

Ten Tenths – June 2026

Welcome to the latest edition of Ten Tenths. The summer driving and events season is underway. I hope “Who has done what?” will encourage you to read on to “Future Events” and sign up and join your fellow Club Members. We look forward to seeing you, hopefully driving your Healey. Don’t forget that until the end of August, all Events marked “Southern” (in yellow) in the Events Diary on our website, and attendance at any of our six Noggins, count for points towards The Park Langley Trophy. Here is a link to our [Events Diary](#) You will see (near the top) there is also a link to The Park Langley Trophy Competition - you will need to sign up to the Member’s Area (if you have not already done so) to see the full results table.

Who has done what?

Staplefield Classic Car Show – Bank Holiday Monday 25th May – Nick Varlow reports: Bank Holiday Monday on Staplefield Green dawned bright and hot, and just got brighter and hotter over the day. We had a good mix of 12 cars - Sprites, 100/4's and 3000's, plus a Healey Westland joined us. Staplefield continues its charm with ample ice creams, stalls, food and drink. Staplefield is a laid-back show, enjoyed by all. And the Victory Inn has re-opened, and was busy serving drinks under its new ownership. We look forward to being at Staplefield again in November, to watch the Veteran Car Rally and enjoy our club lunch at the revitalised Victory Inn.



IHM 31 May – 3 June – This will be covered in RevCounter but I wanted to share some photos taken at Brooklands.



Photo by Jonathan Woodrow



Photo by Jonathan Woodrow



Photo by Richard Laudy

Recent Noggin photos (Clockwise top left: E Sussex, E Sussex, S Surrey, NW Kent)



If you have photos to share, please send them to me jonathan@woodrow.eu.com

Future Events

All Healey race, the John Chatham Challenge Race for Sprites, Healey 100s and 3000s, will be at Donington 5th July 2026 – this is part of the British Sports Car Weekend and well worth a visit

Orchard Restorations Day 18th July 2026 – this year marks 50 years since Kevin Law started trading. Please come and help Kevin and Rob celebrate! There will be the usual mix of food, advice and good company on offer from 10 am – 2 pm. Please email Rob to let him know you are planning to come orchardrest@hotmail.com

Summer Picnic 26th July 2026 – Jeff Snell is again opening his large garden to both The Austin Healey Club and Midget and Sprite Club. Gates open at 1pm. Bring your own picnic. Please contact Jeff to let him know you are coming and for directions jeff.snell@hotmail.co.uk

Picnic and fly in Tony Palmer's Farm 1st August 2026 - Tony Palmer is an avid aviation and classic car & bike enthusiast. His farm, near Eastbourne, has a grass air strip and each year he has an open day. We will have a dedicated display area and expect to see enthusiastic flyers drop in. Bring your own picnic, although there maybe food available on the day. Whilst there is no charge, donations are invited to the RAF Benevolent Fund. If you wish to attend, please contact Richard Long richard@leslongs.com NB: The event is eligible for the Park Langley Trophy and the bonus point for attending in a Healey is also available to a Club Member if you fly in. NB: This is an airfield and it is your responsibility to keep clear of aircraft landing and taking off.

Ladies Drive It Day 2nd August 2026 – Ladies, if your legs are long enough to reach the pedals on a Healey, this is YOUR event. Commencing at Hardy Engineering in Leatherhead, with a planned drive through the Surrey Countryside to The RAC Club in Epsom for a cream tea. Contact Michelle McDonnough mg.mcdonough41@gmail.com as soon as you can. Places are limited.

Cranleigh Lions Show 8th August 2025 – Over 1,000 cars are expected at the show, plus an autojumble, a car gymkhana, stalls, food, bar, music, children's rides, and a raffle. After past congestion issues, Southern are not sponsoring a stand this year. If you attend independently, do please let nickvarlow@gmail.com know how you got on (for next year).

Capel Classic Car Show 15th August 2026 - over 700 cars last year, along with parts stands, a flower show, a good choice of eats, drinks etc with a good atmosphere. Usually, no queues getting in and out. We have a Club stand with gazebo and good company. If you have not

already booked, it is too late as the show has reached capacity. If you already signed up and have questions, please email nickvarlow@gmail.com

Classics at Penshurst 16th August 2026 – Having sold out in 2024 and 2025, 2026 is likely to be no different. We do not have a Club stand but Carolyn and I will be there as private entrants and will be interested to hear from anyone else who signs up, so we may try to link up on the day. To book your place [Classics at Penshurst 2026](#) To contact me jonathan@woodrow.eu.com

Southern Counties AGM 9th September 2026 – this year's AGM will be on the night of the East Sussex Noggin but at the more central Haywards Heath location of The Bent Arms, 98 High Street, Lindfield RH16 2HP. This vitally important night in the Southern Counties calendar needs your support.

Autumn Leaves Run 27th September 2026 – the Autumn Leaves run is back with a quiz (Treasure Hunt) organised by Bob Beaumont. Meet for buffet breakfast at The Welldiggers near Petworth, GU28 0HG, visit two villages to answer cryptic clues and return for prize giving and lunch. For more information, and to book your place, please contact geri.barnden@gmail.com You will be asked for a £10 entry fee (going to charity) to secure your booking.

London to Brighton Veteran Run 1st November 2026 – we are repeating the successful formula of watching the Veteran cars pass through, and sometimes make a stop, at Staplefield. We have reserved spaces for 1pm lunch at The Victory Inn on the Warninglid Road, RH17 6EU. The pub is under new management. To book your seats, please email geri.barnden@gmail.com

National AGM 6th December 2026 – if you are curious about what goes on at National level, this meeting is open to all AHC Members and you are welcome to attend. Please book your space by contacting secretary@austinhealeyclub.com (Mell Ward needs to know for catering)

House keeping

- Don't forget: [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.



- A reminder that the Southern Counties website now includes a Member's Area for Southern Counties Documents and the results of the Park Langley Trophy. If you do not yet have a log-in, just click on the Access Request button on the Member's Tab.
- Don't be shy, please send us photos and stories of your car and Healey activities! jonathan@woodrow.eu.com

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

BT7 L 6364 – part 4 of tales from the Man Cave – by Adiran Mingay

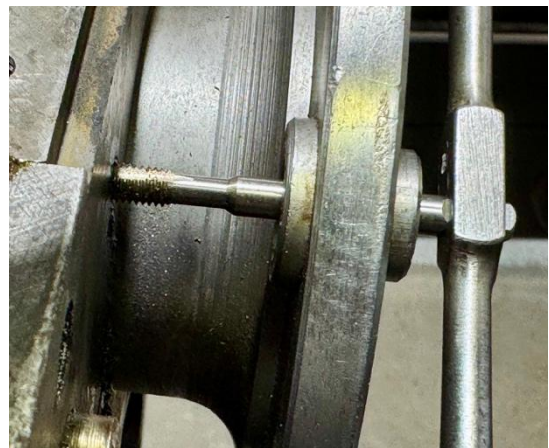
Continuation of the Engine: During the last instalment I laboured on weight, and weight saving, which leads on to the advantages of an Aluminium Head, finishing with adjustable valve timing. This issue we are back tracking and picking up on the parts that were deliberately left out last time.



Having had the block rebored, I cleaned and painted the block and replaced the core plugs. Now we are ready to start assembling. I started with the Camshaft and Oil Pump drive. Both could go in later but it's a lot easier to gently feed the Cam in without the Crankshaft getting in the way - using plenty of lube on all the bearings.

As the Crankshaft had been re-ground, the new main and big end bearings had to be 'oversized' (thicker) to allow for the resultant smaller diameter of the journals on the Crankshaft. The main bearings all fitted snugly around the shaft and within the casings - I should add here that I always use copious amounts of 'Assembly Lubricant' (lube) on any moving components during building an engine.

The standard crank does not have a rubber oil seal on the aft end (Clutch end), and the flywheel flange, that is part of the Crankshaft configuration, limits the installation of a conventional one-piece rubber oil seal. However, there is available an aftermarket split seal, this consists of three elements, a split round rubber seal, a split circular steel spring and an aluminium casing that comes in two halves. The kit was supplied complete with the components as described plus a drill, drill guide, tap, set screws (to locate the casing onto the block) and a set of well documented fitting instructions. With the engine out it was a doddle to install the seal and casing. It is important to make sure that the Crank is 'torqued down' to the correct level. If not located correctly, the Crank will not rotate centrally within the oil seal, quickly rendering the seal useless [torque, is how tight the retaining nuts / bolts are tightened to - usually measured in ft.lb (foot pounds) or N.m (Newton meters)].



Block being tapped for Oil seal casing

Whilst considerably easier with the Engine out, the seal can be fitted by dropping the Gearbox / Clutch. Certainly, if you are having to fit a new Clutch, and an additional oil seal hasn't been fitted; give it some thought.

The Con Rods / big end bearings are split with dedicated bolts installed from the piston side and the nuts on the sump side. Due to the very limited access, these bolts are held captive by a small pin that is mounted under the bolt head and locates in a slot in the Con Rod. It is always advisable to replace these bolts and nuts and, in this instance, was essential as the majority of the locating pins snapped off when being removed. Checking things the way I do before actually installing them revealed that the replacement bolts had locating pins of a larger diameter than the original, therefore the bolts were not correctly locating within the Con Rod. Identical replacement bolts were not available, so the apertures in the Con Rods were enlarged using a very small die grinder and a Dremel (Other rotary tools are available!).



Before.



Enlarging



How it should fit.

Piston / Con Rod assemblies are installed through the top of the block, so back to the lube. Plenty on the Gudgeon Pin to ensure smooth turning on both the Piston and Small End (Top of the Con Rod). Don't forget to insert the circlips in the Pistons to stop the Gudgeon Pins sliding side to side and scoring the bores. Locating the rings onto the Pistons is best done on the gently, gently approach. They usually have a top and bottom, so need to be installed the correct way up. The oil scrapper is usually in three elements: bottom ring, corrugated ring and top ring (the bottom and top rings are very thin). It is possible to snap any of the rings and equally easy to score the side of the Pistons. It's also important to ensure that the gaps between the ring ends do not align with any of the other gaps. I did say earlier 'copious amounts' of lube cover the rings and Piston sides before surrounding with a Ring Compressor.



Compress the rings and tap gently into the bore, making sure that the pistons are the correct way round. Locate on the crank, fit the cap and tighten the nuts to the correct torque. One down - five to go.

All six in, appreciate, they will never look the same again.

Next is the head studs and head. The new aluminium head is supplied as a complete pre-assembled unit complete with valves, springs and valve pockets matched to the cam. New, waisted studs - the theory is that waisted studs give a greater clamp load - screwed and torqued into the block.

The head gasket goes on dry. It's worth spending the money on a good quality gasket - last thing you want is for it to blow. Using the correct washers and nuts, torque the head to the block in the correct sequence and stages. The Healey is no different from the majority of engines, you start in the middle and work out, this spreads the gasket evenly. This reduces the risk of it blowing. I can assure you; you don't want water in with your oil. At best it makes a mess, worse case it goes bang in a really bad way!

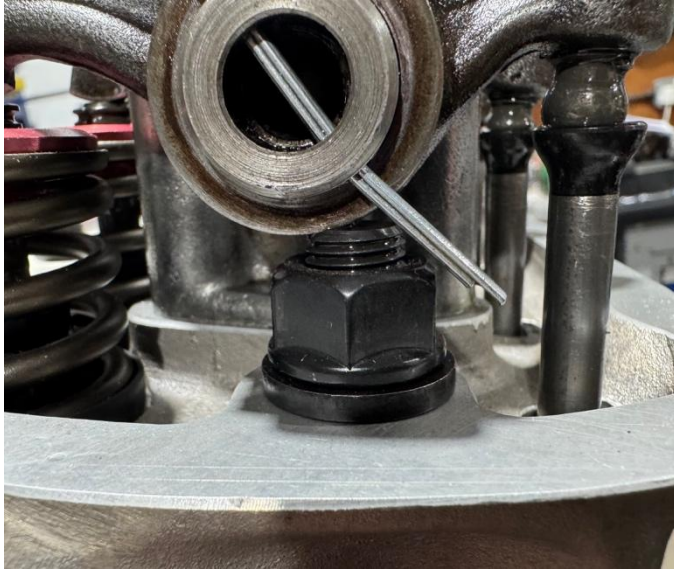
New cam, new cam followers. It's not essential to use new followers but I would always recommend them. In this case I've used the bucket type followers. Lighter, less side load and reputedly less noise - not sure that makes much difference with a sports exhaust! This then leads to requiring longer push rods to compensate for the revised internal profile of the followers.



I chose to use the original rocker shaft and rockers. This sub-assembly was stripped down and thoroughly cleaned. This is a must. An oil feed from the oil pump keeps the rocker shaft full of oil and, via small holes, lubricates the rockers and the tappets. The smoother all the parts move means more power to the rear wheels. Any friction within the engine increases the internal resistance and saps power output.

Rocker shaft in need of a clean.

Installing the rocker shaft revealed two problems. First, the tappets did not sit nicely into the top of the push rods. Closer inspection of the push rods revealed that they had not been correctly finished/manufactured. On speaking to and sending pictures, the supplier accepted that there was a problem and exchanged the rods for correctly finished units.



With correctly finished push rods installed, tightening the rocker shaft revealed that there was still a (second) problem with the assembly. As the pedestals were being tightened, so the rockers themselves were becoming stiff, particularly those at the ends. Baffled, I investigated and found that two of the new head studs, directly beneath the rocker shaft, were too long and was therefore jamming the rocker shaft.

Head stud tight against rocker shaft.

With the rocker shaft assembly removed and every conceivable orifice sealed (to prevent any swarf entering the engine), the height of the offending studs was reduced using a belt sander. Whilst not ideal, I considered this to be potentially the least damaging route. The alternative would have been to remove the head and studs, reduce the length of the studs and then reassemble.



In the last edition we were detailing the timing chain / camshaft drive. The final element of this is the Cam chain tensioner - basically a spring load rubber mat that puts pressure on the chain and stops it flapping about! Replacement unit should be removed from packaging and installed with the two bolts, not forgetting the gasket. By now you must have got the impression that nothing is that simple. When manufacturing the new unit, they forgot to allow for the fact that it sits over one of the bolt heads that holds the engine front plate in place. I choose to form a slot in the base of the tensioner to accommodate the bolt head. The alternative would have been to remove the bolt, countersink the front plate, and replace the bolt with a counter sunk set screw.

Timing chain and tensioner ready to go.

With so much being upgraded and pushed for performance, it was a no-brainer not to include a high duty oil pump. Again, the simplicity was shattered. The base plate on the new unit was thicker than that of the standard pump. So new longer studs had to be cut to allow for the additional thickness in the base plate.

To be continued...

Rear View Mirror

June 1996 – Our Noggins were at the White Hart, Brasted in Kent, the Shaves Thatch (now the Ginger Fox), Muddleswood in Sussex, and the Fox on the Hill at Lower Kingswood in Surrey. We were visiting Hardy Engineering, Brooklands, and the Bromley Pageant of Motoring. We had plans for a BBQ, a picnic at Bentley Motor Museum, an afternoon tea at Barcombe Mills Station, and more. The IHW was planned for the August near Cirencester.

June 2006 – we had a Social Secretary: Carol Leyton-Smith – we need another Carol! Please apply (see House Keeping). Bob Beaumont was running a Treasure Hunt. Jenny Ellis was organising a Midsummer Meander from Goodwood Motor Racing Circuit to a secret location for a BBQ, I imagine not far from where the run started – Jenny: we would love to do it again one day. We reported on Southern Counties Members Katie Brignall, Keith Parfitt and Kevin Law attending the Healey Driver's Club Annual International Meeting at Perranporth and respectively coming 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the Callestock Cider Farm Trophy for the best early 6-cylinder Austin Healey. All three cars were restored and prepared by Kevin Law at Orchard Restorations. And a trip to France was in the offing.

June 2016 – Steve Everest reported on he and Kath taking the Sprite on The Wye Run from Chepstow to Tintern Abbey. There was a Drive-It Day report on a visit to The Weald Foundation at Yalding in Kent. And, there were plans for the Orchard Restorations Technical Day, a Summer BBQ at the de Legh's property, the Bluebell Railway Vintage weekend and the Capel Car Show.

Final Thoughts

I will finish with re-iterating two very important requests:

1. We are very short of Committee Members for 2026/2027. If you feel able to volunteer and help, now is the moment! Please get in touch with me and I will explain what you can do to help Southern Counties flourish. There is more than one role to fill.
2. If you have photos or (short) articles you would like to see in Ten Tenths, I will be happy to include them in the next edition. Nick Varlow is also seeking photos for our website.

Jonathan Woodrow

Chairman – Southern Counties Centre

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