

July 2020

Mutterings

THE NEWSLETTER of the EASTERN CENTRE
of the AUSTIN HEALEY CLUB



Me and my car. Joanna Hill tells all inside

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

ROB'S RAMBLINGS

I was sad to hear of the death of Mike Garton earlier this month.

Mike was a former motorcycle scrambler who came to Geoffrey Healey's notice due to success with 'MEG', his Sprite MEG199, distinctive in gleaming red with its Ashley bonnet and hardtop.

Mike had managed to get an entry for MEG in the 1963 Nurburgring 500km race. Apocryphally Geoff invited him to Warwick *'and bring the flyer'*. Geoff asked whether he would like to buy 1411 WD, the Le Mans Coupé Sprite, Mike said that he couldn't afford it. After several puffs on his ever-present pipe Geoff told him to hitch it up anyway, leaving MEG at Warwick and Mike £100 lighter but with a full race car behind his VW Caravette.

In 1965 he sold the Sprite and bought a Lotus 23B. For the rest of the 1960s he raced a variety of British sports cars at national and international level, including Sprites, MGBs, a Mini Marcos and even raced in the European Touring Car Championship. For the last three years of his racing career he raced Chevrons - a B8 in 1970, a B16 in 1971 and a B21 in 1972.

After retiring from racing in 1972, he became chief scrutineer for the BRDC and later oversaw the various Rover one-make race championships. He was then appointed as an MSA technical commissioner and FIA technical delegate with a principal involvement in Group C racing for many years*.

A wonderful career and someone that will be missed by all that met him.

**I am indebted to John Baggott's book on Midgets and Sprites and Autosport for the details of Mike's career.*

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.

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	25/6/2020	Essential travel	112	732
Rob	25/6/2020	Round the houses	20	148
Dave and Pam	25/6/2020	Covid lockdown	0	101
Dave Holman	25/6/2020	Covid lockdown	0	16

THOSE WERE THE DAYS?

1950. SS Autocarrier out of Tilbury transporting my parents-in-law's new Moggie over to France to start their holiday. No roll-on, roll-off in those days.



CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

June was not a happy month, we had news that Mike Garton, centre R, succumbed to cancer. Anyone that met him would be able to tell you he was the life and soul of any gathering and his enthusiasm for motorsport and Frogeye Sprites in particular, could not be equalled.



He was a mine of information and anecdotes having raced Sprites successfully with the Factory in the early days and with many illustrious drivers in many different cars through the years. I am sure some of you will remember he was our very entertaining guest speaker at an AGM a few years back. He was working with the FIA organisation of motorsport to the end and he will be much missed by everyone in all levels and eras of the sport. Our heartfelt condolences to Lyn and his family.

The lockdown easing continues but it is still impractical to have a group meeting, and of course how many of us really want to until there is a bit more progress on the vaccine side of things. A few of us have had a couple of "zoom" meetings but it isn't the same as a face to face encounter. The Cambridge Classic Car Club has decided to cancel this year's August Ely event and I can't say I am surprised, the responsibility of running an event like this is daunting at the best of times but at the moment it probably isn't a risk worth taking. As with many of the events organised throughout the summer, the Charities supported will be losing out quite badly, we just lose a day out.

The National Club has invested in a virtual meeting package so their Executive Committee meetings can continue, hopefully this will filter down to the centres so we will be able to hold virtual Eastern Centre committee meetings. At the moment there isn't too much to discuss as most events are postponed or cancelled, but as a Limited Company these meetings have to be continued and of course when things start returning to nearer normal we need to be ready to act.

Chairman's chat continued...

Another possible benefit of virtual meetings is that it might make it possible to attract new members to the committee, no tedious drives to the meeting and we could revert to evening meetings, which could mean members that still have to work for a living could join us to help steer the Centre into the future. We really need younger members to help move the Club forward, all of the Committee at present have served for a number of years so we may well be stuck in a rut. We need to be able to appreciate the history of the Eastern Centre but we also need to know what newer members require from the Club. We have a meeting every two months so it is not a huge drain on your time. Please consider joining the Committee to see what is involved, it would enhance your enjoyment of the cars we all love. Please contact me, or any member of the Committee, to find out more.

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.

Best wishes to all,

Dave

THE NEW NORMAL?

Socially distanced coffee in the garden with Roger and Maggi Byford - let me have your photos of lockdown release.



SOCIAL WHEELS July2020

...written through ever lengthening hair!

Still apart, but THEY have decided that 'at least one metre plus' with increased social awareness will suffice!! As I write we have just seen the ridiculous situation on Bournemouth beach last weekend, with crowds shoulder to shoulder in the sweltering heat. Why anyone would want to be anywhere in a crush like that, Covid or no Covid I simply cannot imagine. It goes to show that whatever advice the Government give out there will still be an awful lot of people with no regard or respect for it, and precious little thought for those in the vulnerable category who they might mix with in the following weeks.

As stated last month, 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!!

A Healey is not noted for some of the road conditions either at the moment, and I managed to knock off the middle section of my exhaust recently! To be fair I was on the way to have the flexi section replaced anyway, but it did make for an extremely noisy drive and some odd looks when I stopped for fuel. On apologizing to the forecourt attendant she said 'I thought they were supposed to sound like that!' So much for the well-bred Healey purr! However, now all is fixed, we have a shiny new and slightly modernized mid-section, and a fair dollop of TLC administered, so the quiet purr is back, (unless my right foot starts feeling heavy anyway!)

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, including the MG LIVE and Goodwood Revival, so make a list until you have a next year's diary available. Goodwood are offering to accept your ticket for this year on the new date in 2021.

Social wheels continued...

If you don't want a refund on the grounds that the already expensive ticket price will possibly increase for 2021, if you can commit to a date so far in advance I suggest carrying it over might be the way to go.

THEY are lifting restrictions gradually, although it seems haphazard at the very least and I often wonder at the logic of what is being changed. The fact we can go into most shops now but not have a haircut or visit several family members at the same time without distancing does seem a little odd. Restrictions on haircuts lift very shortly but I suspect there will be an extremely long queue for both ladies and gents appointments. My own hairdresser is not even open for bookings yet.

All information correct at time of writing but changing by the minute, so be careful if you book advance tickets on line. The small print may say they are under no obligation to refund or replace tickets for reasons beyond their control, and I suspect Covid is one of those reasons.

Check before travelling anywhere, some places may in theory be open, but the facilities may not be. Even if you take a vacuum flask there is not much room in a Healey for a Portaloo!!

There is still a lot to be thankful for, the weather has largely been amazing, to the point that here we were desperate for rain on the garden and paddock. Having arranged for some tree surgery they were due to come the day we had a rainstorm of biblical quantities and had to delay for a day, and as I write there is some serious pruning going on out there. I shan't like it but it's needed and the 'haircut' will do the willow a lot of good. Great, isn't it, I can get a haircut for my trees but not myself!!

Take care, stay safe and hope to see you soon.

Best wishes,

Angela



SIMON PARKER ON HIS ASHLEY SPRITE PROJECT

I am not a fan of the standard side and indicator light set up on a fibreglass flip bonnet and so this had also been changed. Because of the changes to the tonneau area a standard trim kit would not fit and we also wanted our own colour scheme of porcelain and British racing green. Yvonne and I made and trimmed all the trim panels and Yvonne made all the carpets, quite a job very tricky in parts but I think looks good now worth the effort.

The seats went off to be trimmed in leather again out of our league but when I came to fit them they are out of a very late car and the fitting bolts didn't meet up with the holes in the floor, many hours of modification but all good now. Good to have this work to do in this period of shielding, we have not been bored.



Just the doors and bonnet to fit and the front lights to also fit, said like that not much to do so when we are allowed out it may be ready.

Simon

Seen right with Yvonne at the Ely Classic 2018.

This enjoyable event is one of many cancelled for 2020



A SENIORS VERSION OF FACEBOOK!

For those of my generation who cannot comprehend why Facebook exists: I am trying to make friends outside of FB while trying to apply the same principles.

Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom!

I give them pictures of me gardening, taking Austin Healy things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch and doing what anybody and everybody does every day.

I listen to their conversations, give them "thumbs up" and tell them I "like" them.

And it works just like Facebook
- I already have four people following me!

Two police officers, a private detective and a psychiatrist!

Tony Withrington



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Whilst looking through my photos I came across this 2007 photo of EC success in the Healey Club race at Snetterton with Brian Bedford and Pete Taylor on the podium - both on the right of Joe Cox, the then club competition secretary.



ME AND MY CAR: JOANNA HILL

My name is Joanna and my partner Jon and I recently joined the Austin Healey Club.

I inherited my father's 1961 BT7 Austin Healey 3000 MkII last year, a car he owned since before I was born so I've known it forever and it goes without saying that it is my all time favourite car.

Dad used it as a road and rally car in the early days before using it to hill climb in the late 80s which is when I got the bug for racing too. He won his class at the Brighton Speed Trials many times and did well at Prescott and the Isle of Mann Manx Classic. Prescott was always great fun, although one year it rained so hard that the cars parked in the paddock started sliding sideways down the hill!

In around 1996, after a major rebuild done by Dad himself, he had a big accident at Porlock (happily no one was hurt) but the car was very badly damaged.

I was in my late teens then and spent most evenings stripping the car down ready to be repaired.

The car was rebuilt as a dedicated race car by Radford Racing so no more driving to and from the circuits in the Healey! I now had to learn to load and secure the car on to trailers. We had lots of fun at Masters and HSCC events at Silverstone, Brands Hatch, Snetterton, Goodwood and elsewhere, surrounded by all the sights, sounds and smells of classic motor sport.

Later he raced in various events with the Healey and also a Chevron B8 and E-Type Jaguar, including the Silverstone Classic, Autosport Three Hour and he successfully completed the Spa Six Hour on a number of occasions in the Healey, his best finish being p25 behind the GT40s, Lolas and light weight E's. What wonderful times we had.

So I can get as much use out of the car as possible I am having it made road legal although it will retain its racing engine and gearbox so it's going to be a bit of a beast to drive on the roads but fun none the less.

Joanna's Healey continued...

I also have a little 1996 Mini Cooper S which I raced in the BRSCC *Mighty Mini* series for a couple of seasons before I had my son. Henry is now six and loves motor racing too.

I hope, in the future, to be able to race the Healey, maybe starting with Hill Climbing or indeed the Austin Healey Club series!

Due to the current situation I, unfortunately, don't yet have the car back but I can't wait to get it out on the roads, meet other club members and join in with the great looking program of events that you organise.

I attach three photographs, the first two are in honour of my wonderful father, Andrew Hill, who passed away suddenly and unexpectedly last June, who can be seen here, doing what he loved most, racing his Austin Healey at Spa Francorchamps, also below winning at Silverstone in one of his other cars, a Chevron B8.



The one on the front cover is the Healey newly arrived at my house before it went Scott Automotive to be made road legal.

We live in Little Downham near Ely although I'm originally from Sussex which I where my father lived.

I'm pretty sure he was a member of the AHC, I certainly recognise the magazines from on his desk.

I look forward to meeting everyone soon.

Take care and stay safe

Joanna



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 BJ8 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.

Pete Taylor has come up trumps with more Healeys on film and also some good YouTube links that are worth a watch.

- **Utta Danelle. TV series 'Libe mit Lachfalten'** 2011 (Love with Laughter Wrinkles). Where on earth did he find that one?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zSnOG9FNPs>



- **NSW Road safety film.**
(Frog, R, and occupants come to a nasty end!)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/320831618126118/permalink/1394400770769192/>

Healeys on film continued....

- 1995 *Father of the Bride 2*.
Steve Martin comedy.

https://youtu.be/Bbvndlu_Zjc



- *The Bank Job* 2008. *Gritty crime drama*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WB3oylmcFzg>



- *Poppet on a swing*. *Harry Enfield, 1990: Spoof on '60s London.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4yFJO6MvII>



- *Fun with a Frog*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYoCjMquagI&feature=youtu.be>

- *RAC Rally*

<https://youtu.be/ZTyNFGhGp5k>

- *Goldie 100/6*

<https://youtu.be/1YjLMhx1oYI>

EASTERN CALENDAR JULY 2020

Subject to change

*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.*

- 3/5th July POSTPONED **Classic Le Mans**. Postponed until 1st - 4th July 2021.
- July POSTPONED. Harpenden **Classics on the Common**, new date Wednesday 28th July 2021.
- 9th July, CANCELLED **Classics on the Green**, Friston, Saxmundham, IP17 1NP.
- 10th/12th July 2020 POSTPONED **International Healey weekend** new date 16th/18th July 2021.
- 11th/12 July POSTPONED **MG LIVE** Date to be confirmed 2021.
- 12th July CANCELLED **Kimbolton Castle Classic Car Show**.
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- 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. Check future Mutterings please.



- 2nd August CANCELLED. **Higham Ferrers Chichele Classic Car Show**.
- 7th/9th August POSTPONED **Practical Classics Car and Restoration Show**, NEC Birmingham. New date will be 26th/28th March, 2021.
- 30th August. POSTPONED **Little Gransden Air and Classic Vehicle show** new date 2021.
- 11th/13th September. **Goodwood Revival**. POSTPONED until 2021. Tickets can be rolled over to next year or refunded if you wish.
- 13th/15th November. **Classic Motor Show**, NEC, Birmingham. STILL ON, check their website regularly.

Events continued...

BATTLESBRIDGE ANTIQUES CENTRE is now open for most of their traders, with strict social distancing guidelines. The toilets will be open and cleaned regularly. Takeaway refreshments also available, so if you fancy a little retail therapy this is the one to visit.

Lots of changes, so please check *Mutterings* regularly for confirmed dates and events. There have been some date adjustments recently so please check dates carefully and check with organiser. Contact by text or mobile, Angela on 07710 267356 for more information, or email angelabonneruk@yahoo.co.uk

I am hoping there might be some late season events to list but so far have not managed to find any. If you hear of anything in this area for the autumn please send me details for publication.

See you soon, take care,

Angela.



LOCKDOWN, WOT LOCKDOWN!

Terry Sprosson has put lockdown to good use as mentioned last week having completed his E-Type project.

He is now moving on to the mini you can see here.....then there's the V12 Jag, the TR.....



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>			

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SPRITES (All Marques)	PAT KIMBER	01920 420642
WARWICK HEALEY	JOHN KEENER	01494 728360

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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.