

June 2020

Mutterings

THE NEWSLETTER of the EASTERN CENTRE
of the AUSTIN HEALEY CLUB



All dressed up but nowhere to go! Lockdown laments
inside

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

ROB'S RAMBLINGS

With all the time on our hands you would imagine that all the jobs on the cars would have been done but unfortunately I must confess that the good weather has meant that dog walking and getting out as best we can has come first.

I did a bit of fettling on the Sprite as a fuel line was leaking and this meant grovelling around under the back axle, making me realise that I am not as flexible as I used to be. More significantly, my eyesight is such that trying to see close up means juggling glasses on and off and of course the inevitable: Where are my glasses? Crunch - ah, that's where they are!

I did get out in the big Healey to meet a friend for a social distancing coffee but that only served to make me more frustrated! Have you done any better I wonder?

With the lockdown easing we should be able to get together in limited numbers - 6 in a group means 3 cars at least which will be something so let's have your suggestions for making the most of it. I know that some are planning to 'Do a Dominic' by going along to Barrington Green next Friday and parking up at a respectable distance from others. Legal? Don't know but I might just drive over to have a look.

Stay safe

Rob

NEW MEMBERS

The Committee welcomes all new members to the club and looks forward to meeting with you when normality resumes. New members are asked to let the editor have a brief 'Me and my car' article for Mutterings.

Tony Withrington

TOURING TROPHY - 2020

The Touring Trophy runs from AGM to AGM (October to October).

The 'Mr Mercury' trophy seen right was presented to the AH Club by National Benzole and rededicated as the Touring Trophy some years ago.



If you want to be in with a chance of winning the Trophy let the Editor mutterings@ahc-eastern.co.uk know your mileage in the following format.

| Entrant | Date | Trip description | Trip | Total |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------|------|-------|
| Angela Bonner | 25/5/ 2020 | Essential travel | 120 | 620 |
| Rob | 25/5/ 2020 | Covid coffee and fettle check | 25 | 128 |
| Dave and Pam | 25/5/ 2020 | Covid lockdown | 0 | 101 |
| Dave Holman | 25/5/ 2020 | Covid lockdown | 0 | 16 |

You will read later that Clive Cocks has made up a plan to get to the top of the pile, you will also read that there are some little local difficulties.....

Opposite you will see Billy no Mates pretending that life goes on as normal...not the same when the pub is shut!

Rob



CHAIRMAN'S CHAT *from Dave Holman*

Glimmers of hope on the horizon, Motorsport UK is accepting requests for permits in the hope that events can restart from early July. That gives me hope that the Cambridge Car Club event in Ely may take place in early August, fingers crossed. It is a shame the Eastern Centre pool party won't be happening, but the amount of work involved and the risks of having a large gathering still being present, it was thought best to postpone it until next year when hopefully the outlook will be more settled.

In the meantime the Hundred is still relegated to prescription collection once a month. Work on the BJ8 continues but it seems to be a one step forward, two steps back scenario. Having sat around for so long, many parts don't like it when you ask them to move so there has been a lot of seal and dust cover replacements going on.

I was really lucky when checking out boxes of bits recently, I found the Bakelite top for an old Lucas electric screenwash. In another cupboard I had a square glass jar full of screws and looking at it I thought it looked a very similar size to the Lucas set up. Much to my amazement the bakelite top fitted perfectly and a modern in-line washer pump fits under the original motor cover so I should be able to have an original looking screen wash arrangement. Of course this doesn't really advance the main job of getting the car back on the road but I find it a lot of fun modifying things.

I really need to get on with the main jobs of course, if events do start happening it will be nice to have a car on the road that can accommodate the dog.

Don't forget even though we can't carry on with the noggins your committee is just an email away if you have a question regarding your Healey and with the extended fettling period I hope to see many of you about later in the year.

We would like to think that normal service will be resumed as soon as possible. Keep an eye on the website and look out for emails from our membership secretary; we will pass on any news as soon as we get it.

ALAN'S BJ8 IN LOCKDOWN

Thanks for sending me the latest edition of Mutterings. You asked readers for photos of their Healeys in 'lockdown'.

Here's one of my BJ8 on Saturday 2 May 2020 having made the epic journey from my garage to the driveway (about 15 feet).

Regards,
Alan Millband



STUART'S IN SYMPATHY

Later on you will read a few words from Stuart Self. He sends a picture of his car snuggled down waiting for the storm to pass!



Stuart is pictured above with Mike Barden at Le Mans in around 2006

SOCIAL WHEELS

Hi all, still smiling and plodding forward, it has to end eventually!

My Healey has managed a couple of short trips, supposedly for essential supplies, but I managed to tie one in with prescription collection, and another collecting a paper pattern as am trying to make some 'scrubs' for the NHS.

The trouble with going anywhere and parking is the inevitable public who want to talk about the car, in normal times very welcome but now !!! Even the woman's husband tooted and waved her away from me as I sort of shrunk down out of her way.

Keep cheerful, the weather is turning warmer again, which is great, in my book, so will try to think up more excuses for an unnecessary journey.

Take care everyone, stay safe,
best wishes,

Angela

THE GOVERNMENT'S LATEST ADVICE



CARS AS TV STARS

- *Bullitt* - A 100 is passed repeatedly in the car chase which must go round in circles because the car is parked up!
- *K-PAX* - Kevin Spacey film. The consultant psychiatrist drives a 3000
- *Beach Boys Docu Drama* - some weird channel. When they get famous they all buy smart cars, one a 100.
- *Tears for Fears music video: Everybody Wants To Rule The World* A BJB is featured as the backbone to the video. You can get it on You Tube.
- *10cc album cover: How dare you!*
- *AXA Insurance advert - current: Sprite is seen in the main character's garage business*
- *"School for Scoundrels"* (starring Ian Carmichael, Terry Thomas and Alastair Sim - to name a few) used the 1958 ex works demonstrator 100/6 registered PJB 828.

Come on guys, there must be some more. Let me have your recollections and I will add it to the list.

FROM STUART SELF

Hi Rob

Hope you are well. We are ok just trying to get to the end of the ever lengthening list of jobs to do. I took the hardtop and roll cage out of the car before coronavirus in anticipation of using it topless this summer! I have to admit that I did use the car the other day just to see if I could remember what it was like to drive I have included a picture of it in hibernation again.

By the way the gent driving PJB 828 in the film *School for Scoundrels* was Ian Carmichael not Alistair Sim. Also in the film is an Aston Martin DB3S masquerading as a Bellini. Terry Thomas played the part of the owner of the Bellini in the film.

Stuart

SIMON PARKER ON HIS ASHLEY SPRITE PROJECT

The project came about as when I was 17 or 18 there was a lovely Ashley Sprite or Midget, not sure which, for sale at a BMC garage in the next village, in the then colour of that mustard yellow, oh how I wanted that car I could afford to buy it but not insure it!

In 2012 I was looking for a project and things started to fall into place. There was a mk4 car for sale minus gearbox in need of restoration, the 5 speed Toyota gearbox had been removed for another car. This car though now had been sold and was to be made into a Brabham recreation with a Coventry Climax engine and standard Sprite gearbox. This meant that the engine and five speed box were also available.

These were all purchased along with an Ashley hard top and what is thought to be a Williams and Pritchard bonnet and all transported to Spaldwick. After I had completely stripped the car it went to Colmworth Classic Cars and the bodywork was all repaired. Paul Webb then suggested that the car would look really good with the hard top bonded on and the fuel filler raised to the cars haunches, the rear tonneau removed and the floor strengthened. After some thought I agreed and this was done.



The repaired body then came back to me fit all the running gear, engine and gearbox.

Although the gearbox was going back into the body it originally came out of it did not fit very well and Paul had to make some modifications.

Ashley Sprite continued...

This was then all stripped out and the body went off to be painted; the colour is a 1950's Jaguar metallic green. When painted the car returned to Spaldwick for final fitting out.

The suspension and braking system is virtually all new and mildly updated with a thicker anti roll bar and polybushes etc. When this was all done it was on the move again to a trimmers to have the roof lining fitted..... 'out of Yvonne's and my skill set'. When returned the wiring was started with a new later negative earth and alternator harness fitted before the other mechanicals went in.



With all or the changes and additions I found this quite a chore and with radiotherapy, regular hospital visits and Chemo also often feeling pretty rough the whole project stalled for a while and also the arrival of an MG TA that was supposed to need nothing but in fact needed a winter of work. But the day did come when the wiring was finished and she was fired up and all worked well, gears selected and brakes worked after Paul helped me bleed them.

Lights all worked with LED bulbs, the Sprite reversing lights 'frenched' out and a sixties Lucas spotlight fitted instead.

More next month...



EASTERN CENTRE CALENDAR 2020

Eastern Centre supported events are shown in bold. Any other events are for information.

Subject to amendment

Please be aware that many events are now cancelled or postponed where possible due to the Coronavirus, so even when restrictions are lifted please check before you attempt to attend anything listed at the moment. I am keeping the diary going in the hope things will return to normal soon, but currently all events are cancelled or on hold until further notice.

- **BATTLESBRIDGE** Closed until further notice, the first time in 50 years they have had to do this.
- 6th June. **POSTPONED Letchworth Classic Vehicles picnic**, new date to be decided in **2021**.
- 7th June. **POSTPONED Euston Rural Pastimes Country fair**. New date 13th June **2021**.
- 11/14th June. **CANCELLED AH Lustrum 2020 Contact** www.healey.nl/events/lustrum if you are booked and you have not heard from the organiser.
- 28th June. **CANCELLED Great Saling Fete and Vehicle Display**, Millenium Hall and Grounds, CM7 5DW.
- 3/5th July. **POSTPONED Classic Le Mans**. Postponed until 1st - 4th July **2021**.
- 9th July. **CANCELLED THURSDAY Classics on the Green**, Friston, Saxmundham, IP17 1NP.
- 10th/12th July. **2020 POSTPONED International Healey weekend** new date 16th/18th July **2021**.
- 12th July. **CANCELLED Kimbolton Castle Classic Car Show**.
- 26th July. **POSTPONED Picnic Pool Party** - There is a slim chance we might hold this later at short notice, but this depends not only on the Covid restrictions but on the state of the ground if we get heavy rain, Healeys are not famous for off road ability!! Check future Mutterings please.

Events 2020/21 continued...

- 2nd August. **CANCELLED. Higham Ferrers Chichele Classic Car Show.**
- 7th/9th August Classic Car and Restoration Show, NEC Birmingham. Still on, selling discounted tickets until 6th August, **BUT** they have **no obligation to refund** for 'events beyond their control'.
- 20th/23rd August. **POSTPONED.** British Motor Show, Farnborough. New date 19th/22nd August, **2021.**
- 30th August. **POSTPONED Little Gransden Air and Classic Vehicle show** new date **2021.**
- 11th/13th September. Goodwood Revival. **STILL ON**, check for tickets on their website.
- 13th/15th November. Classic Motor Show, NEC, Birmingham. **STILL ON**, check their website regularly.

There have been many date adjustments recently so please check dates carefully and check with organiser.

Drive-it Day, of course, did not happen but Patrick Lousada and Pam Davis managed a few miles in their BJ8 and sent the picture opposite of the open road.....

Toot, Toot!

Contact Angela by text or mobile on 07710 267356 for more information, or email angelabonneruk@yahoo.co.uk

Hope to see you soon, take care,

Angela



AUSTIN HEALEY 3000 ADJUSTABLE STEERING WHEEL

Dave Holman continues with his BJ8 rebuild.

Another niggle with my BJ8 was that the adjustable steering wheel never really seemed to lock tightly on the splines but the locking ring was really tight.

The wheel had to come off as I was removing the dash to do some other jobs so I had a look to see if anything could be improved. With the wheel off you could see the fingers closing up as you tightened the locking ring but it stopped turning before the fingers actually closed up on each other. An inspection found that at some time the wheel has been refurbished and the black lacquer on the wheel was binding on the lacquer in the ring not allowing the full movement.

A couple of minutes with a file removed the lacquer on the back of the wheel and returned the proper action. The wheel now locks easily and the ring will undo without undue force.

The photo shows the wheel after the work, unfortunately I didn't take one "before".



You should be able to see the area where the black lacquer was removed leaving the aluminium showing.

THAT'S NOT A HEALEY!

Whilst the majority of us moan about not getting our cars on the road have a thought for Terry Sprosson who completed his E-Type project a week or so before lockdown which meant that its wheels have barely turned in anger!



E10 FUEL - THE LATEST

In these difficult times all we appear to get is bad news. The latest I have seen refers to the damage E10 petrol will cause to our cars. Unfortunately, the articles I have seen do not tell the whole story.

On the positive side classic engines appear to run better on E10, on the negative side there is a serious problem with any petrol containing ethanol that none of the articles I have read have reported.

To give people some good news, I have attached an article based on a series of tests run on a classic XPAG engine at Manchester University.

The full article is available on <https://classicenginesmodernfuel.org.uk/E10/> along with download links to the pictures.

Please feel free to use any of this content on the condition you include a link to the book "Classic Engines, Modern Fuel - The Problems, the Solutions" (<https://classicenginesmodernfuel.org.uk/>)

Dr Paul Ireland

YOU'VE GOT TO LAUGH!

- With lockdown social distancing from people has not been the problem, but need to learn how to keep 2 metres away from the fridge
- I don't think anyone expected when we changed the clocks we went from standard time to the twilight zone
- This morning I saw our next door neighbour having a conversation with her cat it was obvious she thought it understood her, I came in and told the dog we had a good laugh.
- I am so excited time to take the dustbins out..... what to wear, what to wear!
- My body has absorbed so much soap and disinfectant over the past few weeks every time I pee I clean the toilet.
- Classified Ad....Single man with toilet paper seeks women with hand sanitizer for good clean fun.

SOCIAL WHEELS, (STILL AT A SAFE DISTANCE!)

Still two meters apart, driving restrictions have been lifted a little so I hope you have managed to exercise those Healeys in the course of your allowed activities. One of the main problems I find in that area is finding safe parking, they are not the sort of vehicle which can be just abandoned in a lay by while you stretch your legs, even if generally they are treated with respect.

The special commemoration of VE Day this year inevitably fell a bit flat because of all the restrictions, but many people managed a celebration of some sort and I was not alone in flying flags and bunting in honour of the occasion.

Maggi has had to postpone the **Twinwood** trip for the moment and hopes, like many other events, that it can be rescheduled for later this year. Keep checking Mutterings for the latest information.

Please look at the calendar carefully, almost everything we had planned has been cancelled or rescheduled, many will skip this year altogether. Some larger events have already posted their date for 2021, so make a list until you have a next year's diary available, then you won't miss any favourites.

The **pool/picnic party** here in Helions Bumpstead on 26th July has been postponed, we are hoping it may be possible to hold it later in the year but this will depend on factors beyond our control. Apart from the obvious necessary lifting of more restrictions on mass gatherings, I am very conscious of the probable age group of attendees, in the high risk bracket. There is also the weather, although we might get an 'Indian Summer', if we have a period of heavy rain the parking field will not be useable, it is uneven at the best of times, and a Healey is not noted for agricultural motoring!! Remember to read Mutterings on-line for all the latest information on events in our area, there are so many changes again to last month's Mutterings.

See you all soon, hopefully they will lift some more of the restrictions and we can at least now go out on non-essential drives. In the meantime, keep those batteries topped up, and look after the tyres - I am seriously thinking of drawing a smile on my face mask, if only to cheer other people up.

Angela

TAILPIECE FROM CLIVE COCKS

Reading through Mutterings and your comments I have decided to enter the Touring trophy competition.

Firstly by using the Healey for shopping trips, as we are trying to do the occasional big shop with our Healey having a luggage rack it has proved useful for the extra toilet rolls.

Also to gain on the present Trophy leaders, I have investigated your suggestion of driving the Healey in and out of the garage, with a drive length of 25 metres I will need to repeat this 64 times to complete 1 mile therefore to compete with the present leader (499 miles) I need to repeat this process 31,936 times. Considering my concentration levels are not at their best I reckon I could repeat the process 20 times in one go before I scrape the car, secondly considering the stop/start process I have estimated the petrol consumption to be diabolical.

So if I manage 20 trips in the morning a further 20 in the afternoon it will take me 799 days to take pole position in the Touring Trophy (if present contenders do not add any mileage to their present totals) therefore dare I say I need "lockdown " to last till May 2022 at the earliest (NOT a desirable thought).

Clive

PS: I have managed to decrease 23 days down to 776 days by removing workbench in garage enabling the length of journey to be increased (0.85mtres), Roll on end of April 2022

PPS: failed to take into account petrol requirements so will have to fill up at least twice (if it can classed as necessary journey and good for mileage) will need to re-calculate!!!

PPPS: Problem with above calculations after testing have realised by reversing the car it deducts the mileage you have put on going forward, so now working on performing a multipoint turn after taking car out of garage, enabling me to drive out of garage turn the car and drive back in (best result 8 point turn so far, after 3 attempts arm muscles gave up) so will get the "bullworker" out of the loft build up some muscles and re-calculate new distances involved.

PPPPS: Pulled muscle getting into loftSod the Touring Trophy this Year!

NOGGIN `N` NATTERS

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Colchester area | Varies | Chris and Angie Davis | canda3000@hotmail.com |
| 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> | | | |
| Herts and Beds | 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>Joint meetings with Woolpit Area Classics</i> | | | |

EASTERN CENTRE COMMITTEE 2019/20

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|--|--------------|
| CHAIRMAN and MSA Liaison | DAVE HOLMAN | chairman@ahc-eastern.co.uk | 01366 347412 |
| NEC DIRECTOR & TREASURER | MAGGI BYFORD | treasurer@ahc-eastern.co.uk | 01763 242910 |
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| | | |
|-------------|--|--------------|
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|-------------|--|--------------|

TECHNICAL SECRETARIES

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 100, 100/6 & 3000 | DAVE HOLMAN | 01366 347412 |
| SPRITES (All Marques) | PAT KIMBER | 01920 420642 |
| WARWICK HEALEY | JOHN KEENER | 01494 728360 |

VALUATION OFFICER FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES

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| DAVID SINGER | david@overseasair.net | 01787 476264 |
|--------------|--|--------------|

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