

December 2017

Mutterings

THE NEWSLETTER of the EASTERN CENTRE
of the AUSTIN HEALEY CLUB



HAPPY CHRISTMAS
to all our members

IMPORTANT NOTE

From January 2018 Mutterings will be distributed electronically, this means that you no longer will receive a paper copy enclosed with your Revcounter.

PLEASE THEREFORE ENSURE THAT THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, STUART SELF, HAS YOUR MOST UP TO DATE EMAIL ADDRESS.

He may be contacted through either of the following emails:
membership@ahc-eastern.co.uk or stuartself173@btinternet.com



www.ahc-eastern.co.uk



ROB'S RAMBLINGS

This copy of *Mutterings* represents something of the end of an era as it is the last hard copy, all future editions will be electronic. This will not in any way effect the content or indeed the need for contributions but it does mean that if you wish to maintain your archive of paper copies you will need to invest in a copier suitable for printing booklet format as indeed I have. I acquired a shop-soiled laser printer for £40 and whilst only black and white, one cartridge costing £35 prints 6000 pages. Full colour of course will be available through the weblink that will be sent to your registered email address. With Christmas nearly upon us how about adding this handy bit of kit to your wish list?

Happy Christmas and I hope to see you in the New Year.

Rob

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs Sarah Hurrell of Sudbury has a 1958 red Mk1 Sprite which is being restored at the moment.

Mr Al and Mrs Anne Freimanis of Welwyn. No cars notified.

Stuart Self, Membership Secretary.

AN INTERESTING FACT

Bruce Reynolds was the mastermind behind the 8th August 1963 Great Train Robbery. Shortly after the event he visited The Chequered Flag (a London sports car dealership) and road tested an Austin Healey 3000 MkII. He returned later in the evening, paid £835 for the car in £5 notes, gave a false address and drove the sports car away.

Chris Davis

ZARA KIMBER ON THE AGM

Oh I do like AGM's! But I must be different as not many came to our AH Eastern Centre at Bourn on 22 October. I think we usually get a good turnout of 30-40 at the same Meridian Golf Club meal in March, not so many for the AGM.

I like to hear what is happening, who are the important people in office and on the committee as well as enjoying the camaraderie over a good meal.

The main discussion this year was about Mutterings going on line in January. I should have thought that those not on email could be charged for postage and admin as, to be fair, members who choose to print Mutterings off are paying for ink etc.

TOURING TROPHY - 2018

The Touring Trophy runs from AGM to AGM (October to October) with hopefully a few more sunny days this will tempt you out. If you want to be in with a chance of winning the Trophy let Richard Mayes (not the Editor) know your mileage in the following format.

Entrant	Date	Trip description	Trip	Total
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LITTLE GRANSDEN CAR & AIR SHOW 26TH AUGUST 2018

We shall again have a Club Stand at this popular event. As I write this the 2018 Little Gransden Show website is not available. I am assuming that the booking procedure will be the same as 2017. I.e. all bookings through me.

Richard Mayes

THE 1965 LE MANS STREAMLINER RECREATION - A HAPPY ENDING

Well it has been eight years since we made the decision to buy what appeared to be a completed aluminium shell from the Gibson brothers who had a workshop opposite the Archer's Garage in Oldbury. The shell had been constructed for them in Scotland.

As it turned out, problem after problem was identified with the shell and after having the rear chassis legs removed and re-sited, the floors dropped by 2 inches and roll cage fitted, the car sat a long time. It was apparent that the roof was too flat, the windscreen opening would not be suitable for fitting the glass, and to top it all, the car was not symmetrical.

A decision was made with heavy heart to scrap the Aluminium body and request the services of Colin Sandwell and Brian Wheeler to construct a complete new Aluminium body.

From then on things started to speed up; formers were constructed and measurements taken in order to make the new body. We then took the bare chassis home to fit up all the running gear and engine, and then brought it back to Wheeler's workshop.

Brian and Colin did a wonderful job on the body, the roof was now good and a Mini windscreen fitted perfectly. Side Perspex windows and the massive rear one were manufactured and fitted.



We picked her up and took her home to cut the holes and fit (temporarily) the rear lights. The front light covers we had made in Perspex locally, trimmed to fit, and the 4 headlights temporarily fitted. Dashboard clocks and switches installed, emergency power off and windscreen accoutrements fitted.



Le Mans Sprite continued...

Finally an excellent paint job was done by a good friend Brian Bedford who had helped tirelessly throughout the project and the engine prepared by long-term friend and racing colleague, Pat Harris.

First time out was to the Austin Healey Club stand at the NEC Birmingham on the weekend 10th - 12th November. The car was very well received and was awarded the Brian Archer Shield, an award dedicated to the memory of Brian Archer who died in 2008 and who was responsible for making Sebring coupé bodies.

Peter Taylor

VIEW FROM THE STAND

I was fortunate to get along to the NEC Classic Car Show on the Friday and made a beeline for the Austin Healey Club stand to have a look at Pete's car and was certainly wowed by it! I have been following Pete's trials and tribulations over the years and it is great to see the car finally completed as it brings back memories for me having made my first visit to the Le Mans 24-hour race in the mid '60s where I saw these fabulous cars showing a clean pair of heels to many a more powerful one. I believe 150 mph on the Mulsanne was targeted from the 1293cc Sprites. I don't know whether this was achieved, but for me they were the epitome of 'David vs Goliath' and were cheered on their way by we Brits. The French were not so happy as you will read later!

What Pete wasn't aware of when he wrote his piece was that he was also awarded one of Eastern Centre's most prestigious trophies, the Sprinzel Shield which is awarded to the individual who has done most to wave the flag for Sprites in the year and Pete's labour of love was considered a worthy winner.



Rob

Modified vehicles continued....

The vehicle in question must gain 8 or more points to be considered for keeping the original registration. The original registration will be cancelled and a "Q" registration will be allocated, once an "Individual Vehicle Approval¹" has been given, if one of the following applies:

- It has fewer than 8 points
- It has a second-hand or altered chassis, monocoque bodyshell or frame
- There is evidence that 2 vehicles have been welded together to form one

Consider an Aston Martin DB4 GT, or Volante convertible re-creation made from a DB4, 5 or 6. The process of making one of these involves cutting out 5 inches from the chassis and floor pan. This therefore makes it a "Radically Altered Vehicle" because it cannot gain 5 of the required points by not having an unmodified chassis.

Beware the modified car!

It is worth noting that basic and normal IVA tests have various exemptions and one of them is for cars over 10 years old.

These are my opinions based on information that has been published by HM Government Department of Transport and the DVLA. I would be happy to give advice on a case by case basis, if required. I can be contacted on 01787 476264 or david@classicresearch.co.uk

David Singer

This is a very interesting subject as the 'evocation' business is growing with bits from a donor car bolted on to a re-created bodyshell as David suggests with his Aston Martin example above. I suppose the legislation is to stop 'passing off' of a car as a historic one by bolting on a retained number plate - Ed.

EVENTS FOR 2018

Main events organised by AHC or where we have a club stand or where we know AHC members are attending will be shown in **bold**. Check on the website for the latest information: www.ahc-eastern.co.uk

1st January: New Year's Day: Barrington Classic meet and Byford Bun and a Bowl. Maggi and Roger extend an invitation to attendees and others to celebrate the start of a new motoring year with a sandwich and soup at their home in Royston. Contact Maggi at treasurer@ahc-eastern.co.uk or on 01763 242910 to express your interest and she will let you have directions and parking instructions.

18th March: Sunday Spring Lunch. Season opener at Toft Meridian Golf Club, super roast lunch just to the west and slightly south of Cambridge. Contact Andrew Hollick on andrewhollick48@tiscali.co.uk

Daffodil Weekend, probably in April, details to follow, but David Wheeler has agreed to run this popular event again, his email is wheelerd@blueyonder.co.uk

22nd April: Drive it Day: There will be lots going on marking this important motoring heritage event, keep a look out for your favourite.

29th April Sunday. Wings and Wheels, Old Buckenham Airfield, Norfolk, NR17 1PU. Book a space on their website.

13th May: Battlesbridge Spring Classic Car Show, always popular with Eastern Centre members. Details to follow, be in place before 10.00am. Queuing likely.

20th May: National Sprite 60th Birthday celebrations at Shelsley Walsh, near Droitwich. NOTE THE CHANGE OF VENUE. Tony Curran is planning a big family fun party to mark this important anniversary. Latest details on the website at Sprite60.org or from Tony on info@sprite60.org

2nd June: Saturday Letchworth GC Classic CC Picnic. Relaxed afternoon with a real country picnic atmosphere, music, beer tent, teas, etc. more details later.

Events continued...

10th June: Sunday Euston Park Rural Pastimes Great country show with all sorts of exciting events including classic cars. Booking form not available yet, further details soon, your club contacts will be Chris and Angie on canda3000@hotmail.com

6th/8th July: Classic Le Mans. Super event well supported by Eastern members To link up with other local people or to travel as an AHC group contact Rob Ransom mutterings@ahc-eastern.co.uk

28th/29th July: Old Buckenham Airfield. Classic cars and flying displays, book in on their website, Classic drivers and all passengers free at this event, book early, was full in 2017.

5th August: Higham Ferrers Chichele Classic Car Show: Contact Roy Murphy via [Higham Ferrers Classic Car Show](#)

26th August: Sunday Little Gransden Airshow and Classic Cars. Entries will probably be limited on the club stand again this year at this popular show, so keep abreast of developments later in the year. Your contact will be Richard Mayes on secretary@ahc-eastern.co.uk

31st Aug/3rd Sept: Eastern Centre Weekend, Ufford Park, Woodbridge. In honour of the Sprite anniversary, Chris and Angie Davis are organising this one in the lovely Suffolk countryside. Please register your interest with them on canda3000@hotmail.com . If you want to go, tell them soon!

In addition there will be two Classic Car Shows at **Duxford**, dates not available yet, 1st Friday at **Barrington**, 1st Saturday pub meet at The Horse and Groom, **Cornish Hall End**, 1st Sunday Breakfast Club at **Colmworth** village hall, 3rd Saturday pub meet at The Bluebell, **Hempstead**, and of course our regular Noggin and Natters, see back of Mutterings for details, not to mention all the race meetings, most classic events have Healeys competing, check the websites for details and dates.

Angela

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Unusually the weather was kind on the day of the AGM so I had a chance to give the 100 an airing. The turnout was a little disappointing [as usual] but the quality was there if not the quantity. Maybe we need to look at changing the dates used, I think it coincided with school half term so maybe moving a couple of weeks either way might help attendance. Please give us your thoughts on the matter.

The meal following was excellent as was the conversation, and the trophies were handed out after we had eaten.

This year Eastern Centre won a cup at the Battlesbridge Show in May for best Club Stand, the committee decided to add it to the Trophy Cabinet and award it each year to a member who has contributed to raising the profile of the Eastern Centre at a local event. This year it goes to Pete Taylor who made all the difference at Battlesbridge, setting out the area and providing the Gazebo, giving us a great focal point even though he was unable to stay for the day to enjoy his hard work.

The Rudd Trophy was presented to Maggi Byford in recognition of her work behind the scenes as Director dealing with the National Executive Committee meetings, Chairman's shield went to Angela Bonner (R) for sterling work filling in as Secretary in addition to her Social Secretary role.



The New Members' Trophy was awarded to Tony Withrington as he has dived in to the Centre with enthusiasm. The Tourist Trophy went to Pat and Zara Kimber for putting even more miles on their lovely Frogeye and the Mutterings cup was awarded to David Singer for his interesting articles. You will see photos of Pat and Zara and also Tony picking up their trophies at the lunch overpage.

Chairman's chat continued...

Last but most certainly not least, the Sprinzel Trophy goes to Pete Taylor in recognition of his work completing the LeMans Sprite replica which was debuted on the AHC stand at the NEC Classic Car Show, a magnificent job. Unfortunately I couldn't be there so missed the unveiling. It looks marvellous in the photos and I can't wait to see it in the metal, I know it has been an arduous task thanks to some previous dodgy restorers but eventually people were found that actually knew what they were doing and the attention to detail is something to be proud of, well done Pete.

The "Why Me?" trophy was not awarded this year, there were several candidates considered but none really stood out as that disastrous, which must mean more of us have had happy Healey experiences. The Sprint Shield also was not presented, we have not had any notifications of competition exploits as the Competition Secretary position on the committee is vacant. Anyone out there with an interest in motorsport interested in filling the vacancy?

The early AGM and lunchtime event does give time for a bit of relaxed conversation afterwards without a really late night for those from further afield. Many thanks to Andrew and Paula Hollick for sorting out details at the venue, if the spring lunch is anywhere near as good it will be one not to miss.

We are always looking to include plenty of events in the calendar. No details yet [keep an eye on the events in Rev-Counter or our website] but there will be plenty to consider for the Drive it Day celebrations in April and there will be the Battlesbridge show in May. I am pleased to say that Chris and Angie Davis have said they will co-ordinate next year's Euston Park Rural Pastimes Show on June 10th which will be a welcome return to the calendar for many, they are also planning the Spritetacular event at Woodbridge towards the end of the year.

It will be a busy year with Classic LeMans and Sprite celebrations to attend so make sure your winter is well spent fettling to minimise Healey downtime.

Continued overleaf....

Chairman's chat concluded...

Noggin and natter attendances were reported as fluctuating. Our Norfolk meet is usually busy, we now meet for a mid week lunch, which is great for those of us that are retired and it means we can cater for a wider catchment area, but I worry that it precludes those still working. Please contact the committee if you feel an evening meeting would be better for you, we cannot provide things we do not know about. That thought also holds good for anything else you think Eastern Centre could do better.

The new Eastern Centre website is progressing well but as always it is a steep learning curve when playing with new ideas, it is a very similar format to the National one so should be easy to use, at the moment it looks as though the electronic *Mutterings* will be accessed through the website and you will get an email with a link to tell you when it is available, thanks to data protection it is very complicated to have a solution that can send you an attachment direct. We may be able to set up a subscription email where you sign up to receive it individually but there is still some more research needed. If any of you have relevant experience with websites and mailing we would love to hear from you, any input would be valued. As mentioned in my last month's chat please contact me on 01366 347412 if you cannot access the internet for updates [leave a message on the answerphone if we don't pick up for any reason and I will get back to you] as this will be the last printed *Mutterings* that will go out with the Rev-Counter unless we can persuade National to give us some more money back.

I am planning on having a regular half page in Rev-Counter for Eastern Centre once the New Year arrives so there will still be some hard copy news from your committee arriving on your doorstep every month.

In the meantime, Happy Healeying, Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Dave

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE AGM AND LUNCH



Among the prizewinners were Tony Withrington (top right) who collected the new Members' Cup and the well-travelled Kimbers who proudly show 'Mr Mercury', the Tourist Trophy awarded for the most distance covered in a Healey in the year.



GEOFFREY HEALEY AND THE AMAZING CASE OF THE DANGEROUS PAINT

Pete Taylor's article on his recreation of the 1965 Le Mans Sprite brought back memories of one of the events that has entered Healey folk lore: The amazing case of the dangerous paint! Geoffrey Healey was known as something of a Francophobe and so he did not pull any punches in his 1978 book 'More Healeys' as you will see from the extract below.

'The appearance of the new cars at Le Mans produced an immediate reaction from the officials. Here was something that could pose a threat to the highly developed small French sports cars and the Sprites were subjected to a very thorough scrutineering. Finding nothing that contravened the rules, the scrutineers suddenly said that the colour of the cars gave us an unfair advantage and that they should be painted in the national colour, British Racing Green.

I retaliated by pointing out the appropriate paragraph in the regulations, which stated that cars *should* be painted in national colours but did not use the mandatory word *must*. Time went by and in the end I was called into a special enclosure. Harold Parker of the RAC, who was there to assist British competitors, was not permitted to accompany me. Here I was presented with a letter signed by the six top officials, stating that the College of Commissaires had ruled that the paint was fluorescent and this presented dangers. I argued that for a small car to be clearly visible was a safety factor, pointing out that the drivers of small cars were always aware of the danger of being run over by the bigger, much faster cars in conditions of poor visibility. They were adamant, continually repeating the word 'danger' like parrots. I do not think that they would have gone to the extent of excluding us but we would have been placed in a very difficult position if, after they had stated that the paintwork was dangerous, we had been involved in an accident.

There were now two courses open to me - either to repaint the cars or to say to hell with it and withdraw. I discussed the matter with the team who promised me their wholehearted support whichever course I decided to take. However, it was clear that they had put a great deal of effort into the operation and would be disappointed if we did not run. There was also a large British contingent who had come to see the Sprites perform. So we agreed to repaint the cars.

Healey history continued..

Now all the screaming and squawking about this dangerous paint had become public and I had great difficulty in persuading any paint shop to repaint the cars. In the end I found a small shop who agreed to do the work, providing I obtained a non cellulose paint. In a store I found a gallon of green paint which had probably been swiped from the US Army during the war. The proprietor insisted we only delivered one car at a time for painting, with the petrol tank drained, and treated the thing like an unexploded bomb. The job took an awfully long time: before he started the painter squirted fire extinguisher fluid all over the car, the engine and in the oil and petrol tanks, and the paint was very slow drying. We had a pretty stiff bill for carrying out an operation ' *Très dangereux*' and the mechanics had a lot of additional work clearing the systems of fire extinguisher fluid.

When he saw the car and the bill, Paul Hawkins said something to the effect that he could get a better job done by a drunken kangaroo in half the time at a tenth of the cost. Even in today's liberal climate it is unfortunately impossible to put Paul's exact words on paper. Colin Chapman had a similar run in with the organizers over a Lotus which would have won the index of performance, a French prerogative: he never returned to Le Mans'.

I think that the cars were originally painted in fluorescent green although I seem to have a recollection that one was in Lucozade orange.

They certainly were striking!

Rob



In the photo are Derek Ross, Clive Hendrie, Jim Cashmore and Tommy Wellman. The number 48 car was driven by Rauno Aaltonen and Clive Baker sadly expiring after 22 hours. The number 49 completed the race, Paul Hawkins and John Rhodes finishing in 12th place to win their class.

NOGGIN `N` NATTERS

Colchester area	Varies	Contact	Tony Poulter	07835 653199
St. Albans area	First Tuesday	Contact	John Keener	01494 728360
<i>Crown and Sceptre at Bridens Camp, Water End, HP2 6EY</i>				
Suffolk area	Varies	Contact	Garrow Shand	01394 389013
<i>Regular road runs and pub meets - contact Garrow for details</i>				
Cambridge Area	2nd Wednesday	Contact	Rob Ransom	01223 524821
<i>St Ives Golf Club, Joint meetings with Cambridge and District Car Club</i>				
Ongar Area	2nd Wednesday	Contact	Jim Sweetingham	01268 545429
<i>Old Kings Head, Stock, Ingatestone, CM4 9PQ</i>				
Biggleswade Area	Varies	Contact	Clive Cocks	01933 551885
<i>Contact Clive for venue and timing</i>				
W Norfolk area	2 nd Thursday	Contact	Dave Holman	01366 347412
<i>Varies: Contact Dave for the latest information</i>				
Bury St Edmunds	Varies	Contact	John Bolden	01359 240153
<i>Location varies</i>				

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