

October 2020

Mutterings

THE NEWSLETTER of the EASTERN CENTRE
of the AUSTIN HEALEY CLUB



The Golden Healey: 1958 Earl's Court Motor Show car
- See inside

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

ROB'S RAMBLINGS

For me there was an element of 'Old Normal' this month in that I actually attended a car event albeit with appropriate Covid restriction.

Quest Brothers of St Ives hold an annual charity event on the sports field at Hemingford Grey, not far from Huntingdon. This year around 150 cars were socially distanced with pre-booking checked by marshals wearing masks.

The public were invited and had to sign in and sanitise on entry. Food stalls observed the rules and the loos were open as normal.

I took my son, Johnathan, in the Sprite and by chance met with Rick Dyke-Price and Greg Archer, both former EC members, Rick having competed in the Round the World Rally some years ago. He has sold the car now but Greg still has his in the family.



All in all it was good event well organised with little sign of excessive 'mingling'! I am a bit short of space this month but I will include a few photos in next month's edition of Mutterings.

Rob

NEW MEMBERS

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

Tony Withrington

TOURING TROPHY – 2020/21

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

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



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

Entrant	Date	Trip description	Trip	Total
Angela Bonner	25/9/2020	Rutland, King's Lynn and more	413	1229
Rob	25/9/2020	St Ives, Duxford and Newmarket	66	274
Dave and Pam	25/9/2020	Covid lockdown	0	101
Dave Holman	25/9/2020	Caister Castle and around	200	216
Joanna Hill Jonathan Pearson	25/9/2020	In the garage	0	0.5

Angela's mileage is for two months and mounted up as it included a couple of trips to Rutland, one to Kings Lynn, plus racing at Brands as 'team staff'.

CUPS AND TROPHIES

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

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

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

We actually put some miles on the Hundred last month, we decided to visit the Caister Castle car collection near Great Yarmouth, so with that and a couple of other local drives out we covered over 200 miles. I am pleased to say it didn't miss a beat, so it is not holding it against me that it has been locked up and ignored for most of the year. Not really compensation for the planned trip to Austria, not even leaving the county, but any drive in a Healey is a pleasure so I will make do with that for the time being.



If you look carefully at the photo you can just see the Hundred in the car park beyond the Castle.

Don't forget our groundbreaking "virtual AGM" this month. I have already had a few requests to join in but we would always enjoy the company of more members, I am sure it will be fun watching me make a complete hash of things as my grasp of all things technical is limited!

I hope you will have received an invite with joining request details with this Mutterings in case you missed the previous one. If you have contacted me I will be sending you an email with the link to the "whereby" meeting on the night, I am planning on sending reminder emails to those of you that have contacted me a few days before the event so if you do not get a reminder from the chairman@ahc-eastern a couple of days before please contact me again in case it has got lost in the ether. Please bear with me as this is the first time we will have used this system for a bigger meeting and as I may have mentioned before I am a technical numpty.

Chairman's Chat continued...

It is really easy to use, no downloads needed, just a reasonably up to date computer or iPad and broadband connection. Join the digital revolution - will we all be converting the Healeys to electric motors I wonder? Let's face it Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman have just ridden electric Harley Davidsons all the way up South America - all you need is corporate sponsorship, a planning team, a couple of electric pick-up trucks with recharge facilities, a Hollywood celebrity to get easy access to people's homes to use a plug socket, and you too can cover up to 100 miles in a day!

Please remember that even though we can't carry on with the noggins your committee is just an email away if you have a question regarding your Healey and with the extended fettling period I hope to see many of you about later in the year [now maybe next year!]. We would like to think that normal service will be resumed as soon as possible. Keep an eye on the website and look out for emails from our membership secretary; we will pass on any news as soon as we get it. Please make sure we have your current email information so we can keep you in touch with developments.

Best wishes to all,

Dave.

R: On our run out to Caister we stopped for a meal and caught the sunset at Hunstanton, shame about the other cars!



Below: Dave is shown in better times at the Norfolk Noggin' July 2019 with Keith Loader in the background.

Wouldn't we like to wind the clock back?



DAVE'S TECHNICAL TIPS

Work on the BJ8 continues painfully slowly and I now have another unplanned job, taking the gearbox out. As part of the re-commissioning I am changing to silicon brake fluid so a flush out and new seals are the order of the day.

The gaiter on the clutch lever was split so due for a change but when I removed it bits of a spring fell out of the gaiter. They add up to that little coil that holds the thrust bearing in place, it is really annoying as the car drove nicely and the clutch worked well so I wasn't expecting that job.



I can't get an endoscope into the right position to see if there are retainers in place [I was hoping it might be left over bits from a previous clutch change] so for peace of mind I am going to have to take the box out.

On the plus side I haven't put the dash and steering wheel back on yet so at least I have a bit of space to attack the offending item. There has been some progress though, I think I have finished tidying up the wiring loom, it had been chopped against the chassis in the past during an off road excursion in Scotland, I have made a permanent repair and added a wire for brake lights to enable separate indicators at the rear [it is an early BJ8] and included a permanent feed from the battery to a 12v socket to enable easy charging. EBay supplied a nice double socket with a 12v socket and a double usb which I will be wiring through the ignition.

I have made the steel pod (R) to hold these which doubles up as the support for the glove box so they should be reasonably well hidden from sight so won't offend any purists!



Dave

SOCIAL WHEELS OCTOBER 2020

Covid restrictions were lifting gradually but in some places being imposed again, and now we are nearly back to square one, with the threat of even stricter rules if we don't obey, so I think for most of us we can simply write off this year altogether and hope to goodness by next Healey season everything may be back on a more normal footing.

The **Higham Ferrers Chichele Classic Car** show has been postponed until 2021, when they will be combining with the Rushden Historic Transport Society to make a, hopefully, larger event, Classics in the Park, to be held at Hall Park, Rushden on Sunday, 8th August, 2021. If the organizing Rotary club already have your details from an attempted entry this year, please contact them either by email or on the form which I can copy to you as because of the data protection laws you have to give them permission to pass your details across. They will be sending out pre-registration details around the beginning of November for those who wish to enter the 2021 event. Otherwise, if this will be a new entry for next year please download an entry form from their website.

At the moment I do not have any confirmation of other 2021 dates which have been carried forward and I suspect the constant change of directives is making any prospective event organisers tear their hair out. If THEY can find a reliable, safe way of protecting everyone we may get to see a sensible program for next summer, but so far this seems a fairly distant possibility.

In the meantime, keep your lovely Healeys in tip top condition and enjoy the sunshine when we get some. The weather this year has been so good and it makes a mockery of all the events so carefully planned and forced to be abandoned.

Here is to 2021, with the virus beaten into submission and a full summer of events to make up for all we have missed. Never before have I wished the year away, and whilst for me personally there have been some surprising and welcome happenings, I know many have had to deal with hardship and tragic loss, so hopefully a new year will bring better fortune to us all.

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

Best wishes,

Angela

THE GOLDEN HEALEY

Last month I mentioned Ken Gregory's book, 'Behind the scenes of motor racing' and in passing that Ken had been responsible for the 1958 100/6 show car that has become known as 'Goldie'. Here is the relevant passage from his book:

With Casablanca the 1958 Grand Prix season ended, and apart from the Boxing Day Brands Hatch meeting, we could now turn our minds to things other than motor racing. The Earl's Court Motor Show at the latter end of October commanded my immediate attention once I was back from North Africa.

At that time I still retained my post as Public Relations Officer for Donald Healey, and I had for some time been considering how best to tackle the eternal problem of Earl's Court—that is, to attract the crowd to *your* stand and keep them there. Faced with the publicity guns of 'the big five', who between them were bringing out various brand-new models just before the Motor Show, it was obvious that we would need something pretty eye-opening to draw the crowds away from their stands.

In other words, putting it bluntly, we needed a 'gimmick'. My contention was that if, by some means or other, I could create sufficient interest in the Austin-Healey exhibits to bring the public to the stand, it was then up to the salesmen to make use of the opportunity, and 'push' the Company's wares. We needed something so glittering and attractive that people would make a point of visiting the stand specially to see it.

So was born the 'Gold, Mink and Ivory' Austin-Healey. I put my idea to Donald Healey, who agreed it was an extremely sound one. Then, after thinking seriously about it for a few days, he decided that the cost of the venture would be prohibitive, and the idea would have to be shelved.

I felt very bitter about this, and accordingly asked him whether, assuming I could guarantee a purchaser of the special car at a fixed price, he would then be prepared to build the car and carry out all the special treatment it would require.

'Yes,' said Donald; under those circumstances he would, so I then approached Basil Cardew, motoring correspondent of the *Daily Express*. We had a discussion in a Fleet Street pub one evening, as a result of which Basil put the idea to his editor that their newspaper should purchase the car and announce it to be the first prize in a Motor Show competition they were promoting.

Goldie continued...

Having obtained their agreement to this proposal, I went back to Donald Healey, who undertook to begin work immediately on the special Austin-Healey. The car itself was basically an ordinary 'Hundred-Six' de Luxe model, but the entire coachwork was painted in a beautiful ivory shade. Everything that was normally chromed was 24-carat gold-plated, right down to the tiniest trimming washers and screws; the wire wheels, disc brakes, bumpers and instruments were all given the same treatment.

The seats were made of a reversed champagne kid leather with pure mink insets on the seat and the back squab, while the dashboard and the complete side trim embodied reversed champagne kid. All instrument controls and other parts normally of plastic were made of solid ivory, as was the steering wheel, which was an absolute masterpiece of the craftsman's art. The ignition key was gold-plated, also the key ring on which was a tiny, but true-to-scale, 24-carat solid gold miniature of the Austin-Healey Hundred-Six.

*If you
want to hear and see
more on this special
car from its current
owner click:*

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



The 'Golden' Austin-Healey was valued at around £4000 (A new 100/6 was £1223), and suffice to say proved a sensation at Earl's Court, 1958; it gained some very good press reports and generous publicity, and drew masses of visitors to the Austin-Healey stand, which was the object of the exercise.

Geoffrey Healey in his inimitable way was not so sure:

'Austin specially finished a 100 Six for the Earls Court Motor Show. All plated parts were plated in gold and the seats were trimmed in mink. Some metallurgists were alarmed by the gold plating of the wheels, as this could have caused spoke failure'.

Rob

CLASSICS AT GLEMHAM 2020

With so many shows, events and rallies cancelled it was hardly surprising that the Glemham event was a sell out. A wide range of classic and modern classic vehicles plus a smattering of vintage transport made its way to Suffolk and the grounds of Glemham Hall, between Woodbridge & Saxmundham on the A12.

This was the second year of the event and the near 100% attendance seemed to cause a bit of traffic chaos in the A12. Once on site it was a slow and careful procession for my [1959 3000](#) Mk1 'Ruby' following a Daimler Dart and being tailed by a NYPD police cruiser to our spot for the day.



The weather played its part and soon it was time for tea and bacon rolls before heading out to look at the 1000+ classics.

Amongst the ranks of visitors there were a good few Austin Healeys, with a healthy contingent of Sprites (one 193 XVK on its first outing since restoration) and a few 100-4's, 100-6 and some later MK2 and MK3 3000's.



No club stand meant we were all scattered around the show but each took time to stop when we found a fellow Healey.

Glemham 2020 continued...

Despite my own car being surrounded by more modern American muscle (one with Lambo doors) I certainly had a steady stream of admirers one of whom commented she was a rose between two thorns!

A very friendly and mostly socially distanced crowd enjoyed the sun and the cars, while being entertained by an Elvis impersonator who did cover versions of Frank Sinatra and Chas and Dave? I hadn't realise the late Mr Presley's career had taken such a nose dive, but then he was playing from the side of a truck.

Overall a nice event and great to out with the car.

Hoping for many more chances next year and an opportunity to meet more of you in the East.

Happy Healeying

Scott Rose

LADIES NATTERS

I have commandeered the Eastern Centre virtual meeting room for 1 hour in the evening on the first Wednesday of each month, so that the ladies can get together for a chat. No agenda, and we do not have to mention cars, just anything we might usually discuss at a local meeting.

The second meeting of this series is on October 7th at 19:00. You do not have to arrive on time, and you can leave early if you wish.

To join in just email

maggibyford@gmail.com

and I will send you a link to the 'room'.

Hope to see you there,

Maggi Byford



WIN afternoon tea for two on the Chairman



Yes, that is right. WIN an afternoon tea for two* on the club chairman!
Don't miss this opportunity.

We are looking to refresh and redevelop our Eastern Region Club website over the next 12 months and we need your help. Our new club website aims to:

- Create and share with members a wide range of resources that adds value to your membership;
- Actively demonstrate our shared passion for the marque and our enthusiasm for owning, driving and enjoying our cars;
 - Widening and growing our club membership.

Please take 5 minutes of your time to complete our online survey and one lucky participant will be drawn at random and be awarded the prize of afternoon tea for two at a place of your choice within our region.

It could not be easier, you don't need to email, phone or write in with a stamp addressed envelope. We will send every member a link to the online survey next week which can be completed on a computer, tablet or phone in around 3-5 minutes. The survey will be open for only 7 days so do not hang about, get it sorted quick before the Chairman changes his mind.

**Your choice of venue. The Club will pay up to £50 against an eligible receipt.*

THE CAR'S THE STAR: NEW THIS MONTH

- **Summer of Sam:** 1997 film by Spike Lee set in 1973 New York during the Son of Sam killings. One of the characters drives up in a red over black Mk11 which shows its age when accelerating away trailing a smoke cloud!

The film is worth a watch.



- **All the money in the world:** 2017 film by Ridley Scott based around the 1973 kidnapping of J Paul Getty's grandson.

This 3000 is seen on a Rome street.



EASTERN CALENDAR

Subject to change

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

Currently all events are cancelled or on hold until further notice except Battlesbridge. If you hear of anything in this area for the autumn / early winter please send me details for publication but I regret most organisers have simply abandoned this year now as being simply not worth all the effort involved.

- **BATTLESBRIDGE ANTIQUES CENTRE** now open for most of their traders, with strict social distancing guidelines. The toilets will be open and cleaned regularly. Takeaway refreshments also available, so if you fancy a little retail therapy this is the one to visit.
- 11th/13th September. **Goodwood Revival**. POSTPONED until **2021**. Tickets can be rolled over to next year or refunded if you wish.
- 13th/15th November. **Classic Motor Show, NEC, Birmingham**. Cancelled for 2020. If you already have tickets contact them direct for how to proceed for refunds or transfers to next year.
- **Toft lunch**. Due to the uncertainty about social gatherings it has been decided that the Autumn lunch be postponed until the spring of 2021.

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

Hopefully by the time we can look forward to 2021 THEY will have found, and have widely available, a reliable vaccine and we can once again have a safe and enjoyable summer with our Healeys.

Angela.



INTERNATIONAL HEALEY MEETING 2022: AN UPDATE

John Keener our National Caretaker chairman and member of the international organising committee has reported back from a recent virtual meeting. A lot of work has been done on events, meals and accommodation. Many scenic drives and excursions are planned. Roger and I visited the Norway hotel when we drove to the North Cape and back with the Dutch club, and the Hotel location is spectacular with superb challenging drives in the surrounding area. Check in will be the Monday, and closing on the Saturday. Current estimate of cost is around €3000 per 2 person team.

Many facilities are requiring firm numbers well in advance, and many visitors are expected from America and Australia. However with the current world Covid pandemic and all its implications, the committee are having to consider postponing the event to 2023. A decision on this will be taken in January.

Maggi Byford

NOTICE OF EASTERN CENTRE VIRTUAL AGM 2020

TUESDAY 20TH OCTOBER, STARTING AT 19.00HRS

If you wish to join the meeting you should email the chairman [chairman@ahc-eastern.co.uk] in advance of the meeting so we can send you a link on the evening, please include any questions you would like to ask. The current committee members are willing to stand for re-election but there is room for more and we would encourage members to get involved and help move the Club forward. Please email any nominations to the secretary [secretary@ahc-eastern.co.uk] at least one week in advance.

If you have contacted the Chairman, on the evening of the AGM you will get an email with a link to click on to join the meeting. The committee will be seen on the screen, unfortunately most members will only get a voice link.

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

NOGGIN `N` NATTERS

Colchester area	Varies	Chris and Angie Davis	canda3000@hotmail.com
St. Albans area	First Tuesday	Contact John Keener	01494 728360
<i>Crown and Sceptre at Bridens Camp, Water End, HP2 6EY</i>			
Suffolk area	Varies	Contact Garrow Shand	01394 389013
<i>Regular road runs and pub meets - contact Garrow for details</i>			
Cambridge Area	2nd Wednesday	Contact Rob Ransom	01223 524821
<i>St Ives Golf Club, Joint meetings with Cambridge and District Car Club</i>			
Herts and Beds	Varies	Contact Clive Cocks	01933 551885
<i>Contact Clive for venue and timing</i>			
W Norfolk area	2 nd Thursday	Contact Dave Holman	01366 347412
<i>Varies: Contact Dave for the latest information</i>			
Bury St Edmunds	Varies	Contact John Bolden	01359 240153
<i>Joint meetings with Woolpit Area Classics</i>			

EASTERN CENTRE COMMITTEE 2019/20

CHAIRMAN and MSA Liaison	DAVE HOLMAN	chairman@ahc-eastern.co.uk	01366 347412
NEC DIRECTOR & TREASURER	MAGGI BYFORD	treasurer@ahc-eastern.co.uk	01763 242910
WEBMASTER	Vacant	webmaster@ahc-eastern.co.uk	
COMPETITION	Vacant		
EDITOR	ROB RANSOM	mutterings@ahc-eastern.co.uk	01223 524821
MEMBERSHIP	TONY WITHRINGTON	membership@ahc-eastern.co.uk	07903 542903
SOCIAL SEC	ANGELA BONNER	social@ahc-eastern.co.uk	01440 730459
SECRETARY	JUNE HEBDITCH	secretaryl@ahc-eastern.co.uk	01763 848157
TROPHY MASTER	ANDY HOLLICK	andrewhollick48@tiscali.co.uk	01223 263089

GENERAL MEMBERS

JOHN KEENER	healeynutjk@yahoo.co.uk	01494 728360
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TECHNICAL SECRETARIES

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

VALUATION OFFICER FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES

DAVID SINGER	david@overseasair.net	01787 476264
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Produced by the Eastern Centre of the Austin Healey Club. Comments and opinions expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Club or the Committee.