

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.

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COVER PICTURE

A genuine "Aussie" Toyota Ute seen at Moray Steam Fair.

Riley Recollections

This is a photo of my Dad's first car, a Riley 2.5 litre, taken at Lossiemouth harbour late 1950's.



He bought it from the headmaster of Drumtochty Castle School in Aberdeenshire in 1954. The dealer drove in through to the car park at the Elgin Town Hall, where the police station is now.

It had been tuned up a bit with a high compression head, sodium filled valves and platinum spark plugs. This meant it could easily do 100mph, which he often did on the quiet Moray roads of the late 50's. One thing he remembers was the drum brakes terrible brake fade, making for a few hairy moments. He had several notable cars after this including a Jag and a Singer Gazelle, but nothing quite matched the Riley.

Can anyone recognise the model? I think it's an RMB or an RMF.

Calum Pearson.

CHAIR BITTY NOVEMBER 2014

Most of you have missed a really informative and thought provoking talk on First Aid last month, courtesy of Moray Firth Training. Perhaps it was the weather that put you off – it was a tad breezy – but you lost out on:

- how to give CPR
- a dummies guide to using an automated defibrillator (we were so impressed by this bit of kit that we are putting a potential purchase on the agenda for the AGM)
- and Chris demonstrating the recovery position.



As mentioned last month, December's meet is a Christmas dinner. Brian is looking for payment, so if you are going or are thinking of going to the dinner, please take along a deposit of £20 per person to this month's meet.

The weather is becoming autumnal, as we noticed during our recent break to Orkney, just as the weather was turning a bit stormy. On the Monday, just before the weather got too bad, we travelled over the Churchill Barriers to South Ronaldsay. On the approach we spotted how the waves were very picturesquely crashing over the barriers. Unfortunately we mistimed the waves a bit and ended up being deluged whilst driving across barrier #2. It was a rather scary 4 seconds completely submerged in water. We fared better on the way back, only catching the far edge of the wave. It was not much later that day that the barriers got closed to traffic.

We were staying in a static caravan and the wind was strong enough to blow the rain past the door and window seals. It probably didn't help that some of the mastic was peeling away – which we pointed out to the owners. After that stormy Tuesday the weather cleared up and we did some lovely walks around various islands. As you expect we can't help spotting classics – a range of Fords - some Escorts, a Capri, a Granada and a Taunus Coupé, a Maestro near the Airport. Alice thinks she spotted a Dutton languishing in a driveway. The blue Renault 16 we had seen some years previously was no longer there.

The Council is making a start at repairing our street. Although in a bit of a state with various potholes that I keep brushing chuckies back into, I am rather surprised that it is getting repaired at all given the state of Council funds. By the way, I "acquired" these chuckies when the Council resurfaced

the main road a few years back, by brushing up the spoils from the side of the road.

I did something similar many many years ago when we stayed on a new housing estate down south. The tarmac driveway was so soft that our cars were sinking, each car creating its own 4 dimples. The final straw was when we tried to jack up one of our cars and the jack disappeared into the drive. I think I must have brushed the dust and chuckies from about a quarter of the estate onto our drive. The driveway (and that of our neighbours) was also used by delivery vehicles as a shortcut. Both drives were separated by a 2 foot strip of grass as part of our garden and delivery drivers would continue down the shared drive (4 houses) to an adjoining part of the estate). One of these drivers got rather irate when we planted a small hedge to stop them from driving through our garden.

Anyway, back to our street repairs. So far, the Council have over the course of several days managed to paint some lines on the road and made a start on cutting the tarmac. Not quite the progress we'd hoped for. Let's see if they finish before December.

This month's meet will be at the Bog Roy Inn, Inchmore, (Kirkhill) where Mr Paul Monk will give a talk on the HMS Natal – a bit of local history of the Cromarty Firth that most folk may not be aware about. This promises to be another good night so make sure you are there.

See you on Thursday.

Cheers,

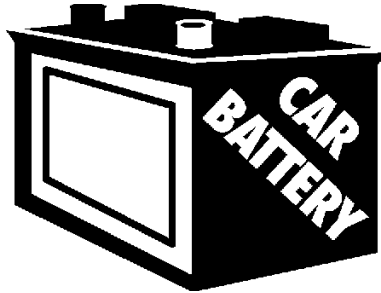
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DECEMBER MEETING, THURSDAY 4TH DECEMBER

The December meeting night is a Christmas Dinner at the Maple Court Hotel. See Brian to book your places and most importantly give Brian your deposit or full payment. He needs the money (See his article on further Aston troubles). The night will be the dinner only, so don't turn up expecting a night of tyre kicking and idle gossip in the car park!

BATTERY BLUES.

I may have wasted a hundred quid on a new battery: here's the story.



I learned very quickly that the Aston can't be left for long periods. The drain on the battery from all the electronic gubbins is such that after about three weeks it's unlikely to start, so a battery conditioner was purchased. I suppose a lot of you have one, and coupled with a "maintenance free" battery you think it's all sorted. Maybe not.

About six months after buying the car the battery was struggling to start her. I checked the voltage and it showed 10.6 at rest. I photographed this and contacted the dealer who somewhat reluctantly agreed to cover the cost of a new battery. I went to Autosave and bought an Exide with a four year guarantee for £115. It only lasted about ten months! I went back to Autosave and the guy's first comment was "Yeh, those Exide batteries are rubbish!!!!" He swapped it for a Yuasa, which he assured me was much better.

Fast forward to last month. I took the Aston out of the lock-up and round to the house. Five minutes later it refused to start. I walked back to the lock-up (it's only two hundred yards) and lugged round my mains-powered booster starter which got me going. Back to the lock up, fiddled around for half an hour, and then tried to re-start with no success. I checked the battery voltage and it had plummeted to 9.5V.

I thought to myself "this battery's only two years old so I'm going to have words with Autosave". That evening I ploughed through my box of receipts. On finding the right one I thought "a-ha!" and then realised that the battery was actually four and a half years old, and therefore out of guarantee. Bugger! Bugger!.

I still had a whinge at Autosave when I went back and the chap said he too was surprised but of course couldn't do anything for me except give me the best price on a new one. So, ninety-five pounds lighter, and back in the lock-up I fitted the new battery and all was well.

However, that evening I thought I'd have a look at the "maintenance free" old battery. The cell covers can still be removed, and peering inside I realised that I couldn't see any liquid covering the plates. It just so happened that we'd been running a de-humidifier and I had distilled water from its reservoir to hand. I filled a 500 ml bottle and poured it in. Not enough. I filled another 500 ml bottle and added it. Still not enough!! In all it took 1.25 litres of water to cover the plates. Basically the battery was empty. I connected it to a battery conditioner, and left it overnight. Next morning I put my ear to the battery, and I could clearly hear it bubbling away. The battery was gassing. I thought the whole point of these battery conditioners was to maintain peak charge *without* causing gassing, which ultimately results in the loss of water from the unit.

So it seems that just as in days of yore, even with a modern battery, you should check the fluid levels regularly. You have been warned! Meanwhile I've been checking the voltage on the old battery every day for the last two weeks. It's holding steady at 12.5 volts. Second-hand battery anyone??



THE TAX DISC (Part:- The Last)

From the outset in 1921, the four floral symbols of the United Kingdom, the Thistle, Shamrock, Daffodil and Rose, appeared on the face of the Tax Disc, as well as the corners of the counterfoil. These symbols lasted as a feature of the Tax Disc until 1951, when they were removed to make way for a bolder expiry date.

The dreaded RAC rating lasted until 1947, but in 1948, a flat rate of duty for all cars was introduced, at £10 per year, though goods vehicles and

Hackneys - that is buses as well as taxi cabs, had more complicated rates of duty, as they do to this day. The 'HP' box still remained as part of the design of the Tax Disc and was sometimes filled out that way, but more often showed engine capacity as 'cc', hand-written.

The last of the 'old design' Tax Discs, that looked very similar to the original '21 Disc, appeared in 1956. It was followed for four years by a totally different design that totally lacked the United Kingdom symbols and no longer had a box for 'colour'. It featured two solid bands of colour at the top and bottom of the Disc. The farmer's version included a large outline 'F' on the left, filled in with the colour for the year. All Tax Discs were still expiring no later than December 31st each year.



The Modern Era Begins ... Big changes to all aspects of the Tax Disc and its administration occurred in 1961. In a major effort to make life harder for the forger, a new design consisting of various circular vignettes and bands of solid colour, plus a half-tone background was launched. Artwork, however was not the only big change, monthly taxation was finally introduced to get away from the bottleneck of the December 31st expiry. From January onwards in 1961, one could buy twelve month's car tax at any time, the Tax Disc you received having Jan, Feb, Mar etc of the following year as the expiry.



In addition, the quarterly Tax Disc disappeared totally as a separate design and four-monthly taxation replaced it. However, the Tax Disc design allowed the issuing clerk to write in '4 months' on to a standard design Disc. The Farmer's Disc still survived these changes but was simply hand-stamped with a black 'F' on the left of the Tax Disc. The attempt to beat the forgers proved to be a little off target. The years of 1961 and 1962 were, to the less scrupulous, relatively easy to 'amend' to their own advantage - Guinness bottle labels being used to evade payment! Consequently, in 1963, an additional expiry date, printed in a light tint on the lower half of the disc was added and quickly put an end to this practice. This defined the design of the Tax Disc for the next fifteen years until May 1978. During this time, the Tax Disc continued to change colour with each year (not monthly, as many believed), in the sequence blue, brown, green, and red.

Starting in 1977, a new 'digital' style Tax Disc design arrived. This showed the entire expiry date in large print on a coloured band, repeated in toned colour lower on the Disc. ie 31:3:77 This was the first 'Swansea Disc'. These lasted until August 1987, during which time the four-month Tax Disc was abolished due to administration costs, this being replaced with the six-month option that we have today. In 1983, the bi-lingual Welsh Tax Discs appear (no Gaelic !!), and the Farmer's Disc was abolished during this time too. The first of the 'wavy line' designs begin in September 1987, again yet another round in the eternal battle with the forgers - instead of a straight toned band, we now have thin parallel wavy lines with the expiry date superimposed. This developed further in 1993, with a return to the larger month and year format, dropping the day from the design. By this stage, there was also an HGV Tax Disc. This had slightly different shading in the design, and featured 'HGV' embossed into the top edge of the disc.

The 'wavy line' design came in during 1977, and survived, with a variety of changes, until October, 2003. A lot of change has been packed into ninety-odd years of history, and the Tax Disc is scheduled to go 'the way of all flesh' from 1 October 2014 (along with the ability to transfer the tax paid to a new owner !) Will you miss not having this iconic piece of motoring history stuck to your windscreen ? If so ...



... **fancy a Reproduction Tax Disc ?** Earlswood Reproduction can supply a facsimile Tax Disc to suit YOUR classic car; have a look at their website <http://www.britishtaxdiscs.co.uk>. for further information – **better still, they are offering a 20% discount to HMC members**, though you'll need to place your order by phone to obtain the discount.

Well here I am relegated to the back page! As I'm the Editor I don't suppose I can moan too much. Some housework to cover first. As I have already mentioned, I will be on holiday until the end of November but I will try to get something out even if it's only on the website. And it appears our publishers (Trish and Alice) will also be away in the new year so, again, the newsletter might only be on the website. So what's in the news at the moment. One item on insurance concerned selling your pride and joy and not cancelling the insurance. It appears that the person concerned sold a motorbike to someone who later turned out to be a disqualified driver. He promptly went and had a big accident and then found out that the seller of the motorbike had failed to cancel his insurance as there was only a week or two left on it. This ne'er do well then put in a claim on this insurance for his considerable injuries and damage to himself and others. The insurance company were understandably a bit miffed at this and when they found out that this ne'er do well was disqualified they refused to pay out and informed the poor policy holder that as he had allowed an unlicensed driver to use the bike they were entitled to refuse cover and he must pay for any subsequent claim! So if you sell any motor vehicle and even if the insurance only has days to run CANCEL IT!

On a lighter vein the Lancia is totally bereft of front suspension. Not too many nuts rusted fast but I have had to resort to the hacksaw for a reluctant ball joint nut. The (still) leaking steering box does have some advantages. All the nuts on that side came off easily but the dry side is proving troublesome. The car is also proving to be very stiff when jacked up only on one corner. I'll explain better when you've got an hour to spare. No? Ok. I once had an Escort RS2000 and when that was on jacks it bent in the middle! Only one jacking point on each side, just in front of the rear wheel. When the car was raised the rear wheel lifted and then the front. If the door was closed, the body flexed so much that you couldn't open it. If it was open, and you tried to close it, it had dropped by about 3 inches! At the moment the entire left side of the Lancia is resting on a column jack on the end of the leaf spring. The rear axle is about 2" clear of the axle stands. As I said, it's a stiff car. And finally, re the above and cars on jacks etc. Please make sure that you are safe when working with jacks etc. I have dealt with three fatal accidents involving poorly supported cars.

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