

CLASSIC SCENE



Oct 2026



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Cover Picture

Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle
Rally.

An excellent drone picture courtesy
of the talented George Finlayson.

Welcome to the October Newsletter

In this issue we have a reviews of the Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally, the excellent final club night drive of the year, Cars and Coffee and no less than two articles about the Farming Yesteryear at Scone Palace, plus lots more.

This month, most of my spare time has been taking up organising the upcoming auction night. This is a bit different from usual as we are using it to move on some of the prize possessions of members and friends, Ranald Smith and Bryan McIlwraith. It's been tricky handling the responsibility of selling other people's things and the sentimental links they have with them. I think both would like to see them redistributed amongst club members but also don't want to give them away for the usual auction night comedy (or laughable?) £1. There will be an item list later in this newsletter and there are some useful lots in there. I already have my eye on about half of them and have an envelope of cash ready. There may be slight conflict of interest as I have also volunteered to be the auctioneer on the night! In the interest of managing expectations, I am not a professional auctioneer, my only experience is from watching Bargain Hunt or Bangers and Cash on the telly and they have a fancy computer system to help. Please come along ready to bid, as you will be helping out two significant club members and their families and you'll get some good deals as well.

What time has been left this month has been spent fixing Mrs Editor's Skoda Fabulous. I noticed an oil leak at the nearside front. I first thought it was a leaking strut, but although rusty, that was dry. On investigation the recently fitted drive shaft appeared to be covered in oil and having just replaced that I went down a rabbit hole of suspecting the gearbox seal, but on investigation, that looked ok too. I started the engine and lo, there was a drip of oil. More stripping down and I found it was coming from a metal pipe under the front "chassis" rail. This came from a strange assembly I didn't recognise, but Google Lens told me it was an electro-mechanical power steering pump. Then everything fell into place! As I write I am waiting for a new power steering hose assembly to arrive. This will mean lowering the front subframe again, which isn't too difficult but there is an MOT looming for extra jeopardy.

All this activity has meant progress on the Sierra has halted again, the grass is a foot high, and the hedges haven't been cut. The next couple of days will be spent on this newsletter. Sometimes I wonder about my lifestyle choices mainly the banger-nomics one, but with challenges come rewards. I have colleagues who have cars on finance and who are tied into a certain dominant dealer network for servicing, where they can experience two week waiting times, so perhaps it's not so bad. Meanwhile the Beetle, the Panda and the Mundane-O are going really well.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter, and I'll see you at the auction night.

Your Editor.

Ramblings from the Chair



Last month, prior to the Fortrose classic car gathering, I delivered the Club's gazebo (to keep the pipe band dry, in case of inclemency) to longstanding Club member, John Mackenzie (Club Member no. 29 – wow!) and was amazed to see his long term project of an Austin Seven 'new build' in his garage. Bodily it is almost complete, it stands on all four wheels and awaits an engine and internal fitting out before hitting the road. John has made the body frame from timber and skinned it with aluminium sheet, folded by hand using nothing more than a vice mounted scaffold pole to achieve the necessary curves on the bonnet and the very attractive boat tailed rear quarters. He tells me there was quite a lot of fettling required to get the panels to fit, but to my eye, it is fantastic. All of this is fitted to an old Austin Seven chassis which holds the suspension, steering and running gear – absolutely brilliant.

I am constantly amazed at the wealth of expertise which can be found amongst our members (and way in excess of my humble mechanical skills) – on last month's Club final 2026 run, what should turn up but a large 1930's gangster car with circular doors, a Rolls Royce lookalike grill and beautifully painted in dark blue and pale yellow. It is actually based on a Mercedes Sprinter van and has been named by the owner (according to the DVLA!) as a Vintage Rose Special (it received an MOT pass just days before). Unfortunately, I did not get the name of the builder nor do I know if he is a Club member but he did tell me that the internal upholstery and fitting out will be his winter project – I very much look forward to seeing the completion of the project in due course. Similarly, I managed a very fleeting glance of what is best described as a Beetle shell on legs (it passed me going the other way, in the almost dark, between Beaulieu and Muir of Ord, on a trailer) owned by Club member Ian 'Chevy' Cormack. He told me later that he had produced this as a feature to be shown at the Belladrum music festival, really as a bit of fun and a test of his welding skills (and his wonderful imagination). I again, look forward to seeing it a close quarters. I am also keen to find ways of divulging all of these skills to a wider audience – I think we classic car owners are a fairly shy group who do not shout about our hobby nearly as much as we should. As Chairman, and I speak for the rest of the Committee, we would love to hear about your achievements – and perhaps include features of your vehicles on the website or in future monthly newsletters. All you need to do is get in touch and we will do the rest.

Anyway, back to John Mackenzie's Austin Seven – it reminds me of the life of John Haynes (founder of the Car Manual empire and described as a Messiah by James May). He was born into a privileged background, but as a schoolboy aged 16, bought a scrap Austin Seven (for £15), had the scrap dealer remove the body and with the help of his teachers and school facilities, built a 'Special' from ash and aluminium. The car actually ran around the school grounds, much to the



admiration of fellow pupils and staff. With money making schemes in his head, he produced a 48 page pamphlet, with drawings, of how he had built the Special, had 250 copies made (on the school's Gestetner duplicating machine) and sold them for 5/- a copy. I can remember having a copy of such (I think Practical Classics included it in one of their editions), long since lost, but my recollection is that that the U shaped chassis members were strengthened by welding a plate on the bottom to make a box section and that there was always a problem in that the engine would lose a lot of oil under spirited driving. The latter was put down to the rigid fixing of the engine to the chassis rails and that on hard cornering, the twisting of the rails would cause the engine to warp sufficiently to induce a gap between the block and the head! (I hope John will use rubber mounting bushes when he finds an engine!!). Haynes left school to do his National Service in the Air Force but managed to produce similar books on building Ford Specials based on the Ford Ten and Eight. Despite being abroad in Germany, he managed to sell his books under his own company name with an address in Old Bond Street in the heart of London's 'old money' district. He had actually charmed a middle aged lady not only to use her flat address, but also to receive orders, package and post the books and cash cheques for him. An amazing story and life— all of which is detailed in his biography – 'John Haynes, The Man behind the Manuals' – a brilliant read.

Next month's Club Night is a slight break in tradition with the timing of Annual Auction, now at the end of summer, so that you have had the opportunity to clear out the garage/shed when the weather is not so cold and sell those treasures to the hordes of willing bidders. This year we will have many 'serious' items from Bryan and Ranald, both of whom are unfortunately in serious failing health – these will each have their own reserves so, dig deep, and have a good look at what is on offer. Details of the Auction, including prior viewing, are listed later in the newsletter and on our web page. Hope to see you all there – Thursday 1st October, Craigmonie Hotel, 7.30pm.

Regards, Richard

September Club Night

I managed to take a couple of hours off at the end of my shift to attend the final club night drive of the year, and still with my 'work head' on (remember Worzel Gummidge?) I headed off to North Kessock. Lost in my thoughts I drove straight past the Harry Gow layby, cursed and turned left into North Kessock to go back but spotted Tom MacCallum heading down towards the pier. Ah. Penny dropped. We were meeting in the big car park opposite the hotel, the same meeting point I described in last months newsletter. I swapped my 'HCMC' head on.



Soon the car park was busy with the usual suspects and one unusual one, as described by Richard earlier. The massive Vintage Rose Special rolled into the car park making everyone stare. As it parked we all headed over like moths to a lamp. The owner said, "I hope you don't mind, I thought I'd just come along." "Er, no. Just look at the crowd you have gathered." I suppose this is one of the benefits of our social media presence. The car is based on the one-off Art Deco "Round Door" Rolls-Royce which is based on the 1925 Rolls-Royce Phantom I. Google it. I did!

And we were off. Richard led us off on another of his excellent meandering routes to Muir of Ord, (some of the roads were new to me,) until we arrived at the Ord Arms Hotel for banter and booze. Well we would have in the old days, now it's more soft drinks and chat. The coffee was via a machine at reception purchased with a token from the bar. The bar was a nice place to be and we gravitated into little groups. Our group was joined by an Australian hotel guest and fellow petrol head. He liked his classic Aussie V8's and in particular the GM group Holdens. I tried my chat about Ford Falcons after seeing the one at cars and coffee but my knowledge proved lacking and on noting my Ford bias, he soon moved to sit next to our GM group expert Richard Lashley!

I had arranged to meet a work pal and old Volvo enthusiast who lives in the Muir and popped outside to look for him. There I met another group chatting and joined them for a bit (like a socially awkward butterfly) until my pal turned up, then it was back it to lurk near the sporty Highland Car Club gang until the end of the evening and drove home in the dark. It's indoor meetings until Spring now.



Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally

I was pleased to be able to attend this year's Fortrose & Rosemarkie Classic Vehicle Rally as it is one of my personal favourites. I like how it's a three-part event, four if you count the drive to the Dingwall Mart. I like how the traffic gathers more and more Classics as you approach Dingwall. I first passed a 50cc Honda scooter, then I was joined by a Volvo 340 and I'm thinking, "I know where you're going." We got stuck behind a tediously slow Motorhome, but on the A835 by Conon Bridge there was a chance and I floored the bottom hinged accelerator pedal, and heading gradually towards 60 mph, the Beetle easily passed the camper van, followed by the red Volvo. In my wing mirror I could see the sporty boys in their fast retro Fords whizzing passed the same slow camper. I wonder what they thought of being overtaken by eight or so old classics, led by a 40hp Beetle? Probably something like, "Tut, tut. Another Wethers Original dear?"

Meeting up at the Dingwall Mart is like having a private preview, similar to tech billionaire Peter Thiel's exclusive access to the Bayeaux Tapestry recently. It's nice to see the cars and the drivers gathering in this relaxed setting. This was my chance to hand in my raffle tickets. I got drawn into the excitement of the raffle a couple of years back waiting at the end of the show, ticketless, with a friend. I had to ask for help with the process this year - such a newbie.

Part three of the day depending on how you're counting, is the drive through Dingwall, over the Cromarty Bridge, along the dark side of the Black Isle (come on, it faces north!) looping round Balblair with an enthusiastic reception from the local households. We carried on down to the Fairy Glen, around Rosemarkie to the show ground in the King George V playing field in Fortrose. It was a slow start as we followed the same 50cc Honda scooter for a while, then sped up towards a leisurely 30 mph. We got to (I think) a "Welcome to Resolis" sign which I was thinking was nice and twee, like entering a small American town, with Mom's, drugstores and apple pie. Then zoom, zoom, zoom. There was some enthusiastic overtaking by the fast Fords and rapid Rootes boys. That ended my reverie. Pop. The rest of the drive was as good, although, as the traffic was hindered by another Motorhome in Rosemarkie, I missed the designated left turn and got to the playing fields via an unapproved route - this resulted in catching up with those fast lads at the entrance.

Part Four. I parked up, annoyingly squint, but I was parallel to the neighbouring car and I had been guided in so don't judge me too harshly. I asked for a peek under the bonnets of some of those faster cars and found a selection of Lotus Twin Cam engines and Cosworth engineered BDG racing engines. Fast and classic.

The show was excellent, and even better than last year. There were a lot of tourists in town (sorry, Burgh) and they added to the throngs, making it feel busy.



There were 190 entries plus another 7 that turned up on the day. Fortunately, the organisers were able to fit them in. I don't think I got to see all the cars due to too much chatting. I do have some favourites though, the Ferrari 308 at the top of my list, a Rally Escort RS1800 (one of those BDG engines again), the blue Porsche 356 (I wonder if he's noticed that I swapped engines yet), the orange Corvette C3, the Rover 90, the Vauxhall Velox, The Ford Model A (or T) hot rod pickup and the Red Mk2 Mini Cooper S. I bumped into John Fair walking in the display area and was congratulating him on an excellent show. I got the impression it was more of a relief than a triumph. The volunteers who organise these shows put so much effort in it's a shame it's difficult to just enjoy the day when it arrives, well done everyone, it was indeed a triumph.

Part 5. The raffle and the rain. The raffle is the last event before the close of play and many of us were lined up feeling expectant, and then in my case less expectant, then disappointed. Nothing. Meanwhile the man who got me into this high-stakes gambling lark walked off with a large bottle of whisky. (He knows who he is.) Still, it's a bit of fun at the end of the day, and you get to see some of the committee in action.

And that's it until next year, when we expect it will be a little bit bigger and a little bit better, as it steadily grows in popularity.

Farming Yesteryear Part 1

Hello, it's a rare appearance from myself, Mrs. Editor, in the pages of the newsletter. I'm normally only trusted to proofread the newsletter before your editor presses the send button, but I've been let loose to report on Farming Yesteryear which took place at Scone palace on the 12th and 13th September. I travelled down on the 13th to meet up with family as it was my youngest great-nephew's 2nd birthday and he is tractor mad. His eyes were like saucers the whole day – never have there been so many tractor appearances in his young life!

This was the Scottish Vintage Tractor and Engine Club's 47th rally featuring tractors of all ages with a special mention to the 80th anniversary of the Ferguson TE20 and also 100 years of the Lister D engine.

Sunny Sunday saw a huge crowd from wee bairns to auld enthusiasts and many dogs (I may have been a bit distracted by passing dogs and the Clydesdale horses in the ring – I'm more of a one horsepower fan).

We arrived in time to see the Scottish Microcar Club take to the ring followed by a plethora of bikes, motorbikes, cars and tractors – soooo many tractors – my favourites were the old Ferguson TE20's and a Caterpillar D2. I gave an involuntary shudder at the Massey Ferguson 135's and 300's – the tractors of choice for the farmers of my Angus childhood tattie picking days.

A whole load of car clubs were in attendance ranging from Angus Classic Enthusiasts to the Fife Volkswagen Club. I lingered far too long at the Beetles and Morris Minors on display – my very favourite classic cars. (And despite what your editor would have you think, 'his Beetle' really belongs to me!)

All in all it was a brilliant day out with hundreds of vehicles, steam engines, those beautiful Clydesdale horses and lots of different stalls (was so glad Calum wasn't there to bring home more junk, ahem, important spare parts from all the autojumble stalls).

My wee great-nephew loved every minute of it, as did the rest of us. See you there next year?



Farming Yesteryear Part 2

We had two dry days for Farming Yesteryear at Scone Palace, which hosted the Champion of Champions so there were more than the usual number of fine exhibits.



The veteran motorcycle in contention was propelled out of the ring like a balance bike. I don't suppose it needed to run to win a prize. Each to their own I say.



The running Landrover (left above) was stripped and put back together in less time than it takes me to change a wheel.

Jim Mackay



This TR-TE25 has had it's Triumph type engine tuned like a TR4, with a highlift cam, big valve cyinder head Twin Weber 40's and producing over 125 bhp. My favourite bit is the racing seat. Sent to your editor by a friend.

Out and About

Alice Brown



Alice has been out and about in the glorious Moray town of Grantown (yes, I'm biased) and sent in these interesting snaps.



Musings on the Modern Motor Industry

I was musing while 'resting' in traffic the other day. If the heyday of British car manufacturing occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, it was overwhelmed by European and Japanese manufacturing in the 1970s to the 1990s. Then Seats and Hyundai's offered good value and became popular on British Roads in the 2000s. Now the Kia's and Dacia's are being replaced by even more homogenous Chinese electric cars to the point where I don't know what anything is anymore. BYD (Build Your Dreams - really?), Chery. GWM, Genesis, Omoda, Jaecoo. What's going on? VW are in trouble and I read that on a Chinese visit to a VW plant, they were surprised at how out-dated their manufacturing was.

It is often repeated that working in the car trade isn't fun anymore. I've read that the Jaguar Landrover workforce is cut back so much that it is a difficult place to work. (I tried to phrase that in the least libelous way possible.) Is it just global economics and the competing cost of labour, or are the new companies just finding more efficient manufacturing methods than their predecessors? Probably both.

And amongst all this negativity, is the positivity that is the classic car world, celebrating the shapes and styles of yesterday where craftsmanship and design vision gave us cars that looked different and had quirks you could talk about in the pub, and then drive home! (Not me, officer.)

(Author's identity kept secret for legal reason's. Editors can protect their sources. Can't they?)

Wheels of Nairn

Your Editor wasn't organised enough to get a place or even go to what is one of the last Car Shows of the year. We did have at least one HCMC representative in the form of Miles Vincent and his Mini, and he sent in these pictures and more.



You can't tell but it was so windy they had to cancel the stalls in case they blew over and hurt someone, and there were some proper soaking showers too.



The event extended into Nairn town centre as a car treasure hunt which began in early September. Thirteen toy cars were hidden in shop windows, with each representing a letter to work out the three word answer, 'Nairn Car Sales.' Last year I popped into the town to see Nigel at Vinyl to Vintage and wander the High Street. Well worth it, so a good idea by the organisers.

Although not pictured here, the blue Porsche 356 as featured in our Fortrose and Rosemarkie Classic Car Rally article deservedly won best in show, even though I nicked his engine at that event. It only takes 20 minutes to change a Beetle engine you know!

Here's to next year.

Cars and Coffee



What can be said about our Cars and Coffee event that hasn't already been said? Everyone loves it.



If you count the cars in George's drone picture, you soon get to 120 and there are even more than that. I like the TVR Vixen below with it's huge rear window.



The Chevrolet Caprice Station Wagon reminded me of Chevy Chase's National Lampoon Vacation film. Below that, Poppy the Beetle found a friend. That's nice.



Cub Auction Night Thursday 1st October

The club auction is a slightly more serious affair this year as we are using it to help out long term members Bryan and Ranald, by auctioning off some of their automotive tools and memorabilia. There is a list of items on the next page and on the Club's Facebook page, which also has all the pictures. The Auction is at the Craigmonie Hotel, on Annfield Road, Inverness, and bidding kicks off at 7:30pm sharp as there could be quite a lot to get through. We plan to have the main sale items available for viewing from about 5:30 so you can judge how much you want to bid. There are about 40 items, and once these have gone, we will revert to selling members items. This usually descends into selling items for a pound with banter and laughs, so if you have a reserve in mind, maybe mark that on your item.

Your Editor will be the auctioneer, (and in a swift change of grammatical person) I confess I'm not a proper auctioneer and I will be bidding too, so please bear with me. Please try and bring as much cash as you need. I have spoken to our treasurer, and it is possible to take BACS payments from your mobile device, but we'd rather avoid that. Cheques are a last resort as we get charged for cashing them.

What follows is a sample gallery of items on offer to whet your appetite and to send you to the cash machine.



Happy bidding, and see you there.

Auction Night

Lot numbers and reserve prices

Lot 1	Ring 12V Single Box Bulb Stand	£40
Lot 2	heavy-duty wooden trestles	£15
Lot 3	Alness Car Rally glasses	£3
Lot 4	Promotional tyre advertising ashtrays	£5
Lot 5	Parkside Flux Cored Wire Welder	£35
Lot 6	Maypole Automatic Workshop Charger	£25
Lot 7	10-Litre NATO Jerry Can with Flexible Spout	£8
Lot 8	4ft (1.2m) PVC Trailer Lighting Board	£5
Lot 9	Sealey MightyMig 100 Portable Welder	£10
Lot 10	Industrial 2-Gauge MIG Gas Regulators	£10
Lot 11	Pair Heavy Duty Vehicle Wheel Dollies	£25
Lot 12	Top Gear items	£15
Lot 13	"Models of Yesteryear" ashtrays/trinket dishes	£30
Lot 20	Parkside Plasma Cutter PPS 40 series	£40
Lot 21	Workzone Air Compressor Bargain	£30
Lot 22	Bench grinder/sander	£15
Lot 23	Auto-Darkening Welding Helmet	£10
Lot 24	Red 12-Ton Hydraulic Floor Workshop Press	£50
Lot 25	90-Litre Pro Belt Drive Air Compressor	£120
Lot 26	MAPP gas blow torch kit	£20
Lot 27	Sealey Mighty Mig 100 Portable Welder	£15
Lot 28	Workzone 160A Turbo Fan Cooled Arc Welder	£30
Lot 29	150mm (6-inch) Heavy Duty Vice	£10
Lot 30	Set of 4 Vehicle Wheel Dollies	£30
Lot 31	Vintage Heavy Duty Leg Vice	£50
Lot 32	SIP Topweld 140 Turbo Arc Welder	£10
Lot 33	3-Tonne Heavy Duty Hydraulic Trolley Jack	£20
Lot 34	2-Tonne Heavy Duty Low Profile Trolley Jack	£15
Lot 35	Clarke Air Hammer Chisel Kit	£5
Lot 36	Mixed lot of garage air compressor tools	£15
Lot 37	Electrical Crimp Terminal Connector Kit	£4
Lot 38	Powerspark Professional Ignition Timing Light	£10
Lot 39	Neilsen 9-Piece Noid Light Set	£5
Lot 40	8-Piece Cylinder Compression Tester Kit	£5
Lot 41	Fuel Injection Pump Pressure Tester Gauge Kit	£5
Lot 42	3-in-1 Compressed Air line accessories	£10
Lot 43	Mac Tools Magnetic Parts Tray	£5

HCMC Events

1st October 2026 In a change to the usual schedule we will be having an October Auction Night. Weather affected attendance last year. I have a feeling this could be a special event, so save up your money now. Craigmonie Hotel, 9 Annfield Road, Inverness IV2 3HX. Auction Starts at 19:30. Preview available from 17:30. See article in the Newsletter and Facebook page.

11th October Cars And Coffee Inverness. The Drumossie Hotel, Inverness IV2 5BE. 10am - 12noon. A quiet social gathering of 20th Century classics plus modern vehicles of interest. Park up, buy yourself a hot drink & snack from Drumossie Hotel and check out what's in the car park. Find us on FACEBOOK.

5th November 2026 HCMC Visit to the Outdoor Curling Rink Clubhouse, Inverness.

3rd December 2026 Secret Santa & Talk by Detectorists, Venue T.B.C.

Triumph Stag for Sale



Bryan has decided to sell his Stag. Guide price of £7500-9000 but will need to be negotiated. Currently running with a 2.5, 6 cylinder engine. (As per original design.) Spares available including V8 engine with a seized cylinder head stud.

Enquiries to editor@highlandclassic.org.uk

