

Flat Chat

THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTIN-HEALEY OWNERS CLUB INSW INC

Austin-Healey

Ross & Jenny
Penman's



1967
Austin-Healey
3000 BJ8

OCTOBER 2011
VALE CHARLIE BRITTEN
NEW MEMBER - IAN MARTIN
ALLOY BRAKE DRUMS
TRICKIE'S BN2 KIT

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Flat Chat is the official publication of the Austin-Healey Owners Club (NSW) Inc., and is published monthly by Vintage Racecar Journal Pty Ltd.

Contributions from members are welcome, however the Club accepts no responsibility for the accuracy, reliability or opinions of any article or correspondence herein.

The Club's postal address is:
AHOC (NSW) Inc, PO Box 2754
North Parramatta NSW 1750
(ABN: 87 630 303 136)

Email:
austinhealeynsw@ozemail.com.au

Website:
www.austinhealeynsw.com.au

Contributions for the magazine can also be emailed to the editor at:
p_cquinn@tpg.com.au

AHOC Club meetings are held at the Rydalmere Bowling Club, Park Road, Rydalmere on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, commencing at 8pm. Members and guests are welcome to join us for dinner at the bistro from 6:30pm.

Flat Chat Editor
Patrick Quinn



ON THE COVER

Ross and Penny go green the old fashioned way in their '67 3000 BJ8. Story on page 10.

FlatChat

OCTOBER 2011

THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTIN-HEALEY CLUB (NSW) INC

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 President's Report
- 4 Treasurer's Report
- 5 Exhaust Notes
- 6 Secretary's Report
- 7 Social Report
- 9 Membership Secretary's Report
- 22 Austin-Healey Marketplace
- 24 Back Page Pics

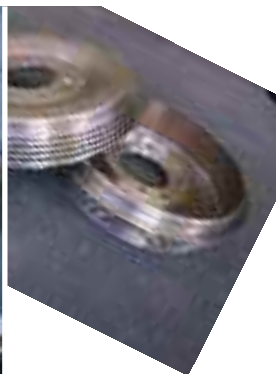


FEATURES

- 8 New Member - Ian Martin
- 10 The Penman's 3000 Mk3A BJ8
- 14 Vale Charlie Britten
- 16 Alloy Brake Drums
- 18 Richard Horwood's BN2
- 20 Moment in Time - AHOC in Competition



8



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2011

OCTOBER

- 12 • Monthly Meeting
- 19 • Committee Meeting
- 22-29 • Charlie's "Underbelly" Run

NOVEMBER

- 9 • Monthly Meeting & Annual General Meeting
- 12 • Garden Open Day Run
- 16 • Committee Meeting
- 20 • Vehicle Inspection Day
- 26-27 • HSRCA Eastern Creek

DECEMBER

- 14 • AHOC Christmas Party
- 25 • Send the editor a photo of your Austin-Healey for Christmas

JANUARY

- 11 • Monthly Meeting
- 15 • Presentation Breakfast
- 18 • Committee Meeting

If you have any questions about the above events please contact our acting club secretary Alan Mitchell on (02) 9639 9450.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

JOHN KENT

In November we have our Annual General Meeting where the Club Committee, YOUR Committee, is elected. At the last two Annual General Meetings there has been a lack of willing participants to stand for positions. This year we have operated without a Technical Officer, Competition Secretary and a formal Secretary; (Alan Mitchell has acted in the role this year).

To have a functioning Committee, key positions need to be filled and I am concerned that I perceive that there is a lack of interest in filling these key positions. During the period prior to the November meeting I will be approaching members to seek interest in standing for the Committee positions.

Today, I learnt of the passing of Charles Britten and while there will be comment in the magazine, I would like to record my appreciation of Charlie's contribution to the AHOC and convey our condolences to Kay and their family. I am sure all those attending will celebrate his life during the next "Charlie's Run".



TREASURER'S REPORT

JIM PHILLIPS

The Profit and Loss Statement and the Balance Sheet for the Financial Year ended 30 June 2011 have been prepared on Cash Accounting basis which is different to past years. (See Page 9) Over previous years I have used MYOB software and, not being familiar with the structure of this package and struggling for some time, decided this year to utilise a spreadsheet. The Profit and Loss Statement indicates only entries through bank statements during the accounting period with no account taken for accruals or prepayments for the prior or post years. I am told by an accountant that this is an acceptable form of account presentation.

You will see that members' funds declined by just over \$9,000 this financial year. To explain some of the apparent anomalies in the Profit and Loss the Supersprint would appear to be a loss. However the reason for this was that the Supersprint for 2010 was held late in June, meaning that the income was recorded in 2010 financial year but most of the expenses were paid this financial year. For this year the majority of the expenses were paid in 2011 financial year. Therefore the financial accounts for 2011 for the Supersprint indicate a loss of just over \$2,000 where in fact the profit from the Supersprint for 2011 was closer to \$3,500 or an improvement of \$5,500 to the bottom line. However as the income also takes into account \$5,000 held in trust for those participating in Charles' Run the loss shown is a reasonable reflection of the 2010/11 results.

Our largest expense continues to be the magazine which is offset by advertising revenue and for 2010/11 this represents a net cost of \$14,000. The extra income received from advertising post 30 June for the current year will mean that the net cost will be approximately \$11,500. A recent change of printing firm will result in some savings into the future.

Please contact me if you have any questions.



CLUB COMMITTEE

2011

Club Patron
Ross Bond

President
John Kent
38 Barrie Street, East Killara, NSW 2071
(02) 9498 8193 0419 497 033 mob
cfkent@bigpond.com

Vice President
Terry Bancroft
PO Box 3027, Llandilo NSW 2747
(02) 4777 4883 • 0409 323 133 mob
bangers@bancroft.id.au

Secretary (Acting)
Alan Mitchell
PO Box 254, Winston Hills NSW 2153
(02) 9639 9450 austinhealeynsw@ozemail.com.au

Treasurer
Jim Phillips
8 Belina Ave., Wyoming NSW 2250
(02) 4328 4582 ah • (02) 9995 1963 bh
0413 589 306 mob
jppjimbeau@gmail.com

Social Secretary
Christine Lyttle
2 Hall Street, West Ryde NSW 2114
(02) 9874 6080 ah • (02) 9291 2836 bh
christinelyttle@hotmail.com

Editor
Patrick Quinn
116 Warks Hill Rd., Kurrajong Heights NSW 2758
(02) 4567 7380 ah • 0417 673 065 mob
p_cquinn@tpg.com.au

Competition Secretary
Vacant

Historian
Joe Armour
5/150 Abbotsford Rd., Picton NSW 2571
(02) 4677 3999
sebring@illawarra.hotkey.net.au

Membership Secretary
Christine Lyttle
(as above)

Regalia
Richard Horwood
(02) 9764 4000 • 0408 233 592 mob
mail@boulevardere.com.au

Technical Officer
Vacant

Club Registration
Patrick Quinn (As Above)

Public Relations
Richard Horwood (As Above)

Non-Committee Positions

Competition Assistant
John Kent

Librarian
Stuart McColl

CMC Delegates
Ray Roberts

Assoc of British Car Clubs Rep
Sue Darlington

Please do not call committee members after 9pm.

Flat Chat is published on behalf of the Austin-Healey Owners Club of NSW (Inc) by Vintage Racecar Journal Pty Ltd., 116 Warks Hill Rd., Kurrajong Heights NSW 2758

The opinions expressed in Flat Chat are not necessarily those of the Editor or the AHOC (NSW) (Inc).



Greetings and welcome to the October issue of Flat Chat. Normally I approach the editorial with some excitement and enthusiasm, but this time it's clouded with sadness.

As you will read on page 14 club member Charlie Britten lost his long battle with prostate cancer. Charlie along with wife Kay had been members for in excess of twenty years, five of which Charlie was

president. At the service on 29 September, held at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium there were more members than I can recall seeing for years in the one place at the one time. It was also fitting to see an honour guard of eleven Austin-Healeys parked outside the chapel. I asked Allan Whitehouse to gather together anecdotes and recollections of Charlie and these appear on pages 14-15. There are also appropriate photos on the back cover.

Our cover story this month is on Ross and Jenny Penman's BJ8, but looking at the numberplate perhaps that should read Jenny and Ross Penman's BJ8. While relative newcomers, the Penmans have become enthusiastic members of our club and I look forward to seeing them at many future events.

Like the look of drum brakes? I certainly do and frankly I think they look better than discs. I recall the drum brakes on an Alfa Romeo Sprint Speciale that I once tested and they were a work of art. I suppose being honest, the drums fitted to an Austin-Healey are not what you would call a work of art, but then again we don't see that many Alfin drums in this country. Enter club member Nigel Nichols who also likes the look and effectiveness of Alfin's to such an extent that he had a pair made for his BN1. You can read about this on pages 16-17.

BN2 Kit

Talking about buying things Austin-Healey, did you know that Richard Horwood has added a BN2 to his stable? He has, but it's going to be a struggle in anyone's language. You see it's completely dismantled and most of it has been sitting for years in less than unfavourable conditions. It's a project and a half and you can find out what Richard is up to on page 18.

Moment in Time is interesting this month as we have a look at the halcyon days of the 1970s when it seemed that every club member was deeply involved in competition. So involved that the AHOC financially supported teams of Austin-Healeys in six-hour relay races.

Talking about Moments in Time. Last month's photos have brought a number of communications from country members living around the Dubbo area. Paddy Hearne first told me that Laurence Ho (see P20 of the September issue) lived in Dubbo and was a restaurateur. Then just the other day Dick Bray sent in an email.

DubboDick writes to say that Laurie Ho lives in Dubbo (Paris of the West) and over the years has been involved in a number of Chinese restaurants and could be best described as a colourful and likeable person. Dick says that once he had parked his BN1 when Mr Ho approached him and said that he used to race one. In response Dick said "Really!" and Mr Ho then said "Yours BN1, mine BN2." Dick's estimation of Mr Ho was increased by this clear knowledge of the marque. Dick added that Mr Ho's daughter is Lisa Ho of fashion fame. As to the car, Dick doesn't know except that he understands that Mr Ho originally came from the Albury area so it could be known to our

friends in the AHOC in Victoria. Thanks Dick for your interest and advice.

Which brings me to another Austin-Healey memory.

Last week, Caroline, I and our two youngest boys Andrew and Jonathan drove to Melbourne for daughter Amy's birthday. I threatened the boys with dire consequences should they not behave, but at 22 and 19 they just laughed at me.

Both boys had not travelled to Melbourne before by road and as we approached the 'Dog on the Tuckerbox' at Gundagai I kept saying wonderful things about this Australian icon. I must say that they did expect something a little grander, but it was a good laugh. All of which reminded me of the last time I stopped by the famous dog.

It was after the 1973 Melbourne National Rally and there was five Austin-Healeys heading north. Don and Anne Read in a 100/6, the 100 of Larry and Helen Johns, Alan Jones' 3000 Mk1, John and Jenny Watson's 100/6 and yours truly in a 100. It was getting late by the time we reached Gundagai and we all decided to stop. It was also cold and a few of us were wearing balaclavas - no tops up in those days.

There were no buildings around the dog in those days, just a grassed area so we thought it was a good place to sleep. So Alan and I slept in our cars and others actually spread out on rugs and their tonneau covers. We made it through to the middle of the night and it was just too cold to stay any longer so carried on our way.

When was the last time you slept in your Austin-Healey? Have the times changed or is it just me?

By the way you're not seeing things - the Treasurer's report on page 4 and Financial Reports on page 9 are the same as last month.

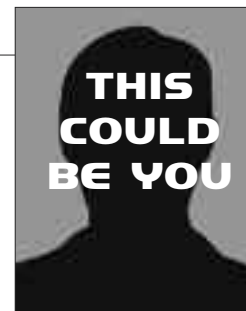
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■ MONTHLY MEETING DATE: 14TH SEPTEMBER 2011

MEETING COMMENCED: 8:05 PM

Apologies: Sue Darlington, Charles Britten, Colin Rule and Alan Mitchell. **New Members/Visitors:** Nil

■ PRESIDENT

- Great to see Patricia Bancroft back 3 weeks after her operation.
- Shannons Classic Car – not well attended with just John Kent, Terry Bancroft, Rod Richards and Jeff Newey present.
- All British at Kings School – good show for classic British cars – 16 Austin-Healeys and crawling with Jaguars.
- Ignition Program – Roadshow interested in clubs like ours to be involved.
- Payments for Underbelly Run due now. Broom manufacturer at Tumut worth looking at while on the run. Check your Austin-Healey before leaving as many of us have had problems on prior events. John will have some BJ8 spares on board.
- Queensland National Rally – register now \$390 adult tickets and hotel price quite high, but it is Easter.
- 2013 Rally not decided as yet.

■ **VICE PRESIDENT** • Too busy looking after Pat to prepare a report.

■ SECRETARY

Mail received:

- Drag Race Casino Airport 24 September 2011.
- Brochure Camp College of TAFE – Trade Night 19 October 2011.
- 31st All British Display Day – 26 August 2012.
- Australian Concours – 2012 event.
- FoSC Spring Invitation – 12 November 2011.
- Workshops Series CAMS – September & October 2011.
- Ham Run Club – Marsden Park Car & Boat Show – 18 September 2011.
- Maclean's Bridge at Lakeside Circuit Queensland – 19 & 20 May 2012.
- Vintage Tyre Summer 2011 Newsletter.
- Leura House – Mountains advertising.
- Queanbeyan Swap Meet - 24 & 25 September 2011.
- Magazines – Healey West, Healey Torque, Hundreds & Thousands plus the 2010 Year Book from Victoria Club.

■ TREASURER

Bank balances at:

\$23,651.92	–.cheque account
Underbelly Run	\$16,800.00
Income received	
Membership	\$230.00
Advertising	\$2,500.00

Cash Account	\$12,075.23	Expenses	
Interest - August	\$21.25	Meeting	\$80.00
Term Deposit	\$62,000.00	Magazine	\$2,892.23 (Two Payments)

Term Deposit of \$20,000 matures in October and will reinvest for term that provides best rate.

■ SOCIAL SECRETARY

- Underbelly Run – 22-29 October 2011.
- Gardens at Kurrajong – Quinns' – 12 -13 November 2011.
- Club Inspection Day – Horwood's – 20 November 2011.
- Christmas Dinner – Rydalmere Bowling Club – 14 December 2011.
- Presentation Breakfast – Goodwins' – 15 January 2012.
- Australia Day Celebrations / Motorfest / Berrima, Parramatta Park and various other locations – 26 January 2012.

■ **EDITOR** • • Apologies for the error of month in Social Report and omitting Allan's mid week run PDF.

- Wally Gates & Chris Dimmock and respective partners arrived on 7 September 2011 for meeting – 1 week early and unfortunately Wally was unable to return on 14 September for meeting.
- If working on Austin-Healey please take photos while you are doing work and send in.

■ COMPETITION SECRETARY

- Colin Goldsmith ran at the HSRCA Wakefield Park 24 -25 September 2011 meeting.
- Driver Training Day at Marulan organised by John Dowsett – disappointed on Austin-Healey attendance, but turned out to be a really good

day. Would like to run another day. Gary Wilmington organising instructors that go with you and the experience is beneficial. Use a normal road car though open cars are required to have a rollbar. Possibly in 2 – 3 months time.

- November & December GEAR Days Colin spoke of event where teams for \$12 can do regularity runs and do not need a Competition Licence or a roll bar – road car with fire extinguisher – if anyone interested speak to Colin.
- Check on 2012 year dates and ensure that our annual CSCA day will be on the same weekend as the All British Race. Even though our price for entrants went up \$5 was very successful and entries were turned away and the weekend competed with a HSRCA event. The recent 3-4 events since our event did not get entrants – had a lot of runs due to lack of only 55 entries – this would run at a loss. Our major money makers are our CSCA and All British Brass Monkey Run.
- Don Read mentioned that it was more difficult to be involved to compete nowadays with the forms, licence all due to CAMS.
- Eastern Creek is doing an extension. Turn 4 will go straight across to pits and they will have two tracks – short track fees will be the same cost as it is currently. It will be very expensive to hire.
- Future events - Sandown 5 – 6 November 2011. FoSC Wakefield Park – 12 – 13 November 2011 and HSRCA Eastern Creek – 27 – 28 November 2011.

■ **HISTORIAN** • Joe Armour reported that in Motor Sport magazine of May 1955 – Journalist did a tour at Longbridge and Austin-Healey factories. Every Austin-Healey 100 engine bench tested for an hour. Chassis numbers – 40 produced a day – 200 a week – 50% were imported to the USA worth \$13.5mil.

- Ridge on bonnet on 100/6 – original 100/6 did not have the ridge resulting in the oil canning of the bonnet. Reason was to “stiffening ribs in conjunction with scuttle vibration”.
- Bodies arrive from Jensen Factory in sets of four. Stored until need for use not necessarily in order when used. Carpets were rolled up and in boot until needed or sold.
- Chassis numbers can miss a chunk of numbers.

■ REGALIA/PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Items sold and there is \$60 for the treasurer.
- PR question – Annual Concours 2012 – where and when?
- Shannons Auction – Dodge 57-58 listed for \$12,000-16,000 restored 10 years ago – unable to get registered – sold for \$36,500.

■ **LIBRARIAN** • Nil report

■ **CLUB REGO** • Inspection Day on 20 November 2011.

■ **MEMBERSHIP** • 3 new members last month at the Committee Meeting.

■ **CMC** • Ray Roberts reported no news.

■ **GENERAL BUSINESS** • • Chris Dimmock spoke about Colin Dodds from Sprite Club recent accident when Colin's daughter was killed – driver had no licence and that 2% of drivers do not have one. Chris requested CMAS to send regs and not received as yet. Course for children of CAMS affiliated clubs – CSCA clubs with 4 instructors for 30 children. Lobby RTA. Named the Catherine Taylor Dodds Training Course. Hoping to get sponsorship and costs should be available soon.

■ **SHOW & TELL** • Christine Lyttle – Bottle of alcohol with a 100S blown in colour class in the base of bottle – purchased at the 2nd European Meet in St Moritz.

- Chris Dimmock – Whitworth Nut & Bolt – 1" Whitworth rear hub nut for 100 or Bug Eye Sprite. Rear Hub Nut on Big Healey. Large sockets/nuts made in the USA – 8 sided nut.
- Richard Horwood – Photo September 1958 – K Dean in Black Austin Healey 100. Purchased at Swap Meet Stall. Photo of Wally Gates' Austin-Healey 100 currently owned by person in Crookwell and is fully restored. Sending photos to Iain McPherson. Original Ron Ward key tag to give to Rob Harrison.

■ **FOR SALE/WANTED** • Terry Bancroft – few kits of decals for 3000 and 100/6 for under bonnet.

■ **MEETING CONCLUDED** • Meeting concluded at 9:35 pm.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT CHRISTINE LYTTLE

The Club's membership stands at 285.

Membership fees are due on 1 January 2012 and you will find a copy of the 2012 membership form as a loose leaf with this issue of Flat Chat. It can also be downloaded from the Club's website - www.austinhealeynsw.com.au or simply ask me for a copy.

This month there are no new members, but I am pleased to report that two former members have rejoined - Bruce and Rose-

mary Hart. It's good to see them back in the Club.

How very sad that Charles Britten lost his battle with cancer on 25 September 2011 and my condolences go to Kay, Elizabeth and David and their respective families.

Please don't forget to check the website for regular updates - thanks to our acting Secretary Alan Mitchell.

Look forward to seeing all the members at an event soon.

SOCIAL SCENE CHRISTINE LYTTLE

FUTURE EVENTS

OCTOBER - Wednesday 12th - General Meeting - Rydalmere Bowling Club. **Sat/Sat 22nd - 29th** - Charlie's 'Underbelly' Run - Thanks to Neil Thew a great week has been organised in the Riverina area.

NOVEMBER - Wednesday 9th - Annual General Meeting - Rydalmere Bowling Club. **Saturday 12th** - Garden Open Day at Quinns - Once again Caroline and Patrick Quinn's garden is open under Open Gardens Australia. Entry is \$6 a head with proceeds going to Médecins Sans Frontières. There will also be a craft shop and plant stall where you can pick up that little something to make a lovely Christmas gift for family or friends. Bring along your Austin-Healey and perhaps meet at Clarendon opposite the RAAF base at 11.00am for a scenic run up Bells Line of Road to Mt Tomah for coffee and then come back to Kurrajong Heights and the Quinns' garden. The garden is open from 10am to 4.30pm on both Saturday and Sunday and a delightful lunch is also available at Bilpin or Mt Tomah. If you wish, you could travel back down to Kurrajong for a wander around the shops and lunch at Sassafras Creek. This event was a great success last year. **Sunday 20th** - Club Plate Inspection Day - Richard Horwood's residence - Edwin Street, Mortlake. Bring along your club plate car for its free annual inspection. Neville Stirton will give your car its annual review and RTA paperwork can be completed on the day. Please bring along your proof of insurance on your car or send me a copy on email if you prefer to christinelyttle@hotmail.com. While fees are due on 1 January 2012 they can be paid on the day as it is necessary to be a paid member to apply for Conditional Registration. Bacon and egg rolls will be available during the morning - any members can pop in for a chat or to help on the day. Look forward to seeing you.

DECEMBER - Wednesday 14th - Christmas Party - the Christmas Party will be held in place of the December General Meeting with a start time of 7pm for pre-dinner drinks and dinner at 7.30pm. This year we will be changing the menu to a traditional Christmas Dinner with turkey and ham followed by plum pudding. The cost for each attendee will be \$20.00 and this will include some refreshments. You may be required to purchase some drinks on the night. A raffle will be held with Christmas related prizes. Please contact me on (02) 9874 6080 or 0419 419 378 to book in for the dinner as numbers are essential for catering purposes.

JANUARY 2012 - Sunday 15th - Presentation Breakfast - Stan & Jill Goodwin's, 189 The Scenic Road, Killcare Heights (02 4360 2621) will be hosting the breakfast in 2012. Please advise me if you would like to attend as numbers are required for catering purposes. The cost of breakfast will be \$5 per person. Remember there is no magazine in January 2012 to remind you of the event. Book in early and don't forget to update your new 2012 calendar.

If you would like to host/organise an event please do not hesitate to contact me with your ideas.

Please put these dates in your diary/calendar - the club needs your support in 2011/2012. Would be great to see lots of members and their Austin-Healeys on the road this year!!!

NATIONAL RALLY



Just in case you don't know, the 2012 Australian National Rally will be hosted by the Austin-Healey Owners Club of Queensland. In keeping with tradition it will take place over Easter (6 - 9 April 2012)

and will be held at the Novotel Twin Waters Resort, Ocean Drive, Mudjimba Beach Qld 4564 (Sunshine Coast).

For your convenience, there is a two page registration form at www.austinhealeyqld.com.au along with the three page accommodation booking form. They have asked for the registration form to be returned to the AHOC (QLD) and the accommodation form to be sent direct to the Resort. The details of which can be found at <http://www.twinwatersresort.com.au/> Rooms will be allocated on a first in basis.

It's hats off to our friends in Queensland as they have introduced an instalment system for those attending the Rally. Details of which can be found with the registration form.

If you would like the forms, but do not have the Internet please call me (PQ) on 0417 673 065 and I will send you copies.

Profile: Ian Martin



Name: Ian Martin

Occupation: Banker

Where Do You Live? Northbridge, NSW

What Model Austin-Healey? 3000 BT7 Mk1

Why did you buy an Austin-Healey? Besides really liking the style for as long as I remember it really has a lot to do with my family history. I am named after my Godfather, Ian Tyrell who took part in a Monte Carlo Rally in an Austin-Healey with David Seigle-Morris. I felt that from an early age I had a real affinity with the marque and just knew that one day I would own one. However as with many things I just never got around to it.

I have never had an older car before and the 3000 is the first and my father, while he has always had a solid interest in older cars has also never owned one.

Did you specifically set out to buy the model that you bought?

Once I made my mind up, I knew it was time to buy one. At first I really didn't know what year I wanted, but then came to the conclusion that one made in 1961 or close would suit the best as it was the year that I was born. So after a little research I thought about either a Mk1 or an early Mk2 would be it.

It wasn't a spur of the moment decision either. I had been considering it for a time and had spent a day visiting The Healey Factory in Melbourne discussing the different ways of going about it. I decided on a car that was registered and going, as frankly I don't have the time or the application to rebuild something. I came close about eight years back when I saw an ad in the newspaper and went to look at a car that had been used for competition. However there was another car there in Healey Blue and that I really did like.

What was it like when you bought it?

I bought the car through Cummins Classic Cars and thought Jeremy Best was great to deal with and straight up. The car was very honest and was in good driveable condition. I have only had it for a few months and just love it. It's great to drive.

Unfortunately I know very little about the history of the car, but do know that the Healey Factory has done some work on it in the past. I would like to chase the details on the car. (I was able to provide Ian the names of three previous owners. It appears to have been imported from the US with the first Australian owner in Victoria. PQ)

Looking at the car I can say that the panelwork is absolutely fantastic. It is a very clean car with no rust. I went to the All British Day a few weeks back, but snuck in late. I was very pleased at how it compared with the other Austin-Healeys on display. Funny thing I took a photo of all the cars lined up that was very similar to the one that was in the last issue of Flat Chat.



How have you been using

the car? I have been playing with it at the weekends and also running it around Sydney. I like to use the car and have driven it to work quite a few times when the weather was good. It certainly feels like a robust car and it definitely isn't my intention to use it on an irregular basis. I have found that driving it in everyday traffic is not a problem, in fact it feels great. Yes I will be using it a lot.

I have a friend in Gosford who is restoring an Austin-Healey and I am looking forward to visiting him in the car. I am also looking forward to taking part in a few club events. Yes I think it's a great car and I look forward to using it more and more.

Austin Healey Owners Club (NSW) Inc
PO Box 2784
North Parramatta NSW 1500

Profit & Loss Statement
1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011

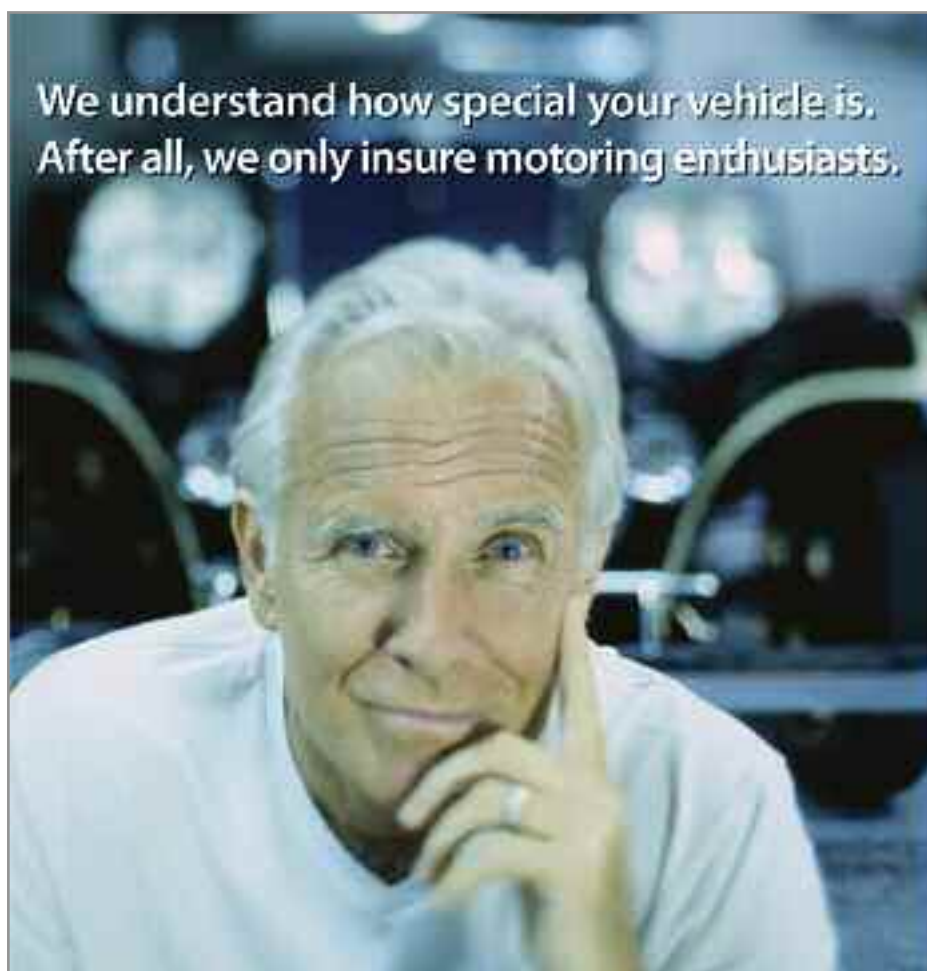
Income		
Membership Subscriptions	\$6,700.00	
Advertising*	\$1,600.00	
Sponsorship	\$14,040.00	
Event Sundry	\$3,740.00	
Charter Run†	\$20,800.00	
Christmas Party	\$1,017.00	
Sale of Regatta	\$243.00	
Interest	\$2,128.28	
Refund	\$8.18	
Total Income		\$43,276.46
Expenses		
Flat Chat Magazine	\$18,800.00	
Website	\$375.00	
Tripnet	\$712.00	
Insurance	\$150.00	
Printed notices	\$140.00	
Postage	\$60.00	
Taxi Fare	\$1,100.00	
Meeting Catering	\$700.00	
Sponsorship	\$17,768.32	
State Meeting	\$5,224.00	
Charter Run†	\$15,000.00	
Regatta Purchase	\$300.00	
Admin purchase	\$251.00	
Car and Vehicle Club Care Fees	\$253.40	
Guest Events (includes photocopying etc)	\$226.87	
Christmas Party	\$8,000.00	
General	\$408.88	
Amusement	\$1,700.00	
Pub Club	\$57.80	
Total Expenses		\$80,438.17
Net Profit (Loss)		-\$37,161.71

Notes
 * An additional \$2,070 received in July 2011
 † The Charter Run 2010 (1) fund expenses for 2010 are
 ‡ Income received from Treasurer's Trust for 2010 - 2011 income
 § Donated by Tullaro Club (NSW)
 ¶ Funds received from 2011 Superclub Fall 130 club 2011

Austin Healey Owners Club (NSW) Inc
PO Box 2784
North Parramatta NSW 1500

Balance Sheet
As of 30 June 2011

Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash		
Main Bank Account	\$10,862.14	
Bank Management Trust Account	\$12,059.34	
Term Deposits	\$60,000.00	
Regatta Inventory	\$200.00	
Prepaid Plant & Equipment	\$1,000.00	
Interest on Term Deposit (Finance Contract entered)	\$1,000.00	
Total Assets		\$85,321.48
Liabilities		
Misc Unpaid Credit Cards	\$551.11	
Term Loan		\$551.11
Net Assets		\$84,770.37
Equity		
Member Funds	\$20,560.00	
Charter Run Expense	\$5,000.00	
2011 Rally Amount	\$590.37	
		\$26,150.37



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Ross & Jenny Penman's



1967 Austin-Healey 3000 BJ8

Ross and Jenny Penman are relatively new members to the Club and we first met them through the February issue of Flat Chat in the 'New and Newer Members' section. They bought their car in December last year and it's been great to see them at a few events enjoying the camaraderie of fellow members.

So I thought that with their first anniversary of Austin-Healey membership coming up, it would be good to say hello again and see how that year has treated them.

"It's been a fun year." Ross answered. "We bought it last December from the first Australian owner who bought it in from the UK who had it for about 12 months before he decided to sell it."

"It was sold new in Middleborough on 27 October 1967 and my understanding is that it is a very late car. According to the Heritage Certificate it was originally painted in Healey Blue, had blue trim and fitted with overdrive, heater and disc wheels. I don't know who painted it British Racing Green and changed the trim to black."

"The Austin-Healey is our first older car." Ross said. "Although I did have a 1967 Holden once, but that was in 1974 when it was just a few years old. However we have owned a Toyota Landcruiser for over 17 years and been quite interested in 4WD for some time."

"We joined the All Wheel Drive Club of Sydney and have gone on many trips with them and are still members. The BJ8 shares

a tandem garage with the Landcruiser, but we don't use the Toyota all that much."

Austin-Healey Interest

As with all Austin-Healey owners I always ask how they became interested in our favourite marque.

"It was around 1985 I suppose." Ross answered. "I was attending Historic races with a friend by the name of Bob Larkin. Bob used to race a MGTC and I used to help him out as best I could and when I wasn't doing that I was watching the races. I saw an Austin-Healey racing and thought it was a beautifully looking car and I then had a really good look at it in the pits. The car really took my interest, but unfortunately I wasn't in a position to do anything about it at the time."

"Then in the early 1990s I was in Melbourne and took the opportunity to visit the Healey Factory. They were very hospitable and invited me to do a tour of the place. Needless to say I accepted and was really taken by what I saw. They were incredibly helpful with their advice and I can say that they are still just as helpful. But again, all I could do was to look as still the funds were not available. However I did know that one day I was going to be in a position to own one."

"By that stage I was starting to get more interested in Historic Motorsport." Ross added. "My interest in Historics was becoming further afield and I attended race meetings at Phillip Island, Win-



ton and Eastern Creek. I still think that the Historic events are fantastic and that the racing is far more enjoyable than what you get with the V8s. I think that attending the racing kept my interest up and while I like MGs, especially TCs and the like, it was the Austin-Healeys that I felt a real passion for - I knew that I really had no choice."

"In 2010 when my mother passed away the funds became available and I had to do it. In a way it's a little like superannuation as the Austin-Healey is one car that really holds its value unlike so many others. Even a relatively late model BMW would lose more value."

Internet Found

"I first saw the car in May last year on the internet." Ross revealed. "My mother was still alive and I can remember thinking how nice it would be in my garage. Six months later it was still for sale and my circumstances had changed. So I contacted the seller who by that stage was very keen to sell the car. I told him that I was coming around with my wife Jenny. I also took my cheque book."

"So we did go and had a very good look at the car. It's funny now looking back as right from the beginning I thought that we could probably afford an Austin-Healey that perhaps needed a little work, but not one that was in such good condition. It turned out that the seller had a number of cars and the BJ8 had to go."

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"Jenny loved the car and it was love at first sight." Ross said. "I had been interested in other cars earlier on in our marriage, but Jenny didn't like them at all. I showed her the BJ8 and she

immediately said that it was a good looking car. Thankfully it was in immaculate condition and as far as I could see didn't need any work at all."

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Driving Frequently

"We have been driving it frequently." Ross added. "Up to the Blue Mountains, the Central Coast and really wherever we can. It has been weather permitting as I still have a phobia of driving it in the rain."

"We joined the AHOC as soon as we bought the car. It really has been great with everyone being very friendly and extremely helpful. I am not mechanically minded so I really enjoy listening to others talking about their experiences and what they are doing with their cars. I have found it interesting that within the Club some modernisation is quite acceptable, while others isn't. The spin-on oil filter is one that is very acceptable."

"So far this year we have attended a few events and would like to keep doing so into the future. I have thought about the competition events too, but I'm afraid that you won't see me taking part. However I would be very keen on coming along whenever we can."

"As far as the car is concerned I would like to keep it as it is." Ross concluded. "Plus to use it as often as we can and over time learn more about the car and the marque. I have quite a few books and have read them all, but I feel as though there is a lot more to know. I would like to do a little more work of my own on the car and I am sure there are members in the club who would be able to advise me."



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CHARLIE BRITTEN 1942-2011

It is with great sadness that within this issue of Flat Chat we mark the passing of Charles Cunningham Britten following a long illness.

Charlie bought his BN2 in 1989 and both he and Kay immediately became enthusiastic members of the AHOC. As was Charlie's want, he was soon Membership Secretary and before long President, a position he held for a total of five years. It was during these initial years that he started the first of his runs throughout the NSW countryside and beyond. These highly enjoyable events have now been run for 18 years and hopefully will continue to be organised and run into the distant future.

While the BN2 was sold, Charlie and Kay's enthusiasm for the Club did not abate, with them both attending almost every event held by our club and others. I clearly remember the club meeting when he mentioned to me that he had been told that his prostate cancer was inoperable and despite this, that twinkle in his eye that was very much Charlie Britten was still prevalent.

Despite clearly failing health, Charlie, usually accompanied by Kay, regularly attended Club events and as late as August 28th was at the All British Day. Personally I found his regular attendance quite inspirational.

At Charlie's funeral service of 29 September 2011 the chapel was packed to overflowing with friends and outside lined up in a sign of respect were eleven Austin-Healeys.

Charlie won many friends amongst the members of the AHOC, so what better way to wish him farewell than to invite their recollections, stories and anecdotes?

I am sure I speak for all members of the AHOC when I pass on their condolences to Kay, children David and Elizabeth and their respective families.

Patrick Quinn

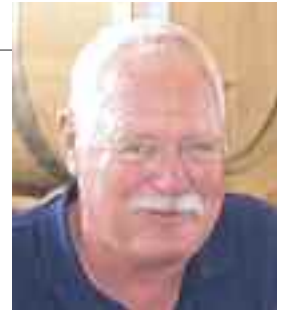
Remembrances of our Friend Charlie Britten...

Charlie to us was a treasured friend and travelling companion. He introduced us to parts of Australia we may never have seen, through Healey outings, caravanning and off the beaten track 4WD treks. His memory will live on through many more of these same adventures and at night as we sit around "The best camp fire ever" and have a cold beer, we will be thinking of Charlie and having an extra one for him.

Neil and Glenda Thew

Hey Chazza – you have been our close and loyal friend over the years. We will treasure the memories of our times spent together, sharing in your humour, your leadership and your amazing zest for life. You are indeed the "Director of Good Times" and they won't be the same without you. We will miss you mate.

Al Whitehouse and Jo Hutton



Charlie was always so very accepting and welcoming to new members. He loved the social side of the Club, and was so good at involving others in this, helping them to enjoy what was offered. He leaves a gap in so many ways in our Club - and also on a more personal level for so many members. I would also really like to pay Kay her due. She is an inspirationally strong woman.... and Charlie talked to me on a number of occasions both by phone and personally about how she was his strength during these last few years particularly. I think he would like it known that this was recognised.

Pamela and Doug Ross

Kate and I first met Charlie about 18 years ago when we went to an AHOC Christmas party on a charter boat. Charlie was dressed up as an Admiral and we all had a great night. Kate did not know anyone in the AHOC at that time and Charlie went out of his way to make us very welcome. After that, Kate and I spent many enjoyable evenings with Charlie and Kay, often at a little Italian restaurant in Concord which is now a Chiropractor. Charlie was into home brew and he always smuggled his home brew beer in with the BYO wine whenever we went out for dinner.

I always remember him at the last Amaroo Park event we held, blue overalls, enthusiastic laugh and lining up whenever he could for another run in his 100. This was followed by more than a few beers and lots of tall tales and jokes at the end of the event until it was dark. Who can forget Charlie and the famous pith helmet bought at Yaralla and the fabulous Party and BBQ that Charlie organised at Temora.

We had lots of good times with Charlie, not only at club events but lazy days out on our boat, dinners with mutual friends and always lots of Charlie's humor and good natured comments. Charlie was a fantastic friend to us and a great club stalwart and we will miss him more than we can imagine.

John and Kate Burch

Charlie showed me a large part of NSW through his runs where we stayed overnight in towns which we normally would pass through on the way to a larger destination. I will miss his easy lighthearted companionship.

John Sherman

Charlie was a doer. He didn't procrastinate, he just made things happen. He wasn't a dictator - he listened to everyone's opinions, and went with the majority vote - even if it wasn't his personal belief. That's the true mark of a man. Charlie was such a fun person to be with, and always had that wonderful laugh. Charlie was such a rock of support in the organisation of Bathurst 1998. I'll miss you Charlie, and I can almost hear you and Ian Howard sitting up there, beers in hand, catching up....

Chris Dimmock

Sometime around 1995 I recall heading out to Eastern Creek in my blue/white 100 and ahead of me I noticed Charlie beetling along in his distinctive azure metallic blue BN2. As I caught up to him, which was not easy as he was really motoring, he noticed me and was not about to be caught, let alone passed. So we had quite a "brawl" and I cannot remember the result. However, I can remember it was around the time he had spent a lot of "doe ray me" as he called it, on that engine of his so he was not about to be eclipsed by another four-cylinder car.

That BN2 really had a lot of power and Charlie used it all. He loved to take down six cylinder cars and enjoyed every second doing it, such was the competitive nature of the man we knew as Charlie Britten.

I will remember him as a man of great integrity with a quirky sense of humour who seemed determined to make good on his aspirations, and there were many. He was a tireless worker for our Club and always gave 100% effort in all his endeavours. He and Kay engaged me to sell two family properties over the years as well as being chauffer in my MK2 Jaguar at their daughter's wedding allowed me to gain a greater insight into the man himself and his loving family, for which I will be forever grateful.

Richard Horwood

Our association with Charlie and Kay coincided with the freedom to attend events without children. Club membership was immeasurably enhanced by "Charlie's Runs"; his gregariousness casting a spell over the group, eliminating the spectre of anything other than fun and camaraderie.

Larry and Helen Johns

I recall Charlie and me standing on a perilous corner on a race track (can't remember which one - not Eastern Creek though) with "noise & burning rubber" from many Austin-Healeys zooming by. It was a nice opportunity to get to know each other - nattering on about trivia and 'really nothing at all'. Charlie was good at that.

Later, I went over to see Charlie's BN2 and we picked up again about all things "Healey". I remember purchasing something small from him for my 100 BN1. Not too long after that Charlie sold the car. I think he was sad about that time.

Like all members of the club, I would like to convey my sincere condolences to Kay and their families.

Tony Williams



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My Alfin Brake Drum Saga

My BN1 was one of the last fitted with a spiral bevel differential and during its restoration in 1979 I could not source new 4-stud splines. However I had access to a 5-stud hypoid drive differential for which new splines were readily available. So it seemed the obvious thing to fit and the result would be bigger brakes, supposedly a stronger more reliable differential, better parts supply and a lower drive shaft. The only disadvantage being the extra unsprung weight.

Yes a 5-stud differential assembly does weigh more. I was carrying out the swap in a shearing shed right next to a wool bale weighing machine, so it was a simple matter weighing them. Naturally I neglected to write the figure down, but I remember the 5-stud as being around 30 pounds (14kg) heavier. This didn't seem much at the time, (although I'm sure Colin Chapman wouldn't have agreed), so I swapped them over. Originality didn't seem that important back then as I just wanted to get it on the road.

This swap is something I would not do now, especially after the experience of having 2 hypoid drive diffs fail! If the spiral bevel was the differential of choice for the 100S it can't be that weak. I know the 100S is significantly lighter, but the differential has to cope with more power.

Unsprung Weight

Although I have read that unsprung weight isn't so important with a live rear axle, I always felt I had diminished the balance of the car slightly. Probably a delusion, but I did use it as an extra reason for justifying the purchase of finned alloy brake drums. The other reasons being more efficient braking and appearance. After all, a big part of the Austin-Healey appeal is the way they look, so why not subtly enhance it?

The only supplier I could find who had Alfins in their catalogue was SC Parts. When I rang them they said they were no longer



Pretty aren't they?.

making them as there wasn't enough demand. I suppose nowadays, owners tend to convert to discs on the back (I have done this on the front). At this stage I had to give up on the idea.

However a few months later SC Parts rang me to say they were having ten pairs made and did I want a set? They were relatively expensive (about AU\$1,200) but I agreed to buy some. After 3 months eager anticipation it became apparent they were never going to arrive. 'Lost (stolen) in transit.' SC Parts would have sent another set, but no more were being made. They refunded the full amount without fuss.

Having being tantalisingly close to having a pair and missing out, made me more determined to source some from somewhere. Other suppliers listed them in their catalogues, but they always turned out to be unavailable.

Lightweight

I eventually discovered Racemettle's website (<http://www.racemettleltd.co.uk/>) an English company that had been making Alfins for Triumph TRs for years. I emailed an inquiry and received a detailed reply saying that they had just done some drawings for an Austin-Healey 11-inch drum of a new lightweight design, but had yet to make any. They said they could make me a pair and delivery time would be about 6 weeks. Despite the expense (about twice the SC Parts ones) and because I reserve all my extravagance for my Austin-Healey, I decided to purchase some.

I paid for them at the beginning of June 2010 and by the beginning of September they still had not been machined. These drums are not cast, but are machined out of a solid aluminium bar and the initial delay was waiting for a supply of this product. Once the aluminium arrived the machine shop found it a challenge to get the side profile correct. TR drums are flat sided, but Austin-Healey drums curve in at the sides forming a dish-like structure. Eventually they managed to get them machined.

The next step was to have a hard coating applied to the friction surface. This consists of stainless steel and some secret ingredients



Rubbed brake washer.



Cardboard template (left).

which are sprayed onto the surface forming a very strong bond. Naturally there was a delay in the supply of this material as it had to come from the USA and it wasn't until the beginning of November that this process was completed. This inevitably led to the next delay. The surface has to be ground to size and because of its hardness it requires a special grinder. This is where the dish shape of the drum again caused a problem. The grinder couldn't get his tool in. (His words, not mine!). Steve, my contact at Racemettle, who

had always been very apologetic and re-assuring, made a special effort during a snowbound December and found a place that did the job perfectly by spark erosion. The drums arrived just after Christmas; Six weeks had turned into six months.

According to my 1950's bathroom scales they weighed 6 pounds (2.7kg) each, as opposed to 16 pounds (7.2kg) each for the cast iron drums. An overall reduction in unsprung weight of 20 pounds (9.kg).

Nirvana

You might think from then on it was all driving around in the incredible lightness of braking Nirvana. Unfortunately not so! On first driving off I could hear a distinct rubbing sound from the rear brakes which I dismissed as the shoes needing to bed into the new drums. However, on the first brake application the whole back of the car shuddered dramatically - very reminiscent of the Empress of Tasmania crossing Bass Strait when the propellers came near the surface. On removal of the drums, the problem became immediately apparent. The machine shop hadn't got the internal dish shape correct and didn't take into account the sliding slave cylinder. Under braking this moves closer to the outer part of the drum and was making contact.

I sent Steve at Racemettle a photo of the results of this. That evening he rang me, very apologetic and assured me that everything possible would be done, even if they had to make another set. It turned out that Racemettle's original drawings were correct, but the machinist hadn't followed them correctly on the inside of the dished area. They needed to have more metal machined from the inside to create the correct clearance. Racemettle would pay to have this done at a local machine shop, rather than send them back to England. Steve was worried about the possibility of too much being machined off, because he wasn't totally sure how thick the drum was in the area of concern, because they had not been machined to his drawings. As a result I had to make many measurements and ended up making a cardboard template of the drum profile. I also drilled some holes in an old cast iron drum to see exactly how thick the original drum is in this area.

After Steve received all this information he gave the go ahead to machine 2mm off. The first machining turned out not to cover



Drilled originals.



Measuring the new drums.



Fitted and ready to go.

a wide enough area, still slightly rubbing on the slave cylinder dust rubbers, so a second machining had to be done. Finally, complete success! Was it all worth it?

I gave them a good test at the Longford Revival, braking hard from 100mph they were very smooth and stable, and remained as cool as an early Miles Davis recording.

As far as I know I have the only set in existence. If anyone buys another set I hope they appreciate my developmental work on what essentially turned out to be prototypes.

Richard Horwood's new Addition – A BN2 Kit – Just add a few \$\$\$



It's great to see folks return to their roots. Richard Horwood's first Austin-Healey was a 100 and of late he has been experimenting with later models such as a BN6 and a BJ8. He recently confided to me that he was very pleased indeed to once

again include a 100 in his garage. (He told me this in private and of course I promised not to tell.)

So just what did he buy? To many it would be a pile of bits that would be better off at Sims Metal, but as a true enthusiast, Richard he can see himself behind the wheel barrelling down the open road.

I caught up with Richard at a recent general meeting and asked him about his new Austin-Healey, a BN2.

"I bought it because it's a BN2." Richard said in response to the obvious question of 'Why?'

"It's one of 400 manufactured in right hand drive and was delivered new to Melbourne and was built in my favourite Austin-Healey 100 colour, Carmine Red with a black interior. It certainly ticked all the boxes for me."

'But it's in woeful condition. No actually, it's abominable with the chassis rusted away completely and in due course it will need a whole new chassis. The front shroud is pretty good and the rear

one is not too bad. The guards are ordinary while the doors are pretty good. Essentially it's pretty rusty and almost complete with it missing one windscreen pillar, a wiper motor that I have acquired since, hood bows that are on the way as are the rear indicator pods."

"What about the engine Richard? It looks as if it's been in a flood." I asked.

"I think it was in a forty year flood, thirty year famine, sank with the Bismark and so on. It's in terrible condition" Said Richard. "The cylinder head had been stored inside, while the block was outside supposedly under a cover which the water had penetrated. It's pretty bad and seized of course. Bruce Dixon and I spent a day stripping it down by about two-thirds. The rust in it! Well when we pulled the side plate off the tide mark was half way up the cam followers. Interestingly all the bearing shells were standard with hardly a mark on them. There was a little bit of rust on the crank as with the camshaft. The head is good as it's been stored inside. Going on the wear we estimated that the engine had done just around 30,000 miles. The bore is absolutely standard. It looks as if it had never been pulled apart and it was bloody difficult to do it."

"I have given the engine to Neville Stirton who will be using a press to extract the pistons. Bruce and I actually drilled out the crown of one of the pistons to try and get it out, but it refused to





budge. Neville used a combination of heat from an oxy and a press and as of today has managed to get two out. The rods are frozen on to the gudgeons, but these should be okay. I think I will get the engine dipped at this stage to clean away some of the rust and then thoroughly grease it."

"There certainly is some work to do." I said usefully.

"Yes there is." Richard answered. "But I am really pleased with what I bought. I don't know much of its history, except that it was delivered new to Melbourne. Since then there isn't much information available. However I did know of the car and it was owned by an early member of the club who lives close to me. I knew he had a couple of cars and saw him occasionally, but was quite secretive about them. This had been going on for over twenty years and while he did disclose that they were both 100s he did not say one was a BN2. Eventually he decided to restore the BN1 he had and not the BN2."

"After some time he decided to part with the BN2 and we hag-gled on a price for a month or two before reaching agreement. Bruce Dixon has a BN2 chassis that I will probably buy and also get him to tidy around the firewall, inner guards and so on. I am also thinking of importing some all alloy body panels for the car and will restore it with them. I will also probably restore it with 'M' specs, period modifications and of course in Carmine Red, but perhaps with a black panel."

"I am really looking forward to it, especially that genuine right hand drive BN2s are quite hard to come by. I am keen for it to hit the road again as it will be a little more Australian history out there."

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Remembering The Competitive 70s



Calder 1973 - Alan Jones standing opposite the 3000 of Wally Gates.

More competition photos this month, but more recent than we looked at in the last issue. There are four photos that were all taken during the early 1970s when I would say our Club was the most active in competition. These four as slides, have literally sat on my desk for months and through the magic of my 'all singing - all dancing' scanner we can see them in print. However I still wonder what the fascination was with slides as I have thousands of them and only one lifetime to scan them.

As today, the early '70s saw our Club as very active members of the Combined Sports Car Association and at events such as hillclimbs and lap dashes it would be unusual if the turnout of Austin-Healeys at an event was under 15. The Club was also very supportive of members who went open racing and especially so

of the various six-hour relay races that were held at the time.

A team of five Austin-Healeys consisting of two 100s and three 3000s was entered by the Club for the September 1973 six-hour relay race at Calder in Victoria. But that wasn't all as it also included a team manager, mechanics and a very active group of helpers. The event was repeated in 1974 with a team of four 100s and a 3000.

There were other relay events entered as well with support of the Club at both Oran Park (1974 & 1975) and Amaroo Park (1977) in Sydney.

The first photo shows Alan Jones standing across the Calder start line from Wally Gates in his BJ8. While my memory may be fading I would say that this is from 1974 and Wal was the

first car to start in our team. Alan had to sprint across the track and give Wal the sash and he would be away. The second photo was taken not long after with the cars accelerating down the straight.

Of course Wal's car is now owned by Chris Dimmock and Alan was tragically died as a result of a motor vehicle accident in 1979. Wal is enjoying genteel retirement on the North Coast and I understand has recently bought a Bug-Eye Sprite.

Left: Calder 1973 - Wally sprinting away after the start.





Oran Park 1975 - Peter Hopwood's 3000, the 100 of Chris Gray and Barry Birch's 100.



Amaroo Park Hillclimb 1973 - Patrick Quinn's 100.

The third photo of the three Austin-Healeys had me thinking a bit and before I sorted it out, I had to 'call a friend'.

It was taken at Oran Park during 1975 and shows from the left. The BT7 Mk2 of Peter Hopwood that he referred to as 'Erg's Friend'. Erg was his earlier BJ8 that he raced extensively and is now owned by club member Scott Whyman. What happened to the Mk2? Honestly don't know, but my 'friend' was long term member Barry Birch who believes that it may have been written off. Barry did say that its engine is in the Birch 100/6.

The middle car is a 100 with a 100S shroud and grille that was owned by Chris Gray. This was a quick car that Chris competed in regularly. Chris eventually sold the car and it has been completely restored and is now owned by club members Geoff and Carol Golding. The last time I heard of Chris Gray he was living in New Zealand.

I really needed help from my friend for the car on the right. During the period, Barry Birch and Adrian Hart prepared two 100s for racing. Both were painted pale yellow and to the casual observer were indistinguishable. However Barry assures me that No 13 was his car and that it was later sold to Carl

Stecher in Queensland. Its current whereabouts is unknown.

The last photo shows a 100 descending the downhill road at the Amaroo Park Hillclimb. It was taken during 1973 and is the same car that was on the left of the bottom photo on P20 of last month's Flat Chat. That is a somewhat younger Patrick Quinn driving it, who is of course still about, but the car is in the UK.

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This month is a case of true extremes going from what seemed to be as cheap as chips to what will probably end up being the most expensive Austin-Healey ever sold.

For sale on eBay Motors in the US is a BN1 that appears in woeful condition and perhaps just as bad as Richard Horwood's new BN2 kit. The only difference is that this car is together and it is also complete, except for missing one bumper. How a car ends up in such a condition is quite a mystery. For instance whole sections of the bottom of the chassis have rusted away as are parts of the cockpit and boot floor. That includes at the rear where generally everything is quite sound due to the normal liberal coating of oil. The outriggers? Yes you can see where they have been.

Inside, while the hood bows are present the actual hood is in tatters. The steering wheel needs replacing or rebuilding and while some trim is still there, it would only be good for templates.

The car is in Atlanta, Georgia and has 95,717 miles on the clock and the ad said:-

"1954 Austin Healey 100/4 BN1. Just in time a great winter restoration project! Car will need a complete restoration. The frame will need to be repaired or replaced, car is missing one bumper. The engine

does not turn over. Car was originally English Racing Green with green upholstery. Car was titled under engine number, 1B213983, which was quite common in the states during that time period."

Bidding started at US\$200.00 and over seven days received 38 bids from 13 different bidders until it peaked at US\$6,000.00. It did not meet its reserve and therefore didn't sell. The eBay number is 330616304939.

The Extreme

Famous or infamous? It really depends on how you look at it.

Austin-Healey 100 NOJ 393 was one of four 'Special Test Cars' prepared in 1953 and ran alongside NOJ 392 at Le Mans of that year coming in 3rd in class and 14th overall. It was later upgraded at Warwick into 100S specifications and contested both the Carrera PanAmericana and the Bahamas Speed Week.

In 1955 it once again lined up at Le Mans with Lance Macklin and Les Leston sharing the steering wheel.

At 2hours 27minutes 52.1seconds into the race the Mercedes Benz of French driver Pierre Levegh hit the left rear of Macklin's Austin-Healey, launching itself into the air, hit an earth bank and in



flames broke up and went into the spectators. Over 80 people died as a result including Levegh.

An investigation followed of which the findings were "Mr Hawthorn, driver of Jaguar car No. 6 ... overtook on the left the car No 26 driven by Lance Macklin, then suddenly came back on the right and braked; Macklin, surprised by such driving inclined to the left just as he was joined by car No. 20 driven by Levegh who, trying to pass on the extreme left of the track, happened to collide with the left side of car No. 26 and ran against the safety banking."

Understandably NOJ 393 was impounded and it was to be 18 months before it was returned blame free to the Donald Healey Motor Company where it was subsequently rebuilt. It was later sold and raced privately through the rest of the '50s and '60s until purchased by its current owner in 1969.

It has remained with this owner since then and is being offered for sale in unrestored 'barn find' condition. It will come up for auction later this year and is expected to sell for more than £500,000 (Aus\$800,500).

If you have that sort of spare change lying about, have a look at the Bonhams' website. There is lots of information about on the '55 Le Mans disaster, but if a book is more to your liking, have a look at "Le Mans '55" by Christopher Hilton. I have seen it on Amazon and eBay for less than \$20.00.





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Photos by Allan Whitehouse, Greg Denning and Patrick Quinn