly to the pub (even if Zac did get lost). However, the weather was better for the daytime events last month, with the Fortrose Rally starting wet but drying up as the morning progressed. The auction Mart seemed to work well and the cakes on offer at Fortrose were something to behold. As someone said, they didn't know whether to "eat it or climb it!".

The Dingwall Street Fayre was well attended although it was a bit drizzly. Fortunately, the weather in Grantown the following day was perfect (as it always is for this event) and MotorMania 2009 seemed to be bigger than last year.

For the benefit of our newer members, our regular monthly meetings are on the first Thursday of each month. We're now running into the Winter fixtures as daylight is failing us. This months meeting is a run to the Munloch Hotel for a pint and a spot of tyre



kicking.

The provisional calendar for the next 12 months is printed below, and we're talking about organising some Sunday runs in the summer months—perhaps to more distant locations. Lunch in Applecross anyone?

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

Callum

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

2009

October 1st	Pub run to Munloch Hotel
November 5th	Club visit to Autohead Engineering, Inverness
December 3rd	Club Night/Christmas celebration, Old North Inn, Inchmore

2010

January 7th	Club Auction, North Kessock Hotel
February 4th	AGM and Quiz Night, North Kessock Hotel
March 4th	SGL Group visit, Muir of Ord
April 1st	Highland Printers visit, Dingwall
May 6th	Cannich Workshop Visit
June 3rd	Ice Cream Run to Strathpeffer
July 1st	'Drive Others Cars' night—Brokies Lodge, Kiltarlity
August 5th	Scenic Drive to Whitebridge (Avoiding Black Isle Show)

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

Local Events Diary

Here are some details of 2010 local events that may be of interest to our members

April

25th 'Drive It Day' 2010. Local run to blow away the cobwebs

May

June

6th Fraserburgh Vintage Car Rally

20th Tain Vintage vehicle Rally

July

10th/11th Scottish Transport Extravaganza at Glamis Castle

18th Forres Theme Day

18th Knockhill Classic SpeedFair

August

1st Moray Muscle Show

8th Historic Wheels Rally, Brodie Castle.

28th Fortrose Vintage Vehicle Rally

September

4th Dingwall Street Fair. Contact Donald Mackenzie 01349 861009

5th Motor Mania—Grantown on Spey

18th/19th Selkirk Rally

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



Jim & Kerrins new arrival—a Sunbeam Rapier Fastback

"DOORS OPEN DAY" : A VISIT to INCHINDOWN



conjunction with the Royal Commission for the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland who provided the guide.

Most of you will be familiar with the tank farms at Invergordon which were used to store oil for the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet. One farm has been demolished to make way for suburban housing with twee street names such as "Agin Court" (I kid you not!) but the other is still there.

Hidden away and largely forgotten in the hills west of Invergordon, they are one of the engineering marvels of the Highlands, easily comparable with any of the hydro-electric schemes. Imagine standing at the doors of Primark in Bridge Street, Inverness looking east up the High Street and seeing a vault the same width as the street stretching all the way to Inglis Street and twice as high as the buildings.



Then try to imagine six such "cathedrals" lying side by side : you've got some idea of the scale of the oil storage tanks at Inchindown which Gill & I were lucky to visit on 19th September as part of the "Doors Open Days" scheme. There were only 40 places available on the tours and they were heavily over-subscribed. The tanks are now owned apparently by Bannermans of Tain but the visits were organised by the Forestry Commission (which owns the surrounding forest) in

As World War II loomed, it became obvious that these facilities were much more vulnerable to air attack than when they were originally built so the Navy embarked on the construction of a safer and hidden alternative buried up to 40 metres underground in solid rock four miles from the town.

Designed to hold 100,000 tons (say 5,000,000 gallons) of crude oil, construction started just before the war

and the tanks were completed in 1941. Apart from some remains of service buildings, there is virtually nothing to see on the surface apart from the entrances to two tunnels 250 metres apart on the hillside. One tunnel houses the supply pipes while the other is a service tunnel which was the only one we were able to access on the day.



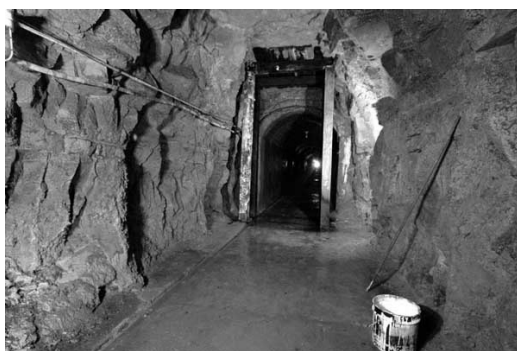
The tunnels stretch some 500 metres into the hill and the tanks lie between them, five tanks each measuring 240 metres long by 12 metres wide by 40 metres high with a sixth which is slightly smaller.

The tanks are fully lined with top-quality concrete (the Navy did not stint themselves even in wartime!) as are the tunnels although, curiously, the lining in the service tunnel stops after 350 metres as if costs had to be pared down and the rest is bare rock just as it was tunnelled out.

We could not enter the tanks themselves but could see into them though the maintenance hatches. There

is electricity still connected but the organisers were not at all confident that the internal wiring was safe so we used torches but the most powerful could hardly reach the end of the tanks and even the TV cameraman's lights were struggling.

The oil, of course, was literally "crude" being the first distillate of petroleum and was horrible, gungy stuff which was barely viscous so the tanks were heated as were the pipelines! – imagine having to pump it four miles up-hill in the middle of winter. The main pumping station was what is now a house behind the Tomich Café and every 200 metres or so there were heaters to maintain the flow which are still clearly visible in their little compounds. The heating elements have been removed from all the tanks except for the smallest one which appears never to have been used.



It is a monumental feat of engineering and the cost must have been equally staggering. Even so, while it was used, it was really never needed since there

seems to have been only one successful enemy air attack on the tanks at Invergordon which resulted in little damage. Even before the end of the War, the importance of the Cromarty Firth as a major naval base was on the wane and the concept of the “Grand Fleet” was becoming out-dated.

Despite that, the tanks were not de-commissioned until the 1990s when they were acquired by Bannermans as part of a job lot with the Admiralty Pier. You can just imagine the nature of those negotiations! Apparently,

Rentokil won the contract to clean out the tanks which, given the nature and smell of the contents, must have been a horribly difficult and unpleasant task.

It is a weird and eerie place. Shout into one of the tanks and the echo will reverberate for minutes since there is nowhere for the sound to go. Despite strong locks, there is evidence of occasional unauthorised entry by locals : rather them than me!

Chris Silver



Zac's Equipe in a drizzly Dingwall

The Aston Bites Back!

I had been going to write a piece about a year's ownership of the Aston as being trouble free, but before I could get round to it.....

I had been out for the day, and when I got back I left the Aston outside the garage while I had some grub. I came out after dinner and went to start it. I turned the key and....nothing! A full house of lights but no starter, not even a click. It was unlikely to be battery voltage as I'd recently fitted a new battery and I'd just been on a long run. I wondered if the car immobilised itself, but decided the best course of action was to ignore it and try again next day. This time it started and all seemed well.

A week later I took the car for it's MOT, and waited whilst the test was done. All went well until Kevin tried to start it to take it off the ramp. Once again a full house of dashboard lights but no sign of life otherwise. Eventually we had to push it off the ramp and out into the yard. You only get an hour for the test, and if it can't be completed it automatically fails! I was now stuck with a car that wouldn't start, and the nearest Aston agent in Edinburgh.

Visions of trailering this car to Edinburgh started to conjure themselves up along with sayings like "if you play with the big boys you're going to get hurt" Like me, Kevin seemed to think that the car had immobilised itself. I phoned the agent in London where I'd bought the car who gave me what little help they could on the end of a phone. The Passive Anti-Theft system (PAT) cannot be bypassed as it is actually built into the loom. However there is a self test function which is indicated by

a red light on the dash which extinguishes itself after three seconds if all is well (Now I know what the funny little light is for!!) It turned out that this light was behaving as it should, and by good fortune the car now started and I managed to get home and into the garage.

I tried it a few times over the next 24 hrs and sure enough the problem would come and go. The big question was where to start. I jacked up the car (a pain anyway because the front is so low) and crawled underneath. The starter was barely visible and was obviously not going to come off without a whole heap of other bits being removed first. Eventually I spotted the live feed going to the solenoid, and from above I could see it coming up as a white cable, but after it passed under the inlet manifold it appeared to be white with a red tracer. Hang on! There was a connecting block under the manifold so if I could reach it..... Of course we mechanics come equipped with 10 inch fingers, and so in a trice..... actually after half an hour of cursing and swearing and scraped knuckles I managed to slide it off its mounting, disconnect it and bring the ends up over the inlet manifold. Now I could get a meter onto both ends and test them. The solenoid seemed OK with a reading of 180 ohms, and the feed from the ignition gave 12 volts initially, but after a few tries it disappeared. OK, progress, but did that mean the ignition switch was faulty and that the dash would have to come out? One more call to London. Was there any other relay, or inhibition on the circuit? Yes! There is a relay under the bonnet. They gave me the wrong relay, but knowing that I was looking for one it didn't take more

than a couple of hours (!!) to pinpoint the right one. I heaved it out, and it was manky, absolutely manky. A good clean up of the relay and the mount and Hey Presto! One fixed Aston. Cost of parts £0, Labour, about 8-10 hours over two weeks. Now just imagine the bill from an Aston Agent “ Ah yes Sir, we completely replaced the ignition circuit, and fitted a new didjeri-doo while we were at it. Would you like to pay by Gold Card Sir?”



One way of gaining better access to your DB9

Actually, the experience was very valuable because it forced me to get to grips with the car. It also verified what I had read; under the skin it is just an XJS which means it's not all that scary, and it also

means that parts are easily available from Jag dealers. Just don't order through an Aston agent!

Bryan.



Peter Naulls Austin Seven boat-tailed special at Fortrose

Highland Heaps

Restoration projects spotted in and around the Highlands.



A brace of Saabs—behind Fairburn House?



A Citroën apparently! Balvaïrd Woods, near Muir of Ord

If you're brave enough to want to rescue one these 'heaps', contact the editor for more info



A Blown Moggy seen in Altbea!



A very nicely presented Lancia at Fortrose