

CLASSIC SCENE



October 2025



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The club has an extensive archive of
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Cover Picture

The last HCMC club run of the year.
And it was a good one.

Welcome to the October Newsletter

Headline News!

Rollerbowl will close its doors for the final time at the end of October—almost 36 years after it first opened. This is particularly relevant to us, as owner Shahid Yusaf has been a generous supporter of *Cars and Coffee*. Every month, he gave us free use of his car park, opened up a little early, and even laid on some catering. No fuss, no drama—just a kind gesture from a genuinely nice man.

Since this is my editorial, I'll allow myself a small rant: the arrival of Hollywood Bowl at the retail park, with its big-budget backing, ultimately undercut Roller Bowl's margins and sealed its fate. The story began when Everlast Gym was forced to close—despite protests from its members—all to make way for a bowling alley nobody really asked for. The result? Roller Bowl's 25 staff out of work, Hollywood Bowl employing 30, and the gym jobs gone. Net benefit to Inverness: zero. Net loss: a small, characterful business with history (and yes, those custom carpets really were something special).

I'll admit I'm no great lover of bowling—or gyms—but I *am* a supporter of small businesses and fairness. So yes, I'm a bit ragin'. Word on the street is Hollywood Bowl isn't all that great anyway: flashy, overpriced, and lacking charm.

The sad consequence is that *Cars and Coffee* is now without a home. Unless we find another venue, its future is uncertain. Could this be yet another Inverness institution lost?

And breathe...

I hope you enjoyed last month's AI-themed issue. This month I've come back to earth. Tempted though I was by a used Kia Niro EV for a "mere" £10k, I started to wonder how else I might spend that kind of money on my current cars (and life-style):

- Restore "Lazarus," the grey Mini buried at the back of the garage.
- Finally fit the Turbo Technics kit (currently buried in a cupboard) to my Sierra—with change left over for insurance.
- Strip and properly restore Poppy, the Beetle's chassis.
- Buy another car: an Imp, a Morris Minor Traveller, a Porsche Boxster, or maybe even another Mondeo.
- Finish those lingering Ford Focus projects.
- Or... just buy 6,993 litres of diesel.

Like this list, the possibilities are endless—so it looks like there won't be an electric car in your editor's driveway anytime soon. Unless, perhaps, it's a mobility scooter.

Thanks for reading,
Your Editor

Ramblings from the Chair



This month's Ramblings are a continuation from last month's, following my visit, with Mrs Chair, to Caithness. We found ourselves at the Caithness Show, held this year in Wick, and what a lovely agricultural show it is – really quite traditional and very much based on the community with all sorts of exhibits from a 'Fur and Feather' tent – to home baking and a wide variety of hobbies on display. I, of course, was drawn to the Caithness Vintage Tractor and Machinery Club which had a huge range of vehicles present



with some very unusual exhibits in amongst the more common Grey Fergies and John Deere's. I was particularly taken by the tracked conversion on a Fergie – I reckon it must be a factory accessory given the very professional



way it was fitted – must be great for soft peat and the like. Then there was a 1959 Whitlock 60 Dinkum Digger (never heard of the make) with a full excavator kit attached to the back of the tractor (but no cab) and front loading shovel. And when did you last see a Ford County? – with four 'big' wheels, I remember that it was huge in its day, yet now it seems overwhelmed by modern tractors. There was also a Fiat tractor from 1962 and a tracked machine adjacent, the name of which, unfortunately, I did not collect. All in all, we had a lovely day at the show (and it was only £6 entry) and can thoroughly recommend for a visit. Next year it will be in

Thurso – apparently it alternates between the two venues.

As reported last month, the Senator's faulty brake lights was traced to a broken switch – an easy replacement with it screwing in (by hand) to a bracket at the top and behind the brake pedal. The only problem was that a plastic duct to the lower fresh air duct on the dash had to be removed first – with a simple pull. Re-fitting was far from easy, mainly by touch, in amongst wiring looms and adjacent to the fuse and relay box. I had to move the seat as far back as possible and lower the backrest on to the rear seat, then lie upside down with my head resting on the

pedals – even then visibility was poor. The duct seemed to go back into place but would not 'click in' as expected, so after several attempts out came the glue. So far, that seems to have worked and it has not dropped on to my feet when on the move.

The September Club run from North Kessock to Muir of Ord turned out to be very well attended – someone told me there were 27 classic cars (is this a record for a Club Night I wonder), resulting in a lot of double parking at the Ord Arms Hotel. It was a beautiful night, weather wise, and was the last of this seasons 'scenic drives' – maybe this brought out members in their droves!! Next month we are having a talk by an Ullapool 'boat builder', organised by Steve Hanson. I'm told he is a real craftsman, a great story teller and can turn his hand to most aspects of construction, even milling his own timber from local sources. We are booked into the Bowling Club Pavilion behind the Station Hotel, Avoch, 7.30pm on the 2nd October – I look forward to seeing you all there.

Regards, Richard

Out and About

This wasn't quite what I expected to see outside our hotel in the Netherlands one night last month! Apparently quite a well-known car – if you move in the right circles! Google Bluebell Bentley for further info.

Also, it was nice to see former member Robin Gilbert on "Bangers & Cash" last night in the part about the Alvis 12/50 bought by the guy at Drum where we had a visit a while ago.



Chris Silver



HCMC. The Last Club Run of the Year.

On Thursday the 4th of September, our club ran the last run of the year. We met at the North Kessock Slipway car park, opposite the hotel, and I think it was probably the best turn out for a club drive that I can remember. 27 cars!



Richard Lashley sent us on a circuitous (in a good way) route through Drumsnittal via the back roads of Ord Hill (Christmas tree territory) through Tore towards Dingwall, but then a left through Millbuie until we approached Muir of Ord on a little travelled road on the north-eastern side.



We arrived in the Muir as dusk arrived and somehow managed to park 26 cars at the Ord Arms Hotel.



26 cars? Not 27? Yours truly had to go into work for a night shift so I left everyone there. I believe everyone had a good time there but as what happens in the Ord Arms stays in the Ord Arms, only those that were there will know for sure. At least the police weren't called.

It was a cracking night out, with a good run and a perfect way to end the driving part of the years club nights. Next month we expect to have the perfect start to the indoor meetings, with what promises to be a very interesting talk from an Ullapool boat builder. This will be held in the Avoch Sports Pavillion. More on that elsewhere in this newsletter.

Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally 2025



This year I fully intended to enter this show, and I did, I even paid my fee and everything, but due to work and life pressures I found I just could find the energy that morning. That was a shame because I love the meetup at the Dingwall Mart and the drive to Fortrose.

After a number of coffee's and cold showers I eventually turned up at the King George V field to be met with a huge, neat display of lovely old vehicles. The organisers obviously did well and with the weather behaving, attendance was excellent by both entrants and members of the public.



I have a huge number of pictures to share from my own god hands and those submitted by Jim Mackay.

In Jim's own words, "Another successful gathering at sunny Fortrose with 166 entries. Parked beside me was the lovely DB4 in Pale Primrose. The owner from



Thurso restored it over 30 years. What? Only 30 years! The Fiat 500 had a picnic hamper on the back which would keep his pie nice and warm. Lots of Hillman Minxes, in fact, lots of every make; super turn-out."

166 pictures would break the newsletter presses so I have included a randomly selected sample.



Why was this Audi Estate on display? Because it has done a rather impressive 347,237 miles and it is still a daily driver. Impressive. This Fordson Dexta belongs to an HCMC member. Apparently it was quite chilly driving home after the rain came on. I love it.



I believe this is the Citroen Light 15 featured on TV's Bangers and Cash and I believe, this newsletter!

See you there next year, all being well.

Love the badge
-Old Man Edition!



A Smart farewell

Trish Brown

It is an end of an era for us. We have been humming and hawing about this for nearly 3 years now, mainly me because I am not comfortably any more in the car. But we always found an excuse for not taking any action.

Alice is also starting to struggle with driving the car, thus with a heavy heart we took our decision and our Smart has got a new owner. If only we had a very large shed somewhere, we would have stored the car to become a barn find in many years time, but we don't have that luxury, so a sale it was.

We have had much joy from owning the car. Annual meet-ups with other Smart owners for a weekend driving our cars around the countryside; showing other sports cars our heels when they were trying to show off on back roads; and even trying to do the weekly shopping once. That was a tight fit I can tell you as not all of the purchases fitted in the front and rear boots. The rest was stowed about my person in the passenger seat. And latterly, learning the 'Brabus weave' to avoid potholes. One of the most reliable cars we have owned with only old age increasing the maintenance.

The Smart has proved its worth several times, by getting us out of a tight corner. Like the time on the Tain bypass driving north, when somebody, driving south, decided to turn to their right, having second thoughts when already on the middle of our carriageway and trying to reverse. There was simply no time for that. But the amazing traction capability of the Smart (and not forgetting Alice's quick reactions) meant that with a zig-zag through the junction, Alice was able to steer us round that stupid car. The shakes set in a few hundred yards further down the road.

Or that night when we were travelling north on the dual carriage way, when somebody pulled out of the lay-by just north of the Munloch junction, just as we were passing that very same layby. Again Alice's quick reactions saved the day. And the car. And the rest.

But back to the sale. We had a few folk interested in the car, some silly offers (half price, no questions asked or pay in monthly instalments), one very rude one and a person looking at the car and dismissing it because there was rust on it. Well, yeah. We live in Scotland! You're not going to get a daily in use car in showroom condition here.

The new owner then is of the very young generation, who just had to have it because it was 'so cool'. I totally agree with his enthusiasm. That was one of the main reasons why we bought the Smart in the first place. But I wonder about the parents decision to buy this car as a present for their son passing his driving test. Statistics are not good for car survival where the owner is of such tender age. Having owned the Smart for nearly 20 years, that would be a very sad end. I do hope he is going to be sensible and have many years of enjoyment out of this 'cool' car, before the government stops us from using petrol.

Farming Yesteryear 2025

Jim Mackay

There is a dearth of images from this trip, because we were there on the Saturday only. All the cars arrive for the Sunday by which time I had raided the autojumble stalls. There is a Green Raleigh which looked very original but the vendor was looking for £200! The Ford Model T pick-up is just great and in very good mechanical order. It wouldn't last long up here in the Highlands though. The very early David Brown (red tractor) is the model that I learned to drive on. My grandfather bought one of the first three to be sold by Kenny Mackenzie, Evanton and my father, subsequently, bought it second hand. By the time I was ready to learn, it had no paint and no brakes and was called 'Old Smokey'. Cheers, Jim



Cheers, Jim



Wheels of Nairn

20th September 2025



This year I decided to take the Sierra along to Wheels of Nairn, a show I've always enjoyed in the past. The weather didn't look promising, and a few heavy downpours on the A96 made the early start less appealing. With an 8:30–9:00 a.m. arrival time requested,

I parked up in the cold and rain, only to find very few familiar HCMC faces. For a moment I thought I'd spotted Miles in his Mini—but it turned out to be a doppelganger from the east, given away by the Doric twang! I went back to the car, to keep warm. At 9:05, I was already bored.

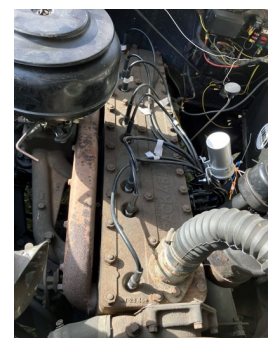


Thankfully, the field slowly filled, the sun broke through, and the day began to brighten—literally and figuratively. I wandered along my row, chatting with VW air-cooled enthusiasts and admiring the many Beetles on display. One car that really caught my eye was a pristine Renault

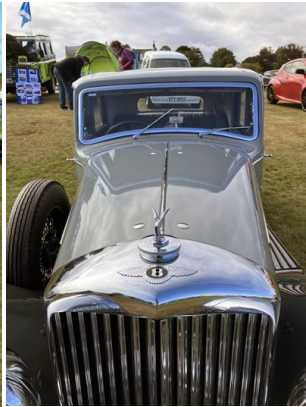


21 Turbo Quadra, proudly presented by its owner. Another highlight was the Highland Classic Car Hire corner, showcasing a stunning 1948 Packard Eight. With its straight-eight flathead engine, it looked like it could cruise the length of Route 66 at 90 mph without breaking a sweat. Tempting as that sounds, I doubt they'd let me hire it if I tried!

There was plenty of variety: Aberdeen had brought along their latest fire engine,



American muscle was out in force with numerous Mustangs, and the show-and-shine and club stands offered something for everyone.



Over 300 vehicles were on display, including some interesting bikes. True to stereotype, a few bikers couldn't resist sneaking out before the official 3



p.m. end time, earning themselves a mention on the PA system—"tut tut (or putt putt?)," though it did make me laugh.



I was once again drawn to the tractors, particularly a wonderfully patinated orange Nuffield and a tidy Fordson Dexta, which I've taken a shine to since helping a neighbour with his. (Not Mark.) Alongside the vehicles, Nairn's High Street is

always worth a wander, making for a well-rounded day out.

The departure, however, was less well-organised. The 3 p.m. exodus was chaotic, with some drivers making their own "creative"

exits through Seatown's side streets. My own marshal guided departure led to a dead end up Marine Road—one last chuckle to end the day.

Will I be back next year? Probably.



Cars and Coffee

September 2025



How many Cars and Coffee at Inverness Rollerbowl are left? As it stands we have at least one more in October when we will be doing our Macmillan Cancer fund raiser in memory of Richard Gibson. This could be the last one here before Rollerbowl closes it's doors, or the last one ever, so if you want to say you were there, make sure you are!



It's possible but not certain, that we will be able to use the car park in November, but if not and after that, we will be looking for another space that will welcome about 100 cars and well behaved enthusiasts and provide coffee food and toilets. If anyone has any suggestions, please get in touch.

Alternatively if you have a lot of spare money in the bank, Rollerbowl may be available for purchase as a going concern. Just think how popular you would be.

It would be a shame if this event was forced to stop as it's been a brilliant, relaxed and popular event with an eclectic mix of (old) cars and people.

At the moment, nothing is certain.

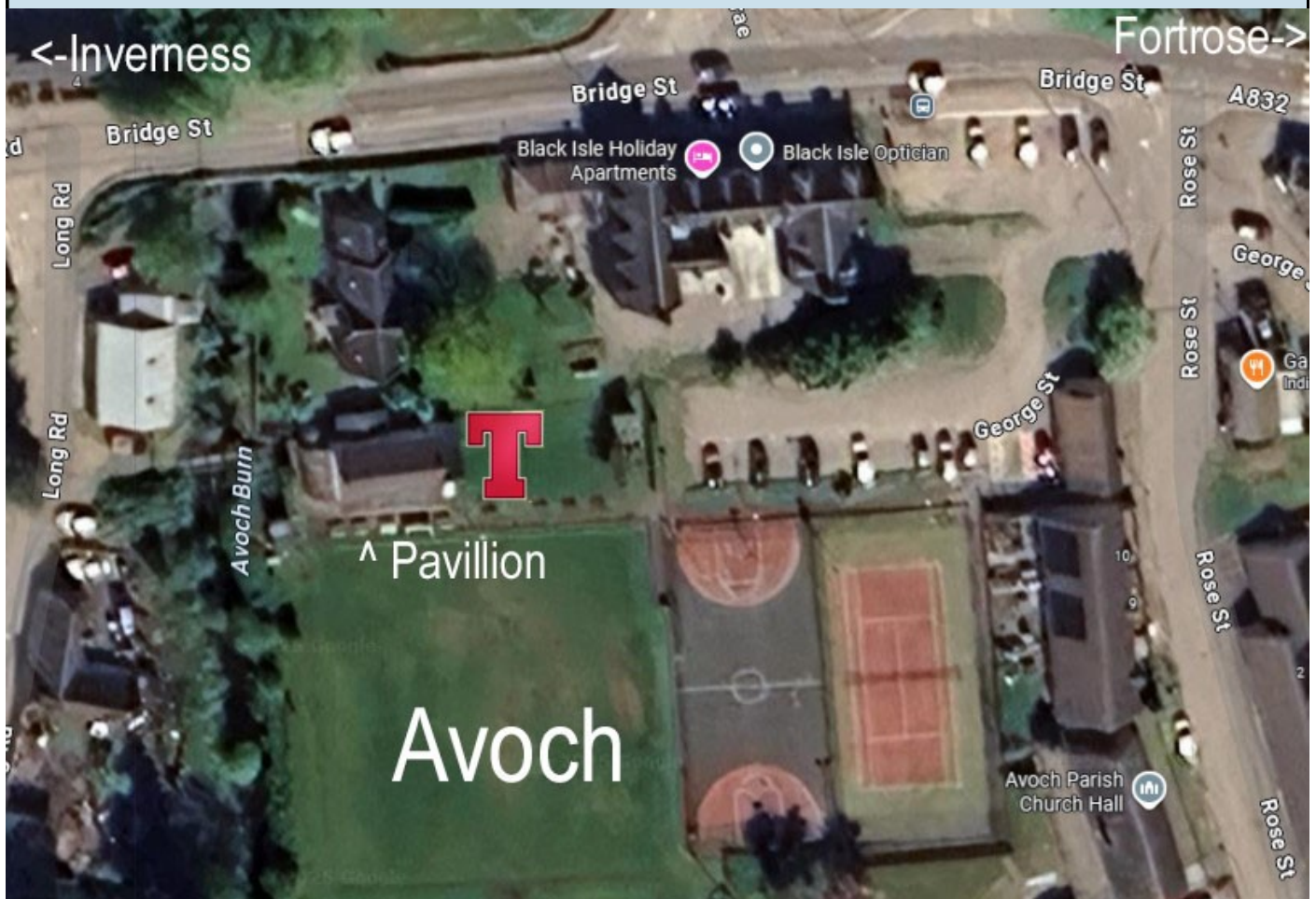


HCMC Events

2nd Oct 2025 The HCMC October Meeting will be an intriguing presentation by renowned Ullapool Boat Builder Tim Loftus of Johnson & Loftus.

The Venue is the Avoch Sports Pavillion and we ask you to arrive at 7:00 p.m. for a 7:30 p.m. start.

It promises to be an entertaining evening knowing Tim. He's an incredibly talented craftsman and lovely guy. He even rides a wooden bike he made! He may bring that along if he can.



12th Oct 2025 Cars And Coffee - Inverness Rollerbowl, Culduthel Rd. Inverness
2nd Sunday of every Month from 10am-12noon. A Quiet Social Gathering of 20th Century Classics plus interesting Modern Sportscars & Bikes. Park up, buy yourself a hot drink & snack from Rollerbowl & check out what's in the Car Park. Find us on FACEBOOK.