



Monkey Business

No 171 January 2026



Written By Chris Taylor

Bunged Together By Simon Griffiths

January saw a modest number of us, totalling seven; which was actually a good number considering we are always light at the first meeting of the new year. That, coupled with the foul weather we had experienced leading up to the night, which included a heavy snowfall in the Cheshire area that strangely I did not suffer in Disley. Fortunately it had cleared sufficiently by the time Tuesday arrived, although it was still much in evidence.

It might be worth us considering copying Eric Ody's routine where, for his 2nd Tuesday meeting, he moves January and February to lunchtime. Sadly for those still working that generally means it's not possible to attend, but night driving with these modern blinding headlamps is becoming an issue we've not had to endure in earlier days so food for thought.

Anyway those of us that did make it, I started at the earlier time of 6.00pm and this I propose to repeat for February's meeting as, although it still means driving home in the dark, at least there's a glimmer of daylight now when setting out. The Bulls Head at Smallwood will be our venue for February as with the best of intentions Simon and I have simply not had the ability to find a Tuesday where we are both available to try out alternatives. Not that we are discontent with the Bulls Head which is now our home until a suitable alternative is found.

I had received apologies from Charles and Judith Van-Ingen, Tim & Jayne Brown, David Culshaw, Elizabeth Bennett and Norman and Claire, mainly due to the understandable risk of more snow and from Melissa whose father is poorly.

However it was twelfth night +1 so the seven of us who made it had a good hearty meal to welcome in the new year and chat about our winter activities, Simon is mainly working on BVC's brakes, Peter Lakin now has PN back at the farm pending finding a suitable sprayer as the body repairs are now complete. One aspect of car painting I hadn't given any thought to is the cost now of warming, filtering and drying the air in the spray booths at this time of year, with soaring energy costs, is a major expense so it might be wise to time your future projects bearing this in mind.

Duncan was getting all enthusiastic about taking his eagerly anticipated project TD21 for its MOT, but I'm afraid he met with a wall of protest and a firm insistence about seasonal delay until the said salt had gone, as severe forebodings about using any of our cars with the risk of salt means it is a real no-no. So, an updated report is anticipated next week.

Finally on project reports AYF is now going back together



New clutch springs in place

with a new set of clutch springs - made in Macclesfield by a wonderful old school company which will make any spring using round wire up to 1/8 inch diameter. A new old stock original Hoffman140 bearing in the gearbox nose and an inhibitor switch now fitted in the gearbox front cover. Which is, of course, where the Hoffman bearing lives so a convenient double hit; the switch will allow overdrive engagement only on top gear.

Finally whilst waiting for the clutch springs I set about the



LH picture shows the gearbox with the front cover removed and RH with the new overdrive switch installed

Andre Hartford adjustable shock absorber system which, when first charged with water and pressurised, the water



Clutch and gearbox refitted and aligned using bespoke (that means homemade!) aligning tool

sprang out of every hole imaginable. All leaks are now cured but there is slight pressure loss over time, so at some point I will look into the rear shock absorbers as nothing is yet visible in the way of leakage. The shocks fitted are not ones I am familiar with so I have no idea what's going on inside them; my last project that like the shock absorbers will be achieved over time.

When dismantling the clutch for removal I noticed



First drop of oil through the metering valve for a very long time!

no oil from the central system had been delivered to the clutch operating arm so I am becoming an expert for a month, as Chris Holt used to say, about metering valves. On my first round I thought I had the system cracked but it seems not, so that's another job lined up for the future, but at least one to be achieved whilst the car is running. I am looking forward to Tuesday as Norman is bringing some old valves he has in stock which will help that part of AYF's return to full specification and all working as it should.

To finish January's report it was great to see Richard Plant-Locke returning as a regular and last, but by no means least, Eric and Denise Ody swelled our numbers. Whilst on the subject of Eric his January 2nd Tuesday meeting moved to the second Wednesday, became a lunch and was a great success, Norman and Claire joined the throng and a lovely meal (as always) at the Coach was noisily enjoyed with most of it emitting from the ladies end of the table!!

So to the future announcements:

Our next meeting is at the Bulls Head at Smallwood CW11 2TY starting at 6.00pm on Tuesday 3rd February.

And our sister meeting organised by Eric Ody at the Coach & Horses, Fenny Bentley DE6 1LB on WEDNESDAY 11th Feb at 12 NOON