



FLAT CHAT NEWSLETTER
AUSTIN-HEALEY OWNERS CLUB (NSW) INC
ABN: 87 630 303 136

An AHOC Christmas Celebration

Text by Christine Lyttle and photos thanks to Lynn Fitzpatrick and Jenny Penman



Everyone arrived early at the Strathfield Golf Club ready to party and gathered in the Bistro while others gathered in the Acacia Room admiring the view across the golf course. It had been a warm day and they were ready for a cold drink. The staff at the Club were still setting up, but it wasn't long before drinks were ready and quickly consumed.

I arrived at 5.25pm still to set up the decorations on the tables prior to the 6pm start. Dodging party goers the decorations were placed at appropriate places. Under Covid restrictions the evening was a seated function with place card settings separated by two metres. In total there were eight tables of eight seats to set up for 59 attendees. There were four cancellations on the night. The decoration table centres were supplied by the Club a varying wreaths with lights and a candle in the centre. Each setting had place cards with

a handmade Austin-Healey Bon Bon with lots of goodies in the centre, a red Lindt chocolate and a Christmas chocolate and a 2021 magnet calendar for each household.

President Gordon welcomed everyone to our Christmas Party at around 6.45pm, with the main course being served at 7pm accompanied by background music. The Austin-Healey Bon Bons were cracked and the party hats placed on heads to make a party vibe, with some party poppers pulled with streamers flowing across the tables. The noise dulled as the meals were enjoyed with alternate dishes of slow roast Turkey breast with chestnut stuffing, pesto baby beans and cranberry jus or char grilled Huon Salmon fillet, minted pea crush, crisp potato galette and caramelised lemon. Delicious and nothing leftover could be seen on the plates.

COMING EVENTS

Due to Covid-19 and directions from the Australian and New South Wales governments all AHOC face to face meetings, runs and events are generally cancelled until further notice. Watch this space.

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Please note the AHOC's new PO Box address below.



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PO Box 6494
North Ryde NSW 2113

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FB: www.facebook.com/groups/681723625314952/

Normally our monthly meetings will be held at Strathfield Golf Club, 52 Weeroona Rd, Strathfield NSW 2135 on the 1st Thursday of each month commencing at 7.30pm.

Members and guests are welcome to join us for dinner in the restaurant from 5.30pm.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's a new year and hopefully a less restricted one than 2020. The committee and I wish you all a very happy, healthy and safe New Year.

Looking back on 2020, January and February were very much business as usual for the Club, our thoughts in those months were with the terrible damage that the bush fires had caused. To help the recovery effort we had a Healey long weekend at Wingham, managing to inject over \$10,000 into the local economy. While the weather turned very wet on the Sunday, I'm sure that the 20 or so club members who were able to go really enjoyed the trip. As the Covid restrictions prevented Charlie's Run happening in 2020, this was to be the last unrestricted club run for the year.

March's general meeting was to be the last face to face general meeting in Sydney for 2020,

although we didn't know it at the time. The Coronavirus struck, the government wisely put us in 'lock-down', and Zoom came virtually (or should it be virtuously?) to fill in the space that general meetings at the golf club used to occupy. I would like to join with the committee in thanking all those who managed to master their computers to join in what were often very enjoyable sessions, even if the opportunity for friendly chatter was much more limited. The highlight was, of course, our 'visit' to the Healey Museum courtesy of Albert Hartinck and Zoom. There are some benefits to virtual meetings!

Coronavirus restrictions continued to have a very large impact on club activities, except for the very popular monthly workshops hosted by Colin and Kerrie Rule on the Central Coast. Thankfully they have a large open expanse that allowed the workshops to



Gordon Lynas – 0403 198 343 – gordonlynas@optusnet.com.au

continue for up to 20 members without breaking any of the rules. Sadly, that was the only real bright spot until we happened upon the Strathfield Golf Club. We had been hoping from month to month that restrictions would be lifted sufficiently to allow us to return to North Ryde Golf Club. That was not to be, but by November, thanks to Ray Roberts and the

Cont' on page 4

COMMITTEE LIST - 2021

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Please send all Conditional Registration documents to Patrick's address or email at left

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Non-Committee Positions
CSCA Delegate - Colin Goldsmith

Librarian - Ron Strange

CMC Delegates - Ray Roberts
Ian Clayton

Welfare Officer - Pamela Ross 0408 201 226

Display Day Coordinators - Ross & Jenny Penman

Conditional Registration Inspectors - Neville Stirton
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Assn of British Car Clubs Reps - Christine Lyttle

National Assn Delegates - Gordon Lynas & Jim Phillips

AHOC Life Members - Don Read, Warwick Sell, Joe Armour, Christine Lyttle, Patrick Quinn, Terry Bancroft, Ray Roberts and David Mould.

If you want to send something by post, the Club's address is:-

AHOC (NSW) Inc
PO Box 6494
North Ryde NSW 2113

It would be appreciated if there were no phone calls to committee members after 9:00 PM.

EXHAUST LEAKS



By Patrick Quinn
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Greetings and welcome to the January 2021 issue of the Flat Chat Newsletter.

So how was the Christmas Party? Unfortunately we were unable to attend due to previous arranged plans, however going on the words of Christine Lyttle it was certainly a most enjoyable gathering. The party was held at Strathfield Golf Club which was new for the AHOC as we had not been before. As everything went smoothly, the Strathfield Golf Club will become the location for monthly meetings which are restarting on February 4th, providing of course that the Covid gods are kind to us.

So what do we have in this month's Flat Chat? On the cover you will find the report on the Christmas Party, followed by the normal presidential words, my drivel and, and – but there's no minutes. No December meeting, equals no minutes. However all is not lost as Secretary Julie has given us some words on husband Garry's new car and the amazing coincidence encountered with the seller. You can read all about it starting on page 17.

Yes there was a December workshop at the Rule residence and following the fettling, everyone let their hair down with a BBQ. That report can be found starting on page nine.

As usual a publication such as the Flat Chat Newsletter cannot be if it wasn't for the contributions of its readership. Thank you to Robert Hosking for the photos from the latest 'Terribly British Day' held at Queanbeyan and thanks are also extended to Bryan Levy for his words on the refurbishment of the seats of the BJ8 that he recently sold, coincidentally to the same Robert Hosking. Equally I am indebted to Central Coast member Ian Richter for his words on how he was less than successful in making friends with a certain arachnid domiciled in his garage. Like Ian, I am at a loss to understand why his wife Jennifer didn't take too kindly to the thought of it all.

Of course there is lots more in the issue, most of which was found lying about just waiting to be enjoyed (I hope) by us all.

Just before Christmas, Caroline and I journeyed to the far north of the state to spend a little time with our eldest son and family. That's the same son who in the late 1970s used to attend monthly meetings in his dressing gown and is now 42. On one of the tours to surrounding towns we stopped at the town of Burringbar and in the town is a treasure trove called Heaths Old Wares & Collectables. Well that is one place I could have left so much the poorer. We did leave with a few goodies including two open-ended BSF spanners with one carrying the imprint of 'Superslim' and the other 'Austin'. Yes the same brand of tools that were supplied in the tool kits of the 100. At \$10 each, it was a price I was happy to pay.

Trust you enjoy this issue of the Flat Chat Newsletter and I look forward to receiving your photos and words on what you have been up to. We wish everyone the best for the New Year and to be honest it wouldn't be difficult to be better than last year.



Cont' from page 1



Dave Mould, Joe Armour, Bruce Reynolds,
Ross Bond, Doug Ross and Colin Rule

Gordon announced the lucky door prize draw and I realised I had not given out the tickets, so a quick run around the room to distribute them. I promptly put the remaining tickets back in the bag when I finished.

Joe Armour, a life member awarded at the AHOC's 30th anniversary in 1999 spoke about David Mould, a member since the club's inception on 9 March 1969. David was instrumental in the initial running of the AHOC having been the President of the North Shore Sporting Car Club and well experienced in sporting car clubs. David was awarded a life membership for his involvement and dedication to the

President's Message cont'

CMC, we made contact with the Strathfield Golf Club. Unlike the North Ryde Club, this venue is large enough to accommodate us within the Covid restrictions, and so we managed our first face to face gathering in Sydney since March, our Christmas Party. To misquote a certain well-known politician "How good was that?" (MARVELLOUS!) It was great to see so many members enjoying the evening, including our Patron, Ross Bond. Visiting from his home in Inverell, David Mould made a rare appearance at a Sydney meeting and we were very pleased to be able to award him his Life Membership in person.

This year will see us relocate our general meetings to Strathfield Golf Club on Weeroona Road. Those who attended the Christmas Party will attest to the quality of the food, and the comfort and ambience of

club in the past 50 years and I am sure that you all agree that he is a worthy recipient of the award. Other life members at the function were Terry Bancroft, Ray Roberts and myself. Our Patron Ross Bond was also in attendance and originally Graham and Leigh Healey were booked to attend, though were unable to make it at the last minute.

The dessert, served alternatively was as scrumptious as the main, Eton Mess – red berry salad, meringue and Persian fairy flow or Christmas pudding, brandy anglaise, vanilla bean ice-cream.

Gordon was then ready to do the raffle draw, oh no, the tickets, I had not placed them ready for the draw



the club. The management has been very welcoming to us and we look forward to enjoying our general meetings once more as face to face events. The first is scheduled for Thursday 4 February, starting as usual at 7:30pm. If sufficient of us dine in their restaurant the Strathfield Club has offered to waive the room hire fee. So do please come and join us for dinner on the 4th, and for every general meeting. I do, however, have to add a word of caution as the recent outbreak of Covid in Sydney might yet cause us to delay face to face meetings for a while longer. Much will depend on people doing the right thing and our government continuing in its efforts to eradicate the disease from NSW.

On that cautious note, while still being optimistic for 2021, I wish you all a Happy Healey New Year.

cont' from previous page

so with the help of a few ladies we had them folded and ready to draw in no time! Gordon called up members to draw a ticket for the each of the 6 prizes, the prize winners on the night were:

Ross Penman - Box of Lindt chocolates
 John Thornton - An English building with a white Austin-Healey 3000 model – donated by Alan Mitchell
 Terry Bancroft - Box of Lindt chocolates
 Chris Lyttle, Rod Richards and Geoff Smith – Bottles of Tempus Two sparkling wine

Four of these prizes were all seated at the one table - lucky table number three.

Ray Roberts shared some memories of Anne Read who many would know that Don and Anne were neighbours of Ray and Muriel prior to moving to Tallong. Gordon presented me with a beautiful bunch of native flowers for organising the evening. Really appreciated, though not necessary. Thanks to Alan Mitchell for organising the flowers.

Towards the end of the evening we were aware of

the Covid outbreak on the Northern Beaches and upcoming restrictions being enforced. We were so lucky to have our party prior to this news being publicised.

There was lots of time to chatter and move to other tables and enjoy fellow Austin-Healey friends and catch up on news from the previous nine months.

Following tea and coffee the evening wound up at 10pm and as we were departing to the car park the fire alarms were chiming away and as I drove out two fire engines were arriving. I understand it was a false alarm!

We have moved our general meetings to the Strathfield Golf Club from Thursday 4 February 2021 and we hope that you will join us at this excellent venue. We have been offered the room for the meeting at no cost on the proviso that a number of the members will enjoy dinner in the Bistro prior to the meeting. We hope that you will all come along and join us for a meal – the food is very good



Colin & Delwyn Goldsmith, Kate & John Burch, Cheryl & Darryl Dobe and Natalie & Vince Cessario.



Dianne Lawlor, Greg Strange and Melissa & John Oppenheim



Garry Lee, Christine Lyttle, Kaye McIntyre, Julie Lee, John Wakeling and Peter Laurantus.



Pat Bancroft, Liz Goodare and Judy Sherman.

I hope you all enjoyed a Happy Christmas and New Year! My last report in December indicated that state borders were being lifted – well how fast things can change - many of you would have been restricted to spending your Christmas how you predicted it to be – my leave to spend Christmas in Victoria was abruptly changed and I spent the time in Sydney. I hope that you were able to celebrate the Christmas spirit with the restrictions as best you could.

The Club Christmas Party at Strathfield Golf Club on Thursday 17 December 2020 was a great success and everyone enjoyed the evening immensely. All members who participated were happy to attend an event and catch up with friends. During the night there were whispers of a new Covid outbreak on the northern beaches and as the night progressed we learnt that restrictions were being placed as early as the next day. We were very fortunate to get the night in and I am so pleased we did, as I know myself it improved and lifted our moral to catch up with so many friends that we had not seen for quite a while.

The membership application from Giles Alexander is still pending finalisation of his documents and payment. Giles purchased a 1958 100/6 BN4 from The Healey Factory some years ago and has restored his car in a very pale green with tan interior.

We have received an application from Rob and Carol Westcott from Washington State, USA for an overseas membership. We welcome you to our club and hope you enjoy our monthly *Flat Chat Newsletter*

Membership Report Christine Lyttle

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membership@austinhealeynsw.com.au



and the quarterly *Australian Austin-Healey* magazine. We welcome you to join us at a future Australian event once Covid settles down and we can travel again.

The next General Meeting will be held at the Strathfield Golf Club on Thursday 4 February 2021 so hopefully you will all be able to mark the date in your calendar and we will see you there. It will be great to meet up again for meetings. We will keep you informed of any changes to these details by email as we need to follow Covid regulations in place at that time.

Don't forget to advise me if you change your address, email or any other details online to ensure that we can keep your details as correct as possible, send any changes by email.

Keep safe and well!
Happy Healeying
Christine Lyttle



1963 Austin-Healey Roadster

These boxed metal models box are currently for sale in Woolworths supermarkets together with a number of other metal models. The only other sports car I have noticed is a blue 1956 Jaguar XK140. They are in a larger orange box which holds 18 or 24 models.

Not all stores have the same models as there are variations distributed to individual stores. Watch out next time you are grocery shopping – they are in the toy section.

Thanks to Christine Lyttle.

Social Report ***Bruce Ewan***

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What a year it has been. With millions of people right around the globe in isolation and activities restricted, we are hoping for a much better and more sociable 2021.

Should normality return we have an exciting year of activities for Austin-Healey Owners Club members. Kicking off in February will be our new Sydney workshops. These will be held once a month at alternate locations so as to reach and cover the wide and diverse geographic basin that is Sydney.

These workshops will be held on the Second Saturday of the month starting from 9am. There are planned for the north, east and inner city, plus the western suburbs. Hopefully a great location for the Southern suburbs will present through the year.

The first workshop will be held at Vince Cessario's workshop in Artarmon February 13, 2021.

Believe it or not there are a few crazy people that choose, or are forced to live in the densely populated inner-city and eastern suburbs, so the second workshop will be held in Darlington at Greg Strange's workshop on Cleveland Street, March 13, 2021. For those living in the west, a workshop will be held at Neville Stirton's workshop April 10, 2021.

Yet don't let geography be the barrier, so come

along, converse and learn from other members, how to maintain and repair your Austin-Healey, but most importantly of all enjoy and spend time with friends.

In addition to the workshops I will introduce other activities, which include a drive plus an activity. The additional elements will hopefully encourage more members and their partners to participate actively in the club, while appealing to wide interests.

The activities include historic houses and properties, gardens for those inclined, art and sculpture, time and decade based interests (1950s and 1960s), aviation and vehicle based.

The first of these will be on Sunday, March 21st with a visit to Retford Park at Bowral, a house of historic significance, with wonderful gardens.

James Fairfax gifted his historic Retford Park home to the National Trust of Australia (NSW). It is a place of great heritage significance with European history extending back to grants of land promised to Edward Riley senior by Governor Macquarie in 1821. The house was built in 1887 by Samuel Hordern (1849-1909) a grand rendered brick Italianate style residence. Having been in the caring hands of Mr Fairfax for over 50 years, the garden is a delight to wander through.

I will publish full details in the next newsletter for February, March and April.

If you have suggestions for activities please feel free to reach out on mobile or email



A couple of photos that took my interest.



Historic Vehicle Registration News

If you have a car on Historic Vehicle Registration you should read this.

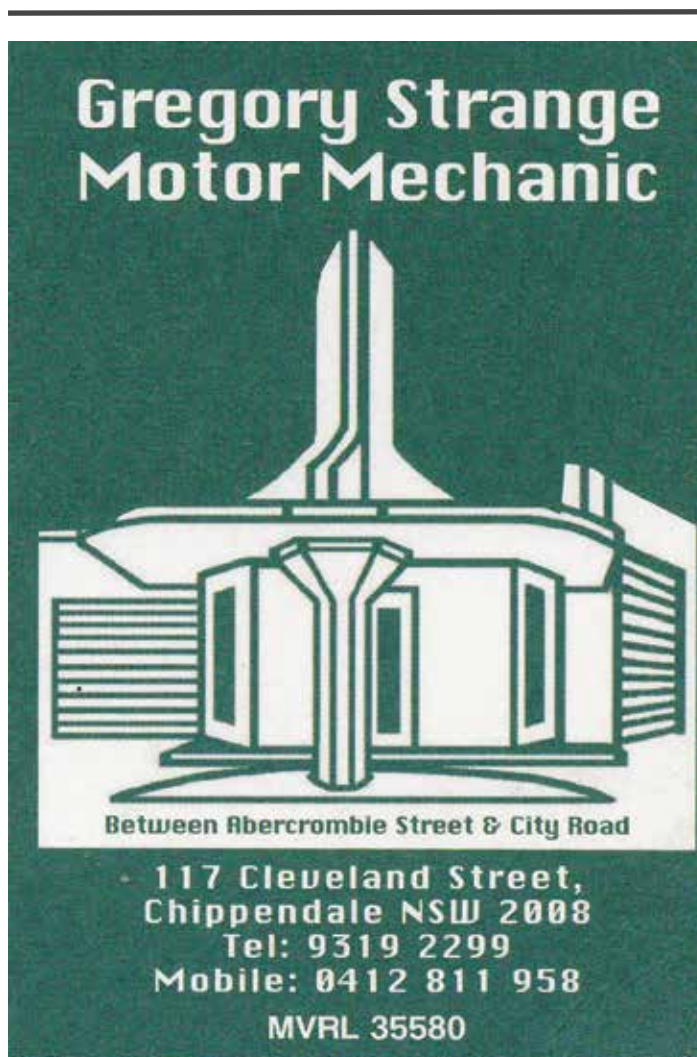
Some news for us who have vehicles on Historic Vehicle Registration. Close to 12 months ago the question went around on what vehicle owners would like to see changed and most said that the single printed sheet of paper doesn't really serve its purpose as a log book. Well someone listened and an actual logbook was introduced sometime towards the end of December.

As you can see from the below images there is a Holden Monaro on the cover and each is individually numbered. Inside are 12 lined pages that needs to be filled in on a daily basis, but they have made that easier as all you need

is to fill in the date, driver's name and signature. While I have yet to see one I understand the logbook is about 13cm x 9cm.

Thank you to Wayne Watkins and Ray Roberts for letting us know. Thank you also to Ray who advised that when he recently reregistered his BJ8 he was asked to return his vehicle's Certificate of Approved Operations which was replaced by a new one.

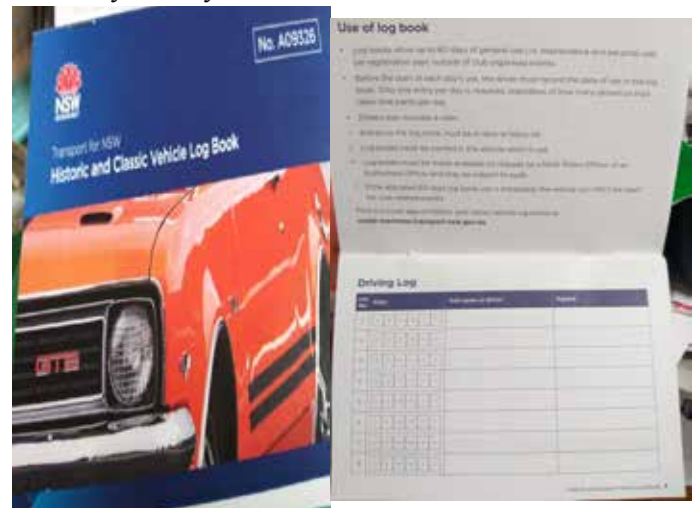
We now have 198 cars on Historic Vehicle Registration and once again I'll remind everyone of what happens when the time rolls around and you have received the Transport for NSW documentation in the post. That will include a single sheet with "Historic Vehicle Declaration" at the top in big friendly letters. Fill in the left side and post it to me, (see page two of this and previous Flat Chat Newsletters for my address) along with an indication that your car is roadworthy which can be a positive inspection result by our inspection officers (see page two for their contact details) or a pink slip from an Authorised Inspection Station. I will complete the right hand side and post back to you inside the stamped addressed envelope that you have also sent me. Once you get it back you can either go to your local Services NSW office to do the deed or post it to the TfNSW in Parkes along with a cheque or include your contact number so they can call you for your credit/debit card details.



**Gregory Strange
Motor Mechanic**

Between Abercrombie Street & City Road

117 Cleveland Street,
Chippendale NSW 2008
Tel: 9319 2299
Mobile: 0412 811 958
MVRL 35580



Last Workshop for 2020

by Colin & Kerrie Rule



The last Austin-Healey Workshop for 2020 held on December 5th was a fitting end to a successful year, even though it was Covid riddled. We had 16 attendees, 11 Austin-Healey and single examples of Aston Martin, Jaguar V12 E-type, Lotus and MGB.

We had two new visitors, Chris Jenkins who owns a black over red 3000 Mk1 and Rob Swan with a white MGB.

One of the highlights of the morning was the very informative dismantling and reassembly demonstration by our resident mechanic Steve Bromfield on a BJ7 gearbox supplied by Bruce Ewan.

We also have a larger range of library books thanks to Geoff Smith who had pick up another 15 books

from Alan Mitchell. This has now added 30 books to our Library which is well patronised.

A barbecue lunch concluded our 2020 Healey Workshops. Hoping you all have had a blessed Christmas and will have a very safe 2021.

First Saturday of the month Healey Workshops will resume all going well in February. All the very best for now. Col and Kerrie Rule.

Attendees were. Neil Janes, Rob Swan, Louise and Paul Hicken, Chris Jenkins, Ian and Jenni Richter, Harley Boggis, Geoff Smith, Doug Ross, Roger Ramsay, Jim Phillips, Bruce Ewan, Col and Kerrie Rule, Steve Bromfield.





With Thanks

We would like to thank all the people who have kindly sent flowers, cards and messages, also the many AHOC Members who attended Eric's Celebration of Life at the Newport Bowling Club. I especially want to thank Rob Rowland and Peter and Pearce Jackson who travelled from Victoria to attend. I can't tell you how much we appreciated your kind words and the memories you shared.

Eric would have been humbled by the number of people who attended and it was EXACTLY as he

wanted it to be. I particularly want to thank John Sherman who has been a rock for me, taking on the task of liaising with club members and helping organise the function at the Bowling Club.

We miss Eric every day, but I hope I can catch up with you all in the New Year.

Thank you all.

Jenny, Tom and Phillip Rudd.

Moving On

Hi Patrick

As you know by now I have resigned from our club as I'm moving to Queensland on 22 Dec 2020.

I would like to extend to members what a pleasure it has been to have had so much fun with my Austin-Healey on numerous occasions over last 30 years. I have made some lifelong friends and enjoyed my time doing things for the club with the All British Day and helping where I could.

Although 2020 has not been the best of years, with

the sad passing of Anne Read, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and that 2021 is a more prosperous year.

Thank you all once again for the fun times. I will miss our outings, but new memories for me are beginning.

If anyone is up my way, please give me a call 0412 228 998.

Warm regards
Sue Darlington

Tasmania Tour - 2022

At the request of the AHOC I have been asked to organise another Tasmania Tour in 2022.

If you wish to express your interest, please contact Terry Bancroft on 0409 323 133, or (02) 4777 4883 or bangers@bancroft.id.au

You may pull out up to around December 2021 with nil loss.

This will definitely be the last Tasmania Tour that Pat and I will be organising.

Itinerary

February 6th -	Departing Melbourne on the Spirit of Tasmania
February 7th -	Breakfast at the Edgewater Hotel Devonport
February 7th & 8th -	Overnight stay in Burnie
February 9th & 10th -	Overnight at the West Coaster Motel Queenstown
February 11th-14th -	Overnight at the Wrestpoint Casino Hobart
February 15th & 16th -	Overnight Bicheno
February 17th & 18th -	Overnight Casino Launceston
February 19th -	Depart Devonport for Melbourne on the Spirit of Tasmania

All mornings will include either a continental or a full breakfast depending where we are.

That was the year that was!

Can't say it was a good one, but can say that thankfully it's in the past. The worldwide turmoil caused by the Pandemic was and still is terrible, and it's impacted on us as a car club. However that impact has been relatively minor, as after all is it really a tumultuous thing that we haven't been after to enjoy our cars in our normal collegiate way?

Thankfully none of our members, as far as I am aware has been subjected to Covid-19, but I do know of Austin-Healey owners in both the US and the UK who were not so fortunate. While that aspect has been positive for our club, last year did sadly see the passing of four long term members. These included

Barry Birch, Graham Hodkinson, Anne Read and Eric Rudd. I believe that our club is so much the poorer for their tragic absence.

Things look on the mend for 2021, especially with the vaccine on the Australian horizon. While it won't be an instant panacea, it is the start and into the future we can look forward to some form of normal AHOC activities.

So through the pages of Flat Chat Newsletter let's look at AHOC activities for 2020. Having said that it's a little light on for obvious reasons.

February

The presentation lunch held at the home of Philip Bloom



March

The AHOC announces the adoption of the Originality Guide for Restorations and Registry Inspections.



April



April showed what was probably the most active month of the year. There was the Fire Frolic of mid march and the monthly technical workshop at the home of Kerrie and Colin Rule.



May

In the May issue Steve Lumley told us that he really didn't set out to buy his red BJ8 plus Helen Vance was excited to pass on her experience of driving home after her Mk1 BN7 was fettled at the Monthly worshop.



June

June's Flat Chat saw Tony Ash entertain us with tales of his touring Australia in his 100.



July

July saw the introduction of the new AHOC website thanks to Jim Phillips.



Austin Healey Owners Club (NSW) Inc



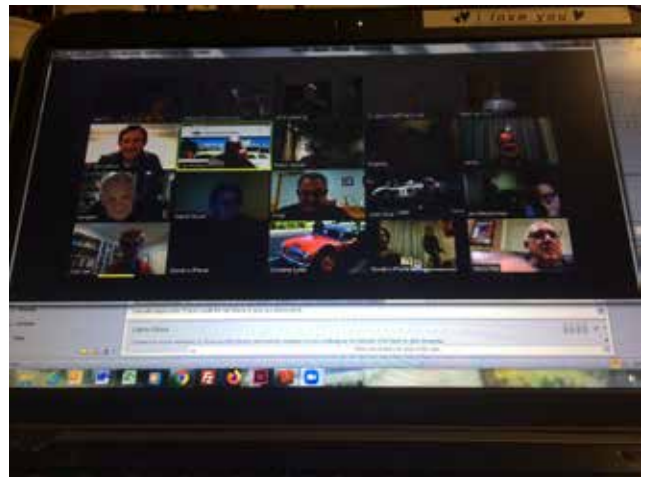
August

August's Flat Chat told the story of the latest successful workshop day.



September

ZOOM! No face to face meetings so due to the wonders of modern technology we were meeting online using a system called **ZOOM**.



October

October's Flat Chat saw a report of a Central Coast run to Wollombi. Unfortunately a serious vehicle accident not involving our cars shortened the run somewhat.



November

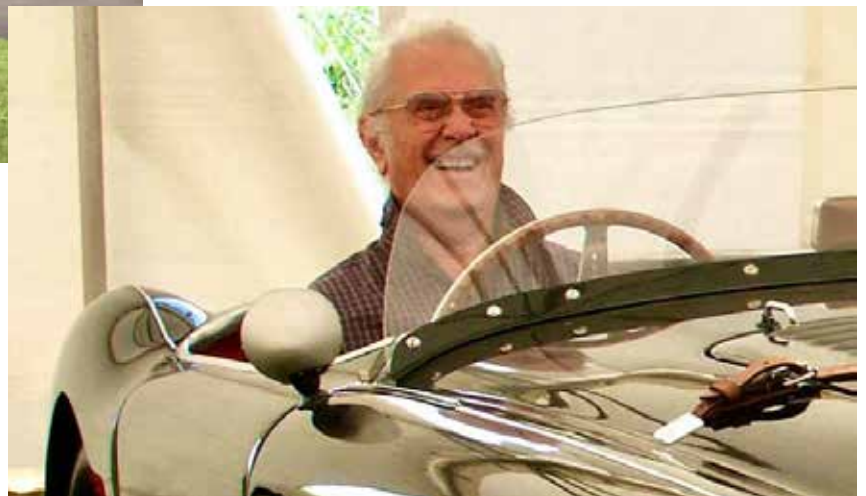
October's Flat Chat reported on another successful Saturday morning workshop. Julie Lee reported that it was the first time she had a chance to inspect the underneath of their car.



December



The previous month's workshop proved once again to be a success. The Newsletter also marked the sad passing of Gerry Coken, the designer of the body styling of both the 100 and Sprite Mk1



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Gamages, Halfords,
Dept. Stores &
Garages

ELTRON (London) Ltd., Strathmore Road, CROYDON
Telephone: Thornton Heath 1861

I certainly want one of these. Picnic basket, struggle rug, a thermos or two and a carfri. Perfect for the All British Day

Member Profile – Get to Know your Members



Alan James Mitchell

Wife: Vicki, Daughter: Sarah

Son: Nathan – both married

We have four beautiful grandchildren

As a former Austin-Healey owner please let us know of your ownership:

What model Austin-Healey did you own? 1954 100 BN1

When were you first attracted to Austin-Healeys?
In my youth when I first bought an Aurora scale model of an Austin-Healey 3000

How long did you own your Austin-Healey for?
15 years

What other cars do you own or have owned? MG Midget, Mazda RX4, Mazda MX5, Mercury Cougar, Ford Mustang

What was your favourite thing about your Austin-Healey? Driving freedom wind in the hair and the original Austin-Healey exhaust note

What is the most memorable moment in your Austin-Healey? Driving with my children to QLD and SA National Rallies and being awarded the Alan Jones Memorial Trophy at the Cowra National Rally (a really big surprise and much appreciated with my wife present).

What is the worst moment in your Austin-Healey? Constant breakdowns with overdrive (solenoid issues) and rain water leakage.

What is your favourite Austin-Healey model? 100 BN1. I also like the early Healeys, Nash-Healey and Healey Elliott and Tickford

What is your favourite Austin-Healey event? Terry's Tassie Tours, as well as local travelling events

What attracted you to buy an Austin-Healey when you were young? Always wanted an Austin-Healey from when I first saw one, my brother had a MG TD. It was fun BUT did not have the appeal that an Austin-Healey has and continues to have. My first sports car was an MG Midget

Have you owned other makes of sports cars? What were they and how do they compare to an Austin-Healey? MG Midget no match to an Austin-Healey – MX5 (Vicki's car) very comfortable, harsh ride and noisy BUT modern

Do you belong to other car clubs and, if so, how does our club compare? Yes, Moss Vale Vintage Vehicle Club, very small local club really good, but not the same as AHOC

Do you watch movies with Austin-Healeys in? When I can, but do notice Austin-Healeys in movies and serials

Do you like to watch the old races from the '50s and '60s with Austin-Healeys? Yes I like the old races of the '50s, '60s and '70s

Who in the Austin-Healey fraternity would you like to have a dinner party with? Would love to have met Donald Healey and Gerry Coker, and was privileged to assist with Graham Healey's wedding in my BN1 in Australia. I enjoy the company of the

Continued

AHOC members, not just for the cars, but we seem to like the same type of events and activities

Please add any other questions that you may think would be of interest to other members?

After I sold my BN1 to Peter Jamison in South Australia in 2010 I then focused on other Healey items, diecast cars, plastic model kits and trading cards with Healeys and Austin-Healeys on them. I do have an extensive diecast model car collection rang-

ing from micro models to 1/18th scale cars mainly older vehicles but do have a few hot rods, American cars and European models. I do also have an Australian HK Monaro plus a collection of James Bond diorama cars. I love cars and have had that feeling since childhood. I still have an original friction toy that I was given one Christmas when I was 6. I also love aboriginal/indigenous art – we have a number of original pieces as well as photography.

Terribly British Day

Many thanks to club member Robert Hosking for sending in a few photos from his visit to the Terribly British Day held on Sunday 6 December 2020 at Queanbeyan.





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What are the Chances?

by Julie and Garry Lee

Garry had been hatching a plot for some time to buy a Toyota MR2, with the aim of replacing the existing motor with an Aurion V6 to give it a bit more oomph. As his approaching retirement was looming ever closer (end of January, not that he's counting the days!), he tracked down the ideal car only a couple of weeks ago. It was in good nick with low kilometres. The bloke he bought it from had owned it for 27 of its 28 years, and had kept lots of records, so we knew almost its entire history.



Compare this to our BJ8. We still have a few pieces of the puzzle to fill in, but in its 55-year lifetime, it's changed hands at least ten times, with two people each having owned the car twice!

So we were standing around talking cars to David, the bloke we bought the MR2 from. He looked a bit disparagingly at the RAV4 which we'd driven over in and suggested that I was getting the raw end of the deal being stuck with that.

Ha! I said. No need to worry on that score, I've got an old Austin-Healey.

Oh, he said. What kind? I used to know a bloke that had one.

I told him it was a big Healey, a 3000 Mk III.

Well he immediately launched into a story about how a friend of his from university, numerous decades before had owned one. Name of Doug Treloar and he only had one arm. Used to reach across with his right arm to change gears.

So Garry's ears pricked up at this point. Doug Treloar? I'm pretty sure one of the previous owners of Julie's car was Doug Treloar. However never met the bloke so dunno about the one arm.

David then says if his memory was right, the car was white with red interior and had steel wheels.

Hmm, I thought. Although our car is white over black now with wire wheels, it was indeed white and red when it left the factory.

OK, said I. There's only one person I can think of who'll be able to solve the mystery. So I texted Patrick with a cryptic question "Does Doug Treloar only have one arm?"

Sure enough the reply came back with lots of detail, as Patrick had known Doug very well. Included was the comment "Of course he used to own your car, when it was Old English White and had steel wheels."

So by some insane coincidence, we had just bought a car not remotely Austin-Healey-connected from a bloke that used to know a previous owner of our BJ8, and had no doubt driven it at some stage.

Sydney's a big place with a fairly decent sized population, so for a coincidence like this to happen is just ridiculous. I guess it goes to show that you can never be too careful what you say because you don't know who might be listening and who they might know!

Since this all happened, we've renewed our efforts to build a complete history of our BJ8. We know a reasonable amount, but there's still a sizeable gap in years, so if anyone has any information, we'd love to hear from you!

It was purchased new on 11 June 1965 from Ron Ward Motors in Strathfield by a J Rodgers. It then

What are the Chances? cont.

ended up with Bruce Paterson, who took it to Perth and back to Sydney again. Patrick was with Doug Treloar when Doug bought the car from someone in Bathurst in 1973 or 1974. In late 1977, Doug sold it to Hugh King, a solicitor from Lane Cove. In 1979 Hugh sold it to Ray Jorgensen, a very well-known Austin-Healey identity, and the car moved to Queensland, where Ray did a bare metal restoration, painted it black over red, and added the wire wheels.

Hugh bought the car back in 1980 and owned it for a few years before selling it back to Ray Jorgensen again in 1986. I'd love to know the reason for the ping pong ownership between the two!

We believe the next owner was Mel Bridges, but don't know when it changed hands. We bought the car in May 2007 from Andre Neizabitolwki and are not planning on parting with it anytime soon.

Oh yes, one last coincidence. Doug Treloar lived in Cooma when he bought the BJ8 (not so.PQ). Garry was born in Cooma and only left a year or so before the car came to live there.

Chances Postscript by Patrick Quinn

I first met Doug Treloar in the late 1960s during a school Rugby match when we were on opposing teams. Doug was an outstanding sportsman, something I was to witness many times in the future despite his physical difficulty of being born with his left arm finishing with the vestiges of elbow. The next time we met was in May 1972 at an AHOC meeting held the Leyland Theatre at Zetland.

The previous month Doug had bought a 3000 Mk2 Roadster from Ross Bond that Ross had acquired from AHOC president Ben Sellers in a deal that provided Ben with the Bond 3000.

At the time Doug had almost finished his accountancy degree at the University of New South Wales and was living on campus. I was living just down the road in Kensington. Doug was originally from Wagga Wagga where his father was the manager of the local Commonwealth Bank branch. Doug was to become the treasurer of the AHOC.

Doug soon moved into a unit at Coogee and started

employment with Price Waterhouse Coopers. We socialised both with and without our Austin-Healeys over the next couple of years until he sold the 3000 to fellow AHOC member Wally Gates. It is now in Victoria.

Through that time Doug met Lynn, who he eventually married and I met Caroline.

It pained me that Doug was missing out of the fun of owning an Austin-Healey and when I found out that an Australian delivered BJ8 was for sale in Bathurst I let him know. The following Saturday Doug, Lynn and I set off for Bathurst, three up in Lynn's Alfa Romeo Spider and needless to say Doug bought the car. That would have been in early 1975.

Not long after, Doug and Lynn set off for Cooma where they were to establish a local office of a countrywide accountancy firm. The BJ8 went too and was to stay with Doug for a couple of years before it was sold to Hugh King, a Sydney solicitor who also joined the AHOC and became treasurer.

Over time Doug and Lynn would separate and eventually divorce. Soon Doug met up with Ros and they married. Two boys, Cameron and Martin arrived and the family were extremely popular in the Cooma area. We remained friends and frequently visited Cooma and vice versa. The early 1990s saw Doug restoring a Jaguar Mk2 and our everyday car was the same.

Sadly following complications after heart surgery Doug died in 1996. We have remained good friends with Ros.



Doug and Lynn with the BJ8. Doug delivered the car to Hugh King in Bowral as it was half way between. Hugh King Photo.

Bring Back the Blue

Bring Back the Blue

Pleased to hear from Bryan Levy about how he re-furnished the blue leather seats of his previous BJ8. He hopes that the information provided is of some use to us all.

I purchased the Leatherique cleaning and rejuvenating fluids from PPC in Warriewood, (02) 9999 0394.

I found the owner of PPC extremely generous and patient with his time in advising me on the process. He even agreed to meet me at his warehouse after hours, as I could not get there during normal working hours. Admittedly he was there anyway doing paperwork, but still I reckon I was disturbing his 'quiet' office time.

Step 1 (Bottle 1) Brush then vacuum the seats well



followed by 'massaging' the Rejuvenator Leather Conditioner into the leather. For very hardened leather a few applications is required. One needs to rub it in well and patiently apply more than one coat to nicely soften the leather.

The Rejuvenator is then left for at least a day. A few days is better, for it to penetrate well.

Step 2 (Bottle 2) Spray on Prestine Clean and then wipe off with a soft lint free damp cloth. Keep rinsing the cloth frequently in warm clean water and squeeze out before using so it is damp not spooning wet.

This step is to remove dirt from the leather. It seems to work best if done in sections, as do the other

steps. Then buff with a clean dry cloth to achieve a nice finish.

Step 3 (Bottle 3) Spray an area with Prepping Agent and then very lightly sand the leather with fine wet and dry sandpaper (400-600 grit). Wipe away debris with a damp towel.

Step 4 (Custom colour dye) I took the car up to PPC at Warriewood and the owner mixed up a bottle of dye to match the original vinyl and leather. This took him some time (two to three hours) and again his fee was very reasonable. In fact I left a seat with him for a few days and he sent it and the dye back to me with a courier.

Firstly the dye bottle must be shaken VERY well and then the portion you use is diluted about 15% with water to thin down just before use.

I applied the dye with a soft cloth rolled up in to a fairly firm ball and applied in very thin coats. Allow dye to dry for at least an hour between each coat.

The PPC owner told me it can be dried faster with a hairdryer from a distance, but watch out as it is rather easy to cause damage, so I opted for the safer wait between coats method. The dye must be mixed well before each and every occasion you dip the cloth in to it to maintain even colour. It seems the dyes settled very quickly to the bottom of the container.

It is important to apply lots of thin coats rather than a few thick to achieve a really good natural look. Thick coats produce a fake plastic look. After the last application and once dry, I buffed up





cont' from previous page

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the seats with a soft cloth a couple of days later.

If the leather is damaged there is also a crack and chip filler (I did not require that product).

I believe it is also equally possible to treat vinyl with a cleaner, I don't know about the possibility of dyeing vinyl, but I recall being told there are products for this as well.

So the process takes a number of steps and as with all restoration care and patience. The owner of PPC was very patient to explain the finer details of the process. Writing all that down her would take longer than appropriate. He was also amazingly patient with custom mixing the dye.

Cost of all four of the 250 ml bottles was \$150. This was definitely more than sufficient for a four seater car in my case.

PPC also has a number of interesting rust removal, paint prep, etc and tool products.

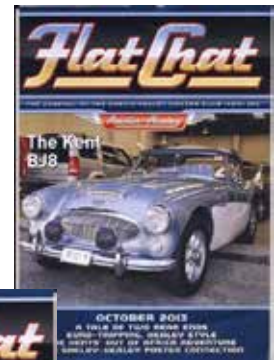
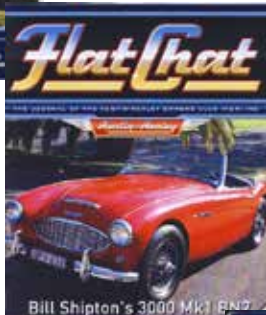
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"Wongaburra"
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NSW 2758

You can give me the drive (& stamp) at a meeting.



Interesting Finds

Indian Sportsmobile

With just 25 produced between 1948 and '50, a Healey Sportsmobile in any condition does not come up for sale all too often. Some would probably say that it's a good thing as the body styling is one that you either like or you strongly do not. To me it's part of Healey History to appreciate for what it is and that it was the DHMC endeavour to build a true luxury vehicle for the period.

The photo shows an example of a restoration project that has recently surfaced in India which makes me think of how in heavens it got there in the first place. I do know of an Elliott and Tickford that are domiciled in the sub-continent with the latter on show in the local concours circuit.

There is a fully restored Healey Sportsmobile in Australia.



Sportsmobile in India



Sportsmobile at the Healey Museum

How does this happen?

Apart from the photos there is no information on this tree find LHD 100 BN1.



Pieces of (BJ)8

Barnfinds.com is always an interesting source for all sorts of cars, including notifying this BJ8 for sale through eBay.

While it's certainly a BJ8, look closely at the photo showing what's left of the cockpit. It's not fitted with a centre-shift gearbox, but a side-shift.



BJ8 Registrar Steve Byers tells me that the car (in bits) has been for sale since early last year and when it first came up for sale there was a loose BN4 identification plate.

Yes it did sell, but at US\$3,350 it's not a huge amount of money.



AUSTIN-HEALEY 1956 blue/white 100-SIX ERTL 1:18 scale model.

This car is in as-new condition and is still in its original un-opened box.

Free shipping (within Australia only)
\$250

Please phone Allan Whitehouse 0429 381 025

Healey Woodie

There is a photo spread circulating the Internet that shows various cars bodied using wooden panelling or what are called 'Woodies'. Most of the cars are from the US where it was very popular around the WW2 period and into the early 1950s.

However there are a few British examples including a Healey with bodywork built by London based

coachbuilder Hector Hobbs. While there are plenty of photos of the car in its restored state there are not many in its 'prior' state and during restoration.

The car was restored by Classic Restorations in the UK where the proprietor is Warren Kennedy, who is a very keen Healey enthusiast. Thank you to Warren for the below photos.



Austin-Healey experiences just keep getting better...

By Ian Richter

“I will not be too long; it’s a simple job, it won’t take me longer than ten minutes.” Is my usual comment as I leave the house and race to the shed, a mere 30-metres away. Tonight’s continuing project on the Austin-Healey is completing the replacement of a couple of oil lines from the oil filter adaptor on the engine block to the remote oil filter housing on the side of the engine bay. “Why?” I hear you ask; well I thought they needed refreshing and I prefer the look of brass crimp ferrules, not steel as it looks more in the period.

Perched up on jack stands, the car waits patiently for me to return and finish off the expressive work that had begun the previous night. Nothing unusual about a half-finished job on an Austin-Healey. I would hazard a guess that is the way most Austin-Healey owners progress through projects; take your time, let the project mature and with a little amount of nurturing the work will be completed using the just-in-time principle before the next outing.

All sounds fairly ordinary to this point. It was a warm night and I was in my very best shed tee-shirt, only one small welding hole on the chest and good for another 15 years of wear, specifically selected for its short sleeves and dark colour. The short sleeves help to reduce the muck on your clothing as you wind your arm into an oil pipe tightening position. It’s not a difficult task to locate the oil pipes placed in position the previous night, I just need to fit them to the adaptor and nip them up tight with an

open-ended spanner. I jump on to the sliding floor trolley and push myself under the car, head first in the direction of the oil adapter location. There is not much room between me and the underside of the vehicle, I should have placed it up an extra notch on the jack stands, work light already in position lighting the way, it’s a squeeze, but fine for a simple job. At that moment, I saw a dark object drop past my peripheral vision. My mind shrieked SPIDER.. and I dropped tools and extracted myself. I wouldn’t suggest it was graceful, but I was quick!

On my hands and knees, I poke my head back under the vehicle to do a quick recognisance. Did I actually see something or was I spooked? Nothing...further scanning still nothing. All clear to resume. I laugh nervously to myself and perch back onto the trolley and scooch under to pick up where things left off. As I raise and wind my arms into the oil pipe tightening position, spanner in hand, there sitting on the bare skin of my left bicep is an Australian funnel-web spider. It is smiling at me, two front legs raised in a howdy wave. At this point, I was taking this as a friendly wave but nevertheless, it was waaayyyyy too close to my face.

I’m not sure who was more shocked! There was a standoff and a stare down on who was going to move first; this may have typically taken half a minute in a western movie, but only a microsecond when wedged under an Austin-Healey. I drew first. Now I’m right-handed and that hand is entwined in an oil



Cont from previous page



Ian's new friend

pipe tightening position with the spanner. Just how it became my freehand is still a mystery! It accelerated at such a rate that I am sure I heard a whip crack at the finger tips. I flicked that arachnid off so fast I am sure he (I know it was a he, I will come to that shortly) is still trying to work out what thwacked him in the face and sent him flying.

However, now I had a problem. Just where did he go? Now, if my shed was like a high performance or a high-end Service Centre like some of the exclusive car brands with their shiny floors and well-placed service equipment, I may have been able to spot my new little buddy - but it is not. I was reasonably certain of the direction of flight, but the distance was unknown. I found him after a few minutes of searching. He was under a rolling workbench.

He was excited to see me again and was sitting up and waving at me with four legs, or maybe he was saying, "Come-on, have a go." I am unsure of his demeanour. Maybe the four-metre flight across the shed was a bit of a shock and not the highlight of his day.

I however had a feeling of euphoria due to finding him. I decided to take him inside to show Jennifer. The collection had its challenges, he is a wiry little

fellow. I popped him in a recycled takeaway container. The capture was necessary to prove that my story was not fabricated and not as a result of a bang to my head while working under the car. I couldn't find the lid so I draped a piece of bubble wrap over the top. How did my offering to Jennifer go I hear you ask?not well. I should have thought that one out. In hindsight, if I had secured the spider in a sealed container before taking him inside the house things might have gone far better.

I did a quick Google to identify my new mate. Yes it is definitely a Sydney funnel-web and a male. The males are the more toxic of the pair, but the good news is - since the development of the anti-venom in 1981, there has only been one recorded death with the male spider identified as responsible.

If there were any learnings from this rambling prolix, it may be that Australian (Sydney) funnel-web spiders make their burrows in moist, cool, sheltered habitats – under rocks, in and under rotting logs and have irregular silk trip-lines radiating from the entrance of its home to catch prey. Not this one though, it was more comfortable living on top of an Armstrong shock-absorber in a dry engine compartment and a reasonably tidy shed. As an Austin-Healey owner, one should always be aware of something unexpected. After all, it's just another of the many joys of maintaining an Austin-Healey.

What does one do with a male funnel-web spider that has an appreciation of the Austin-Healey marque at 8.30 on a Wednesday evening? We had bonded so well, you let him go back to his family, but I'm not telling Jennifer that.

Yes and by the way, how do the brass ferrules look on the Purolator remote oil filter housing? Well worth the effort, in my opinion.



After Ian's story perhaps something a little different is called for.

Photos of Interest



How far have we come?

This photo appeared on the June/July issue of Chatter from the AHCoF America.

It was taken by a gentleman by the name of Scott Aurandt who still owns the BN7 at the bottom right.

The 100 has probably been restored to gold level.



Not the same car.



Engineering Porn

A modern Ferrari V12 on the left and on the right is a Miller V16 from the 1930s.

Probably not the tools used for making gear adjustments.



I didn't know this.

Did you know that the engine plate fitted to early BN1s had three holes for the starter motor?

That doesn't mean that the starter was equipped with a three hole flange, like those fitted to Riley engines.

The extra hole was to accept the earth chassis strap.

It is thought the plate was changed in November 1953, but the Austin Service Journal amendment didn't reach service centres until February 1954.

Thank you to John Harper, the UK 100 Registrar for this.

ENGINE REAR PLATE

Austin-Healey 100, A 70

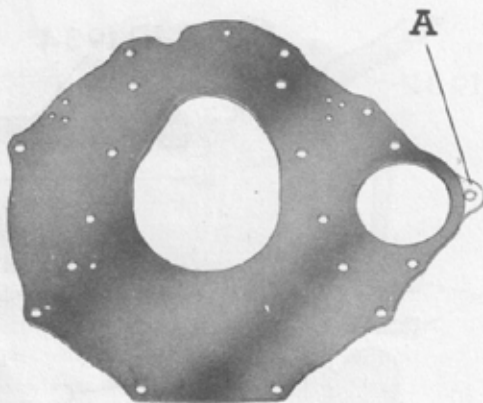
To allow more clearance for the clutch pedal on the Austin-Healey 100, the engine rear plate, also fitted to the A 70, has been modified by deleting the outer boss and hole A at the starter motor fixing face (see illustration). The gearbox casing

has been altered to accommodate the modified plate although there is no change in part number.

The earthing cable, which was originally fixed by a bolt at this point, has been moved to the lower bolt securing the gearbox to the mounting plate.

INTERCHANGEABILITY

The new rear plate can be used for replacement, also the modified gearbox casing.



STR 1279

COMMENCING ENGINE NUMBERS:—

A 70 Saloon	-	-	-	203231
Pick-Up	}	-	-	174217
Countryman				

COMMENCING CHASSIS NUMBERS:—

A 70 Saloon, R.H. Steering	-	-	148304
L.H. Steering	-	-	148307
Pick-Up, R.H. Steering	-	-	148319
L.H. Steering	-	-	148428
Countryman, R.H. Steering	-	-	148459

SUMMARY OF ALTERATION

Description	Number Off	Old Part	New Part	Type and Parts List Publication Number
Engine Rear Plate	1	1F 1332	1B 2842	A 70 Pubs. 780A, p. 3, 853, p. 3

FOR YOUR RECORDS	PARTS LISTS
	STOCK CARDS
	PARTS ORDERED
	ALTERATIONS NOTED



A Supercar Classics article from 1989 by Geoff Healey

No-one could accuse the Big Healey of lacking charisma. The enthusiasm and common sense engineering abilities of Donald and Geoffrey Healey, the father-and-son pair behind the car, are witnessed by each surviving example. The two of their designs to be built in large numbers, the Big Healey and the Sprite/Midget, attract as much enthusiasm today as when they were new.

Geoffrey Healey has always believed that the Healey 3000 Mk3 and its planned successor were killed off by the BMC management for reasons of internal convenience rather than commercial necessity. He remains so sure of his car's fundamental appeal that he is now putting his name, expertise and authority behind an updated version.

Donald Healey never forgave BMC for cancelling future Healey developments in favour of a variety of ill-conceived in-house projects, but always acknowledged that without Austin's offer to mass-produce the car, agreed on a handshake with Len Lord at the 1952 Motor Show, the Healey would never have been as significant.

'My father never had any second thoughts about his overnight decision to let Austin build the Big Healey. He knew that the potential market was more than he could satisfy, and he was very grateful for the opportunity. Perhaps in hindsight there might have been a different way - I remember Peter Morgan telling him that we should have stayed independent, and that if we had, we would be still making the same car today. Of course, that's Peter's way, but most of the other independent car makers have disappeared or been taken over.

'I do believe that the Healey team was badly treated when the 4.0-litre car was dropped for no very good reason, and when the Sprite was dropped in favour of the almost identical MG Midget, on which we received no royalty. My father, in particular, never lost that bitterness for the rest of his life. He always felt that Lord Stokes ruined the industry.'

In 1966, Longbridge designers put forward an ungainly monstrosity, locally dubbed *Fireball XL5*, as the Healey 3000 replacement. It proved to be a lash-up of the first order, using the Rolls-Royce 4.0-litre engine from the Princess R, coupled to a sluggish Borg-Warner automatic gearbox, and Hydrolastic suspension of dubious geometry. Having consumed a colossal research and development budget, the monster died when its dynamic failings became embarrassingly insuperable.

Meanwhile, the Healey team, believing that they knew more about the preferences of the US sports car buyer, pushed on with their own ideas. The light-alloy Rolls engine went into a widened 3000 chassis and body, and numerous detail modifications were made to suit coming US safety regulations.

Handling and ride were exemplary, and the Rolls engine endowed the car with impressive performance and refinement. Even the Austin management liked it, but after two pre-production vehicles had been completed, it was axed.

'Ever since then, my father and I kept looking for ways of producing new cars. The costs always seemed prohibitive. Finally we got involved with a company making Frogeyes out of GRP. We liked what we saw, so we agreed to support that effort, working on a consultancy basis.

'Then we were introduced to the Holmes brothers, who had built a car inspired by the

Big Healey, called the Harrier. We'd seen the Harrier some years before. Originally it was rather a rough effort, but since then it has been greatly refined, and they have now produced what we considered to be the way the Healey could possibly have gone if it had continued in production.

'We had looked at the Rover V8 ourselves in earlier times, and would have liked to have used it: it was one of the engines considered when the 3.0-litre C-series engine disappeared.

'Austin Rover gave that engine to Land Rover in the split-up: it didn't fit their plans, especially as they wanted to standardise on front-wheel drive. Issigonis said many years ago that he thought the sensible limit for a front-drive car was a 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine. I think he was right.

'So we went back to the Harrier, did our sums, and realised that it was quite the best of the efforts that people had made at producing a new Healey. They didn't seem to be inhibited about dropping old ideas and coming up with better ones. Take the chassis, for instance: it would have been easy to use something similar to that of the

'No-one in this country is ever again going to produce sports cars the way Austin and MG did'

old car, but instead it's a spaceframe with an independent rear using Ford components.

'I'm very optimistic about the future. The new 3500 will soon turn into a 3900, using the large-capacity engine fitted to the current US-model Range Rover. That change will give us that little bit of bottom-end torque that the C-series had and the Rover Vitesse-specification V8 lacks. I believe we can sell 200 cars a year. No-one in this country is ever again going to produce sports cars the way Austin and MG did in the old days.

'Exporting the new Healey to the US will sadly be rather more difficult than it was some years ago. The emissions and safety regulations are considerable barriers for a very small-scale operation.

'In the old days we were always principally interested in the American market: that was the destination for 90 percent of production. Making something to export was really the whole point of the Big Healey.

'We managed to sell a couple of our Riley-engined 2.4 saloons and roadsters over there, then a larger number of Silverstones. The Healey 2.4 was a luxurious, expensive sports car. When it was introduced it was the fastest production car in the world; top speed was about 110mph.

'Then my father got very closely involved with Briggs Cunningham and saw the American market for what it was worth. He decided then that our new car should be intended first and foremost for that market. The prototype was even laid out originally as a left-hand drive car.

'We had little choice in deciding to go for exports. The British market for sports cars in the austere post-war period was very limited. There were also big problems with

raw materials supply. I remember my father having a great meeting with Stafford Cripps, raising the question of allocation of materials for the small manufacturers. The answer was that the Government didn't care in the slightest about the small manufacturer: they said there was no place in their view of the world for us.

'US sales were the primary motivation behind our record attempts and successes. They certainly had a positive effect on our image there, and I think they did the company a lot more good than our Le Mans efforts. We laid down four special test cars towards the end of 1952, then in August and September the next year, we were in Utah breaking records.

'I don't think there will be any attempt at competition with the new Big Healey. Competition cars are now so remote from the cars sold to the public. Someone told me once that the old Healey 100S had been the last real sports car, because it was about the last car you could buy and drive with equal success in circuit racing, rallying and hillclimbs, and still use to go to work.

'Perhaps, though, you can do that with the current Caterham. Colin Chapman, I think, deserves to be remembered as the last of the brilliant sports car designers. Sometimes I think it's a shame that Lotus has gone the way it has. Still, General Motors seems to be leaving Lotus to do things its own way, just as Ford is being very sensible with its ownership of Aston Martin, and Len Lord refrained from interfering too much with us at Healey.

'The small-block Ford V8 would have gone into the Big Healey easily, and from time to time people ask why Carroll Shelby built the Cobra out of the AC Ace rather than the Healey. Certainly he knew and liked the car well enough, having been involved with our record breaking.

'I enjoyed all our cars, from Sprites to the latest 3000s, but of all the Healeys we made, the special test cars stand out in my memory. The two Le Mans 100/4s, from 1953, were kept for a few years, and they were super to drive on the road: quick, sweet-handling, and I put in many happy miles on both of them. Compared with them, the early 100/6 was a big disappointment: the engine was a gutless wonder which took a lot of prodding to attain its full potential.'

Geoffrey Healey has too much of the practical engineer in his blood to have much time for unnecessary sentiment. To him, an old car is not a shrine to misty memories, but a machine to be driven and enjoyed.

'The prices people are paying for old Healeys amaze me. I wish I'd kept one or two, if only for that reason. Fortunately, that has saved a lot of cars from rotting away. Whatever the merits of cars as investments, they are a lot more fun than a bunch of diamonds or a share certificate.

'I've got a prototype turbocharged diesel Maestro, which is surprisingly lively and is proving excellent as pure everyday transport. I worked for Rover until July 1987, and on early retirement had the chance to buy one of the development cars. There's also an Escort RS2000 Mk1 in the garage, which used to be the old man's. It has been a remarkable car.'

The two sports cars expected shortly at his spacious home in Barford are a new reproduction Sprite and a new Healey 3500. Both will be run extensively for continuing development purposes. This genial engineer, now in his sixties, has plenty of ideas left to try out.