

“Only last week I looked in the rear view mirror to see my five year old daughter Molly happily chomping away. Curiously, I enquired what she was eating as I hadn’t handed out any snacks for the journey. As it happens I didn’t need to – she’d found a few furry chips on the floor whilst climbing into the car. I know for a fact that nobody has eaten any chips in that car since August. You’ll be pleased to know she’s still alive.”



Dads ROCK!

In the second of a new series Paul Bunker, TV, radio presenter and dad of two living in Portsmouth shares his fatherly experiences!

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This spring I’m going to fulfil a promise. It’s a promise that I have failed to keep for the past two years, I’m actually going to spring clean...my car.

Being a dad to a five year old and nine month old means that my car is an environmental health hazard on wheels. There are things in my car that David Attenborough would get severely animated about, it’s a worrying mix of crumbs, dried milk and dog hair.

A few moons ago I used to really care about my car. I’d spend time and effort making sure that the upholstery was kept in good order and that if anything was ever spilt or dropped, I’d bring the car to an emergency stop and deal with the offender before it could dry or leave a stain. In the blink of an eye it all changed, I just gave up and lowered my guard to any form of debris. Looking back, my change of outlook came at the same time as my first child.

I should make it clear at this stage that my car and my wife’s are both battered old bangers, but they get us around in one piece. From the outside, they’re both fairly respectable apart from a few scuffs and bumps, the real danger lurks inside.

If a bespectacled scientist in a white coat was to carbon date some of the detritus on the back seat, he’d find some scraps that go back 4-5

years. As a parent you’re so busy making sure your child is belted up properly or that she isn’t going to run out in the road that you just gently brush a gummied piece of cucumber onto the car mat and let decomposition occur.

I don’t ask too much of my dog with regards to household duties, but I genuinely thought that whilst he just sat in the car on his own some times, he could lightly graze across seats and carpeted areas on all of the leftovers. It’s a win win situation. He gets a few scooby snacks, I get my car dog-hoovered. Only problem is, he’s a little selective and doesn’t particularly like carrot sticks or apple and cinnamon rice cakes. If anything he adds to the mayhem, by shedding so much fur, that you could be mistaken for thinking I have bespoke Border Collie hair seat covers.

Watching a toothless child, playfully sucking on a biscuit that has dropped momentarily onto a hairy floor is one of the ugliest things any parent should have to witness.

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My brother has just bought himself a new car and is expecting his first child in a few weeks. He commented on how he intends to keep the car nice and clean and wipe any milk/sick/wee off immediately – in theory it’s a great idea, in practice you’ve just got to roll with it and accept the inevitable. In time your car seats will be emblazoned with milk stains that start to resemble the rings akin to an old oak tree. You can actually work out any child’s age, just from the stains on their car seats.

It’s going to be a mammoth industrial job getting the car back to any form of hygienic state. A friend suggested taking it to a car valet place, but I’m too embarrassed. I know a little about human rights and nobody should be put through that, except for those who have created the turmoil.

So, this year I’m going to fulfil my promise and actually return the car to its former glory. I’m going to do away with the long lost dummies that are sat teet-high in trampled Wotsits. I’m going to vacuum the car mats that actually smell like unloved livestock. I might even stretch to an air freshener, so I can make my aged old Ford Focus actually smell like a Norwegian glade.

It’s good preparation for the spring/summer ahead. Besides I need to make way for the new seasonal mess that’s on its way; a delightful blend of crushed ice cream cones, shells and a one inch deep coating of sand. ❄️

Seeing life from a dad’s perspective!