

Ten Tenths – April 2026

Welcome to the latest edition of Ten Tenths. We have the usual sections covering ‘who has done what’, ‘future events’, ‘house-keeping’ and ‘rear-view mirror’. We also have the latest chapter from Adrian Mingay regarding the restoration of his Austin Healey (now working on the engine), and an interview with new member Nick Wood about his quest to find his Austin Healey. Please read on.

Who has done what?

Drive It Day (DID) - Sunday 26th April – this year, we based ourselves on our South Surrey Noggin pub, The Surrey Oaks, near Newdigate, on the Surrey - Sussex borders. I know the location is a journey for our colleagues coming from Kent and I want to thank the Dixit’s and Moody’s for making the effort to join all those who are more local members. I know other Kent members did a run to Headcorn. We were able to order both breakfast and lunch at the pub and, in between eating and chatting, set out to three local villages to solve cryptic quiz clues (aka: find the Treasure) on a “Treasure Hunt”. Congratulations to Jon and Geri Barnden on (narrowly) winning the quiz with 27/33. There was a four-way tie for second. More details of the day can be found in a RevCounter article, so I will not say more here, other than to thank all those who entered, raising £230 for NSPCC DID, and to Bob and Jaimie Beaumont for setting the quiz. Those present sufficiently enjoyed the experience to ask for a repeat. This will likely be based on the Welldiggers, Petworth as an Autumn Leaves Run. More details to follow. In the interim, here are a few photos from the day.



And they're off...



Other forms of horsepower out on DID



Steve & Cathy's dog uses "doggles"



Lunch in the sunshine – Neil & Jo, Bill & Michelle



Searching for clues: Lousie L, Phil and Pauline - Louise G & Cyane – Stewart & Jayne



Bob and Jaimie Beaumont (Quiz Master)



Jon and Geri declared the winners

Events (more details and contact details on our website: ahc-sc.org.uk)

Staplefield Classic Car Show – Bank Holiday Monday 25th May – Spaces now limited.
Enquiries to Nick Varlow. To email him, or any other Event Organiser, follow the link via the Events Diary on the Southern Counties website.

Orchard Restorations Day – Saturday 18th July - contact Rob Law at Orchard Restorations

Summer Picnic – Sunday 26th July – contact Jeff Snell

Picnic and Fly-in at Tony Palmer's Farm – Saturday 1st August – contact Richard Long

Ladies Drive-It Day – Sunday 2nd August – spaces going fast - contact Michelle McDonough

Capel Classic Car Show – Saturday 15th August – contact Nick Varlow for details about how to book as part of our Club Stand

Classics at Penshurst – Sunday 16th August – no Club stand but you are free to apply for an individual entry and join like-minded Southern Counties members.

Southern Counties AGM – Wednesday 9th September – contact Carolyn Woodrow

London to Brighton Veteran Car Run – Sunday 1st November – it appears the Victory Inn is closed. We are exploring other options and will report back later in the year

National AGM – Sunday 6th December – contact Carolyn Woodrow

Housekeeping

- We are working on a design and pricing for a new limited run of grille or bumper badges that are unique to Southern Counties (Surrey, E & W Sussex and Kent). More to follow.



- Don't forget Healey Help: ahc-sc.org.uk/healey-tech/healey-help. Enquiries may be made via the Southern Counties website HealeyTech tab. Just send your question using the enquiry form on the Healey Help tab.



- We have been developing our new look Southern Counties website. This now includes a Member's Area for Southern Counties Documents, so you can learn what your committee members are up to. Head to ahc-sc.org.uk. On a largish laptop, the 'Members' area is on the top far right. On an iPad or phone, it's at the bottom of the menu list. If you are a member who has not logged in before, simply click that button, complete, and send your request. You'll then receive an approved invite. It may take a few hours; a volunteer will check you are a current member. As it's Southern, use a new password when requested, NOT your National Password. Also, don't be shy, please send us photos of your car and Healey activities!
- Digital Membership cards: Rob Thornburrow, our National Webmaster, tells me these should now automatically update in your wallet, saving you effort.

- Your Committee Needs You! We are looking for new volunteers to expand our current group of volunteers. No task too small. Please contact any Committee Member to discuss.

BT7 L 6364 - part 3 – by Adrian Mingay

I've often stated that hindsight is the only exact science that I have ever found. This project has just confirmed that I should have learnt that by now!!

The original concept of a fast road / mild historic rally car has held firm, other than the bias has shifted from centre of the road to historic rally!! Can't help it, just haven't grown up and at 72 not lost the thrill of being on the edge and testing one's reactions.

Whilst the initial planning was "sort the body and whilst that was in paint, work on the mechanics", for various different reasons it hasn't worked out as planned. So, the mechanics are almost ready and the body nowhere near where it should be. On stripping the engine down, it was obvious that major works were required. Deciding that performance took precedence over production originality, the engine is in the process of being built for that performance. That said, I do believe that the majority of mods that I've incorporated were either used, or at least tested, on the works cars. (I'm no expert and I'm sure that someone will be able to correct me!

Where to start on the Engine? The lip at the top of the bores, compounded by them being



elliptical in shape, meant a re-bore was prerequisite. Both the block and the crank went to OCS for evaluation. As it was, when I called to chase them up for a report on findings, I'm informed "it's completed, ready for collection". Collection revealed they had to re-bore to + 60 thou, the maximum, supplied five ring pistons and rings (the extra ring sits in the skirt of the piston and helps to reduce the amount of piston slap, keeping the bores as cylindrical as possible), installed and line bored the camshaft bearings, re-ground and polished the crankshaft journals and supplied new bearings, big end and main. All that I would have specified; it just would have been nice to know before they had started. (I might well have specified different pistons).

Carbon build-up on pistons and bores.

Awaking grey cells that had been in hibernation for more years than I care to admit, brought me round to balancing everything that rotates and keeping the weight to as low as practicable. Denis Welch (or should I say Jeremy Welch) came up trumps here. They supply a lighten flywheel on an exchange basis, and an upgraded clutch. As I had committed to purchasing several other items (all ready for collection), I took the crank, front pulley and the old flywheel to their facility on a pre-arranged visit. They dynamically balanced the whole assembly, starting with the crank, then adding the flywheel, front pulley, and clutch one at a time, balancing each item as added. All while I waited; well worth the drive. For performance, balancing is very important as the smoother an engine runs the less power you are wasting compensating for unequal loading.



Confirmation of requirement for some serious TLC.

Back in the man cave, the piston and con rod assemblies were all weighed at each stage: piston, con rod and cap, bearings, retaining bolts & nuts and finally rings were added. Each assembly weighed in at over 1.6 Kg with a 4-gm difference between the heaviest and lightest. Which in round terms is less than a quarter percentage (0.25) between the extremes. With an engine that is very unlikely to go above 6,000rpm I'm not worried about getting it any closer. Totally different if working on a high revving engine. At 15,000+ rpm I would be concerned.

I am conscious that weight saving not only affects the engine performance but probably, more importantly, the cars handling. Weight balance between front and rear axles is very important. Too much weight on the front tends to generate 'under steer' push into a corner and the car

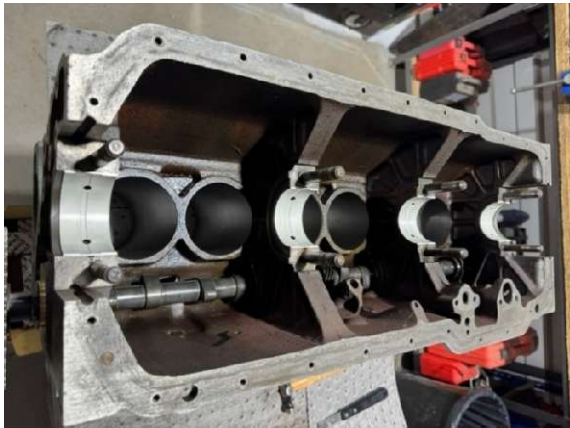


goes straight on, as opposed to go in the direction the front wheels are pointing! (Personally, I like a pointy front end - by default, usually, if the front is going where you want it to go, the back will follow!)

Looking at front end weight, the majority of that is the engine and engine related components. As already stated, the flywheel is a great place to start. However, going from the standard cast iron head to an aluminium head saves a staggering 30 Kg. Swapping the rear plate from steel to Ali also makes a significant weight saving.

Re-bored and New Pistons

Because I've also made changes to the front suspension and braking system, I have yet to calculate how much weight saving there is to the front axle. That's for a winter night when I have nothing better to do!!



New main bearings and Crank during the rebuild.

The Aluminium head opens the opportunity for larger valves and longer valve opening, potentially providing better breathing in and out and more fuel, hopefully equating to more performance. To facilitate that required a replacement camshaft with revised lobe profiling. To get the maximum efficiency from the new cam, the valve timing needs to be adjusted, A Vernier Cam Sprocket, Timing Chain and Hydraulic Tensioner all got added to the shopping list. Then don't forget the bucket cam followers, to suit the high lift cam, together with the revised length push rods and tappets. (adding up the total spent is also waiting for that winter night, probably with a large single malt to soften the blow!)

Note for those sensible people who have alternative (better) occupations / interests than thinking about valve timings: valve timing is like ignition timing and relates to where the pistons are at any given time. Hence the terminology BTDC and ATDC: Before and After Top Dead Centre. Top Dead Centre being when the piston is at the very top of its travel.



The Vernier Cam Sprocket is an interesting animal: the best I can describe it, is as a wheel within a wheel with a series of off-set holes within the matting flange. The inner wheel locates on the Camshaft with the standard Woodruff Key. The outer wheel has the teeth matching the standard Cam Sprocket, whilst a dale pin goes through any two holes when correctly aligned, hereby adjusting the relationship between the Crank and Camshaft, and a cover plate to hold the pin in place. All that to change the Valve timing from the standard full lift @ 110-degree ATDC to 106-degree ATDC.

Vernier Cam Sprocket Installed

As we are now running out of column inches (cm to the younger generations!) the complete shopping list is far too long to list here. In the next instalment, we will expand not only on all the other goodies from the sweetie shop, but also go into the trials and tribulations of installing the said components.

A Chat with Nick Wood

Nick has recently joined the Austin Healey Club after a very long absence from owning an Austin Healey. He lives in Chichester and therefore selected the Southern Counties Centre. I thought it would be interesting to talk to him about his quest to find his Healey.

It seems that this chapter of Nick's association with the Austin Healey marque was born out of a chance conversation in Madagascar with none other than our 100 Register Secretary, Peter Dulieu. Both were on holiday and fell into a conversation about classic cars.

Nick is very much a "petroleum head" and owns several classic cars at the same time. Over the years, he has owned a wide variety of classics, which he usually keeps for a few years before passing them on to the next custodian. Once he has decided on a make and type of car he looks for a really good example of the marque at sensible money - the price you should

pay for one in top condition and with a certain provenance. Presently he has two MG's, a more regular MGB and a rather special NG TF V8 kit car (normally based on an MGB), plus a recently acquired AH 3000 BJ8.

His only previous Healey, which he owned in the late 1960's, was a very early all aluminium 100/4. The drum brakes were poor, as was the paintwork, and Nick sold it for about £300 to buy an MGB roadster. Peter Dulieu knows the car, as it is currently on the 100-register and informed Nick that it last changed hands for a six-figure sum.

Nick's interest in Austin Healeys had been re-kindled. He started his research by using the Glenmarch auction site, which lists all UK auctions and gives details of all Healey variants and achieved prices. This data helped to give Nick a fair idea of what to pay for a good example in the current market. He armed himself with a copy of the "Big Healeys Essential Buyer's Guide" and then started his search by visiting the known Austin Healey specialists in his area to build his knowledge on the differences between the various models. His research continued by trawling the various auction sites, Car and Classic listings, Auto Trader etc, initially looking at a 100/6. He progressed to focus on the later 3000 models on the basis that earlier models would now be too basic in terms of the weather equipment for him and his wife. The "creature comforts" of the later cars, especially those with windup windows and a "easy up-hood", were beckoning.

The first car he identified was a late BJ8 which was being offered by a reputable dealer in Surrey on a commission sale basis. Nick has a strong preference to buy privately but it was a very good example with a substantial history file with a lot of recent work done to it. After a test drive, he was persuaded to make an offer for the car but it was turned down. Almost immediately, he found another car for private sale, quite close to him, but on checking the Glenmarch site discovered it had been sold at the 2025 Goodwood Revival auction and then almost immediately re-advertised for a substantially higher price, so did not go to see the car.

With time running out before a trip to Abu Dhabi to visit family, Nick left his details with Jack Rawles of BRCC. Whilst Nick was abroad, he received an email from Jack informing him that he was about to take on a BJ8 on a commission sale basis, which was a top-quality example, had a lot of upgrade work in the hands of two AHC members, and had a number of concours wins. The car also came with a very comprehensive history file.

Nick asked BRCC to thoroughly inspect & road test the car, obtain a fresh MOT and advise regarding any necessary work. There were only a couple of minor items that needed doing and these were duly remedied. The only other hurdle was the colour, as Nick's wife had a strong preference for a Healey Blue over White car - this one was Colorado Red - (Editor's note: the asking price of the identical car in Healey blue is said to add up to £2,000 to the asking price). After explaining how good Nick believed the car to be, his wife agreed and price negotiations were finalised with the owner via Jack - Nick had found a Healey he was prepared to own after a 50+ year absence from the marque.

There is a parallel article in the May edition of RevCounter that explains the history of the car Nick purchased, so keep your eyes open. Meanwhile, "welcome Nick to the Southern Counties Centre". Nick will be attending the West Sussex Noggins at the Welldiggers Arms in his BJ8 and looks forward to meeting all those attending.



Words by Jonathan Woodrow and Nick Wood

Photos by Nick Wood

Rear View Mirror

April 1996: The newsletter included a final reminder to renew your AHC Membership Subscription – today, Steve Barber, our Membership Liaison Officer, tells me he is still reminding a few members to (please) hurry up and renew...or no more RevCounter or Ten Tenths... There were announcements for a Go-kart challenge with teams from various Centres competing. The Orchard Restorations Technical Day was being advertised, as was the Healey Championship Race at Brands Hatch, and a two-night trip to the Laon Classic in France for the princely sum of £89 per person including hotel and ferry!

April 2006: There was a short piece introducing the then Secretary, George Smith (our current secretary's maiden name was Smith!). George mentioned one regret: that "more Healey owners don't join in the Southern Counties events". The current nee-Smith would agree. There was a report on the Regis Classic Tour visiting the Isle of Wight for a two-day

event, raising money for Breakthrough Breast Cancer, and The Prostate Cancer Charity. In 2007, they had plans to go further 'over-seas' and hold the event in Holland. There was a Saint George's Day Lunch, an Egg Cup Trophy Scatter Rally (think Bob Beaumont's 'Treasure Hunt' mentioned earlier), and plans for a Midsummer Meander (not Murder!) culminating in a BBQ – good ideas? Please let us know if you would like to see us running such events.

There were also fly-sheets notifying members of the birth of the Goodwood Breakfasts and Drive-It Day (DID) – both now regular events in many member's calendars.

April 2016: There was mention of the Spring Lunch at The George & Dragon, Houghton, the DID trip taking participants to The Weald Foundation and The Invicta Military-Vehicle Preservation Society (IMPS), and the birth of the fore-runner to our current WhatsApp chat groups known as The Sussex Healey Enthusiast Division (SHED) using Facebook. There was also an article about Fast Women Drivers - I'm very pleased that our Ladies DID is entering its second year in the expert and enthusiastic hands of Michelle McDonough – See Events above.

Final thoughts

I want to thank both Adrian Mingay for the third part of his restoration story, and Nick Wood for helping me write about his quest to be reunited with the Austin Healey marque. If anyone else is prepared to write a few lines and share a picture or two, I would be delighted to include them in a future edition of Ten Tenths. It could be about an event you have attended, a trip you have undertaken, your search for a car etc. Almost anything to do with the Austin Healey make and Southern Counties will, I'm sure, make interesting 'copy' for us to read. If you need a little help, just [ask me](#).

For a few of us, the season kicked off with the 34th running of The Daffodil Run, a three-night / two-day event now running with its fourth set of custodians (the Woodrow's and the Everest's). There is a full report in RevCounter, so I won't run any spoilers here other than to say it is limited to around 25 cars / 50 people and is currently very popular. If you would like to have your name added to the list of those who are interested to be invited, drop me a line. We make no promises to be able to include all who apply, but we will do our best to include as many as possible.



And finally, Alan Greenhalgh, a Southern Counties Member, has let it be known that he and a couple of fellow classic car owners have taken a unit in West Horsley, Surrey, to store their classic cars. He says it is dry, very accessible, safe and only £135 a month per car/caravan etc. Alan says it is not a commercial storage venture, just relaxed enthusiast classic car owners who are looking for a few more like-minded persons to help them spread the cost. As a

Centre, our involvement is limited to facilitating contact with Alan so you can make your own direct arrangements with him. His mobile number is: 07785 573973.



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