

CLASSIC SCENE



December 2023



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Cover Picture

The Practical Classic photoshoot of
Thursday 15th November.
This was them shooting their cover
shot, and shamelessly used by me
on our cover.
This magnificent drone picture was
taken by George Finlayson.

Welcome to the December Newsletter

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of the newsletter. It's written under duress as I have caught a seasonal lurgy and have managed to break my little toe so I'm feeling a bit miserable. On the plus side for you readers, that means less jokes and punnery this time round. Normal service will be resumed.

Of course mere ailments won't keep me out of the garage and the Focus has been MOT prepared with new dampers/shocks (delete to your preference) all round and a wheel bearing replaced. The Skoda Fabulous also has a new wheel bearing. General malaise has lead to some tidying up. The garage had become a dumping ground from the clearance of the old family home in Morayshire, and was embarrassingly messy. The Pearson family relics are down to a few boxes, maybe less after the January auction, and the garage is just normal messy now.

Part of the big clear out was a trip to the dump to dispose of an accumulated several gallons of used engine oil. Unfortunately they don't take engine oil at the moment and the facility has been removed, possibly never to return according to the 'dump man' I spoke to. "Try Dingwall," he said. I did. They don't take it either. I have Googled DIY waste oil burners for winter heating, but flue fitting and fire risks have put me off. Hopefully this disposal issue will resolve itself.

Thanks everyone for all your contributions to this newsletter recently. It certainly makes the job a lot easier, and your work there is very much appreciated. The notion of having correspondents is starting to gather momentum as you'll see in the Chairs Bitty, so remember to attend the AGM, or in traditional HCMC fashion you might find yourself with a new job.

My personal highlight of the last month was the Practical Classics visit, there was a great turn out from the Highland car community, though only a small proportion were fully paid up HCMC members. The clubs reach is bigger than it's membership, thanks largely to our Facebook presence and Cars and Coffee. Personally I don't have a problem with this, and the event was great success. In fact Practical Classic got in contact and shared the event through Facebook, so whatever your views on social media are, it turned out well. I like this line the best.. "Hope to see you there with members of the brilliant [Highland Classic Motor Club](#) " We're officially brilliant.

For a future newsletter, I thought I might do something about local area number plates. The ST and the AS (SO for Elgin!) I find it fascinating that people are fascinated by this. I have lived and worked all over the place so it doesn't seem to mean much to me but then I do remember the excitement of seeing on SO plate when I was a kid, so there's something in it. 1160 Facebook subscribers can't be wrong. If you want to write in with why local registrations mean something to you, I can compile it into a feature. I think it could be interesting and I don't think it's something we've done before.

Your Editor.

Chairs Bitty

It was the first time that I got to visit the rail depot in Inverness. After briefly standing in front of an automatic gate that wasn't moving, we realised that there was another entrance further down the lane, which did open for us. The place is more extensive than say Strathspey Railway, but it is also cleaner. Just goes to show how dirty coal actually is. We were lucky that on the night in question there was no night shift working, so Steve and co had time to show us round. Sadly, because the trains were jacked up for maintenance, we were not allowed on board. It was a very informative evening and gives you an understanding of what it takes to keep rolling stock running.



The Merc has come back home again, with a working fan. The electrical gremlins were traced to the fan control module (rheostat to you and me) which fried itself and also took out the module on the climate control panel. As you get these days on modern cars, dismantling the dashboard is quite a job. One benefit is that when you have the fan out, you can clean out the airbox and filters to remove dirt and leaves. Judging by what was in there, the previous owner must have parked it under pine trees. It probably contributed to the fan control module failing. Thing is that the grid above the air intake will catch most leaves, but small stuff like pine needles or seeds simply fall through. I've tried putting my arm down the intake, but it is at an awkward angle and longer than my forearm. No chance of me pulling out dirt that way.

We also took the carpet back out of the Smart as the foam backing was getting damp again on the passenger side. We are monitoring the situation, but so far we simply cannot work out where the water is coming from. We still don't think it is the windscreen – with the recent downpours the car is staying dry. But there is marginal condensation on the inner passenger sill. Something to check out.

It was good to read the variety of contributions to last months magazine. With that in mind I think that our editors suggestion last month of "correspondents" can work. It will certainly be on our AGM's agenda this year. Now, I was reading through the requirements for submitting an article to make sure I am getting it right and I have to apologies to Mr. Editor, but Tahoma is not a Linux font, will Arial do? [Ed: I can change it. This is Tahoma in Tahoma font.]

You will remember reading in September about our decking. It has taken me and Alice several weeks of evening and weekend work. Borrowing our neighbours circular saw to cut treated wood to the right size, painting all the wood, building the frame, preparing the ground, siting and levelling the frame (Outlast, if you are interested) and finally rebuilding the deck. It is all in place now and what a joy being able to step out of the house again without getting muddy feet. A job well done.

This month we are having a bowling night at Rollerbowl, usual time of 7.30pm. £7 if you fancy a game or join us to cheer/jeer our efforts. And it being December it means secret Santa time. Remember that Miles is also collecting for MFR's Mission Christmas, if you have a spare toy or gift, donate it to a good cause.

See you there.

Trish

November Club Night



The well-attended event started off with tea and biscuits in the depot conference room, where, after fighting off the volunteers [That's what the PPE was for –Ed] to write up the event, we were given details of the depot, current work ongoing and the required safety information to ensure we were safe to venture into the workshops.



It was fascinating to see how relatively simple some parts of these machines are with the bogey assemblies being held on mostly by gravity and being a very common change out. New units are shipped weekly by road where they are changed out and the old units returned for refurbishment.

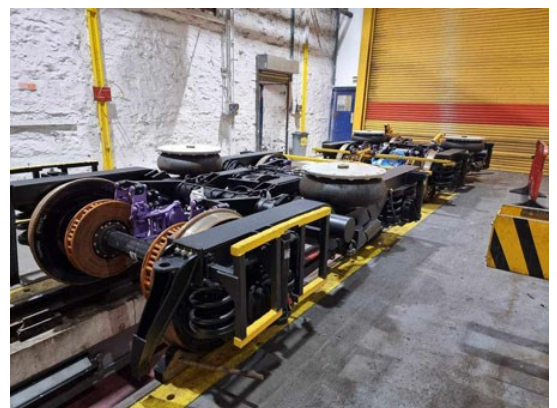
Scotrail Yard

Graeme Bremner

I have to admit I was very excited about this month's visit as I unfortunately missed the last outing there due to work, that was in March 2017 as I was reliably informed by Miles, and a lot has changed at the depot since then. The team has grown in size considerably and the amount of work they undertake in-house has also increased since our last visit.



The visit started in the main engineering workshop where we were greeted by the 2 most common class of trains seen on the highland network. Those who frequent the trains will no doubt have felt the despair of train timetables but to hear just how much maintenance they get through at the depot with the time constraints put on them is incredible. The highland network chalks up around 250,000 miles a month and 10,000L of diesel a day.





The depot is always looking at ways of increasing efficiency and improving safety including a recent project to conceal all the jack lines under the edge of the walkway tidying up the workspace no end.

They also have a very impressive wheel lathe. The machine will re-profile damaged wheels with incredible accuracy and is one of only 3 in Scotland.



At the end of the evening, we were shown around the storage yard which houses all the consumables along with new wheels which are ready for the next batch of trains coming in for maintenance.



A very enjoyable evening and one of the most interesting places I have had the opportunity to go around.

Graeme.

Practical Classics

Highland Visit

As promised by James Walshe Practical Classics came out to play in the Highlands. Danny Hopkins made it in his Fiat Coupe after a wiper arm fell off en-route. We were also rewarded with the company of PC staff Derek, Matt, Matt and Matt the photographer.

We met up in the Braeview Park car park, Beaulieu, and they were astonished to find around 40 cars with more joining later. And they talked to and interviewed nearly everyone, though if everyone makes it to print it will have to be a bumper edition. Danny got our attention and laid out the plan for the day, and amused us with his pronunciation of Dochgarroch. He could work a crowd and I found out why. Seemingly he was an actor in a former life. We had 20 minutes for more interviews and chat to amongst ourselves before we hit the road.



In this photo from atop the recycling bins you can see Matt Tomkin's Ford Focus (Yes I brought mine too.) and Matt George's soft top BMW. A brave choice for November. I loved this 1.5 litre Riley, but there were some reliability issues.





We left on our drive to Cannich in dry weather and beautiful autumn colours. The route was peppered with paparazzi snapping as we drove by. We turned left after the bridge into Cannich towards Drumnadrochit, and then up the A82 to Dochgarroch where we stopped off in the An Talla car park, for more photographs interviews and general chat. I took the opportunity to ask Matt George what the reasoning behind their trip was, and it's a mix of driving your classic all year, finding a beautiful driving route that's not the NC500 as that's over done now, (this is Nessie Loop!) and to drive over the A93 Braemar road, just because it's the highest road in the UK. You can find out more for yourself in a couple of issues time.



Here's my old 205 GTi living a life now I've sold it on.

There were more cars and people at the An Talla car park, and that Riley I admired so much appeared with a soft top conversion and a refreshed paint scheme. It turns out that they had a mechanical issue, probably the clutch, and with some assistance from PC's own Matt Tomkins managed to nurse it home to Muir of Ord and select another from their pool of classics. I spoke to the owners, but I failed to get their name and would probably have forgotten it by now anyway! But they were nice. And niceness was a bit of a theme, as there was a positive atmosphere about the place, and all the PC staff were very well, er, nice. A special niceness award goes out to the helpful Matt Tomkins who once pipped our own Callum Beveridge to PC restorer of the year, but I've forgiven him now because he's so nice. I bet he doesn't bear petty grudges for 5 years or so. That wouldn't be nice.

I'll leave you with a collection of pictures that didn't fit in with this narrative but are hopefully worth sharing anyway. For more pictures check out you social media as there are pictures of this event everywhere.



Matt Tomkins Ford Focus Mk1.

This Alfa has done 350,000 miles

Derek's Saab has a rally homage strap.



Danny Hopkins was fair taken with Craig's Colin McRae Rally Sierra Cosworth and got a special mention on the PC Facebook page. George was warming up his Reliant before the drive. It's had starting issues but it looks like he's fixed them. And yes there's my emerging (according to PC) classic Ford Focus what else would I bring?



Derek Matt and Matt standing by.

A carefully arranged photoshoot.

A travesty of an MG at Beaulieu.

Austin Healey 22

Jim Mackay



The brake fluid reservoir sits above the master cylinder in an exposed area behind the front offside wheel but it hasn't had fluid in it for about fifty years. The top was stuck and it took some time to free it. It didn't move with force and swear words so penetrating fluid was employed and left to soak. Next was heating the top to cherry red which filled the garage with fumes as all the penetrating fluid evaporated and the rubber seal burned off. This was repeated several times over the space of a few days with no success. Finally, I found the answer as shown in the image. Clamp one hefty stillson wrench in the vice, sit the reservoir body in the jaws and use the adjustable wrench shown, not another stillson – that is where I was going wrong! Some wire brushing and a bit of

paint will bring it back into service..... maybe. I'm not even trying to free off the master cylinder.



Tim Moore

I'm sad to report the passing of Tim Moore a well kent face at events and the owner of this lovely Rover 16. He attended may events in the Inverness area despite living in Skye. He suffered from Motor Neurone Disease and moved to Dingwall latterly. He also owned a yellow MGC and was a member of the Highland MG

Cars and Coffee

Your Generosity is VAN-TASTIC!!

Thank You so much to everyone who braved the chilly fog to turn up at CARS AND COFFEE- INVERNESS this morning and help fill Frankenvan with an incredible haul of Toys & Gifts for Cash for Kids North Scotland "MISSION CHRISTMAS."

Everything Donated will be delivered straight to "Cash For Kids" HQ tomorrow for immediate sorting and distribution.

...

See you again on Sunday 10th December for more of the same!



I say it every year, but charity is an important part of our car (and motors) scene and this sentiment is echoed in the editorial of the most recent copy of Practical Classics, so there must be something in it. We try not to overdo it, but you are more than welcome to overdo your donations should you choose too.

Bring along New Unwrapped Toys & Gifts to the next Cars and Coffee on the December Club night.

Out And About

Jim Mackay



Spotted in Balintore.

Ed: I remember those rusty bits. I'm having post traumatic flash backs.

A nice Rover 25 spotted around Inverness. Surely a car with future classic prospects.



In the US of A, you'd face a hard time and penalties if you overtook one of these parked at the side of the road. I wonder what it's doing over here in Inverness and what the owner thinks about the fuel prices?



Grampian Transport Museum Heritage Skills

The GTM over in Alford are running some Heritage Skills Workshops over winter. As many of you will know, the skills to look after heritage vehicles and engines are becoming less prevalent and the opportunities to learn even more so. They are working on a programme of workshops to address this need, after a pilot programme last year was well received.

Unfortunately we have missed an Introduction to Steam by the Bon Accord Steam Engine Club, this newsletter isn't out in time to tell you about the Classic Car Maintenance class, but there is time to get to the Classic Car Electrics session. It costs £45 for a four hour session and covers: Batteries and chargers, Dynamos and Alternators Voltage regulators and cutouts.

Ignition. Magnetos. Coils Distributors. Ignition timing. Starter motors. Wiring, harnesses, fuses and relays. Lighting,. Instruments. Auxiliaries, horns, fuel pumps etc.

I wonder what the etc might cover! More details online www.gtm.org.uk/events/

They have also listed next years events for those of you who like to plan ahead.



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DEC

HERITAGE SKILLS: CLASSIC CAR ELECTRICS

SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER 2023 // 1:00PM -
5:00PM

NEC Classic Motor Show

Chris Silver



The Princess used to belong to Eddie Ritchie (Snr) but is now safely living in Lowestoft with proud and enthusiastic owner, Simon.

The other picture will set the hearts of all Bond Equipe owners in the Club (OK, all one of them), showing a one-off Equipe Estate.

Too many tempting things to buy but did have a run in a McLaren 675S – WOW!!!



Pantomime.

Scene 1. Act 1.

Principal Players -
Jim Mackay
Bryan Mcilwraith

The setting; A single track road in the middle of nowhere.

And there was me thinking my days of pantomime were over. Oh no!
I popped up to see Jim to get a form signed. While I was there Jim casually asked if I'd give him a hand to collect another Polo that he'd bought. It was up in Abriachan, about as far off the beaten track as you can go, and it wasn't a runner so it would have to be towed. No problem. So the next day we set off in Jim's van. Jim had a rigid tow bar which he started to fit to the towing eye on the Polo which the owner had helpfully screwed in. As he was doing so I remarked that on one of my Volvos the towing eye had ripped out when I went to tow a certain Mr. Smith. Anyway we got it hitched up and set off down the drive. Jim turned right heading for the town via Blackfold – and a hundred yards along the road – the towing eye ripped out! Perhaps it is a common problem on older cars as it lives down low exposed to all the dirt and wet from the road.

First problem was that we were blocking the road. The nearest lay by wasn't too far behind us, but the Polo wasn't that easy to push and I'm just not fit for pushing cars any more, but we did manage it. Now Jim (not me) had to jury rig something to get us out of a hole. Fortunately he had some tools and a couple of U shackles in his van. He got down on his knees on the road and started to work it out. Me? What did I do? I stood and bloody shivered. Did I mention it was that day of freezing fog. It was utterly Baltic. Full marks to Jim, he managed to get a secure fixing somewhere and off we set. I don't know if any of you have been towed with a rigid bar, but it's quite scary as you're only five feet behind the tow vehicle, and with it being a van I could not see where we were going. In addition to that on the steep bit of Backfold, the mist was so thick I could barely see the verge and of course I didn't have wipers or demisting! Tons of fun.

Ok, we got to Inverness without further mishap, and a cup of hot coffee helped to stave off hypothermia.

I remarked to Jim that I've been on many similar adventures in the past, often in the company of Ranald, but the difference is that in the old days we always used to end up in the pub where we could laugh about it. Nowadays coffee and a biscuit is as wild as we get!

Bryan.

HCMC Events

Sunday 10th Dec 2023 Cars And Coffee - Mission Christmas. Rollerbowl, Culduthel Rd. Inverness. 10am-12noon. It's time for our usual Christmas charity. Bring along an unwrapped toy suitable for children, and help turn some youngsters Christmas day around.