

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

On holiday I always seem to find something old and sometimes interesting. This old Volvo 245(?) seemed to be still in use even though the rust was showing through in a few places.

CHAIR BITTY NOV. 2015

Ah, well seeing that winter is approaching as our last meeting took place in the dark. Glenn, from Autohead Recon, gave us a guided tour of his workshop, showing off the beefy kit in use, some of which use teensy weensy little diamond drillbits, each bit costing almost as much as my monthly wages! Pretty impressive how much heavy duty equipment they manage to pack into such a small workshop. Much attention was also paid to the Riley engine undergoing a skim and rebuild. I seem to remember somebody mentioning Ranald as a source for spares...



Anyway, I mentioned the evenings drawing in, which means I can no longer cycle up to the station or back in daylight (sigh). I suppose the one plus point is that the weather is still fairly quiet. Not that much wind yet – except last Thursday morning where the high winds resulted in slow running trains. I think they are limited to around 45mph in case of trees down on the line. On Friday the excuse was a loss of traction due to “leaves on the line”. It sounded very much like a slipping clutch to me with the engines revving but little or no forward motion. I was half expecting the train to get cancelled, but fortunately once we got past Conon Bridge the pace picked back up again.

We were out in Aberdeen the other weekend for a concert. The few times that we have been out that way it has always been very busy. But this time round it was relatively quiet on the road and we made good time. As I was parking up at our accommodation, Alice noticed that the Merc's left front tire looked a bit bald on the outside, so on our return home she booked in the car for a quick look at the tires. End result was 4 new tires as they were **all** down to the wear bar. And the tracking was out, by a whopping 5mm. Better news for the Landrover, who passed it's MOT with flying colours. We also got round to fitting new rubbers round the door frame.

This month we have been invited to visit Calum Pearson's garage. As there is only limited space for parking, we will meet up at the North Kessock Hotel at 7.30pm. From there on we will car share. We will be able to take 2 passengers, 3 at a push. Job for next weekend, vacuum the car.

See you there,
Trish.

The Pit and The Pendulum

Sorry, all you fans of Edgar Allan Poe. This is not a gothic horror story. The Pit may be real, but the Pendulum is metaphorical.

Let me tell you about the Pit first. To recap an ongoing saga; being short of garage space when I moved into town, I bought a flat that had a huge back garden and a huge garage. I rent the flat out but keep the garage to myself.

I knew at the time that the garage structure was a bit suspect. It looks to have been extended at least twice in its lifetime. When I say extended I mean bodged, superbodged. I realised I'd have to turn my attention to some general repairs at some point, but when I looked at it in detail more recently I realised that in fact it was in imminent danger of collapse. Some of the wall timbers were so rotten that I could pull lumps out with my bare hands. Something radical had to be done.

With the aid of Accrow jacks I propped up the roof one section at a time and knocked out the offending wall. A great tool for aiding and abetting this destruction is the long bodied reciprocating saw which enables beams to be cut out in sections. Not only was the wall rotten, some of the floor wasn't much better. I was suspicious of one area, and took a 14lb hammer to it. The concrete broke up to reveal a sleeper (now rotten) that some cretin had poured concrete over! The difficulty is knowing where to draw the line. Jane keeps telling me "just remember it's a shed; you're not building a house round there!" The work on the walls progressed through the last year, but I had had no reason to look at The Pit which came with the garage. Not until recently, when backing the Aston over it I heard an ominous crack! "Hucking Fell" I thought as I gingerly moved forward again. Sure enough a pit timber had given way, but as I'd covered the whole affair with some old sheets of ply it had spread the weight. However, it did concentrate the mind, and within a couple of hours some six-by-twos and plywood had been sacrificed to make new pit covers. Then I had to clean out the gunge that had accumulated in the bottom. All this proved very timely because a few days later I heard a strange clonk off the Volvo. A quick squint underneath showed that two brackets on the exhaust had rusted through and the whole affair was gently swinging from the front mounting on the engine.

I nipped round to Inverness Tyres and got a selection of clamps to see what I could cobble together. AND, lo and behold I had a pit to work in. At the age of 62, for the first time in my life, doing an exhaust was a doddle with a full size pit to work in!

This now brings us to the Pendulum. A pendulum that has swung too far. The work on the exhaust made me realise that the Volo V70 was at an age where I might have to start throwing money at it which I really didn't want to do, so I popped round to see Ian Cattnach and told him to find me a car; another V70 of course. A fortnight later he phoned me to tell me he'd got a car that might interest me, which turned out to be exactly what I'd asked for. His price was fair, and he gave me a reasonable price for mine which save me all the faffing about going to look at cars all over the place.

Now you and I, we're all experienced drivers aren't we. We only need the manual for checking where the fuse box is, right? Oh no! Before you can drive this car you need to READ THE MANUAL. Get in. Key? Ah no, the fob slides into the dash, which even I can see. OK, press the Start Engine button. Nothing. You've got to put your foot on the brake Ian helpfully points out. Oh really? Now it starts. Handbrake? Who's stolen the handbrake? That little button there he says. Oh, that one! Yes of course. OK, we're under way, but the dash has a central display like a miniature TV screen. How do we choose options on the menu? READ THE MANUAL! Seriously, this motor has myriad functions, but if you don't READ THE MANUAL! you won't guess them. For instance; when you set off, all the doors lock. Useful, I believe in America, where you get mugged a traffic lights. Not too much of that in Inverness at the moment, but harmless I suppose. NO! when you get out, THE BLOODY BACK DOOR IS LOCKED! so you can't open the rear door to grab your jacket off the back seat, nor can you open the boot. You need to take the key out of the dash, and fiddle with it. After a few days of this it was getting beyond a joke. Can you disable this function? Yes you CAN, but to do so you have to READ THE MANUAL!

This what I mean by the pendulum. Just like with computers, the manufacturers are fitting all sorts of fancy stuff because they can, not because we actually need it and I think the pendulum may have swung too far.

Some "improvements" are also a trade-off. Volvos are very keen on safety, and this one now has WHIPS, which is an anti-whiplash function in the front seats that a rear-end collision triggers. To maintain this function no luggage must be put in contact with the back of the front seats, and there is an eight inch gap between the end of the rear load platform and the front seats. In the old days the load was restrained by the back of the folded rear seat, but now, with this gap, under heavy braking the load moves forward. So the choice is to preserve the anti-whiplash function, or to get your luggage round your ears when braking! So much for progress!

One definite improvement though; last year I had a bill for £120 for changing a headlamp bulb on the old car because I couldn't get at it. A dipped beam bulb blew on the new car while I was in Shropshire. I discovered I could change a bulb without tools (after I'd READ THE MANUAL) so I popped round to a branch of Halfords. The young lad on the counter seemed bewildered by my request, but gradually the words H7, 55watt, halogen bulb seemed to stir something in his neanderthal brain. "Oh this" he said, opening a box and withdrawing a bulb which he held with his fingers on the glass part! When I explained to him that you really shouldn't do that he gave it to me for free! I wonder how many of his customers have had short-lived headlamps because of him?

This car's also got built-in Sat-Nav, but I've just driven all the way to Ironbridge in Shropshire without using it at all. I like maps, and I like using my brain to figure things out so for now I'm not going to use it. I suppose at some point it might come in handy, but if I want learn how to use it I'll have to READ THE MANUAL!

Bryan.

Editors PS. On this subject I am a little bit sad I suppose because I do actually read the manuals that come with a car. All nicely presented in a folder. There's lots of unnecessary bumph in there, special offers, how to find your nearest dealer in everywhere from Angola to Zaire, the service record and the users manual. The manual is about an inch thick, open it up and.....it's the manual for the radio! Search through the other bumph and the users manual is only about 1/2" thick. Having then read both manuals (told you I was a bit sad), its easier to drive the car. The radio is a far more complicated!

Directions to Calum's Garage

November Club Meet

Meet at the usual big Car Park outside North Kessock Hotel.

Head North on the A9

Turn right onto the B9161 sign posted Munlochy and Cromarty. There is a big long filter lane on the right.

Immediately after turning off the A9 take the next right signposted Coldwell.

Carry on past the old Post Office and take the next left signposted Croft na Creich. There's a wee wooden bus shelter at the road end.

Keep on going past some houses and the farm, and we are the next house on the left called Bowersburn. You can't miss the large timber garage. I'm told you can see it from space.

I'll stay and wait on your arrival.

Any problems my mobile is 07762101067.

Calum.



Highland Classic Motor Club Committee Meeting held on Thursday 8th October 2016 at 8pm

Present: Trish Brown, Alice Brown, Ian Thompson, Miles Vincent, Roy MacGregor, Alan Goff, Bryan McIlwraith.

Apologies: Ranald Smith.

1. Christmas 2015. Trish to organise a small buffet for the Xmas do at the Old North Inn on the 3rd December 2015.

2. Calendar for 2016.

Month	Event	Venue	Whos Organising
7th Jan	Auction	Old North Inn,	Bryan
4th Feb	AGM	Old North Inn	Trish/Alice
3rd Mar	Visit to Seaforth Highlanders Museum Fort George		Alan
9th April	Pub Run		Alan
5th May	Visit to Tarbetness Lighthouse		Trish/Douglas Hird
2nd Jun	Drive each others Car	Brockies Lodge	
7th Jul	Run to Ullapool		
4th Aug	Regularity Run East of Inverness		Bryan
1st Sep	Run by Loch Ness		
6th Oct	Visit to George, Edderton		Bryan
3rd Nov	Pub Meet, TBC		
1st Dec	Christmas Event Old North Inn		

Drive it Day: 24th April 2016 starting at the V8 Cafe, The Club will cover the costs of the teas and coffees for this event.

Smart Roadster Owners doing the NC500 from the Saturday 30th April until Tuesday 3rd May.

Inverness Car Show: 7th May 2016.

Discussion took place regarding a weekend drive later in the year along the lines of Drive It Day, possibly to Fort Augustus. Thoughts are to invite MFR Cash For Kids, with our cars as backdrop. This is to be discussed at the AGM in February.



THE EDITORS MONTHLY RANT



Hopefully we have all heard the saying "If you're in a hole, stop digging." Well it seems like the DVLA are digging themselves into a big deep hole. Their latest problem continues to be the problem of the sale of a car and the subsequent cancellation of the Vehicle Excise Duty. As it stands at the moment if you sell a car, at the very moment of sale the Vehicle Excise Licence (what was a tax disc) is cancelled. The seller will be reimbursed any outstanding duty, but only for whole months. We've all been caught out by that little Government "Earner". The buyer must reapply for a new VEL, again for the whole month. With me so far? But the DVLA have insisted that they can only deal with the reregistering of the new owners by post. They also apparently have a back log of several weeks. So until the DVLA open their post and someone enters it all into the system the VEL is not cancelled because they have not been "notified" of the change. So is the car taxed? Apparently the number of unlicensed vehicle on the road is on the increase because few people are aware of the changes and the inability to tax the car if the DVLA are unaware of its sale. It gets even better. The legislation only refers to the sale and buying of a vehicle and the seller and the buyer, but what about a vehicle that simply has a change of owner without a "sale". If the vehicle is simply transferred to another registered keeper, the DVLA are treating it as a sale and cancelling the VEL. So if your Great Uncle Bulgaria pegs out and his wife transfers the vehicle to herself, the DVLA cancels the tax without notifying the new keeper. But the car has not been sold. So if your Great Uncle Bulgaria pegs out and leaves his fleet of taxed, roadworthy Ferrari's to you you've got to retax the lot of them! DVLA part2. Reflective Number Plates. Reflective plates have been required since 1973. But if your car has been changed to an "Historic Vehicle" taxation class, it can legally have the old style black and white plates. So my Lancia, being registered in 1974, and as such is required to have reflective plates. Unless its taxed as Historic, and then can have black and white. And as correct index plates are part of the MoT Test you can have lots of fun (or heartache) engaging in a long legal argument with the tester when he fails your car. So DVLA stop digging as the hole is getting deeper!

The Garage



Well it's been a busy summer on the car front. Last winter I inherited a new Mini (The Green Machine!) from my Uncle in Yorkshire and as it had been in storage for about 10-15 years it took quite a bit of recommissioning to get going again. As well as sorting out many electrical issues and fixing the excessively low suspension and strange rear wheel tracking, I had great difficulty getting the engine to run properly. The twin SU carbs were gunged

up and even after cleaning, just refused to tune in. At one point the exhaust manifold was glowing cherry red! To get it going I fitted a single SU which actually works quite well.

However there was still something not quite right with the Mini as the engine had poor low down power and a tendency to overheat cruising along the A9 at 60 ish. I eventually worked out that it was a faulty distributor vacuum advance by the process of trying everything else first! I got a new one from the excellent H&H Ignition in the Midlands. Overheating cured. Low end grunt back. Unfortunately this now reveals how terrible the low budget tyres are in the wet. It's hard not to wheelspin and slide about on damp tarmac. Not ideal but useable and it also meant I had four running cars, a lifetime record.

Meanwhile our reliable 'modern,' a Ford Focus Mk1 Diesel has got to the playing up age. It needed a new dual mass flywheel (expensive) and there were some electrical gremlins including a tailgate that opened if you switched on the rear demister. Not ideal with two dogs in there. That turned out to be broken wires in the tailgate loom from all that opening and shutting letting the dogs out. Rewiring it fixed that. Then there was no low down power (can faults be catching?) which defeated computer diagnostics and a couple of garages. It felt like an old turbo Audi or Saab, all lag then woosh, off it went. And that's kind of what it was. Modern (ish) turbos have variable geometry so the turbo changes characteristics depending on engine speed. The actuator for this is vacuum controlled and to cut a long, long story short there was a loose vacuum pipe, and a 10p petrol pipe clamp sorted that. Bingo, car back to normal. Apart from a faulty electric window. And some new tyres required.

So with the Mini on the road and running fairly well, it became my main car for a couple of weeks while I prepared the 205 GTi for the winter. I took the bumpers off to check for surface rust to rub down treat and cover in Bilt

Hamber's finest rust prevention products, but what a shock, it looked like the remains of the Titanic in there, crust and rust and holes all over the place. Nothing for it but to get the welder out. It turns out the Pug wasn't the only thing that was rusty. My welding skills seemed to have deserted me. I couldn't see what I was doing which turned out to be a faulty visor. Then the wire feed needed repaired and somehow there doesn't seem to be quite enough gas. I think the thin Peugeot panels didn't help either. After some 'good enough' welding I moved onto the rear which if anything was even worse, though on the plus side my welding has improved. On the downside I seem to owe Lynn a holiday as she has been neglected for weeks.

With all this activity and the wet summer, the Beetle has been sadly ignored and has only done about 50 miles this year, although I did reupholster the bottom half of the rear seat from a kit, and fit a new clutch as described in a previous article.

So the new garage has been well used and is also the location for November's club meeting. I hope to do a wee bit of show and tell of various car parts lying about, show what useful tools I have should anyone want to borrow any in the future. Perhaps if I'm brave enough a wee technical chat about how SU carbs work and show some needle selection software. There will tea, coffee, biscuits and general tyre kicking.

The plan is to meet up at the usual North Kessock Car Park, opposite the hotel and car share as I can probably only fit in about 6 cars in the drive. Perhaps we might even have to run a shuttle, so perhaps don't come in your pride and joy if you don't want to leave it unguarded in a car park for a few hours.

I'll send out directions to the usual club contacts to hand out on the night, but it is close to the Munlochry turn off on the A9, just north of North Kessock. I hope to see you on the 5th.

(the other) Calum.



FOR SALE

ROVER P5B COUPE



1970 (March) Rover P5B Coupe.

3.5 litre V8. 88,000 miles from new with three owners only, first owner being a BMC/BL agent, to 2004.

Rover Copperleaf red with silver birch roof. Factory fitted steel sliding sunroof. Buckskin (magnolia) leather interior.

Full engine rebuild at 86,000 miles. Spare short engine plus various bits. New steel front wings ready to fit.

Owner's/driver's instruction book, service book, plus Rover workshop manual – part numbers 4661 & 605358.

Original Rostyle wheels with good tyres. All chrome is good. Interesting original registration number.

Currently on SORN – needs re-commissioning. Not run for several years and looks sadder than it really is. Road tax free. Cheap classic insurance.

Offers invited. May consider long term loan rather than outright sale.

Call Davie on 01408 622880 for a natter if interested further.

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