

February 2017

Mutterings

THE NEWSLETTER of the EASTERN CENTRE
of the AUSTIN HEALEY CLUB



*Archive photo showing John 'The Pipe Major' Raybould's
J9 at an Eastern Centre event in the early 2000's*

www.ahc-eastern.co.uk

ROB'S RAMBLINGS

One of the things I must do during, what for me anyway, is the off season is to sort out my photo collection from my 25 years of Healey ownership, what I rather grandly call my 'archive' is a mess.

An example is the front cover photograph. I trawled through my computer and found the rather nice photo of John Raybould's car but, for the life of me I can't remember when the photo was taken or where.

In my effort to remember I blew it up on the computer and I recognise John Keener, outgoing National Chairman, and is that Tony 'the cake' Bending, Sprite racer who used to provide wonderful cakes for us at the old Colchester Show with the shock of white hair?

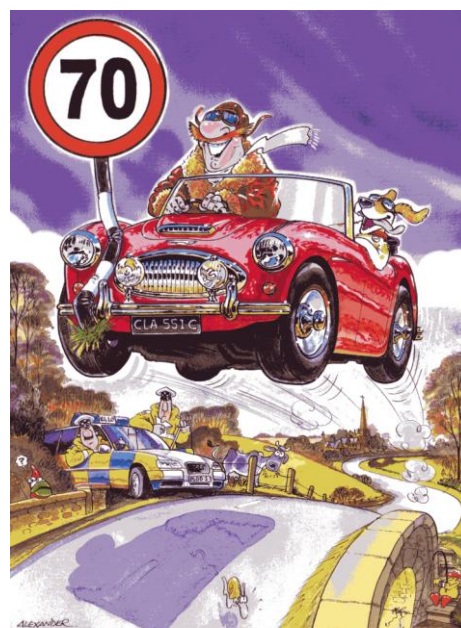
I suppose there is no excuse these days as digital camera phones embed a lot of information with the image, date, time and even location now - how clever is that? It is possible to use Google maps to zoom in on exactly where the photo was taken if you have set up that function on your phone or iPad.

The first Healey weekend I went to was in 1991 at Alsager and I remember taking loads of photos - this was the pre-digital age so loads equates to 24 or 36 shots - can I find them? Of course not! The interesting part of any photo collection is not so much the cars, they don't change that much, but the people do, hence my preoccupation with trying to get someone in the shot as foreground interest. It really irritates the subject but as a record is invaluable!

If you do have any interesting photos in your collection, regardless of whether you have full details, let me have them and at worst we can play the 'Guess where and when' game, meanwhile, someone please put me out of my misery!

Finally, you may remember that I had my 70th birthday recently and one of the cards I received was this one with a Healey featured, very accurately drawn by James Alexander.

Rob



EVENTS FOR 2017

*Main events organised by AHC or where we have a club stand or attend regularly will be shown in **bold**. Check on the website for the latest information:*

www.ahc-eastern.co.uk

12th March: **Grand Reunion Sunday Lunch.** Toft golf course, near Cambridge. It will be the generous 2 course meal with their famous roast potatoes. A great event get together to start the Healey year. More details from Andrew Hollick; andrewhollick48@tiscali.co.uk 01223 263089

18-19th March: Goodwood Members Classic race meeting

23rd April: **Drive it Day - Road Run from RHS gardens at Hyde Hall, Chelmsford:** See *Social Wheels* later in Mutterings. The Cambridge Car Club has also invited us to join their Charity Classic Road Run. The run will be around 80 miles starting and finishing from IWM Duxford. £45 per car.

<http://www.cambridgecarclub.co.uk/>

20th/23rd April: **DAFFODIL WEEKEND.** This is almost fully subscribed, but you just might squeeze in to this popular event if there is a cancellation. Contact this year is David Wheeler 07984 862334 or his email is

wheelerd@blueyonder.co.uk

14th May: **Battlesbridge Spring Auto Show.**

18th June: **LETCHWORTH PICNIC** at Halls Green, Weston near Baldock. Further details nearer the date.

7th - 9th July: **International Healey Weekend.** Lincoln. See Revcounter or the Club website

6th August: **Higham Ferrers Classic Show:** [Higham Classic Show 2017](#)

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

TOURING TROPHY - 2017

The Touring Trophy runs from AGM to AGM (October to October) and I am sure you will have been out in your Healey. If you want to be in with a chance of winning the Trophy let Richard Mayes (not the Editor) know your mileage.

Entrant	Date	Trip	Trip	Total
Pat & Zara	20-01-17	New Year	59	267

LITTLE GRANSDEN CAR & AIR SHOW 27TH AUGUST 2017

We have again booked a Club Stand at this event. Entries for the 2017 show are limited to 250 classic cars and Club Stands limited to 10 cars. To manage this I will maintain a list and the first 10 people to enter will be on the Club Stand. After that you will be parked in the general classic car area, you can of course still use the facility of the event shelter.

As usual submit your entry using the form from www.littlegransdenshow.co.uk mark your form "Austin Healey Club Stand" and advise me by email that you have entered.

I will take emails on a strictly first come first served basis.

Richard Mayes



MORE TECHNICAL TIPS FROM DAVE HOLMAN

Whilst tackling a couple of fiddly jobs recently I was reminded how frustrating it is to have a floppy universal joint in the socket set department. There is a little trick which may help, I use an "o" ring to slip over the joint which increases the friction to hold it in place initially but still allows full movement. You have to find a suitable size and thickness of course but it has to be a snug fit over the middle of the joint and ideally the thickness needs to be a tight fit between the two yokes. The stretch in the "o" ring will enable it to fit around the yokes as hopefully the pictures will show.



Dave

GRAND REUNION SUNDAY LUNCH 12th March

Once again this starter to the social season will be held at Toft golf course, near Cambridge <http://www.cmgc.co.uk/>

It will be the usual excellent menu choice of roast beef, pork, turkey or gammon and of course their famous roast potatoes. Desserts are chosen on the day from the blackboard.

A great get together to start the Healey year.

Numbers please to:

Andrew Hollick; andrewhollick48@tiscali.co.uk 01223 263089

SOCIAL WHEELS FEBRUARY 2017.

We are now looking at the events coming up this year, in addition to the recent calendar; we have another one of interest.

For **Drive it Day on the 23rd April**, there is a charity fun run around the south of Essex, starting from the RHS gardens at Hyde Hall, Chelmsford, refreshments available here, then a 50 mile drive to finish at the Royal Gunpowder Mills, Waltham Abbey. This is a hugely important site in the history of explosives from the Civil War to the Cold War, and is set in 175 acres of beautiful gardens and landscaping. Entrants will be given a Tulip rally route and a rally plate for the front of your car.

They are asking for an entry payment of £18 as there as yet is no sponsorship, but if you can offer some (forms available when you send in your entry) the good causes this year are Little Havens, (the only children's hospice in Essex) and CHAPS (the men's health charity).

Last year the balance after costs was £4,106 shared between St Luke's Hospice, Essex Community Foundation and the Museum of Power. They are hoping to improve on this figure for 2017.

Entries have to be limited to 300 cars because of space limitations at the start and finish, so please get your entry in early. Full rules and entry form to print off are available from Alan@two-services.com

Hoping any winter 'fine fettling' is coming along well, and looking forward to seeing you at the Toft Spring Lunch on 12th March, details elsewhere in this copy of Mutterings.

Take care,
Angela



HIGHAM FERRERS CLASSIC CAR SHOW 2017

Over 200 Classic Cars were on display at the 3rd Higham Ferrers Chichele Classic Car Show in 2016 put on by the Rotary Club of Rushden Chichele.

The 2017 Show will be held on **Sunday 6 August** in the Castle Fields, Kimbolton Road, Higham Ferrers. Note that there are some minor amendments to previous entry criteria, most notably the closing date for entries and the formation of a waiting list.

This event always has a good turnout from Eastern Centre so contact Austin Healey Club member Roy Murphy, Cedar Lodge, 128 Northampton Road, Rushden, Northants NN10 6AL to register your interest or use the email contact below:

Email highamclassic@btinternet.com telephone—07831898138

GOODWOOD MEMBERS MEETING

The Goodwood Members Meeting in **March (17th and 18th)** will be holding a race for A-series engine vehicles the race for The Weslake trophy named after the designer of the A-series cylinder head .

There will be a full grid of 30 vehicles the vast majority will be period racing Sprites and Midgets including the 4 WSMs, Lenhams etc.

Hopefully if car and yours truly can get back into racing trim we will be there.



Clive Cocks

IN SEARCH OF A WEATHERPROOF 100

Dave Holman tackles the perennial Healey problem....

The way my sidescreens fit there is still a bit of a gap at the front bottom corner where the material curves out to sit on the door, I have used some self adhesive sponge strip trimmed to fit in the triangular gap that is exposed, this works but I don't think the adhesive bond will last very long on the textured material so will be monitored over time.



I have also used some very soft sponge on the back of the pillar and the side of the shroud where the door closes up to it. Unfortunately this mod doesn't look very pretty at the moment but I am sure that a bit of repositioning will improve things.

The modifications haven't yet been tested exhaustively but I did get to take it out for a 45 minute drive in pretty heavy rain and it all seemed to be quite effective, the carpets stayed dry in that time, as did my glasses. The seal under the screen still allows it to be lowered and I don't think it looks too obvious, a possible problem may be that a little water still gets behind the original seal so it will be prudent to lower the screen after a wet run just to dry out the corners. All the seals used are available from "Woolies" at Market Deeping.

Happy [hopefully dry] Healeying,

Dave Holman.

MORE ABOUT RALPH SLEIGH

Last month's *Mutterings* carried an article about the motoring exploits of Giles, the famous *Daily Express* cartoonist. His navigator was Ralph Sleigh:

Ralph Sleigh (on left in the photo below), was an ex-Squadron Leader, R.A.F., from Hitcham, near Ipswich, and was Eastern Counties Representative of a firm of paint manufacturers. Peter Jopling, his co-driver on his long-distance adventures was an ex-Major in the King's African Rifles, from Merston, near Chichester. They first met through an advertisement Sleigh inserted in a daily newspaper when he was seeking companions for his Trans-African 1948 trip.

They completed the journey from England in 24 days 2 hours 50 minutes, smashing the previous best time on record by no less than 7 days 19 hours 10 minutes and had also broken the Algiers to Cape Town "record" by 3 days 20 hours 55 minutes.

In 1948 Sleigh and Jopling drove an Austin A70 Hampshire Saloon with only two modifications - special auxiliary tanks mounted on the roof and seats designed to let down as beds. But the extra equipment carried in the car weighed slightly more than half a ton - a further testimony, were any needed, to the sturdiness of the A70. In 1950 they were to use a Wolseley 6/80 for a similar trip.

The distance overland from Algiers to the Cape is 10,300 miles - four thousand miles further than the sea route because no road existed down the West Coast of Africa.



The full details of their adventures can be found in *Savage Sahara*, written by Ralph Sleigh on his return.

Thanks again to the ECMC Historical Review for this information.

THE 2017 EDITION OF THE HIGHLAND 3-DAY CLASSIC TOUR

Roger and I have been participating in this 'spirited tour' on alternate years for over a decade, and still really look forward to it. It is not a rally, there is no timing, but you are expected to be back in the bar before dinner! Each day starts with a good Scottish breakfast, there is a lunch halt, coffee and afternoon tea stops are highlighted, then dinner in the evening. You may find a small autotest, or manoeuvrability test near lunch and on one day there may be a navigational section, but these are optional. Most importantly you are there to join with a small friendly event and admire the glorious scenery and uncongested roads of the Highlands.

Mike Raven, the chief organiser, is a Healey man based near Preston, but the event is run through the Lancashire Automobile Club and essentially they welcome any sports, classic or interesting vehicle. We have done the event in our 3000, in the rally car, in my MGB and in the Mazda amongst other vehicles.

Despite its name, for those living in East Anglia, this is a 6 day break! Leave home on Wednesday 20th September (or even Tues) and drive just over the border into Scotland. Thursday -Sunday, routes etc as provided by organiser, Monday 25th September drive home.

Details of this year's Highland 3 day Classic Tour are available on the web-site <http://www.highlandtour.co.uk/>

Phone or email **Roger or Maggi Byford** if you want more info before putting in an entry.

01763 242910 or
maggibyford@gmail.com



WET NEW YEAR AT BARRINGTON 2017

After the crisp dry weather over Christmas, it started raining in the early hours of the New Year, and the morning of 1st was very dark dismal and increasingly wet. Not conducive to getting old cars out and going for a run!

Roger and I put on a thermal layer of clothes topped with waterproof anoraks, then got into the cold soft-top Mazda with Bert the dog. Can you imagine the steamed up windows!!

On arrival at Barrington it was obvious it had rained harder there, and only another MX5 and a little Vauxhall sports, plus a few 30s/40s saloons decorated the edge of the green. After a short while we decided to give up and go home.

On the way we saw Pat and Zara Kimber in their yellow Frogeye going north, and shortly after we reached home John and Janet Harper arrived in a sensible saloon.

We were only expecting a few for the annual Soup 'n Sarnies, and we were soon joined by Pat & Zara who had given up on Barrington, Alan & Chris Pugh in their Volvo who had come straight to our house, and Jim & Stella Prior who had been to the pub at Barrington for a coffee but had driven up from Chelmsford in their Land Rover.

We all warmed up with the soup, and chatted over the sandwiches, discussing plans for outings and events in 2017 - very much hoping we get a nice fine, dry summer.

Maggi Byford

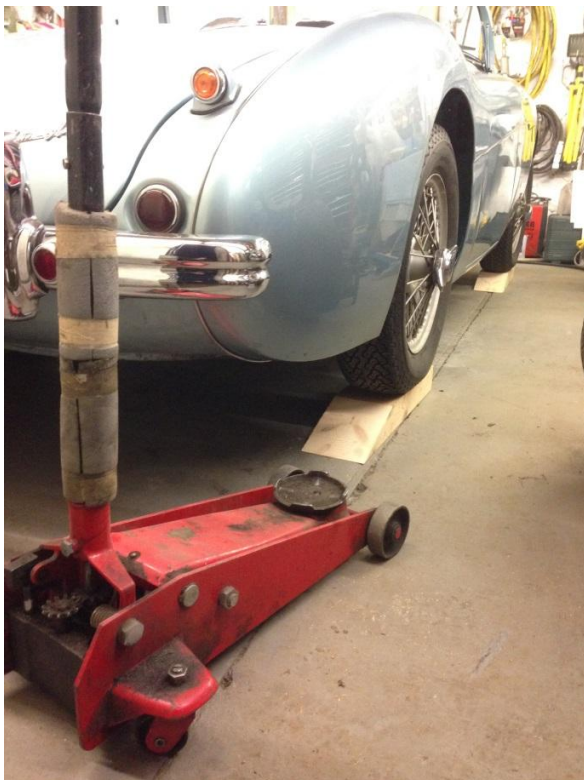


Sadly it does seem that New Year's Day was a washout everywhere. We were up at the Norfolk coast and even the dog was reluctant to go out! If you had a better experience, please let me know - Rob

WINTER DRAWERS ON!

I assume everyone has been beavering away out in the garage preparing their cars for the wonderful summer of Healeying that awaits. During this time it is nice to have a good look round and to this end I like to get the car up on four axle stands, which gives a chance to lie underneath and have a good look round [not as good as walking in under a proper lift but as good as most of us will get].

Jacking a Healey up to this height can be a bit tedious so to make life a little easier I have made a set of four small ramps from 6" x 3" timber. I used some timber I had surplus to requirements and made them around 600mm long with a ramp over about 200mm of that length. Driving onto these means I can get a decent sized trolley jack under the car enabling one lift at each end to get to full axle stand height.



To enable jacking on the centre-line of the car I also have a sturdy piece of timber that I have put a groove in along the length to accommodate the welded seam of the front cross-member, this spreads the lifting load and should eliminate the pushed-up cross-member syndrome. If you don't have suitable saws to make these things up I am sure a local timber supplier would be able to help.

The height of these ramps is also sufficient to do a quick oil change without having to resort to jack and axle stands.

Tips for winter from Dave, continued....

Once up on the stands you have the chance to check the wheels, tyres and brakes as well as a look round for any evidence of rust creeping up on you. If you plan on not using the car for a while it is good to leave it on the stands to give the tyres a chance to remain round, otherwise mark the tyre with a bit of chalk at the bottom and roll it about so it isn't sitting on the same part of the tyre all the time, I also increase the tyre pressure to help stop flat spots but obviously if you do that, leave a note on the steering wheel to remind you to set them to the correct pressure before you drive off.

Whilst on the subject of wooden aids, I have also made some small blocks to fit under the wiper arms to raise the blades off the screen, this helps keep the rubber in its intended shape.



As always I never seem to make enough effort to get out into the garage and get all the jobs done so I will inevitably have a spring and summer of fettling to relieve the boredom in between the events and shows! I am planning on visiting the Donington Historic Festival this year as I haven't had a chance before, and of course there are plenty of Eastern Centre events that I need to catch up on as I won't be doing quite so much "Old Healey" stuff. I am hoping to make the famed Battlesbridge show this year as we won't be away that weekend for the first time in many years.

Hopefully we will get a chance to say Hi at sometime during the year but whatever you do, enjoy your motoring.

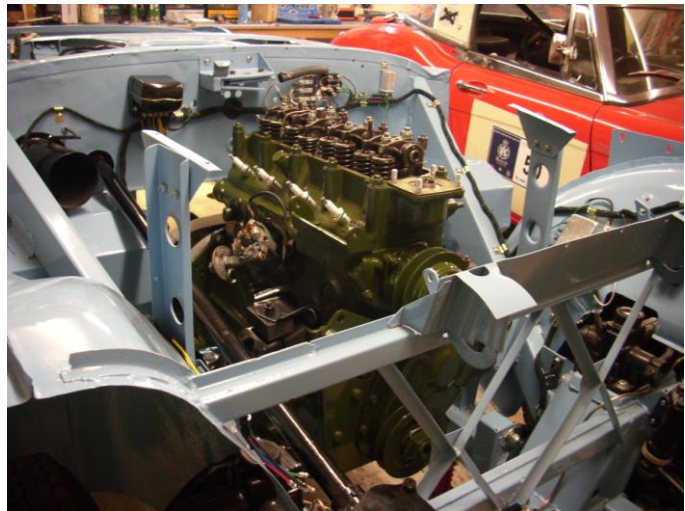
Dave Holman

RESTORING THE DREAM - part 2 from Angela Bonner

As a result of standing outside until she came back to England, which took about six weeks, and damage incurred in the accident itself, plus then four years outside but under wraps, the interior was in a sorry state. I had never liked the tan brown upholstery anyway, and the Heritage certificate quotes blue, so now the entire interior is 'off the shelf' navy blue apart from the seats. These have been specially re-covered in the slightly lighter 'midnight blue' which doesn't have the, to my mind, greyish overtones of stock navy leather.

The engine block and other metal parts which were normally painted are now in the original dark green, including the rocker cover. This had been chromed, but repairing damage also damaged the chrome finish.

More wiring and other engine bay components are being attached, suddenly we have a car rather than a shell and an awful lot of bits.



A completely new wiring loom is being fitted, I don't believe in taking chances with electrical stuff, and some of the instruments have been away for refurbishing. Rumour has it that there is no such thing as an accurate Healey fuel gauge, but at least we will have tried!

As soon as the threaded wheel hubs were sorted out - there seems to be different thicknesses of metal used sometimes, who knows why, so what with that, and getting the right handed, left handed supply sorted this took longer than hoped. The car was now put onto 'slave wheels' to preserve the final ones from any possible damage so the engine and gearbox could be fitted, and I felt we were now making visible progress.

More next month.....

ZARA'S FUN SPOT

A nun ran out of petrol, so she walked to a garage about a mile away. The proprietor told her that unfortunately he had lent his only petrol can to another driver so had nothing in which to put petrol for her. She returned to her car and got out a bedpan; she was a nurse as well as a nun.

It was filled with petrol for her at the garage. She was using it to fill up her car when two men saw her as they drove past. One said "If that works I am turning Catholic!"

Zara Kimber

8TH CLASSICS ON THE GREEN, FRISTON, SAXMUNDHAM

This will take place on **Thursday 6th July** from 3pm until about 9pm.

Anything built before 1970 welcome at this charity event, free entry but donations collected for the village church. No need to book, but for more info contact Tony Morley 01728 687999 also on tonymorley2000@aol.com.

Refreshments available.

The Green, Friston, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1NP

OOPS!

Tony Withrington sent this photo through. It was taken at a race meeting at Snetterton last year. Whilst it adds excitement to the racing I am not sure it will catch on with the drivers!



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	First Tuesday	Contact	Clive Cocks	01933 356251
<i>The Cock Inn, Broom.</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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