

July 2018

Mutterings

THE NEWSLETTER of the EASTERN CENTRE
of the AUSTIN HEALEY CLUB



***Fun in the sun: Keith and Ruth Farnfield plan a route
home from Halls Green***

<http://new.ahc-eastern.co.uk/>

ROB'S RAMBLINGS

The glorious summer weather has meant quite a lot of Healey activity with an enjoyable day at the Letchworth Picnic, another Barrington First Friday classic meet and a day out on the Norfolk coast with Terry Sprosson and the West Norfolk Healey clan. This latter event was also the proving run for Terry's rebuilt 100 in which we are planning to visit Classic Le Mans next weekend. The car performed superbly with a fully-functional overdrive, an engine that made all the right noises and, wait for it, a running temperature in the arctic region compared with that prior to Terry's fettling. We did not check the fuel consumption but I will be disappointed if we don't better 30mpg.

As I have hinted at in the magazine later my visit to Dave Holman to get some expert advice on my problematical oil pressure seems to have been successful with the car running with a healthy 55psi compared to the not-very-healthy 20psi the gauge was showing when I arrived on his doorstep! Thanks Dave - great job!

With the Shelsley Walsh Sprite celebration still fresh in the memory I have included an historical article that I hope you find interesting. They used to get 10s of thousands of spectators to pre-war hill climbs. It must have been a wonderful atmosphere and certainly one that could not be repeated today.

Rob

NEW MEMBERS

Nick Suiter of Kings Lynn has a 1964 blue 3000 mk 3 in original condition but needing some work.

We look forward to meeting you at one of our summer events.

Stuart Self

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
Pat & Zara	20-06-18	Around and about	50	163
Dave and Pam	20-06-18	Switzerland	797	1883
Rob	20-06-18	Norfolk and around	250	730

LITTLE GRANSDEN CAR & AIR SHOW 26TH AUGUST

We shall again have a Club Stand at this popular event. If you have pre-booked one of the 10 places please arrive at your set time and ask to be directed to the stand.

If you are parked in the general classic car area, you can of course still use the facility of the event shelter.

Richard Mayes

COMPETITION

2018 MIDGET & SPRITE CHALLENGE

July 14/15 th	Donington Park
Aug 4/5 th	Croft
Aug 27 th	Castle Combe
Sept 29/30 th	Snetterton

Dates may change so check the website:

www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk

Lydden Hill

July 8

Entry Fee: £249 [Enter Here](#)

Snetterton 300

August 4/5

Entry Fee: £299

Donington

September 29

Entry Fee: £299

Brands Hatch

October 27,28

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Our luck with the weather ran out in June; we happened to be in Scotland when Storm Hector paid a visit and we got drenched. The weatherproofing to the windscreen worked well but things steamed up so badly we had to run with my sidescreen out so we still got a bit damp. The drive home, taking a few days with stops in Yorkshire and Lincoln, was dry but the carpets were still wet when we got home. Meeting up with some of the Midland centre on their visit to Lincoln was fun, great Hotel [Branston Hall] and a coach was arranged to take us to Lincoln on Monday to avoid the parking hassles. Disappointing that Brad Pitt had decided to do some filming in the Cathedral on the same day so we couldn't visit but it gives us an excuse to return someday. Tuesday we visited Doddington Hall which is in the "Historic Houses" scheme, to get a tour you have to be booked in but it was well worthwhile with brilliant guides. After that we headed for home but some stayed on another night to visit the new Bomber Command Memorial. All in all we had a great holiday, 1500 miles and the 100 is still running, the exhaust got heavily scraped a few times on the scenic Scottish roads but it hasn't worn through yet. I have just been checking it over ready for the Classic Le Mans trip and most of the bits still seem to be hanging on.

The bookings for the Local Club Events seem to be a bit low this year, The Kimbolton New Members Day/Sprite Birthday Party is very low so it will be a reduced stand without the "Bells and Whistles" that Clive and the team are so good at providing. It is a busy weekend with Classic Le Mans, the British F1 GP and some football match going on so that may account for the lack of entries but other Eastern Centre events have not been particularly well attended either. What would you like to see happening in your Club, what would entice you to drag the Healey out of the garage? As a Committee we really would like to know, we want to organise things that people want to attend. Please please please get in touch and let us know what you want from your club.

Hopefully we will see some of you out and about. Check the website and Mutterings for details of events.

Happy Healeying.

Dave

COMMITTEE MATTERS

This year is whizzing past and we are due to have another Committee meeting soon. As mentioned in the Chairman's Chat the bookings for events this year seems to be a bit low. Please let us know what you would like to see happening in the Centre, we are always open to new ideas. The AGM will be upon us before we know it and it would be good to see some new faces on the Committee so please give some consideration to joining us. Contact any of the committee members on the list to find out more about the running of the Centre and find out how much fun it can be. We still need to find a new membership secretary and Angela our long suffering stand-in secretary would like to be able to concentrate more on social stuff so if any of you would like to join us on the committee please contact me. At present we meet at lunchtimes but that can be changed if necessary. The Membership Secretary post involves receiving information on new members from national and sending out welcome emails and information explaining how Eastern Centre can be of benefit, also sending the occasional email reminders for events. The Secretary post involves booking the Pub, taking minutes of meetings and producing agendas and the like for the committee. It can be a lot of fun and you get the benefit of getting to know more Healeyists.

This could be the perfect opportunity to get involved and shape the future of Eastern Centre, come along to a meeting to see what goes on, chat to your nearest committee member or collar us at an even and see if this could enhance your Healey experience.

Your Healey Club needs you.

Dave

The picture on the right shows Dave showing off his 'patented' puller for removing a sticky oil-pressure relief bullet from the Ransom 3000. Whisper it every-so quietly but the surgical operation seems to have worked.

Rob



SOCIAL WHEELS JULY, 2018

The year's summer events are now well under way, The **Sprite Anniversary** celebrations at Shelsley Walsh were, by all accounts, a great success, and thanks and congratulations to Tony and his team for all their hard work. These events do not happen on their own, and many hours of toil and effort go in to them, we do not have any 'mysterious good fairies' behind the scenes to lighten the load, so if you have the chance to help at any future events, please offer just a bit of your time.

I managed to attend the **Letchworth picnic** at Halls Green, which like so many days recently started off a bit chilly and misty, but by lunchtime the sun shone brightly and it was definitely ice cream weather and I attach a couple of pictures. This was probably the largest gathering of vehicles they have ever had, with everything from a Stanley Steam car to the very latest in Jaguars, and their usual group of vintage bicycle enthusiasts, great music from 'Fifth Wheel' and an assorted group of Healey owners, some with Healeys, some with another 'beast' from their collection, just to prove what a varied and enthusiastic club we are.



The following weekend had **Euston Rural Pastimes**, a small number of Healeys in attendance and very similar beautiful weather to Letchworth. This is such a varied event, cars, traction engines, dogs, horses, ferrets, all sorts for the children and fabulous cakes from the Church ladies in addition to lots of other delicious food on offer. I fail to understand why more AHC members don't come.

Social continued...

By the time you read this some will already be on their way to the Classic Le Mans races, so I hope they are also blessed with decent weather. Sadly an all-singing, all dancing birthday party for the Sprite at **the Kimbolton Country Fayre** has been cancelled as insufficient interest was shown. Clive and Sue put a fantastic amount of effort into a bespoke Healey stand each year and it is understandable that without support such a stand is unviable. Let's hope that we can revive it next year.

It is still possible to attend as an individual entry and Clive plans to set up a stand but without the bells and whistles of previous years.

Cambridge and District CCC invite us to join them at **Ely Cathedral green** on 28th July and then it's August and **Higham Ferrers classic car show** before another favourite of mine, **Little Gransden Air and Classic car show**. If you have not already contacted Richard you will be too late to be on the Healey stand as he had to send the entries in by the end of June. However, if you contact the air show organisers direct you may still be able to fit in the general classic parking area.

Eastern Centre Weekend at Ufford Park, another Sprite Anniversary event, is fully booked and promises to be another great event, carefully planned by Chris and Angie Davis, so lots to look forward to there.

Please check the Events calendar on the website for full details on all our activities in 2018, there have been no paper Mutterings for some months, and this will be your only guide. It will be regularly updated as new events details come in, so don't miss out on anything.



Angela (Seen R with Maggi Byford)

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

5th July THURSDAY: Classics on the Green, Friston, Saxmundham. IP17 1NP
Come and go at will from 3pm, everything in production before 1970, free entry but charity collection. Contact Tony Morley on 01728 687 999 or <mailto:tonymorley2000@aol.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

8th July: New Members' day at Kimbolton School. Sadly there will not be a themed AH stand but members who wish to attend and join with other members, new and old, should get in touch with Clive Cocks on 01933 551885

28 July: Classics on Ely Cathedral Green. This very popular Cambridge and District Classic Car Club event is open to all Healey club members.

<https://www.cdccc.uk/events/2018/>

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: Becoming a favourite with EC members. Contact Roy Murphy via [Higham Ferrers Classic Car Show](#). 220 cars and 40 stalls have already booked.

26th August: Sunday Little Gransden Airshow and Classic Cars. Entries will be limited on the club stand again this year at this popular show. Contact Richard Mayes on secretary@ahc-eastern.co.uk

2018 events continued...

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. The weekend is sold out but if you want to be put on the waiting list contact them on canda3000@hotmail.com.

OTHER EVENTS 2018

- 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**
- 1st Friday at the **Royal Oak Barrington, near Cambridge**

IWM Duxford has 26th August for its summer car show, but this is now **PRE-BOOKED ONLY**, see their website.

Angela

EVENTS AT BATTLESBRIDGE 2018



- June 16th and 17th - Essex Vee Dubbers Volkswagen Show Contact: Scott Walker 07504 951014
- July 1st - Classic Motorcycle Show & Bike jumble
- August 12th - Classic Ford Show & Autojumble
- September 2nd - Essex Boat Jumble & Small Boat Sale Contact: Chaddock & Fox Promotions 02392 381405 (www.boat-jumbles.co.uk)
- September 30th - Thirty Second Annual Grand Motorabilia Day and Classic Vehicle Show including cars, bikes & autojumble

Visit the website for further details <http://www.battlesbridge.com/>

SHELSLEY WALSH

Visiting Shelsley Walsh for the Sprite 60th celebrations fulfilled a long-held ambition of mine. My father-in-law was a motoring enthusiast and as such he collected a modest library of motoring books including a motoring autobiography from the 1950s by Raymond Mays called 'Split Seconds'.

Raymond Mays was the top pre-war hillclimb and racing driver making his name initially with a pair of Brescia Bugattis that he modified for hill climbs along with long-term colleague Amherst Villiers. He latterly supercharged (a Villiers designed unit) what was to be called the 'White Riley', put twin wheels on the rear axle and blew away most of the opposition, although challenged by Hans Stuck in an Austro-Daimler who held the record for three years. The White Riley led to his most famous project the ERA series that did so well in the *voiturette* category of racing and that still can be seen competing in VSCC meetings. 'Split seconds' refers to the margin by which hill climbs are won and he won many of them including being the undisputed 'King' of Shelsley Walsh where he posted fastest time of the day and took new records at almost every occasion he competed there.

Over the years I have been to most of the motor racing venues in this country but never Shelsley, a venue so evocative in motoring memory that it was on my bucket list not the least in that it brings back memories of conversations with father-in-law about a period that has always fascinated me.

What follows is an excerpt from a contemporary book on Shelsley by pre-war motoring journalist C A N May. It hasn't changed and I can tick my box.

SHELSLEY!

Against a background of tall, dark, majestic trees, a narrow ribbon of road winds steeply up a hillside, twisting, at its steepest pitch, into a sharp left-right "S" bend. On the natural grandstands formed by the sloping banks at the roadside, and in the amphitheatres formed by clearings amongst the tall trees, a crowd of several thousand people waits expectantly.

Shelsley continued....

Away down at the foot of the hill—where there are orchards, dog kennels, hay stacked in Dutch barns and a black-and-white farmhouse—there comes, intermittently, a harsh, staccato noise, like the tearing of giant strips of calico.

Of a sudden the noise steadies, and takes on a more purposeful note. A voice comes over the loud-speaker installation, bells tinkle, a wave of excitement ripples through the crowd. The noise rises to a screaming crescendo, falls for a split second, and rises anew. Men with big brooms make a last defiant jab at ripples of loose grit on the corners of the S, and then crouch back against the banks at the roadside, while the crowd goes tense.

With a shattering roar a slim, streamlined projectile hurtles into view, swaying and lifting to the unevenness of the road surface, big section tyres scrabbling for grip. Shuddering slightly under the impact of powerful brakes, firmly applied, the sleek, graceful machine slows momentarily, on the apex of the first left-hand corner, while the driver's elbows shoot up and down like pistons as the steering-wheel is turned this way and that to hold the car to a level course. Yelping viciously as a lower gear goes home, revolution-counter needle swinging into the "red", the machine leaps forward again in a scatter of grit, and with a rising snarl of exhaust note drowning the plaudits of the crowd, goes away between the banks of the second corner, its passage marked by the lingering, sickly-sweet smell of "dope". (Alcohol-based fuel in case there was any doubt in your mind!)

Since 1905, the year in which The Midland Automobile Club first persuaded Mr. Montague C. H. Taylor, the then tenant of the Court House Farm, Shelsley Walsh, to sanction the use of the steep bridle path running up through his fields as the site for speed hill-climbs, many thousands of people have made the pilgrimage to this picturesquely sited, though somewhat inaccessible hill, rising, rather unexpectedly, from the heart of the Worcestershire hop-fields.

Naturally the extremely narrow, bumpy, gravel-surfaced track which was the scene of the first climb on August 12th, 1905, presented a very different picture from the much wider, metal-surfaced, stoutly fenced—though still a little bumpy—road on which latter-day drivers have steadily reduced the time for the fastest climb to a number of seconds less than half that recorded at the opening meeting.

MY MATE MIKE REFLECTS ON SHELSLEY WALSH

A friend, Mike Roe, often accompanies me on Healey trips and has done since I bought the car in 1991. He came along to the Shelsley Sprite 60 event and here is a page from his diary:

The morning's strong summer sun had driven the visitors into the small marquee at midday, and I sat in the front row facing the low, makeshift stage on which THE SOUTHERN BELLES were delivering their hour's performance - singing to the thin attendance in the warm, tented shade.

The three lady performers were dressed in the style of the Andrews Sisters, the famous American trio of the forties and fifties. They were a local trio, all on the wrong side of thirty and so not exactly in the youthful, slim-waisted 'Sisters' image. Their rather matronly figures were each dressed in the same knee-length bright red frocks with black belts around their thickening midriffs. Black shoes and black gloves and their bright red lipstick, matching the colour of their dress, and outrageous floppy hats completed their 'showbiz' appearance.

They sang and harmonised to the backing tracks on the sound recorder back stage and they delivered a good range of popular numbers from that jazz age, with many songs from the Andrews catalogue featuring in their lively performance, gyrating to the rhythmic pulse of the music with plenty of Southern gaiety in their gesticulations.

My eyes were fixed on the tallest of 'the belles', a good-looking, well-stacked blond and in my thoughts I imagined her transported in time to a sleazy, nineteen-forties New Orleans motel room lying on the bed in her underwear, smoking as she awaited the arrival of her lover and gazing out of the flyblown windows anticipating the lovemaking that lay ahead. I could even see, in my mind's eye, the ashtray beside the double bed with its red lipstickedbutts, and hear the electric ceiling fan lazily stirring the warm smoked-filled air above the bed.

I enjoyed their performance that ended with a favourite number - 'a full-on' Chattanooga Choo Choo.



Mike

LETCHWORTH PICNIC 2018

This year's Transport Picnic at Halls Green was the biggest and possibly most successful to date. The sun shone, the attendance was huge, and the variety of vehicles on display was breathtaking. We even had a surprise flypast from a D-Day painted Dakota!

The Healey club were out in force again with around 10 cars (not all Healeys it has to be said), the weather was fabulous and ideal picnic-ing weather. Richard Mayes who has championed this event over the years joined us for lunch and caught up on the gossip.

Here are a few photographs. More can be found (taken by Ben Salmon) here:

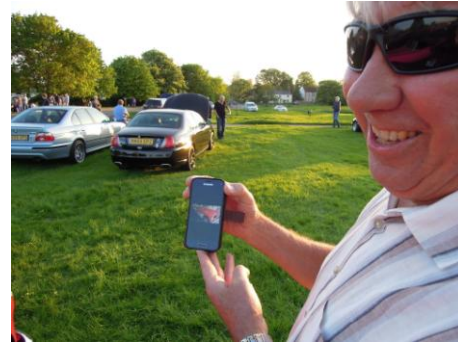
<https://flic.kr/s/aHsmj7yqwn>



Pat and Zara Kimber took a certain amount of stick but avoided having to push their errant Frog: Terry Sprosson shows off the home-made key used to start the trailered Model A having left the original at home: Richard chats with Maggi Byford and John Harper.

KEITH'S HEALEY

Last month I mentioned Keith Rudge's Healey that is nearing completion. Here are a couple of 'before and after' photos.



TONY LIFTS OFF!

Hi Rob

After the awful winter weather we suffered, I guess we all needed some kind of lift! I took things to a different level - two levels in fact!

If anyone in the club is considering a parking lift - I'd be happy to talk them through the ups and downs!!! :0))

All the best
Tony Withrington



NORFOLK CLASSIC RUN 2018

Every year Neil Williams and the Norfolk Group organise a classic run along the North Norfolk Coast. This year the route took 10 cars from the Sandringham estate through Brancaster, Wells and along the coast to a coffee break at Cley marshes visitor centre then on to lunch at the Hourglass pub at Sculthorpe just outside Fakenham.

The weather was brilliant and the route, which was open to some interpretation, an interesting one particularly if you were following Tony Longmate who at one point decided on some off-roading. How is the number plate, Tony?

After a great value lunch several of us adjourned for a cross-country route for afternoon tea in Castle Acre via Great Massingham.

A Grand Day Out!



From top L: Sandringham start: Cley coffee break: All roads lead somewhere but not necessarily in the direction of the lunch stop!

Rob

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>				
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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Produced by the Eastern Centre of the Austin Healey Club. Comments and opinions expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Club or the Committee.