

November 2003

Saturday morning in Daytona and a day at the races . It was a whole lot of fun – the weather was awesome and both Stacey and her dad did really well – I stood on the stands with Marilyn waving a British flag so they could wave at us at the end of their heats and it was cool when they did.



Cute cars



Stacey wins!



International contingent

I bumped into some people that I knew, which was very strange indeed.



Nadine, Robin and me ...

I had a flight on Sunday, which I changed to Saturday as I really just needed to get home – Daytona airport had nutsy security guards – I hate flying mostly because of the nutsy security guards ... so back home and relaxed – good to be home. Well it was until Sunday morning. The kids had parked the car outside the house at around 11.30 pm – when I got up at 7am it had been shunted 15 feet down the road - somebody had given it a really good hit. The people left their number on the car a little later in the day and we are currently negotiating how much they are going to give me for it as the car is totaled. ... more to follow.

So the rest of the weekend was spent in having lunch and seeing the children off – it was pretty sad but no doubt we will meet again many more times! The rest of the week was spent either at work or at a diabolical CAN training class in Detroit – the class was bad but I got to spend a couple of evenings with Jeremy which was a lot of fun – catching up and all. Jeremy had a race on Saturday early so I flew back on Friday night.

The following weekend was my first weekend on my own in Atlanta – it was a lot of a shock to me although it didn't take up much time to work out a load of things that I needed to do – house cleaning and looking after the clearing up that needed doing after having solid travel / guests for

the previous month. I also got my hair cut. Now this doesn't seem like much of a big thing until you realize that the past time I got my hair cut was in the middle of February (no it wasn't too dull for me to include – I just do not get my hair cut very often, which I guess is why I don't go for a very complicated style). Deb and I also went to see "Love Actually" on Sunday which I liked – I know it's very low-brow but you have to remember it's fun to see Eastenders ex-stars and it made me feel a little closer to home. We went out to the local Italian, which we have been threatening to get to finally. It was OK – not great but we went.

Work has become pretty normal and just very busy for me – I am now covering about half of the repair groups associated with the car – I used to say that I was an Electrical Engineer, however things have expanded rather a lot (it was do it or watch nothing happen and I am far too responsible to let it go) so I now basically do everything except the greasy bits. That's it – the whole car bar engine and chassis. This makes for a lot of fun as I have a goodly number of components and engineers to work with . . well it would be but for one of the engineers who has decided that he doesn't have to work to the same process as the rest of us and actually started sending me somewhat rude e-mails. We shall see where this one goes I guess...

So – lots and lots of work and then in the middle of it I went out on a date (!) and we all know what a rare occurrence this is – sadly possibly the worst in history – super-cute guy who is the son of the president of the Morgan Owners Club so we have met a couple of times. Sadly I was too busy talking to Oscar about getting my deck built to have dinner. He poured way too many Martinis down me – seems I was a little drunk at the end of the night. Shame that I told him what I really thought of BMWs and their drivers BEFORE I found out that he has an M3 as well as his V8Morgan. It appears that I thoroughly disgraced myself and was a little rude too – I apologized the following morning but he wasn't too receptive (as my friend Stacey says – at least you didn't puke in his car) I guess that was the last time we'll be going out... shame ☹

The next weekend my cousin Nancy came down from New York for the weekend – her first visit to Atlanta ever – we went out with Marla on Friday night to Doc Chey's and Saturday we went to the Atlanta History Museum, which was really fascinating and had a reconstruction of a working farm on the site and the original house that was built on the plot – a fabulous turn-of the century house which was undergoing renovation - Swan house – really interesting – we then went for a drive around Buckhead – my, has Nancy a nose for expensive buildings – she (visitor) took me down all these roads that I have never been down before and we saw some of the most enormous houses that I have ever seen.



Swan house



Nancy MLK house

Saturday evening we went to a traditional 'southern restaurant' – which had an extremely eclectic menu and it was pretty interesting. Sunday we went out for brunch and then went over to the MLK site and to the MLK house, which didn't have scaffolding on it for a change – it was very interesting inside.

The following weekend I went up north to see Lucy – at Yale – I flew in to JFK and then had a personal bus ride to the Subway (the guy took pity on me and took me on my own in his bus on his way back to the depot) then a train up to New Haven and then Lucy picked me up. We chilled out for the evening – up late on Saturday evening and wandered around New Haven for a while before walking over to the football pitch to go to the Harvard/Yale game. We spent most of the time at the massive tailgate party that was going on on the field behind – it was madness for sure. I've rarely seen so many drunk people in one place – but my favourite was definitely the group who had brought a hot tub on the back of a trailer and were sitting in the sunshine in a bath of warm water drinking beer. Oh dear, oh dear !

The game itself was pretty dull – Yale were getting murdered but the half-time stuff was fun – they have a 'fun' band who don't take the whole marching thing seriously at all and they spend half their time running around forming letters and very little time actually playing music.



Yale's best doctors



Half time at the game

After that we wandered back and Lucy had to pack for her trip to Virginia for Thanksgiving – train into the City and then a yomp to Jo's place. Now Jo and Lucy may be twins and are very similar in some ways (tall, skinny fabulous-looking) but are very different in other ways and it's great to be together with both of them – we had an innocuous walk to Jo's favourite pizza place which was great – except she bottled out of leaving her phone number for the very gorgeous wine waiter - thinking that I might be shocked – I was only shocked that she didn't ! Then home via a video shop and watched a very odd French film – you know one of these where there is not a lot of dialog and nothing really happens. Sunday morning Jo slept late and Lucy and I staggered down to Chinatown to find the place where her cheapie bus left for D.C. – it reminded me so much of so much of the traveling that I did in Turkey that it made me really look forward to my trip at Xmas. I got back in time to catch up with Jo and go for brunch – which was lovely – then a meander to where she teaches and we parted company – I to the airport and she to work.



Me and Jo NYC

I got back to find that Suzy and Mark had found their way in to my place OK. Suzy and Mark are my dive instructor buddies who were coming to see me on their travels whilst looking for work – my place is a stopping-off point for them whilst looking for work in the Carribean.

So – three days of work and then three glorious days off –except for two things – firstly the weather was the nastiest ever and I had an invite for Thanksgiving dinner – which was lovely except for the fact that it was the president of the Morgan owner's club's family (with the very cute son . . .) – it was actually way better then disaster-evening-from-hell as the family are so nice and welcoming and made me feel really welcome. I was primarily interested in the whole southern deep-fried turkey thing that was going on . . . now I am not an aficionado of southern food at the best of times, and not the greatest turkey fan so this had to be seen to be believed ! Randy and Scott gently lowered said pre-pickled bird into a vast vat of boiling oil – and somehow I thought it was going to be a lot more sophisticated than that !

So – good food and good company and dogs everywhere – it was a lot of madness but a lot of fun ! Friday was spent re-painting the cabinets in my kitchen before picking up Dave from the airport – he came in from a 2-week trip in Vegas – and got right into the whole painting thing. Mark and I dashed off to Home Depot on Saturday morning and picked up every colour chart that we could find as Suzy had had an interesting idea for a collage. It was hilarious as we ended up with around 4 inches of colour charts – way more that we eventually needed and I have around 2.5 inches if anybody wants some colour charts from Home Depot. Saturday night Dab, Amanda and Sam came over for dinner – lots of good food (well – I have to say that – I cooked) and great company and outrageous conversation. Deb and Sam were totally outnumbered with 5 Brits around them but coped pretty well on the whole. Sunday we attempted to get to Asheville, until we realized it was 240 (not 140) miles away - but it meant a good long drive in the two Boxsters with the roves down – blew the cobwebs away for sure. Sunday evening we met John and Maxine and had a tolerable curry (for the U.S.). And that has to be November !

So – during this time I finally sorted out the car – they just cut me a cheque for the value of the car, and my deck got finished – yes, that's right Oscar did the whole job in almost one hit . .