

CLASSIC SCENE



December 2022



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Cover Picture

Cars and Coffee attendees give gen-
erously to Moray Firth Radio's 'Cash
for Kids - Mission Christmas' appeal.

Welcome to the December Newsletter

The headline story from the HCMC newsroom is that your editor passed out and brained himself off the granite hearth in the living room. I've been dizzy and (more) dopey since, like being seasick on a boat. A trip to the hospital for scans showed that I do have a brain (NHS consultant humour) but unfortunately it's not firing on all cylinders. Unlike the cast iron equivalent though it should heal in time.



A consequence of this predicament is that I'm not allowed to drive at least until mid December which as the owner of nine vehicles, is quite inconvenient however I do have a chauffeur in the form of Mrs Editor.

We had a long weekend booked in Arbroath and intended to take the VW Van, but Mrs Editor hasn't driven it yet and finds it a bit daunting. I shall remedy this - it's actually nice and easy to drive. So it's lucky I bought the wee Skoda for a reliable car, except we couldn't fit all our stuff and three Labradors in it. No problem I have a roof box, and just needed a roof rack. Halfords over £200! Eek. Online was much the same. Cheaper ones were available but not within our delivery window before we left.

The next logistical issue was that our nice (relatively) new Skoda has a slight coolant leak. I thought that was just incompetence on my part when I fitted the new (water cooled) EGR valve but on this occasion it wasn't me. It was a leaking water pump, so that was that travel option gone. And a timing belt kit ordered.

I have an old roof rack for the Focus in the garage rafters (never throw things out!) but the bars are rusty and probably not safe. However I have good bars for the van. So a bit of swapperoonie and refurbishment and new bolts and the fabulous Focus was adorned with a roof box and we were ready to go.

For a car that is nominally our most unreliable due to it's age and mileage, it drove perfectly, without hitch. New drop links meant it handled the A9 pot holes with aplomb. The only issue was the howling winds going over the Drumochter summit making steering difficult. The traffic slowed down, it was that bad, but they didn't have the added hindrance of a roof box catching the gusts. The first I was aware of it was when I was woken from my snooze by swearing from the drivers seat.

We stopped of at my favourite Ballinluig Motor Grill, which was excellent as always, but I was dismayed to find it was to be closed for refurbishment (i.e. change!) in January. Chatting to our waitress showed I wasn't the only customer to be alarmed. I sent in an email expressing my concerns. On the way back north we popped in again and met the manager Claire who now knows my name from the email. Thankfully they aren't going to change the key features of greasy menu, fast service and bench seating. Mrs Editor was (quite) a bit embarrassed on my behalf.

I hope you enjoy the rest of this December news letter,

Your Editor.

Chairs Bitty

OK, I didn't get to the meet last month. Both Alice and I were a bit under the weather and we did not want to accidentally share any germs with fellow club members. So we stayed at home and I thought about baking an apple pie instead to cheer us up – but didn't have enough flour. Or caster sugar. And a few days later the fridge packed in.



But do doubt, those of you who met up in Munlochry will have had some time to catch up with the gossip. More time for gossiping this December.

I thought I would tell you about a recent trip we had down to Edinburgh at the very end of October. Local members of the Series2 Owners Club had arranged for a visit to the Bo'ness & Kineill Railway and workshops and we decided to go down in the Landrover. Boy were we glad we had the new heated front windscreens as they did their job very well during the drive down. The Landie returned an average of 24mpg on that trip. Not bad for a 60 year old 2 1/4 petrol engine.

Once back home, we discovered that the headlights weren't working any more. They sure were when we arrived in Edinburgh, so somewhere along the weekend or on the way home there was a meltdown. Literally. The fuse holder fused without blowing the fuse and melting through the wiring instead. Closer inspection the wiring revealed that relay and fuse we installed a few years ago turned out to be not as chunky as they pretended to be. Perhaps a case of feeble wiring in chunky plastic, although we suspect that the heavy rain during the weekend may have had something to do with it too. Alice has since spend some time completely re-wiring the headlights and each headlight is now separately controlled by fuse and relay.

Back to our visit to the railway which was very good. After a round trip on the railway, we were treated to a tour of their workshops. The steam shed, the carriage shed, the diesel shed and finishing up at the museum. Just like in Aviemore the steam shed has several engines in for a back to basic refurb. In the carriage shed they were undertaking some crafty repairs. Not able to source any replacement Teak, they had made up metal sheet panels and did a very convincing paint job on them.



The diesel shed included the hydrogen test train and several sets of axles undergoing work. Unfortunately we did not have much time to look round the diesel shed as the tour was by that time running out of time. We were in danger of getting caught in the yard by moving traffic and hence were ushered along to finish the tour at the museum.

After the museum visit Alice and I cheekily asked whether we could have a visit to the signal box, and they let us in! We got a change to observe the signal man in action during a shunt manoeuvre in the yard.

I recently did, what I hope is, the last cut of the grass this year. It was getting long enough that someone's cat was using it for a toilet, yugh. Specially that rather runny jobbie. Just as well that I did a walkover first to check, imagine what that would do to your lawnmower. To get me over that horrible thought, I bought a Paeonia from one of the cut brand supermarkets, simply because it promises to have nice white flowers. I've already got a set in the garden which gives us around 8-10 really big flowers each year. This expect that this new Paeonia will have smaller flowers, but more of them. Back in the garden with my new purchase, there was a bit of head scratching to work out where I would plant it up. In the end a swathe of Michaelmas daisies got the chop to make room for this newcomer. As a result of this, and recent gardening, there is a amenity site garden run worths in the brown bin.

Car wise, it has been a quiet month. It has allowed us to get on with installing someone's cast off kitchen into our garage. The storage we had there consisted of some of our old kitchen units (doors falling off, etc) in a yukki beige colour, some repurposed old bits of wardrobe and an old mail sorting type unit. Now we have fairly decent units in a u shape at the back of the garage. Just as well we aren't parking any cars in the garage anyway 'cause now they definitely won't fit any more. Main benefit is that we are able to get into the garage again without having to climb over things.

This month we are meeting at the Old North Inn, but note the earlier time of 7.00pm. As it is our December meet we will have our Secret Santa (if your budget can stretch to it).

See you there,

Trish.

Cars And Coffee

13th November



The new normal is your editor's selections from the cars on display on at Cars and Coffee. That Datsun 240Z (I think it's a 240) overtook us at warp factor speed later that day. It looked good. Even Mrs Editor ooo'd and ah'd.



Austin Healey 16

The front wings were a bit ragged round the edges and new ones were prohibitively expensive. Nothing was appearing on eBay so I ordered repair sections which didn't fit, surprise, surprise. The wheel arch is wired and repairing these would be short term as I doubt I'd get rid of all the rust. On the balance I decided to buy new wings which wouldn't bubble up any time soon. The bank manager had a bubble at the price though and I had a bubble when it came to fitting them. New wings will fit very well I thought, my troubles are over I thought.



Cheers, *Jim MacKay*.

Out and About

Jim Mackay has been out and snapped this Volvo. The big old Volvos are looking good. I have not been out much, but spotted this Triumph GT6 for sale online



and I think it looks great. The shape the colour, the stripes and the big wheels give it a sense of purpose, and heavy steering probably.

NEC Classic Car Show

Attendees: Steve Matheson, Tony Dafino, John Fair & Barry Clark

We decided that this year's trip would be the classic car show at the NEC in Birmingham.

As soon as EasyJet flights became available, we booked them and hotel at the same time. Decided to fly to Luton and drive back to Birmingham as it was much cheaper than flying Logan Air to Manchester.

Myself, Barry and John flew down on the Thursday lunch time flight. Tony had a business trip overseas and was in London before us, so he would collect the car and meet us at Luton. We asked him to be present in hat and chauffeur uniform with our names on a placard, but he didn't hear this or more likely just chose to ignore our instruction. So, we set off up the M6 and duly arrived in our hotel, a Premier Inn on the outskirts of Birmingham. As this is Tony's old stomping ground, satnav was not required. Settled in and enjoyed a beer and a curry and retired for the night.

Day 1

Big breakfast in the morning and then set off for the NEC. Again, as Tony was driving, we knew we'd have no issues getting there. As there were plenty of stores nearby and being big advocates of the Tesco meal deal (even after it was raised to £3.40) we duly stopped and grabbed one for our lunch time snack, apart from Barry who had obviously decided on a one-man odyssey to patronise each of the various NEC food outlets but that's another story.

Got to the NEC and made our way to the halls. It's a massive place and it took us a while to get our bearings and which bus would get us back and fore to the car park, etc, think we eventually cracked it after 3 days.

Went into the first hall which was mainly Ford based. Every conceivable version of most of the popular models were on display. There was also a display of police cars, including a 2.8 Capri and a Granada resplendent in 80's livery. The famous Sweeney Consul GT, NHK 295M, was there which I know was a personal highlight for Tony. I think he would gone down for this alone.

We then wandered through the passageway into the next hall, casually passing a few rally cars parked up, including a South African spec Firenza which was supplied with a 302 V8 Chevy motor.



This hall was filled with various makes of cars, too many to mention really but there was a great assortment of BL cars, including some fantastically restored Allegro, Marina, Land Crab, etc which were a real testament to the owners when you realise that they were obviously a labour of love rather than financial investments. There was also a fantastic BMC bus converted to carry race cars.



This hall also contained a lot of memorabilia and autojumble stands. Tried to avoid these really as it would be difficult to carry stuff about and get it home.

Passed a familiar looking chap here and realised it was Dave Mathewson from 'Bangers & Cash' fame. Talking of auctions, we then went to view the cars which were due to be sold off on the Saturday. Purchased a catalogue, £10 which allowed 2 persons entry. This was a bargain for such a well printed and informative document, Morris Leslie hang your head in shame!!



There were some fabulous vehicles here but for me one of the best was an exceptional mk1 Ford Transit which was a credit to the owner who had restored it. Really attracted a lot of attention. There were people all over, and under it.



Lots of other great cars including a Chevette HS X, 1 of only 10 produced, and an unregistered '89 XJS that had only done 100 miles and an 18,000 mile Aston Martin DB 7 amongst others. Another fantastic entry was a Honda NSX with only 11,000 miles on the clock. The fact that we could get in and out of it was a bonus, particularly if you had seen our efforts doing the same in a GT 40!!



Barry had wandered off to the Charity Bears area where the owners take you out for a ride out in their vehicle and you make a suitable donation. He went out in a couple of Lotus Exige's which makes me think the Elise may be due an upgrade. By this time it was getting close to 6pm and we were eventually kicked/dragged out. Did think at one point of hiding under a tarpaulin and having exclusive access to myself all night!!

Back to our base and we enjoyed a sit-down meal in a local takeaway establishment followed by a beer or two.

Day 2

Definitely a bit busier on the Saturday. We continued where we had left off the day before looking at various dealer stock and car club stands. Passed the Scimitar stand, apparently someone famous used to own one but can't quite remember who it was, and I don't mean Miles. Went to have a look at some of the Aston stock. John particularly liked the DBS Superleggera Concorde edition. One of only 10 with various nods to the iconic airliner including the CAA aircraft identifier number on the rear quarter and a Concorde silhouette incorporated into the wing vent. Maybe Barry won't be the only person upgrading their vehicle?

Decided not to view the auction live in case we got sucked in and spent too long there and end up missing out on some of the show items. Found the Lotus Drivers Club. Barry beat us there and was already signing up. I wouldn't be surprised if he has more mileage under his belt than any other member.

I relented and bought a couple of items from a trade stall. Seemed rude not to as they had a show discount and the vendor kindly agreed to post them to me F.O.C. Ironically, as they are "Firestick" fire extinguishers it's one of the few things you buy and never hope to use.

Then wandered over to the motorcycle section to view the various club stands and bikes being sold at the Sunday auction. Saw Sarah Crabtree, formerly of "Bangers and Cash" and her famous brown Ital. We also saw her last year at the "Festival of the Unexceptional". I think she may be stalking us. Passed a stand for Richard Hammond's imaginary car restoration firm but no sign of him, he's small but not that small.

Chucked out again. Back to the hotel. Popped into the local hostelry next door for research purposes and discovered that the Transit had sold for £62k, with the XJS and DB 7 making £131k and £29k respectively. The NSX apparently made £113k. Then met up with my cousin who lives (fairly) locally. He is a frequent visitor up to our neck of the woods and is used to daft Jock's (Tony being an honorary member). Beer and curry again on the menu.

Day 3

Bit shorter as we had a 2pm departure to Luton for our flight. Early into the halls and didn't initially seem as busy as the Saturday.

Saw the Hamster at his wheel, er, I mean stand. He actually looked a bit bedraggled, as though he'd spent the night in a car. Maybe it was GT/Top Gear thing we didn't know about.

We had by now seen most things but concentrated on the various stands that we wanted to get another look at. Barry watched Mike Brewer on the big stage for a while. I decided that I could catch that later, or never, on demand.

After a few more hours, we were just about ready to go and as we hadn't been able to purchase any food on the way in as all the local shops were closed until 11am, relented and visited a pasty stand. A ComicCon event was running concurrently in some of the other halls, so we mingled with their attendees in the foyer whilst we ate. Not my cup of tea but certainly colourful and you had to admire the costumes and the effort that had obviously gone into putting them together. They in turn were probably wondering about all the old gits looking at even older cars. Then it was drama free drive back to Luton (thanks again Tony), drop off the car and made our way to the airport for the flight home.

In summary, a great weekend in congenial company. Would thoroughly recommend this event to any likeminded enthusiast. A bit of advance planning to get the best deal on travel and accommodation means that our location should not be a hindrance to attending such events.

Steve.



Merry F*ing Christmas Everybody (Just hum the Slade tune)**

So here it is Merry Christmas
Comes round every f***ing year
Doing the Christmas shop
With Slade stuck in your ee-ee-ear

Are you trailing round the stores to buy some crap?
Do think that all these kids just need a slap?
Do you want to strangle Santa?
Could you punch him in the face?
Have you realized you hate the human race?

So here it is Merry Christmas
Comes round every f***ing year
Doing the Christmas shop
With Slade stuck in your ee-ee-ear

Are you waiting for the family to arrive?
Do you wish that they would all fuck off and die?
Do they buy you useless presents
Do you throw them in the bin
Do you wrap them up and give them back again?

So here it is Merry Christmas etc...

Are you going to watch The Great Escape again?
Do you really think your brain can stand the pain?
Do you really want more turkey?
Could you face more Christmas pud?
Do you think that Christmas should be banned for good?

So here it is Merry Christmas etc...

(An irreverent Christmas anthem re-penned by our maestro of irreverence Mr. Bryan McIlwraith. Personally I like Christmas and this Slade song which I have been trying (unsuccessfully) to learn to play. I keep watching The Great Escape hoping that Steve McQueen will finally make it. Your Editor.

P.S. Learn the new words for the next club night!)

Mission Christmas



For a good number of years now through the efforts of Miles Vincent and Cars and Coffee Inverness, we have been collecting for MFR's associated charity 'Cash for Kids' and specifically their Mission Christmas.

Essentially the idea is to donate a gift suitable for children (pick your age group) and these will be distributed to children who would otherwise get nothing for Christmas.

Alternatively you can donate money and the charity will use that to fill in the gaps for age group or gender.

One of my friends says she knows from a very early age that Santa wasn't real because the kids from rich families down the road got more 'stuff' than they did. No, it wasn't me. I lived in a different county, in a house by a field so faced no judgment in my Range Rover pedal car.

At HCMC we try not to overdo the charity and I personally think we get the balance about right. If you can afford to go to Cars and Coffee in a flashy car (or any car) you can afford £20 to help a poor kid who faces a miserable Christmas. Hark! I've come over all Bob Geldof - charity nostalgia, it's the new thing.

Cromarty for Coffee



On Sunday the 20th I took a hurl to Cromarty in the passenger seat of Callum Beveridge's Burton. It was a chilly morning and it was a bracing journey, but not as cold as you might think. I'd even go as far as recommending it!

Once there, we met some like-minded Sunday drivers and had an excellent coffee from the Slaughterhouse Café.

HCMC Events

1st December The Old North Inn, Inchmore 19:30

Back to our usual winter venue for a social and also the opportunity to drop of gifts for HCMCs favourite winter charity, the MFR Mission Christmas campaign to provide gifts.

Speaking of gifts it's Secret Santa time. Bring a light-hearted preferably motoring related gift with a budget of around £5 and see if you get something better or worse in return. Happy Christmas!

11th Dec 2022 Cars And Coffee - Inverness

Rollerbowl, Culduthel Rd. Inverness 10am to 12 noon Every 2nd Sunday of the Month. A quiet Social Event for all Car Enthusiasts. Park up, buy yourself a hot drink and snack from Rollerbowl and check out what's in the Car Park. Chat to old friends and make new! Find us on FACEBOOK.

Plus a last chance to drop off donations for MFR's Cash for Kids—Mission Christmas.

9-12 YEARS
Board Games,
Make Up Sets,
Nail Varnish

12-18 YEARS
We know teenagers can be hard to buy for and they're the age group we usually get the least donations for. Here's a few ideas to help out:

- ★ Toiletries
- ★ Electrical items (Straighteners, mini speakers)
- ★ Aftershave & perfumes
- ★ Jewellery
- ★ Puzzles
- ★ Make-up
- ★ Books
- ★ Lunch boxes
- ★ Duvet sets

BUY YOUR GIFTS ONLINE!
Can't get to the shops?
No problem! Visit mfr.co.uk/mission to view our online gift list (available from mid-November). There's something on there for every child, and you can use our no-fuss ordering system to send them directly to us at Mission Christmas HQ. Easy!