

CLASSIC SCENE



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CLASSIC SCENE

**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

The club has an extensive archive of information relating to all aspects of classic car ownership. To access this please contact Ranald Smith, at Hawthorn Cottage, 2 Burn Road, Inverness IV2 3NG. 01463 236459
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COVER PICTURE

The shows seem to have had a common theme this year, rain. Historic Wheels, Brodie was awash with the wet stuff, and the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally had a wet start and a steamy, humid afternoon. A test of will and anti-corrosion products. It was remarkable that so many great cars and owners turned out. Grantown on Spey Motor Mania was also hit by rain, and the numbers seemed reduced, and an essential part of the event calendar. Here are some pictures of the Fortrose and Grantown shows respectively. See if you can spot any members cars.



THE EDITORS MONTHLY RANT



Lots to cram in the Newsletter this month, so lets go! The Committee Meeting covered many issues, so please read the minutes. It was felt that the club needed to raise its profile at events so a Sail Banner is to be purchased along with quotes for other similar items. The monthly events calendar for the summer has been left open so that club members can suggest and decide on what to do and where to go at the AGM. The AGM will not be a 5 minute chat with everything going through "on the nod". Trish will present a small talk on the clubs year, places visited and events attended. So if you went somewhere different, TELL US ABOUT IT!! The Committee discussed these matters for some time and all present felt that this was what was best for the club. During the general chit-chat during the evening were the following:-

Club Regalia; The "School Shop" in Inverness has the club badge on its system and can embroider it on almost anything. **Practical Classic Magazine.** The club (And the Highlands) have been well represented over the last year, with Calum, Callum and Miles all having their cars featured. The Dyane being the Restoration of the Month. Well Done Callum. The **Christmas Dinner** is on Thursday 4th December 2014 at the Maple Court and the menu is on the back page. This is our usual monthly meeting night for December. This months meeting is a basic First Aid talk from Gavin Grant. It will be on the essentials of life saving only, with not a triangular bandage in sight! So please attend, you know it makes sense. And finally, I will be away on (another) holiday until nearly the end of November and I will try to get a newsletter out. If not I will do a bumper December/January edition. That's all folks!

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GARAGE BUSINESS FOR SALE

Garage and MOT Station for sale as the owners are retiring.

Contact 01381 620343 (Day) 01381 620897 (Evening)

CHAIR BITTY OCTOBER 2014

Our Smart has just been returned to us after languishing with the garage for 6 weeks, waiting for its replacement fan. Mercedes appear to have trouble identifying the right part. You would have thought that if you said "it's the fan at the rear, attached to the intercooler" and give the registration number, this would be a big clue. But no. Even though Merc sold us the car and does the major services, what has turned up was : a front radiator fan (no); ForTwo intercooler (No); standard roadster intercooler (NO). Poor Alice was pining away and has only just recovered by taking the Smart for a nice long run – though she claims it was a test drive, just to make sure the fan was working.



To take her mind off the Smart, Alice had another stab at the Landie to try and solve a fuel leak this time – apparent only when you really fill up the tank. We suspected the breather hose was not on properly, but as it turned out the gasket on the fuel pick-up was not that effective. Fitting a new gasket only gave a minor improvement reducing the leak from flow to drip. Out with the instant gasket and the fuel pickup is now sealed. Then the fuel sender started weeping.... (sigh). Some more instant gasket and that is sorted too.

Network rail has just finished making a big mess at the Arabella rail crossing. Even though I pass this every day on the train, I am not sure exactly what they were up to as the train swishes through too fast to see. But what ever it was, it caused tailbacks (!) when trains were due. Traffic control measures consisted of putting a fence across the road as the barriers were out of action. It is all finished now, and to be honest I can't see the difference, unless you count the new control box – the size of a small shed – which now stands beside the crossing. I had hoped that they would level out the crossing itself as it is a rather bumpy one, especially in our wee Smart, but

but no luck there.

Our village (well, the farm next door) hosted the World Championship Sheepdog Trials 2014 in early September. What has this got to do with cars? Not much, except that the road between our village and the Seaboard was closed for 4 days. Not a great loss to us personally, but a bit of a detour required for anyone travelling to/from the Seaboard Villages from the North. There was a lot more traffic through our village during the trials, starting very early in the morning. I gather that even Princess Anne made an appearance. We were wondering what all the helicopter activity was on the second day. Well, now we know.

For those interested in the results, top dog is called Bob. You will be pleased to note that the top prize was awarded to a Scottish team, beating the Welsh team by just 0.5 points. In the final 16, 6 places were for Scotland. 52 teams entered the competition.

Just a reminder for those of you who are coming to the Christmas dinner at our December meet. As you know Brian is organising this for us. If you haven't paid your deposit yet, go and do this right now. And I think Brian will be looking for full payment shortly – you have been warned.

And please put your thinking caps on. We will be asking for your input and ideas for events for next year's meetings come the AGM in February.

This month we are meeting up at Moray Firth Training Group, 32 Harbour Road, Inverness for a First Aid Demonstration. Will see you there.

Cheers,

Trish

The RAC Rating Cometh.....Or Car tax Part 2.

The Government did not leave things there (do they ever ?). The Finance Acts of 1909 and 1910 introduced a sliding form of annual duty on cars, based on a notional horsepower rating - the notorious RAC rating. These Acts also stipulated that the money raised from vehicular taxation should be 'hypothecated' for road maintenance and construction. ie money raised from roads should be spent on roads, sadly no longer the case, as we all know to our vehicles' cost.

From then on and through the Great War, motor vehicle use continued to expand. This had an increasingly adverse effect on the condition of Britain's roads, which led in 1919, to a Royal Commission being set up to review the situation and make appropriate recommendations. This Commission was the parent of the Road Traffic Acts of 1919 and 1920.

The passing of the 1920 Act greatly tidied up what was at the time an extremely confusing situation, and we must remember that motoring was still a relatively 'new' method of transport then. The horse had been around for a very long time and was being replaced at a frightening rate by the internal combustion engine.

Prior to this Act being passed, various forms of taxation had been implemented with reference to 'Locomotives', number of wheels etc, appearing in both the 1888 and 1896 Acts. As we know, the Motor car Act, 1903 led to measures designed to identify vehicles and licence (tax!) them annually. The 1908 Finance Act introduced a 3d. per gallon tax on petroleum spirit. The Finance Act of 1910 introduced the hated 'Horsepower' rating.

Unfortunately, this formula did not take account of the length of an engine's stroke, and in order to keep the horsepower figure as low as possible, long-stroke engines with small diameter piston areas were the order of the day. The RAC formula was expressed :- $HP = (D^2 \times n) / 2.5$ (where D^2 = the diameter squared of the pistons and n = the number of cylinders).

There were three constant assumptions lying behind this formula. These never change, despite the actual statistics for a given engine. The notional pressure within the engine's cylinders was presumed always to be 90lbs per square inch. The engine was always presumed to be 75% efficient and the mean speed of the pistons always 1000 feet/minute. This presumption led almost invariably to the resulting figure being very low. An example: the Singer 9 has an RAC rating of 9 horse-power. Its actual BHP figure is

around 31. It was this that led to the common habit amongst British car manufacturers of calling their cars the '16/60' or something similar - ie RAC rating of 16 hp but actually the engine produced 60 bhp. Squared and over-squared high compression engines took many years to evolve as a result of this ruling! The trade guides of the period, as used by second-hand dealers, all listed the RAC rating for each model, as a car that was expensive to tax, would be less easy to sell. Curiously, one of the first cars intended for the masses, the Austin 7, was rated at 7.8 hp, which rounded up to 8 for taxation, should really have been known as the Austin 8.

The Treasury did not let the motorist get off lightly, having chosen to use this formula. OK, a Singer 9 may only be rated at a third of its actual power but the boys from Whitehall then levied a whopping £1 per horse-power on it! Remember, only back in 1903, it was just a £1 for the whole year for the whole car, not just one measly RAC horse!

However, there was at least, an accepted method of determining an engine's size for annual taxation purposes, with an initial rule of thumb being that one horsepower would cost £1, the rating being rounded up to the next complete horsepower during the calculation, regardless.

The Tax Disc is Born ...

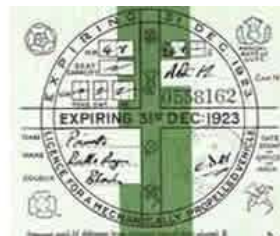


This is the story of the Tax Disc, and it is here that our hero (heroine ?) makes his/her entrance. The Acts of 1919 and 20, laid down the specifications for the first Tax Discs and exactly how they should be displayed - by using a holder that "shall be circular". It was defined as proof of payment of the Road Fund Licence and thus the Tax Disc as we know it today was

born. For the years the years 1921 and 1922, Tax Discs were by today's standards quite basic: plain grey paper, black ink with simple instructions on the reverse - sometimes even advertisements - and no perforations. Life itself must indeed have seemed simpler in those days - until you tried to fit the disc into the holder. Some cut round them with scissors whilst others preferred to just fold over the edges

repeatedly until it could be crammed in. Presumably, the Acts stipulated that they should be round because the holders were more easily produced in circular form, but why were they not perforated from the start?

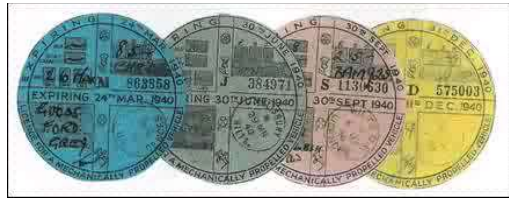
1923 saw the introduction of colour. Background intaglio printing - very fine, repetitive security printing behind the basic design, similar to a bank note - together with an over-printed broad green band also appeared this year.



The intaglio print read: 'Road Fund Licence'. This was done, as the first two Tax Discs were too easy to forge. In addition, the selection of a colour for each year enabled the enforcing agencies to quickly identify those with out of date Tax Discs. At this time, all Tax Discs purchased during a year expired on the last day in December. So, if one was caught driving with a grey Tax Disc in 1923, instead of a green one, you were nicked! As previously mentioned, the Tax Discs all expired within the year of issue. A Tax Disc purchased in March 1923 could not carry 12 month's rate of duty; the maximum would have been nine months. While the annual rate of duty payable for a given vehicle would always be shown on the Tax Disc, the actual amount paid would be written on the counterfoil, at the bottom, and thus hidden from view when in the holder. This system of December 31st expiries remained for many years and caused enormous problems at the issuing offices as they struggled to cope with the task of renewing so many licences in a short time over the Christmas and New Year period as they all expired simultaneously.

Introduced at the same time as the 'annual' Tax Disc, was the quarterly Disc. As its name implies, these were only issued for three months or part thereof. Their design was similar to the annual but with a solid background colour of light green, light blue, dark blue, buff, pink, yellow, orange or grey, with no intaglio print. Over this solid colour was either black or red print, of a similar basic design to the annual Tax Disc. Over this solid colour was either black or red print, of a similar basic design to the annual Tax Disc.

Though known as 'quarterly', they weren't quite. The second, third and fourth quarterly licences all expired when you would expect, ie 30th June, 31st September, and 31st December. However, the first quarterly always expired on the 24th March. Why (I hear you ask, if you've bothered to read this far) ? Because many more impoverished drivers laid their cars up for winter and put them back on the road for a run at Easter (which comes early some years) and so would have to fork out for another quarter's licence before they did so.



Starting with 1923, various colour changes took place for each year's licence until the present day. The coloured bar started out as vertical in 1923 and remained that way until 1932 when it became a horizontal bar. By 1935, it became a cross. 1935 was also significant because the rate of duty was reduced to fifteen shillings per horsepower, probably due to the fact that the government wished to encourage the motor industry and the tax take would be larger overall if there were more cars on the roads.

The Little Perforations!

A major innovation in 1938 was the introduction of perforations around the outside of the printed circle, making the Tax Disc much easier to fit into its holder. It is curious that this had not been done earlier though some older Tax Discs had been 'rouletted'. In addition the wording of the intaglio print was changed from 'Road Fund Licence' to 'Mechanically Propelled Vehicle Licence'. The perforations lasted only until 1942, not reappearing until 1952. The precise reason for this is unknown but it is thought likely that the necessary equipment was destroyed during bombing raids.



Highland Classic Motor Club

Committee Meeting held on 18th September 2014

Present::- Trish Brown, Alice Brown, Ian Thompson, Callum Beveridge, Alan Goff, Miles Vincent.

Apologies:- Ranald Smith, Bryan MacIllwraith, Roy MacGregor

Programme for the coming year.

Discussions took place regarding the venues for the forthcoming November meeting, the AGM and Auction. Alan informed the meeting that the Bog Roy appears to have reopened after a period of closure.

Club events for the forthcoming year.

November:	HMS Natal Talk	Bog Roy Inn
December:	Christmas Dinner	Maple Court Hotel, Inverness

2015

January	Auction	North Kessock Hotel Venue to be confirmed
February	AGM	Bog Roy Inn
March	Black Isle Bronze	Nairn, Bryan organising.

April	Club runs to be decided by membership
May	
June	
July	

August	Pub run to the Ben Leva Hotel, Drumnadrochit. Meet at Highland Council HQ
September	Cairngorm Brewery Aviemore Alice to organise

October	To be decided by the club members
November	

December	Christmas Event
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2016

January	Auction
February	AGM

AGM: The Committee discussed the format of the AGM and agreed that the Committee should give a small talk about what the club has been doing over the last year. Members will be asked to give ideas for pub runs and events to be held for them during the year. Discussion took place around forming a sub committee, to organise weekend events on behalf of the club. This was agreed to discuss further at the AGM.

Club Profile

The Committee discussed raising the Club profile and how best to achieve this. It was agreed that the Club should purchase a 'sail' banner and a small information banner for outside the Club's event tent, at shows. Callum asked to purchase these items to a limit of £200. Further ideas include small flags that attach to the top of the side windows to identify club members at the various shows.

Alice to check with Bryan that the membership forms are up to date and then print off the forms for the shows next year. Alan asked if the Club would be interested in a club entry for about 5 cars in the East Sutherland Rotary Club event East-West on the 23rd of May next year, with a plaque displaying the club badge for the side of the cars. Alan to investigate the purchase of the plaques for the side of the cars. Alice and Alan said that they would take part. This will be advertised in the Newsletter for other attendees.

Other ideas discussed was a Croftera Pandimonia type event in the future. This will be investigated further.

Inverness Car Show. The Committee agreed to offer advice and guidance to Inverness BID team in respect of the Inverness Car Show if the BID team requests assistance from the Club. Though the Club will not take any organising role in the show, Alice offered to help revise the registration form. The Club asked that a *pro quo* that the advertising for the show states “ in association with the Highland Classic Motor Show”. It was agreed that Callum to approach the Inverness BID team.

Drive it Day: to be held in April 2015. This will start at the V8Café, and will end possibly at Grantown on Spey. The Committee agreed to pay for the tea and biscuits at the half way stop along the route. Callum will create a web-page to ensure entrants register for the event via the website, to allow for accurate numbers for the tea and biscuits.

Citroen Special Round Britain Coast: Callum is organising this event which will be passing through the area between the 3rd and 6th of June next year.

Other ideas

Alice to investigate a weekend event to visit the Skye Brewery at Uig. Alan to investigate skidcarsscotland based in Elgin . This is a skid training company.

Meeting closed at 21.40 and Trish thanked Callum for his hospitality in holding the meeting at his home.



CHRISTMAS DINNER MENU
THURSDAY 4TH DECEMBER

Carrot and Coriander Soup

Chef Parfait served with a Red Onion Marmalade served with Oatcakes
Pan Fried Mushrooms in a Garlic & Tarragon Sauce on Toasted Brioche
Prawn Marie Rose Salad served with a Piquant Mayonnaise

Festive Turkey with Traditional Trimmings, Chipolatas and Natural Jus
Slow Roast Fully Matured Scottish Beef with Yorkshire Pudding and
Caramelized Onion Gravy
Pan Fried Scottish Darnè of Salmon in a Lemon Butter Sauce
All served with Chef's Seasonal Vegetables

Rich Christmas Pudding with a Brandy Sauce
Hazelnut & Honey Parfait
Sticky Toffee Pudding, Toffee Sauce & Vanilla Ice Cream
Selection of Scottish Cheddar and Brie with Highland Oatcakes and
Grapes

Freshly Brewed Coffee and Mince Pies

3 Courses £20.00 per person inclusive of Vat
Includes drink on arrival

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