

August 2018

Mutterings

THE NEWSLETTER of the EASTERN CENTRE
of the AUSTIN HEALEY CLUB



Healey SR at Le Mans Classic

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

ROB'S RAMBLINGS

Wow! What a scorcher!

I have always loved that headline and as far as I am concerned scorch on! However Healey motoring and scorching sun do not go together - a Healey is best driven early morning or in the evening and it is then that the car comes into its own. How the Americans drive their LHD cars I really don't know - they must have some recipe that we aren't aware of for insulating the cockpit.

Let not the heat dissuade you however from getting the car out and enjoying Club events. That is what they are there for, blisters not withstanding!

Rob

NEW MEMBERS

- **Eddie Russell of Purleigh** has an unrestored Red 1965 Mk 3 AH300
- **Ray Walters of Ipswich** has a Blue/ white 1966 Mk 3 AH3000 which was restored this year.
- **Richard Moore of Bury St Edmunds** has a Blue/White 1957 Ah 100/6 in good condition.
- **Terence Spencer of Leighton Buzzard** has a Red 1964 Mk 3 AH3000 in vg condition.
- **Paul and Samantha Antcliff** have a Black/Cream 1958 AH 100/6 in good condition.
- **Nick Suiter of Kings Lynn** has a 1964 blue £00 mk 3 in original condition but needing some work.

Welcome to the Club and we look forward to meeting you at one of our summer events.

Stuart Self

Membership Secretary

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	20-07-18	Here and there	47	210
Dave and Pam	20-07-18	Here and there	133	2016
Rob	20-07-18	Here and there	25	755

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. The entry passes will be posted this week

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

Aug 4/5th Croft
Aug 27th Castle Combe
Sept 29/30th Snetterton

Dates may change so check the website:
www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk

Snetterton 300

August 4/5

Entry Fee: £299

Donington

September 29

Entry Fee: £299

Brands Hatch

OCTOBER 27,28

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

I hope you and your Healeys have all coped well with the heat wave. James and I had a great trip to Le Mans other than the Ferry that we were supposed to take was cancelled, thanks to French industrial action at Le Havre, so instead of a relaxing night crossing we had to find a room for the night in Portsmouth as Brittany Ferries had managed to get us onto a Friday morning crossing to Caen [top marks to Brittany Ferries who were very helpful]. At least we were travelling with Rob Ransom and Terry Sprosson so we had someone to commiserate with.

This meant we didn't get to the circuit until late on Friday but fortunately Tony Withrington was already there and had managed to save us a bit of space for the tents so we had a bit of an Eastern Centre enclave.

Terry's Hundred had had radiator problems so it meant we were in convoy with an Alfa Romeo GTV but both cars behaved themselves in the heat and after a great weekend got us home without drama and the ferry home was as planned. We even had time for a scenic detour to visit a friend of my son's who has a delightful place in the French countryside, where we had a bite to eat on the way back to the ferry.

I didn't go to Silverstone Classic but I hope all of you who did had a great weekend, the Healey Drivers Club, Association of Healey Owners and AHC were in close proximity so hopefully there were plenty of opportunities for Healey spotting.

I attended the Cambridge Classic Car Club meeting in Ely on the 28th. Rob Ransom is on their committee and our Cambridge group meeting is shared with theirs. It was a lovely day out, we got to park opposite the Cathedral and there was an interesting diversity of vehicles from Scootacar to Corvette.

We had had a couple of days of rain and thunderstorms but Saturday stayed dry for us and there was a refreshing breeze to make things comfortable and as a bonus it made some money for the Prostate Cancer Charity. My wife Sue came down with the dog and my sister so we were able to enjoy a wander round Ely with a spot of shopping and lunch. Sorry I didn't get round to chatting to everyone I should have but the day seemed to flash past.

Chairman's chat continued...

August sees our annual run to Derbyshire returning via the Midlands planned drive and lunch which is always worth gate crashing and then at the end of the month the Ufford Park spectacular Sprite weekend will be upon us so I hope to see some of you there.

Happy Healeying.

Dave

SOCIAL WHEELS JULY, 2018

August is on its way and so is **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

COMMITTEE MATTERS

As mentioned in the Chairman's Chat last month the bookings for events this year seems to be a bit low. Is our notification system inadequate, is there a better way of getting information to the members? 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 on the website to find out more about the running of the Centre and find out how much fun it can be.

Richard Mayes will be standing down from the secretary post so it would be good to find someone who can keep us organised and take minutes. It is a great post to get to know people and be the first to get new information so please consider giving it a go. The Secretary post involves booking the Pub, taking minutes of meetings and producing agendas and the like for the committee but there is always help available so don't be afraid to have a go. We have had interest for the membership secretary post but we would still like additional committee members. Most of the current committee have been in post for a long time and it would be really useful to get the input from newer members to progress the club into the future. As always, many hands make light work.

At present we meet at lunchtimes but that [and the venue] can be changed to evenings to suit whoever is on the committee if necessary

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

Your Healey Club needs you.

Dave

*Right: Dave shows another side to his talents
At Classic Le Mans*



PETE TAYLOR'S CONCOURS SUCCESS

Just a note to say that Paul and I entered the National concours event held at Elford gardens in Staffordshire. We were asked, when we were there, if we would become Midland centre members for the day by Mike Ward, I guess that was so we could enter the Midland centre competition as well. They were held on the same day.

We were in the modified Sprite class with the L.M Sprite. I have to say that there was little competition and the car won best in class for both trophies.

For those interested in detail a log book came with the donor car and I had ownership changed to me some time ago, following that, more recently I requested that the DVLA put an unused 1965 plate up for auction. I picked one that looks very close to a works car. After some months DVLA informed me that it would be coming up for sale at auction.



The number was not of any special interest except to us, and a bid at the reserve price secured the number HNX416C . This number is now on the logbook. The car is taxed and insured and we drove it on the road a few miles from our B&B to the concours venue.

I have been in conversation with Jim Lowry about applying for HTP FIA papers and we may pursue them, although at around a total of £1000, they are a tad expensive. They are valid for ten years. On the other hand, the papers may make the car more desirable if and when we decide to sell.

Pete

Congratulations to Pete and Paul. The car is a faithful recreation of the 1965 LM Sprite and its long-drawn out gestation was fully covered in the December 2017 Mutterings - Rob.

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 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

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.

If anyone has a favourite event that they would like to feature, please do let our Events Secretary, Angela Bonner, know.

Angela

EVENTS AT BATTLESBRIDGE 2018



- 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/>

ELY CLASSIC 2018

This event is put on by the Cambridge and District Classic Car Club and has proved to be a great success over the four years since first run. 2018 saw a full house of over 100 cars parked up on Cathedral Green with Dave Holman, Terry Sprosson, myself and Simon and Yvonne Parker representing Eastern Centre.

Ely is a great place to spend a day and we strolled down to the river for a pint in the *Cutter* having trawled the Saturday market for bargains - for me a breakfast baguette at £3.50 ticked my box!



Simon and Yvonne Parker waved the flag whilst Ol' Spross admires a Chapron DS.



GOLD, MINK AND IVORY - THE 1958 MOTOR SHOW AUSTIN-HEALEY

You must know by now that I am an inveterate collector of motoring books and every now and then I come across passages in books that crossover from the main subject of the book to refer to Healey history. At Shelsley I bought a book entitled 'Behind the scenes of motor racing' by Ken Gregory, best known for being Stirling Moss' manager in the 1950's. Less well-known is that he was PRO for the Donald Healey Motor Company.

We all know that the Healey Hundred caused a sensation at the 1952 Motor Show but six years on and with the 100/6 having been introduced Healey have a problem.....

At that time I still retained my post as Public Relations Officer for Donald Healey, and I had for some time been considering how best to tackle the eternal problem of Earl's Court—that is, to attract the crowd to your stand and keep them there. Faced with the publicity guns of 'the big five', who between them were bringing out various brand-new models just before the Motor Show, it was obvious that we would need something pretty eye-opening to draw the crowds away from their stands.

In other words, putting it bluntly, we needed a 'gimmick'. My contention was that if, by some means or other, I could create sufficient interest in the Austin-Healey exhibits to bring the public to the stand, it was then up to the salesmen to make use of the opportunity, and 'push' the Company's wares. We needed something so glittering and attractive that people would make a point of visiting the stand specially to see it.

So was born the 'Gold, Mink and Ivory' Austin-Healey. I put my idea to Donald Healey, who agreed it was an extremely sound one. Then, after thinking seriously about it for a few days, he decided that the cost of the venture would be prohibitive, and the idea would have to be shelved.

I felt very bitter about this, and accordingly asked him whether, assuming I could guarantee a purchaser of the special car at a fixed price, he would then be prepared to build the car and carry out all the special treatment it would require.

Goldie continued.....

'Yes,' said Donald; under those circumstances he would, so I then approached Basil Cardew, motoring correspondent of the Daily Express. We had a discussion in a Fleet Street pub one evening, as a result of which Basil put the idea to his editor that their newspaper should purchase the car and announce it to be the first prize in a Motor Show competition they were promoting.

Having obtained their agreement to this proposal, I went back to Donald Healey, who undertook to begin work immediately on the special Austin-Healey. The car itself was basically an ordinary 'Hundred-Six' de Luxe model, but the entire coachwork was painted in a beautiful ivory shade. Everything that was normally chromed was 24-carat gold-plated, right down to the tiniest trimming washers and screws; the wire wheels, disc brakes, bumpers and instruments were all given the same treatment.

The seats were made of a reversed champagne kid leather with pure mink insets on the seat and the back squab, while the dashboard and the complete side trim embodied reversed champagne kid. All instrument controls and other parts normally of plastic were made of solid ivory, as was the steering wheel, which was an absolute masterpiece of the craftsman's art. The ignition key was gold-plated, also the key ring on which was a tiny, but true-to-scale, 24-carat solid gold miniature of the Austin-Healey Hundred-Six.

The 'Golden' Austin-Healey was valued at around £4000, and suffice to say proved a sensation at Earl's Court, 1958; it gained some very good press reports and generous publicity, and drew masses of visitors to the Austin-Healey stand, which was the object of the exercise.

..... and from the web in 2014

We spotted this impeccably restored 1958 Austin Healey up for auction on eBay, with an astronomical Buy-it-Now price of \$1,000,000 (USD). This very special vehicle was handmade by dozens of craftspeople, and features such extravagant touches as gold plated wheels, grille, bumpers and other trim, as well as a leather and mink interior.

Based on the Austin-Healey 100-6 roadster, this rarity was plucked from the assembly line and embellished with 24-Karat gold on just about every exposed metal surface. Screws, washers, wheel spokes, instruments and even its Dunlop disc brakes were coated in the shiny stuff. PTO

Goldie concluded...

The car was built especially to garner excitement at the 1958 London Motor Show.

Cheap plastic interior components were replaced with genuine ivory, and the seats were trimmed with champagne kid leather and champagne Diadem mink.

While the car originally was valued at just £4,000 (~\$6568 USD) that was still four times the price of the stock 100-6. Of course, these days you can get a stock Austin-Healey 100-6 in good condition for about 1/24th the price of the Goldie.

<https://95octane.com/2014/01/21/1958-austin-healey-goldie-ebay/>

Rob



CLASSIC LE MANS 2018

Dave has given you a little taster of the recent Le Mans trip; suffice to say that all did not go smoothly with the late (very) cancellation of the Portsmouth to Le Havre overnight ferry that meant an enforced stay in my hometown. Normally when on Healey trips from Pompey we go to the Still and West pub in Old Portsmouth for fish and chips before the late sailing. This we had to forego but the all you can eat buffet redressed the disappointment balance somewhat!

We also had to abandon the 'pretty route' going down to get to the camp site whilst still light. Tony Withrington was a life-saver when he presented us with cold beers and did the proverbial 5 loaves bit to feed us as well - we not having been able to get to the supermarket.



It helps I suppose having a big boot - he was in his fabulous, newly acquired Mustang - above.

After the stuttering start we got back on track with the weekend shop at the new supermarket in Arnage - warning! Saturday morning on race day is probably not the best time to do this as the traffic was horrendous! We then drove on to the circuit to park up with Mark Knight's South Western centre group alongside a hundred or so Healeys from the Dutch and French Clubs. Being a sweltered weekend rehydration was top of the list of to-dos but this proved to be somewhat expensive with Heineken €8 for 500cc PLUS €1 for the plastic 'glass'. Didn't stop us, however, although we did take advantage of cheaper prices at the Tertre Rouge café whilst watching England beat Sweden in the World Cup.

Continued overleaf...

Classic Le Mans concluded...

That evening we made to obligatory night-time trip to Arnage corner after, it has to be said, coating ourselves with mosquito repellent, learning from our last visit when we were eaten alive! It was wonderful to see the Lolas, GT40s and GT Porsches roaring through the darkness spitting flames from their exhausts on overrun. One, indeed, spitting so much fire that a conflagration ensued giving the *pompier*s some action.

Sunday was chill out day with a stroll around the circuit looking at the paddock, the many club stands, a bit of racing - Healeys, including the SR on the front cover, were represented in a couple of the grids, and more rehydration however our anticipated supper of Brie, French bread and a rich red was a little disappointing: the brie was liquid, the bread suffered from brewer's droop and the red wine was nicely mulled! Breakfast was much better with Dave cooking his very tasty ham and scrambled eggs.

We did manage the pretty route home, following one that Terry and I had taken some years before that wound its way through the Alpes Mancelles with a stop at St Céneri le G erie, one of the 10 prettiest villages in France. Having called in on one of Jim Holman's friends near Bagnolles we got to Caen in good time for the overnight ferry home.

My thanks to Terry Sprosson who dusted off the Alfa to do all the driving, to Dave and Jim for their company and to Tony for the cold beers! Tony actually had a ferry disaster going home: The Dieppe to Newhaven ferry left on time but turned round 3 miles from UK - faulty loading ramp! After 8 hours on the ferry he arrived back at Dieppe at 1am and then had to then drive 3 hrs to Calais! Short of petrol and sleep and with headlamp wiring problems it was a nightmare!

Don't let me put you off, however. It was a great weekend and the glitches, in hindsight, make it even more memorable.

Rob

LE MANS IN PICTURES



Top L, clockwise: The morning after the night before: Rehydration comes at a price: Pretty route home: The Classic is not only for Classics.



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.