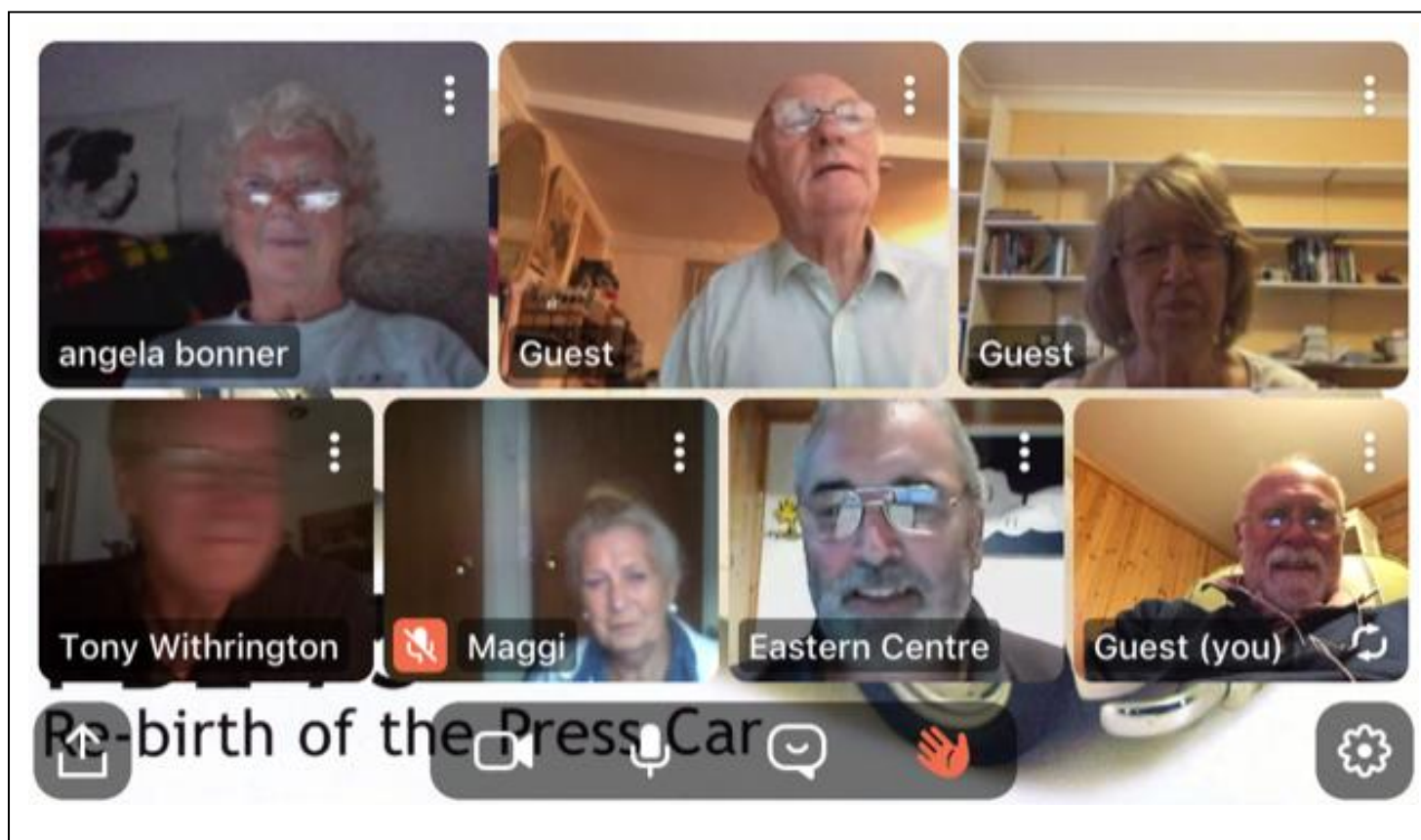


September 2020

Mutterings

THE NEWSLETTER of the EASTERN CENTRE
of the AUSTIN HEALEY CLUB



New Normal? The committee go virtual.

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

ROB'S RAMBLINGS

We have recently returned from two weeks holiday and experienced the *New Normal* away from home and it was a very interesting.

- There was a noticeable increase in day trippers with car parks filling very quickly and 'fly' parking the order of the day.
- Social distancing was observed generally but children, dogs and the increased number of people resulted in many close encounters.
- Pubs and restaurants were varyingly successful in obeying the rules: some were very good - tables outside; designated in and out; bookings only; cleaning rigorously between customers; ordering at the table and 'hands free' delivery of food on a tray in some instances. Others required ordering at the bar with little attention to a one-way system.
- Disposable plates, glasses and cutlery were common.
- Group numbers were restricted.
- Contactless payment was employed wherever possible.
- Contact details were taken when booking.
- Sanitiser was readily available.

I felt very comfortable outdoors but we were reluctant to go indoors. The business owners are trying hard, not so sure about some of the punters.

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*.

- Dennis Bloomfield, Southminster, Essex
1964 Mk3 3000 - project
- Michael Rex, Stowmarket, Suffolk
1960 Mk1 Sprite

Tony Withrington

TOURING TROPHY - 2020/21

The Touring Trophy normally runs from AGM to AGM (October to October), however this year we have decided to roll over the 2020 mileage to 2021 as many cars are confined to the garage or used very little at present.

As you will see below, however, a big shout out (as they say) to Angela Bonner who through thick and thin uses her 100. Gets my vote for the spirit of the competition award.



The 'Mr Mercury' trophy (R) 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	25/8/ 2020	Resting	0	816
Rob	25/8/ 2020	Round the houses	15	208
Dave and Pam	25/8/ 2020	Covid lockdown	0	101
Dave Holman	25/8/ 2020	Covid lockdown	0	16
Joanna Hill Jonathan Pearson	25/8/ 2020	In the garage	0	0.5

CUPS AND TROPHIES

Awards are usually presented annually at the AGM and we are looking at ways to do this in a Covid-safe way. Please arrange for the return of cups and trophies to our Trophy Master, Andrew Hollick as and when you can.

His address is 73 Swaynes Lane, Comberton, Cambridge CB23 7EF.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Another month with not a lot going on. We did exhume the Hundred to go to a pub in the next village though, they used to hold Classic Car meets on the first of the month through the summer but since being allowed to open again there have been gatherings every Sunday. There was a varied selection of vehicles and the pub is well organised, you collect your beer from the back door and the burgers and hotdogs are from a barbeque in the garden, so plenty of social distancing and fresh air, great while the weather holds.

We did get a welcome visit from Pete and Lin Dulieu, they had come across some archive material they had stored from when they were on the committee so brought it up for me to have a look at. There are a lot of papers from the early days of Eastern Centre when BMC still looked after the clubs, on to the Healey stewardship and then the start of the Austin Healey Club. These were days when there was a lot of competition activity at all levels and John Sprinzel was our Chairman for a while. There is a note excusing himself from one of the committee meetings because he was competing in the Alpine Rally. I need to have a good look through as there is some duplication of material. Unfortunately it is not a complete record of the period but does have some interesting insights to that time.

A little more work has been done on the BJ8 but more done on the house, I think I may have to build an extension to house the "brownie points". I am not sure where all the time is going but hopefully the car will be finished [well back on the road! I don't think any of my cars have ever been finished] before the ice and snow reappear.

We held another virtual committee meeting and it was decided to try and hold a virtual AGM, the venue we normally use has quite a few restrictions for meals and meetings, also we weren't sure how many of you would want to turn out for such a gathering in the current climate. There is so much uncertainty and changes of direction in the government guidelines we thought we would give technology a try.

I am not sure how well it will work but until we have tried it we won't know. You should find an agenda and instructions on how to join the AGM in this issue of Mutterings and you will all get an email invite to attend if you wish.

Chairman's chat continued...

It will be interesting to see if we get a good uptake, at least this way you can have a glass of wine or two and not worry about driving home. We would encourage you all to think about joining the committee and having your say on how the centre moves forward. As you will have read in RevCounter other centres are having problems recruiting new members to their committees, we are in a similar position as all the current members have served for a considerable time and we would welcome a fresh look at what the centre needs to keep relevant.

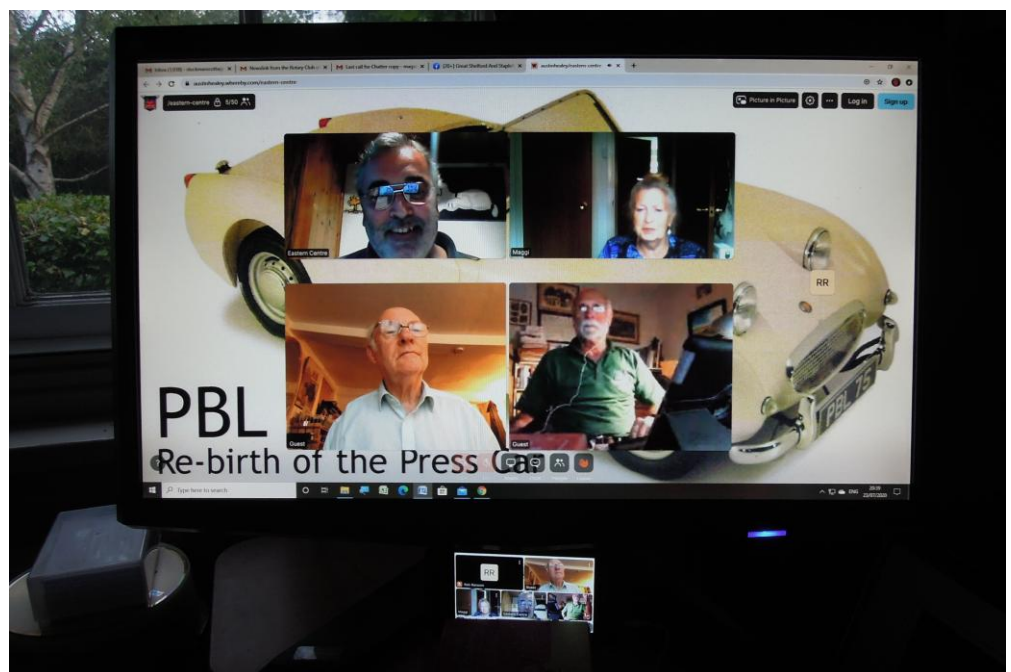
It has also been suggested that questions and thoughts for the virtual AGM be submitted to the Secretary, June Hebditch, before the event by email or telephone.

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. Please make sure we have your current email information so we can keep you in touch with developments.

Best wishes to all,

Dave.

Opposite: The last committee meeting was held virtually and was a qualified success: Angela's wi-fi dropped out just as we were getting to AOB, otherwise known as gossip!!



SOCIAL WHEELS

Hello everyone,

Most larger events have already posted their dates 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 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.

Covid restrictions are lifting gradually but in some places being imposed again, so I think for most of us we can simply write off this year altogether and hope to goodness by next Healey season everything may be back on a more normal footing.

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.

There will be a large event on 6th September at **Glemham Hall**, just off the A12 heading towards Ipswich, out between Wickham Market and Saxmundham, to which our Healeys are invited. Please visit their website, details on the Mutterings calendar page and make your own arrangements. When you book in mention Austin Healey Club and they will try to put us together, we have decided not to have an official stand there.

The **Higham Ferrers Chichele Classic Car show** has been postponed until 2021, when they will be combining with the Rushden Historic Transport Society to make a, hopefully, larger event, **Classics in the Park**, to be held at Hall Park, Rushden on Sunday, 8th August, 2021.

Social wheels continued...

If the organisers already have your details from an attempted entry this year, please contact them either by email or on the form which I can copy to you as because of the data protection laws you have to give them permission to pass your details across. They will be sending out pre-registration details around the beginning of November for those who wish to enter the 2021 event. Otherwise, if this will be a new entry for next year please download an entry form from their website.

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

Best wishes,

Angela

DAVE'S TECHNICAL TIPS

...or how to take a long time to do a simple "get the car back on the road" job!

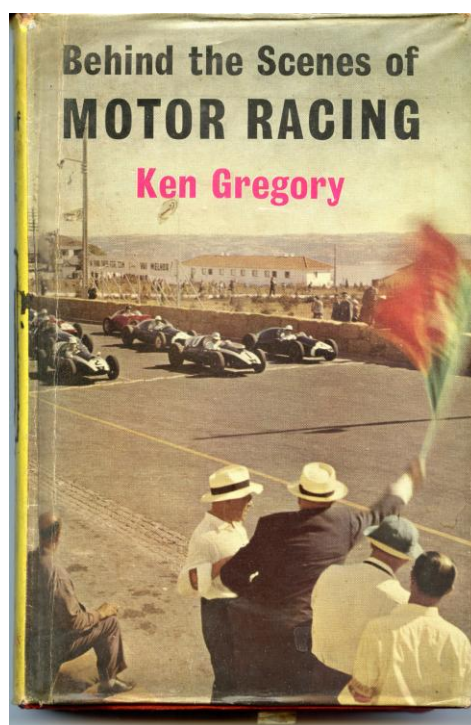
It was inevitable really, how could I have expected things to go smoothly. I was working through re-commissioning the car but the heater matrix needed replacing, taking the dash out to get easier access meant removing the steering wheel and while pulling out the stator tube I noticed the track rod end covers were really past their best. There was no play in the steering joints so being a skinflint a trawl through e-bay sourced some likely looking rubber boots at a very reasonable price.

Popping off the track rods complete means I shouldn't have to adjust the tracking when finished. After removing the old covers a thorough clean and re-grease [and check for wear again] was undertaken before fitting the new covers. With regard to the diameters they fit really nicely but there is not so much give in the new boots, so to cover extreme movement I decided to wire them on rather than using the rubber rings supplied.

Hopefully the photos that you will find later will show the improvement.

HEALEY FERRARI

I read a lot of motoring books and am always on the lookout for a Healey connection when reading them. Recently I was reading one by Ken Gregory, 'Behind the scenes of motor racing' and found this passage regarding one of the less successful adventures of Donald and Geoffrey Healey. Ken was well known in motor racing circles in the '50s and '60s as Stirling Moss and Peter Collins' manager. He was also publicity officer for the Healey Motor Company for a short period of time.



He, amongst other things, was responsible for the gold, mink and ivory big Healey show car of the late '50s.

Peter Collins came to Nassau in 1957 (for the speed week), and drove a rather special car (X224) entered by Donald Healey. This had a standard Austin-Healey 100 chassis with slightly altered suspension, into which was fitted a 2.5 litre 4-cylinder Grand Prix Ferrari engine. This particular engine came from the actual car with which Maurice Trintignant won the 1955 G.P. of Europe at Monaco after the collapse of the Mercedes-Benz and Lancia teams, Donald Healey having bought the car for detailed study.

I had suggested to Donald that it might prove advantageous to experiment with the production of a 'handmade' variation of the standard Austin-Healey, to which various power units could be adapted according to the customer's wishes. I have always thought that the '100' was aesthetically one of the best-looking sports-car designs ever to go into quantity production, and that connoisseurs would appreciate the availability of 'special' versions.

The Austin-Healey Ferrari was the first experiment on this principle, but unfortunately the great power from the engine was more than the chassis could reasonable cope with, and it did not perform very well at Nassau.

Healey Ferrari continued...

I gather that Enzo Ferrari was rather amused on hearing of this strange alliance.

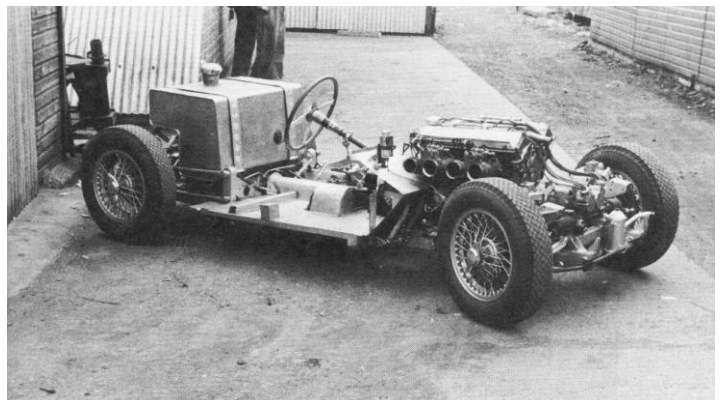
Geoffrey Healey comments on the experiment in his 1980 book, 'The Specials'....

X224 was based on a modified S chassis fitted with the long nose six-cylinder race body that had been developed from the 1956 record breaker. Roger Menadue and Jim Cashmore carried out most of the modifications necessary to fit the Ferrari engine and rear axle suspension assembly. We used MGA rack and pinion steering. Barry Bilbie had the task of determining the exact position in which to fit the rack for the best steering geometry. Quite a lot of drawing office time was spent on this layout, as we viewed rack and pinion as a possible improvement to the Austin Healey steering.

Essentially a short distance Grand Prix engine, the Ferrari unit was not really satisfactory because of its high rate of oil consumption. Peter Collins drove the car at Nassau in the series of races they used to run in December as a tourist attraction. It displayed a voracious appetite for oil and he had to make a pit stop for replenishment.

Eddie Maher and Jack Goffin at Morris Engines, Coventry subsequently made considerable progress in developing the six-cylinder Austin Healey into a racing power plant. We replaced the Ferrari engine with this 175bhp unit, and despite the increase in weight, the car became a lot quicker: the Coventry horses were certainly very strong. Roy Salvadori drove it in the next Nassau races, achieving second place in one, and retiring with an oil-soaked clutch in another.

X224 was eventually dismantled and scrapped, the Ferrari bits being returned to the Grand Prix car which was sold. As a competition project, had not been a success, but it was an interesting development exercise helped widen the team's knowledge of motor cars.



Rob

ME AND MY CAR(S): STEVE AND KATH EVEREST

Part 2: Kath's car

Steve and Kathryn recently moved from Sussex and last month Steve told us about his Big Healey. This month it is Kath's 1966 Mk3 Sprite - JTR 453D.

When Kathryn and I got together in a more than just good friends way in 2013/2014, we hadn't planned on increasing our 'stable' of Healeys. Being in the right place at the right time can often change things.....

We were at the Goodwood Revival in 2014 enjoying lunch with Kevin Law when Kath received an email from her solicitors advising that her flat had sold and the funds were now in her account. Quick as a flash, Kevin asked her, somewhat tongue in cheek if she'd like to buy the Sprite he'd been asked to sell. Laughter all round.

Later on that day, looking at the vast number of lovely cars in the pre-1966 car park, Kath asked what a Mk3 Sprite looked like. Kath's comment was, 'that looks nice and just the sort of classic car I'd like to drive'. We arranged to go and see the car at Orchard Restorations, Kath fell in love with it and the rest, as they say, is history.



This HAN8 car had spent all its life in Jersey until 2012. The inner body panels had been Waxoiled so none of the dreaded tinworm which these cars can suffer from was found. The car was imported back to the mainland by its previous owner and Southern Counties member, Dave Brooks, who was pleased that the car was going to a good home as he put it. As previously mentioned, we are firm believers that the cars are there to be driven and not stored. Since Kath acquired the car, we have been on numerous events and rallies, some of which have been long distances which the little car deals with very well.

Kath's Sprite continued...

I recently rebuilt both carburettors to cure a poor idling problem, the butterfly valve shafts had worn the carburettor bodies oval, no wonder I couldn't adjust them properly!

The only other major problem we've had was a cracked exhaust manifold casting that happened on the way to The Healey Drivers Club International meeting in 2016. On advice from several members who race and rally Sprites, a new Maniflo 4-branch exhaust system was fitted and boy, did it make a difference!

It may be small, but the Sprite always gives you a great drive.

Steve

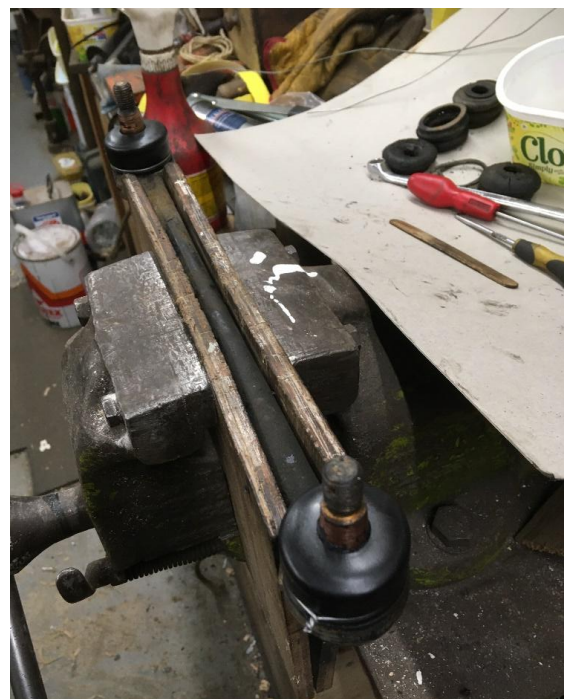
Pictured (R) at the February Norfolk Noggin'.



DAVE'S TECHNICAL TIPS



Replacement ball joint covers are nice and snug: Let's see how long they last!



NOTICE OF EASTERN CENTRE AGM 2020. VIRTUAL MEETING, TUESDAY 20TH OCTOBER, STARTING AT 19.00HRS.

At the moment it is proving impractical to arrange an AGM along the lines we usually use. We have recently been having our committee meetings on the virtual platform provided by the Club's National Executive, these have worked well but are, of course, dependant on working broadband connections.

We thought we would try and host the AGM this way, it won't be as much fun as meeting up in person, but it may give more of you a chance to have your say in the running of the Centre.

If you wish to join the meeting you should email the chairman [chairman@ahc-eastern.co.uk] in advance of the meeting so we can send you a link on the evening, please include any questions you would like to ask so we can keep the meeting moving.

The current committee members are willing to stand for re-election but there is room for more and we would encourage members to get involved and help move the Club forward. Please email any nominations to the secretary [secretary@ahc-eastern.co.uk] at least one week in advance.

If you have contacted the Chairman, on the evening of the AGM you will get an email with a link to click on to join the meeting. The committee will be seen on the screen, unfortunately most members will only get a voice link due to the limitations of the system, there is a maximum of 50 contributors allowed at any one time.

We haven't been able to trial a meeting with this number of attendees so this will be your chance to see me make a fool of myself and give you a chance to vote in a new chairman who has a clue.

If we continue with virtual committee meetings we can easily have them in the evening, so may give an opportunity for more of you to join in through the year and help direct the future of Eastern Centre. Please feel free to join us on the committee, send your nomination to the secretary and we can vote at the AGM.

In order for any of this to work we do need a current email address for all Eastern Centre members so please make sure the Club has your current email information.

THE CAR'S THE STAR: NEW THIS MONTH

American Graffiti 1973: A Sprite is seen cruising with 1950 yank tanks and.....a Morris Minor in this classic film. The hero, played by Richard Dreyfuss drives an unreliable 2CV!

From Clive Cocks

Through bleary eyes on telly spotted rear end view of a Colorado red early 3000 (or maybe 100/6) in the film "Stardust" with David Essex. Car was parked up at a dodgy car sales. Registration number shown as CMX 865 (which does not seem to be about now).

Not really a starring role as I don't think it appears again.

*Will keep on looking
Clive*

GIVE US A CLUE

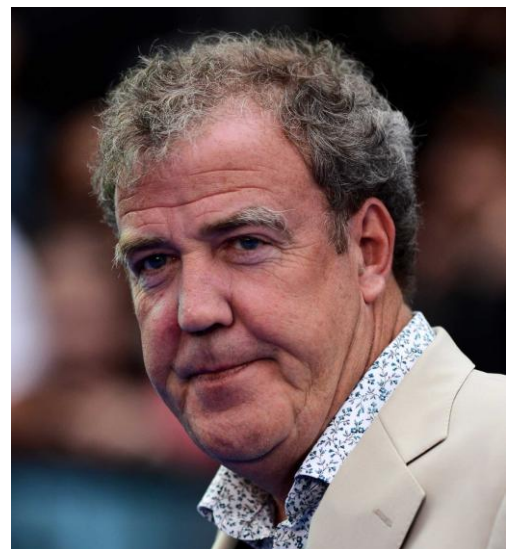
The vehicle spotted at a farm shop in the Cotswolds is owned by none other than Jezza!! Jeremy Clarkson.



The errant ex-presenter of Top Gear is a farmer in his spare time and in addition to various bits of farm machinery drives this odd-ball!

Tony Withrington

Picture of JC first published in Time magazine



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.*

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.

- **Quest 'A Classic Affair'**
5th September, Hemingford
Grey Sports ground, near
St Ives.
Entries for this excellent event need to be submitted directly to Quest. Application forms are available on their website
<https://www.aclassicaffair.co.uk>.



COVID-19 UPDATE

This event is going ahead and we are taking bookings! We will monitor the situation and follow Government advice in the lead up to A Classic Affair to make sure that we can safely run this event.

- **6th September Glemham Hall Classic Motor Show, Little Glemham, IP13 OBT.** This is between Wickham Market and Saxmundham, just north of the A12 heading towards Ipswich. Advance tickets available for exhibition vehicle and up to 4 passengers for £5 total. State club membership when applying and they will try to group us together. Arrival between 8.00 and 10.00 prompt please because of vehicle movement restrictions when public are allowed in, as per usual. www.classicsglemham.org.uk
- **12th Sept Saturday. Rickinghall Car show and Autojumble** from 8am. Free entry. Just off the A143 between Stanton and Diss at Rickinghall Village Hall.

Events continued...

- **EVENT 20TH SEPTEMBER Battlesbridge Breakfast Club**, Battlesbridge Antiques Centre, SS11 7RE.
- **27th SEPTEMBER Autojumble**. CANCELLED. Battlesbridge Antiques as above. With regret they have decided NOT to go ahead with the auto jumble this year.
- **13th/15th November. Classic Motor Show**, NEC, Birmingham. STILL ON, check their website regularly.

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.

Angela.

TOFT LUNCH

Due to the uncertainty about social gatherings at the moment it has been decided that the Autumn lunch be postponed until the spring of 2021.

The venue would be happy to have us in October however, canvassing members it is unlikely that we would get a very good turnout, hence the postponement.



Andrew Hollick

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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JOHN KEENER	healeynutjk@yahoo.co.uk	01494 728360
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SPRITES (All Marques)	PAT KIMBER	01920 420642
WARWICK HEALEY	JOHN KEENER	01494 728360

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