Welcome to the 2008 Yearbook of the combined Austin-Healey clubs of Australia.

First of all, many thanks to the committee members of the clubs who went to the trouble of preparing their reports, articles and lists of members. Without these we would have no Yearbook.

Within this 2008 Yearbook you will not only find the individual club reports prepared by the club presidents, but also some reports on the social and competition events held throughout the year. I am also pleased to say that each club has cooperated in the production of the Yearbook by forwarding lists of members including details of Austin-Healeys owned showing both chassis and engine numbers.

In addition to the state reports there are also a number of articles that hopefully will be of interest to members across Australia. There is a report of the 2008 National Rally held at Salamander Shores Resort, Port Stephens NSW. There are also interviews of both Stuart Turner and John Sprinzel, who many will know have been prominent in the history of our favourite marque. In case you don’t, Stuart Turner was the Manager of the BMC Competitions Department from 1961 to 1967 or the halcyon days of the Rally 3000 before moving on to Ford. Stuart is now a world renowned public speaker and I understand that he is the invited guest at the 2010 National Rally due to be held at Creswick in Victoria.

Needing no introduction to many of us will be John Sprinzel who besides being an ex-BMC works driver went on to form Speedwell Performance Conversions and worked with Donald Healey to start a speed equipment division in London. John too will be joining us for the 2010
National Rally.
I had the pleasure of meeting up with both Stuart and John in Sydney and recorded the interviews with them. Also within this Yearbook is an article on Colin Goldsmith’s competition 3000 Mk1 that originally appeared in the Australian Classic Car 2008 Yearbook. Colin continues to compete in and enjoy his car.

After some 35 years Easter 2008 saw the return of club level motor sport to Mount Panorama at Bathurst under the auspices of the Festival of Sporting Cars. It is pleasing to report that Austin-Healeys were prominent, not only in their attendance, but also the levels of success. Notably successful was Peter Jackson who had never been to Bathurst beforehand, but managed to not only improve his times, but scored a first in one race. You will find within the Yearbook an article on Austin-Healeys at Bathurst that includes an interview with Peter along with a montage of photos taken over the weekend.

Who am I? My name is Patrick Quinn and I have been a Healey and Austin-Healey owner since 1972. I am privileged to be a life member of the Austin-Healey Owners Club of NSW and I am also passionate about the Yearbook as I was involved in the preparation of the very first, published by the Queensland club back in 1978.

I believe that each Yearbook should provide a snapshot of what has happened within the individual clubs for the year in question. I am of the opinion that the Yearbook should chronicle the history of each club and provide information that is not only informative but also entertaining.

The Yearbook should contain details of the cars that are in the clubs during the year. Hence I asked each club for details not only of their members, but also of their cars including chassis and engine numbers. As mentioned I am pleased to say that each club has been forthcoming with the information.

I think that it’s important that we know how many and of what model we have in Australia. In fact about 10 years ago I started collecting the information that appeared in Yearbooks going back to the very first. To date I have collected details on 1,421 individual Healeys and Austin-Healeys that have appeared in the Yearbooks. Included within this introduction is a small matrix that shows the distribution by model and state that might be of interest.

In no way do I say that it’s a definitive list of Healey and Austin-Healeys in Australia as there are cars that are not on the list as they have not appeared in any Yearbook. However it does provide an indication at what is in the country. Of course if every owner were to drop me an email with their car’s details it would be wonderful.

Anyway I hope you enjoy the 2008 Yearbook of the combined Australian Austin-Healey clubs of Australia.

Happy Healeying
Patrick Quinn
p_cquinn@tpg.com.au

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Sue Darlington/Terry Bancroft
President’s Report

The year 2008 was always going to be an important one for the NSW Club because it was ‘our turn’ to host the National Rally. A stoic group of members formed the Rally Committee and over a considerable preparation period their combined efforts resulted in a highly-lauded event. Perhaps it was the coastal location of Port Stephens, or the attention to every detail that made the event memorable. Not even some inclement weather could dull the enthusiasm of participants!

For some Club members the lure to attend the Rally at Easter was surpassed by the need for speed! The Festival of Sporting Cars held the first ‘Club Level’ motor sport event held at Mount Panorama for over thirty years. Of course many have harboured a desire to compete at this circuit since childhood, so this event was not to be missed.

Cameron Sell was once again prominent in the Combined Sports Car Association (CSCA) Championship competing in his 3000. However Patrick Townshend also competed regularly in his Valiant Charger and won the trophy for his efforts in a non-marque vehicle. In open racing events Colin Goldsmith easily won the Ross Bond Trophy for regularly competing in his 3000.

The 2008 Concours was held at the Kings School at Parramatta in conjunction with the All British Display Day. This has been our venue for several years, and following the 2007 rain-out, it was great to see the sun shining and a good display of cars. Roger Ramsay has continued to improve his car and this year received a Master Class award. My lament that last year’s event contained a mere sprinkling of 100s and 100/6 did not cause a rush of these cars to attend the Concours!

Other social events provided plenty of opportunities for members to get their cars on the road on a number of runs. These included displays, an ice cream weekend, two popular fish and chip runs, the “Speed on Tweed” event and the six-day Thunderbolts Way run. Our annual running of the CSCA competition event at Wakefield Park near Goulburn exceeded expectations with a good turn-out of competitors from our Club and a healthy support team of members who combined to ensure this was a successful event.

All in all it was a successful year for the Austin-Healey Owners Club of New South Wales and I thank all members for making it so.

Steve Shepard

“Our annual running of the CSCA competition event at Wakefield Park near Goulburn exceeded expectations with a good turn-out of competitors from our Club...”
Keeping with previous years 2008 started with the annual Presentation Breakfast at the Central Coast home of Stan and Jill Goodwin. Once again this was a great event with an early morning run, breakfast courtesy of Stan and Jill, and back home before it got too hot.

Australia Day is proving to be a busy day with many members attending the annual NRMA Motorfest held in the middle of the Sydney CBD. Early morning and all roads led to Sydney, where tens of thousands of enthusiasts gathered to view the thousands of classic cars on display. Naturally it was the opportunity to show off our Austin-Healeys to many, many people and the very favourable comments are always welcome.

February saw us in Tasmania for 2 weeks with Healey people from NSW, Qld and SA in attendance. Our Tassie trips are wonderful social events with people going about their merry ways during the day and at night there is always the opportunity to tell tall tales as we regale what “happened” during the day. Just a couple of weeks after our return there was a run to Clarence in the Blue Mountains and a visit to the “Sleigh Inn” for a morning tea run. Both the Quinn’s BN3 and Sell’s Silverstone were there and created much interest. The cafe is owned by Mark Alchin, a Morgan owner and also the OH&S officer for the Historic Sports and Racing Car Association. The scones were so large that “doggy bags” were proving popular. As the “Sleigh Inn” is just a whistle stop from the famed Zig Zag Railway many members spent the rest of the day playing trains.

March saw 26 members on a Fish and Chip run to

Warwick Sell and his Healey Silverstone next to Patrick & Caroline Quinn’s BN3/1.
Easter was the end of March and we had a magnificent National Rally at Salamander Shores with all attending singing its praises. Our rally committee worked very hard for 3 years to get everything right - and succeeded. It was a sell out and we will find it hard to surpass when it is our turn once again. See the report elsewhere in the Yearbook.

In April we had our “Ice Cream Weekend”. The object was to get the Healey out, drive to an ice cream outlet, buy same and pose in front of your car for photo shoot. Simple and it gets the public noticing the cars. We also went to Robertson, in the Southern Highlands for the Vintage/Classic Car Day and managed to get wet tails on the homeward journey.

It was certainly brass monkey weather for the “Brass Monkey Day” run in June. All sports cars are invited to leave early in the morning and enjoying a warming and hearty breakfast at our destination, which for 2008 were the vineyards in the Hunter Valley. With 190 well clad souls attending, once again it proved to be a popular event. Perhaps the coldest and bravest participants were those in a 30/98 Vauxhall.

Next came our Combined Sports Car Association competition day at Wakefield Park. To entice members and cars we also classified the day as a social day. For July we had a lunch run with everyone bringing a picnic and a chance to enjoy the company. Wiseman’s Ferry on the Hawkesbury River was the venue - a good winter’s day drive. Our Concours day came in August and it was great. Held in conjunction with the All British Day, there were over 900 cars on display and thankfully the weather was kind to us and the cars were looking their best. We even received 2 new members on the day.

Speed on Tweed beckoned in September with 14 members travelling north to Murwillumbah. While it took 3 days to travel there, 2 days at the event and 3 days back, it was well worth the trip. Sadly, it looks as if the 2008 SOT will be the last. The Bowral Tulip Festival had us driving in the street parade while practising our “Regal Wave”. Bowral is about 2 hours drive south of Sydney, so it’s a good drive.

In October there was a drive to the Fleet Air Arm Museum at HMAS Albatross, Nowra on the south coast. October also saw Charlie Britten’s 6 day run to Thunderbolt’s Way in the north of state. With short runs during the day, lots to see and plenty of time for social activities it was enjoyed by all attendees.

With the benefits of daylight saving our November Fish and Chip run to Brooklyn started at 5pm. With a run up the winding old Pacific Highway and watching the local ferries while enjoying dinner it was a very relaxed evening.

The year was brought to a close with our December Christmas Dinner. Held in place of our normal meeting night, everyone enjoyed the Chinese banquet, raffles, lucky door prizes and member prizes. A great way to end our social events for the year and well attended with 86 participants.

Thank you to all who made these events a success.
Competition Report

During 2008 we had two members regularly competing in the Combined Sports Car Association (CSCA) Championship. Perhaps a short history of the CSCA is in order. The Association commenced in 1972 and the Austin-Healey Owners Club was a founding member, together with Morgan, Triumph and MG. Lotus, Jaguar and Sprite are the other current members whilst three other car clubs have been and gone during the period. Events are now Supersprints at either Eastern Creek, Oran Park or Wakefield Park. In the formative years the series included several locations for lap-dashes, hill-climbs and motorkhanas and even the Amaroo Park ‘dirt-circuit’ where several cars came to grief! In those early days the AHOC often had many of our ladies competing on-track with the men. At ‘our’ Motorkhana we had 31 members competing! The records show that AHOC won the championship from 1972 to 1976 inclusive. Sadly, we haven’t managed to win the championship since those heady days….

Returning to the present, as mentioned we had two members active in the 2008 championship. Cameron Sell’s usual aim of competing at every event was hampered by mechanical gremlins that curtailed his activities. However he was still able to claim another trophy for his efforts. Our other active competitor in the championship was Patrick Townshend in his Valiant Charger. Having competed for several years and sometimes suffering from mechanical problems, Patrick really had the Charger flying and has set some very competitive lap times. He was a worthy winner of the Club trophy for competing in a non-marque car.

Several members competed in our annual CSCA event at Wakefield Park. This certainly added to our Club’s point-score by the year’s end. Our result? Well, we didn’t come last…..!

Several members also competed in Historic Racing and Festival of Sporting Cars racing events. Colin Goldsmith easily won the Ross Bond trophy which is an annual award for the driver who has competed in the most racing events throughout the year. Not only did Colin compete both locally and interstate, he also took part in several mid-week ‘GEAR’ (Golden Era Automobile Racing) meetings held at Wakefield Park.

However the event that captured the most interest for racing competitors and enthusiasts in 2008 was the inaugural Festival of Sporting Cars race meeting at Mount Panorama, Bathurst. The New South Wales contingent included Jeff Newey with his MGB and Robert Harrison in his Rover 3500 competing in Regularity, Colin Goldsmith (Austin-Healey 3000) and Steve Shepard (MGB) in historic sports cars, John Dowsett (Austin A90) in historic sedans and Peter Jackson and Cameron Sell in their Austin-Healey 3000s in a class that was essentially for modified sports cars. All of our Club members enjoyed the experience and managed to finish the weekend without contacting the daunting concrete barriers that line the circuit. Without doubt the most exciting race was the final race for the modified sports cars. To see and hear Peter Jackson’s faithful Austin-Healey 3000 rocketing up Mountain Straight and leading a field of Porsches, turbo-charged Mazdas and other cars that the casual observer may have considered should have been faster, was certainly a worthwhile experience. It was almost a relief when Peter took the checked flag!

Steve Shepard
2009 President
PRIZE WINNERS FOR 2008

Christmas Charity Raffle
1st John Sherman - Ham
2nd Sue Cairns - Hamper
3rd David Cairns - Wine bag set
4th Jim Phillips - Small hamper basket

Christmas Dinner Lucky Door Prizes
Kay Britten; Don Read; Craig Sheppard; John Wadsworth; Sue Cairns; Bruce Wallace (Tess);
Michael Branson; Don Hardie; Cathy Sheppard; Christine Lyttle

Major End-of-Year Prize Winners
Holiday David Williamson
Lunch on Harbour Heather Middleton
Petrol Voucher Joe Armour

AHOC CONCOURS TROPHY WINNERS
AH 100 Brian Duffy
AH 100/6 John Wadsworth
AH 3000 Mk1/11 Michael Branson
AH 3000 Mk111 Steve Shepard
Modified Healey Keith Drake (BJ8)
People’s Choice Barry Birch (100/6)
Furthest Travelled Graham Hodkinson
Master Class Silver Award Roger Ramsay (BN7)

COMPETITION RESULTS
Best Performance in a non-Healey Patrick Townshend
(Valiant Charger)
Club Competition Cameron Sell
Ross Bond Trophy (Open Competition) Colin Goldsmitth
Best in Austin-Healey 100 Chris Komor

CLUB CHAMPIONS
Club Person of the Year John Kent
Men’s Club Champion Terry Bancroft
Ladies’ Club Champion Pamela Ross
Scribe of the Year Patrick Quinn
Hard Luck Trophy Gordon Lynas
2008 Austin-Healey “Sea Change” National Rally

Salamander Shores Resort Port Stephens NSW

by Stephen Clark

The tide has long gone out on the 2008 “Sea Change” National Rally. All two hundred and ten attendees parted as friends and comrades with a smile, a tear, a handshake and a hug. National rallies have traditionally been events of great friendship and the 2008 “Sea Change” Rally was no exception, except we would say the level of friendship and high spirits was at a higher level.

From the start, everyone involved looked forward to the activities with excitement and anticipation. The right choice of venues, meals and refreshments by the organising committee encouraged and supported the positive atmosphere. Even before the official welcome dinner, the car park at Salamander Shores was not only filled with Austin-Healeys, but also the sound of laughter coming from smiling faces.

Ample food and wine at dinner, combined with the detailed planning of Pat Bancroft, got the official events off to a wonderful start and put pressure on the rest of the weekend’s activities to maintain a new standard.

Clearing showers on Saturday morning added a little spice to an already challenging observation run from Salamander Shores to Morpeth. Fortunately, everyone took the challenge in their stride and were rewarded with a superb welcome and lunch provided by the Morpeth Public School P&C. The quality and quantity of food provided by the volunteers at the school was nothing short of superb. The welcome from the school captains, ushering people from their cars to the covered area with umbrellas, was inspiring. Craig Sheppard, who set the run, has been a targeted individual since. The nature of some rather cryptic questions and elusive answers gave rise to suggestions of his slow and painful death!

The evening weather gods were kind to us with clearing skies for a fun filled fancy dress cruise around Port Stephens. A short walk to the wharf adjacent to our resort gave everyone a preview of the creative approach taken by some to our “Naughty-cal or Nice” theme. Allan Whitehouse (NSW) “Manly Fairy” and Veronica Grey-Linn (QLD) “Island Girl” were judged by the crew as the best dressed male and female. More great food and a smiling crew on the Moonshadow V, plus good dance music made the night another success.

The opportunity to show off our cars safely in a busy public location, with plenty of distractions for those who don’t find looking at cars for a few hours interesting (do these people exist?), doesn’t come along very often. The foreshore at Nelson Bay provided everything you could require in a display...
venue. Ably assisted by some of the NSW attendees, Allan Whitehouse provided the detailed planning required to move seventy plus cars successfully and safely into a public area. Even a few passing showers did not dampen the spirits of the event which generated huge interest and allowed us to tick off another A+ grade for event organisation.

Sunday afternoon saw what appears to now be a prerequisite of any rally – Tappet Cover Racing. The grounds of Salamander Shores supplied the perfect natural track setting and, with some friendly interstate rivalry, the entertainment provided by this “tongue firmly in cheek” event was the talk of the afternoon. A special guest at our rally, John Chatham from the U.K., took more than a passing interest in the activities. Can I feel a new type of international challenge coming on? Ralph Boord from South Australia is now the current national champion, but no doubt his supremacy will be challenged in the future.

The formal dinner on Sunday night was just a short stroll across the road to the Soldiers Point Bowling Club. A champagne welcome, an excellent dinner and much dancing made the official end of the event another success. Thanks to Christine Lyttle’s creative eye the room was decorated superbly with shells and sand in keeping with the location and the “Sea Change” theme.

Awards were handed out to some worthy recipients for the various events over the weekend. The annual Alan Jones Memorial trophy for the best club member in Australia was, as always, a special part of the evening. Each year the national delegates thrash out the winner from nominations made by each state club. Selecting one winner from a list of people all worthy of recognition is difficult and the voting is always close. Nominations for 2008 were Noel Standfast from Queensland, Don Polkinghorne from South Australia and our own Christine Lyttle. Noel Standfast from Queensland was selected as the worthy recipient of this award.

Monday morning dawned with the realisation that it was now all over far too quickly. A mixture of smiles and sadness filled the room as we said our goodbyes for another year. What was once a car park full of beautiful cars and lively discussion, soon emptied to be a lonely patch of bitumen.

Thanks must go to the organising committee of Allan Whitehouse, Christine Lyttle, Craig Sheppard and Patricia Bancroft. We should also recognise the assistance of numerous NSW members who gave up their time to assist when more hands were needed to lighten the load. The success of this event was a result of their dedication and efforts and it reflected very well on the NSW club that we can rely on members to contribute whenever the need arises.

Let’s keep the spirit of friendship alive not just at the rally but throughout the year.
Gold Level! That's what so many strive for when they undertake a restoration. Achieving the showroom standard a car would have had when it was sold new, and proper presentation are essential to attract the judges’ attention at a concours. However, a concours win is not foremost in every owner’s mind during the hundreds of hours needed for any restoration.
Sydneysider Colin Goldsmith wanted to take the next step in Historic racing. After some years of having fun competing in a Bugeye Sprite, it was time to move on to a big Healey. But instead of getting behind the wheel of a race-ready car, Colin bought one in need of a total rebuild and restored it with historic motor sport in mind.

**HEALEY HISTORY**

The Donald Healey Motor Company (DHMC) was formed in 1945 when Donald Healey gathered a number of enthusiastic and skilled friends to build vehicles for a car-starved British market, initial Healeys were basic vehicles powered by Riley engines and were regarded as high-speed sporting cars. Following the successful Nash-Healey, an Austin-powered sports car was designed and released in 1953, the Austin-Healey 100.

Because the small DHMC facility at Warwick, England could never have produced the new model in sufficient quantities to meet demand, manufacturing was handed to Jensen, whose factory delivered the completed chassis/body units to BMC for installation of the mechanicals. This arrangement allowed the DHMC to continue with what they did best, experimental work and competition to promote the marque.

The DHMC continued to produce a range of big and little Austin-Healeys that ran in the major road racing events around the world. Under the control of the BMC Competition Department, the 6-cylinder Austin-Healey became one of the most successful rally cars of the 1960s. Attend an historic race meeting anywhere in the world and you will find enthusiasts enjoying their Austin-Healeys in the way that Donald Healey intended.

**COLIN’S HISTORY**

When a father’s love of motor cars, history and sport spills over to his children, it’s likely they will share his affections when they grow up. Colin Goldsmith’s memories are filled with his father’s Mk1 Austin-Healey Sprite and a friend of his dad who had an Austin-Healey 100.

“I remember the first time I saw the 100 in the late 1950s,” Colin said. “I was just amazed. I knew what an Austin A30 was and was expecting a variation of that. Imagine my surprise when he drove up in the Healey. It was the most beautiful car I had ever seen. My dad bought the Bug-eyed Sprite in 1956, not long after they were released, and it became part of the family and part of my life. I can remember going to Warwick Farm many times to watch the motor racing.”

“I took over the Sprite in the late 1960s and used it as my everyday car, including some club level motor sport, for over 10 years until I managed to write it off completely in an accident. A series of nondescript sedans followed, the sort that tend to be essential as you go through life. I kept on going to motor races and particularly Warwick Farm, which I liked, and became a big fan of Ross Bonni and his racing Austin-Healey 3000.”

**RACING ITCH**

Colin had to wait until 1966 before he bought his first Austin-Healey, an Australian delivered 4-cylinder 100 BN2 that needed a complete restoration. “That’s when I became involved with John Dowsett, a long-time Austin-Healey owner and the proprietor of the Classic Connection at Riverstone, Sydney.”

Not long after the project was finished, Colin’s racing itch returned. He bought a 1968CSC Bugeye Sprite from Melbourne that had been used in historic racing since 1982. He ran the Sprite in Group 5 through to the end of last year. “It was a lot of fun, but frustrating. While I passed other cars around the corners, they would pass me again on the straights. During my ownership of the car, I rebuilt the engine 3 times. The car was a little small and when trying to achieve any decent speed, my weight was against me.

Colin Goldsmith’s Austin-Healey 3000 ran closely with John Young’s MGA and the O’Neill MGB for most of the meeting.
THE WAY TO GO

“I had seen Austin-Healey 3000s running in historic racing and decided that this model was the way to go. The 3-litre engine gives the 3000 lots of grunt and with a bit of work, it can be made to handle well. However, driving a 3000 is very different to driving a Bugeye. In a Sprite, you arrive at a corner quite quickly. You arrive a lot slower in a 6-cylinder Healey, but then use the power to accelerate out.”

“I enjoy running in Group 5,” Colin commented. “It covers sports cars made from 1 January 1951 to the end of 1964, the same Group that the Bugeye was in, and lets me run against cars typical of the period such as the Sunbeam Alpine and MGA. The cars have to be relatively standard except that the engine core can be taken out 1-litre and balanced along with other modifications such as LSD, extractor exhaust, gearbox ratios and suspension spring rates. In other words, any modifications have to have been available when the car was raced in its era, although none of the Group 5 rules require a car to have a competition history.”

Of course, safety items like roll-over protection, harness seat belts and supportive racing seats have to be fitted, too.

When Colin started looking around for a 3000 to run, he mentioned what he wanted to do to John Dowsett, who told him that he had bought a 1959 3000 Mk1 as a project car to restore. “It had been snapped to Philadelphia and Steve Pike of Manly Classic Restoration in Victoria imported it into Australia. Originally black, it was partially stripped, rusty and had some accident damage. It needed a complete restoration to make it useful for anything. I bought it from John the way it was, intending John to undertake the major work while I assisted in any way that I could.”

The project took close to 16 months. Colin spent on average about 4 days a week at John’s factory doing any work that he could, which saved him a few dollars. “Plus, when I was there, it motivated John to work on my car and not anyone else’s. There are some things I couldn’t do, of course, but I handled what an eager apprentice would be asked to do - fitting the front and rear suspension, the rear axle, brakes, all the wiring, instruments and the engine. I remember working for hours getting the harness to fit correctly.”

THE RESTORATION

John Dowsett has been running the Classic Connection for over 15 years and involved with Austin-Healey and other British cars for much longer. While Colin donated as much assistance as he could, the work was undertaken under John’s guidance. John helped to explain how it all came together.

“It was a pretty sad car when I originally bought it. It was to be a project to restore and then sell. Coming from the US, it was left hand drive and while all the important bits were there there such as the suspension, engine, gearbox and the like, it was missing quite a few of the jewelry items like bumpers, door handles and lots of the chrome work.”

“However, when Colin told me that he wanted a 3000 to go racing in, the car suited the purpose perfectly. He could prepare the car from the ground up and knew exactly what he had, instead of not knowing what someone else had done.”

“Sometime in its past, it had been in a frontal accident,” John added.

“The front of the chassis was also quite rusty, especially internally, which would have weakened it considerably. An Austin-Healey chassis has a cross brace just below the rear of the gearbox so I decided to replace the main rails from there forward but left the scuttle in place to maintain the structural integrity. So, with the exception of the front inner guards, everything forward of the scuttle is new. Thankfully, all that is available from Kilmarno Sheetmetal in Ballarat who supply Austin-Healey chassis and body components worldwide.”

He also replaced the engine mounts, suspension parts and inner and outer sills, welding everything together on a special jig. Despite looking in such a poor state, the rest of the chassis and the body panels came up perfectly with minor repairs, but everything needed considerable adjusting to fit correctly.

Among this pile of bits, there is a beautiful Austin-Healey waiting to be reborn. (Photo: Colin Goldsberry)

The foam filled alloy fuel tank was custom-made for Colin’s car.

HUNTING FOR A HEALEY

Anyone involved with Austin-Healeys knows that it is a big leap from deciding to race one to tracing one. While the Austin-Healey 100 was imported to Australia in reasonable numbers, the 6-cylinder cars were not. Just over 100 of the first 100/6s were imported here new and amazingly just 25 of the 3000s arrived as new cars. However, the late 1980s and 1990s were born years when all sorts of classic cars were imported from overseas, especially the US. The same goes for Austin-Healeys, since 80% of the total production of 73,000 were originally exported to the US.
Ecurie Ecosse

For the paintwork, Colin liked the Ecurie Ecosse dark blue. “As we didn’t want to make up a colour, we searched around for what looked to be the closest. Colin chose a BMW colour called Atlantis Blue with a couple of white stripes running down the centre of the car. The Austin-Healey chassis is the same colour as the body, so after the chassis was back together, it received a coat of dark blue with the bodywork.

“Group Sa rules allow the use of some original accessories so we bought an after-market hardtop from Marsh Classic Restorations and that was also finished in the dark blue with the white stripes. The rules of what you can and can’t do to your car for historic racing are quite strict,” John pointed out. “For instance, suspension has to be close to original but a few changes are allowed that could have been made in period. We altered the spring rates, fitted stronger lever arm shocks, lowered it slightly, beefed up the front sway bar and fitted trimp rods to the rear – everything that could have been done in 1960.

“It still has original front disc brakes and rear drums, but fitted with competition pads and linings. The trick is to find something that will give adequate stopping power under racing conditions without chewing up the rotors. We were permitted to slightly modify the steering by converting the solid steering into a collapsible arrangement in case of a head-on accident. At the rear, it’s still the original 3.9:1 differential. Although an LSD is allowed, we haven’t fitted one.”

THE ENGINE

“Again, rules on the engine are quite straightforward,” John said. “The block and the strobe must be as original while the bore can be taken out +0.5 thou. The cylinder heads can be gas flowed, but it still must remain in the original design. So the engine in Colin’s car was taken out 60 thou and Russell Engineering in Northcote completely flowed and ported the head.

While parts for competition Austin-Healeys are available from many sources around the world, John prefers to buy in Australia if possible. The steel crank and lightened flywheel came from Melbourne, the ARGO rods from Newcastle, and the pistons were sourced from the US but machined locally. Duncan Fosters in Blackburn machined and lined-bored the block and John reassembled everything. Because carburettors must be of the original make, number and type, they fitted twin 2in SU’s on a special inlet manifold. The engine has a full exhaust extractor system with a side exit just behind the passenger door.

MORE RULES

“Cooling for Austin-Healeys has always been marginal, especially in warmer climates,” John explained. “While the radiator dimensions are standard, we fitted a 5 row unit instead of one with 4 rows along with a 7lb cap. We also left the 4-speed gearbox as standard though I used new bearings and synchros plus the Laycock de Normanville is in as it left the factory. The fuel system involves a 60-litre foam filled alloy tank built that fits easily in the boot, and I kept the SU pump but fitted in-line filters going in and coming out. In all, it works just fine and we have yet to experience any fuel starvation.”

Specifications

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power</td>
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While the rules don’t require much in the way of tires, apart from body hugging racing seats, all the rest is standard, even down to the carpet. For wheels, the team is restricted to 5-inch on standard diameter wheels, which means 5x15 7J spoke wire wheels, and for tires, Colin chose Heuers Speedster 155/90 15.”

A strong finish

“Both Colin and I are very pleased with the end result,” John remarked. “The engine feels very strong and it tested at 250bhp at the flywheel. That’s not a bad result from the BMC C-series engine that, when first released, gave all of 00bhp.

“We restored the car with racing in mind and keeping within the rules set for Group Sa. That was the real challenge and my philosophy is to do the best we can within those rules. Over the years, I have noticed some people trying to fit bigger tires, larger engines and so forth. But I think that misses the point of historic racing. Anyone can win with a huge engine, but thet’re only kidding themselves.”

The debut

I had spoken to Colin Goldsmith a few times leading up to the 3000’s debut on 20–21 October at the Festival of Sporting Cars meeting at Wakefield Park, but I thought the last interview should wait until afterweards. “I was a little nervous,” Colin Goldsmith admitted. “I didn’t need to. The car went very well. There were a few teething problems like radiator coolant overflow and the carburettors needed a bit of ticking, especially with fuel overflow. Overall, I was very happy.”

“Problem one that Colin is going to work on isn’t to do with the car but with the driver. I think it will probably take me up to 12 months to get used to the car. My best time at Wakefield Park was 1 min 16.9m but I can do a lot better. While I was the 2nd Group Sa car home, I did have a little coming together with another car but that was fixed with an hour’s work or so. Not is the RSRCA’s November meeting, also at Wakefield Park. I have checked the brakes, rotated the tires and fixed both the coolant and fuel overflow problems and after a front end alignment, I’ll be ready to go.”

A couple of weekends after the 3000’s debut at Wakefield Park, Colin presented the car for inspection at the annual Concours d’Elegance of the Austin-Healey Owners Club. He didn’t win - after all, he was up against some pretty impressive concours vehicles. But when it came to the People’s Choice category, he won hands down. Well done to both Colin Goldsmith and John Dowsett for this slightly different restoration.”
Stuart Turner was the Competition Manager for the British Motor Corporation from 1961 to 1967 before moving to Ford. Stuart and Margaret Turner recently visited Sydney where our Australian contributor Patrick Quinn met up with him.

AAHC: Stuart, did you have a family motor sport background?

ST: No one in my family was in the slightest bit interested in motor sport. My introduction to anything apart from ordinary cars was when I was doing my National Service. We were out on a march and came across Prince Birabongse of Siam who was based in Cornwall with his ERA and a bunch of us had to push it to get the car started. Surely the best introduction to motor sport would have to be through a grand prix car?

Then I was involved in rally navigation purely by chance and had a few lucky breaks because in those days during the 1950s the navigator was king. I was invited to sit with Erik Carlsson who was at the time European Rally Champion - this was really like dining with God. Eric was quick and had an amazing reputation. The mark of a good rally driver in those days was to be able to roll a car without damaging the roof mounted spotlight. We won the RAC Rally after rolling the car and Eric had the foresight to switch off the ignition while we were still rolling. That RAC was the very first Special Stage Rally held in Britain and Eric was the only one clean on the stage and just six navigators clean through the rest of the rally.

AAHC: When did you move into BMC?

ST: I suppose my biggest break was with the retirement of Marcus Chambers who after putting together the BMC Competitions Department decided in 1961 that seven years was enough. I was twenty-eight at the time and the only one who was offered the job. I believe that I was extremely lucky to be offered the job at BMC.

Walking into BMC was like walking into history. Syd Enever was a riding mechanic at Brooklands and Reg Jackson sat with Nuvolari. I was 28; everyone else was around 60 except for the accountants. Everything was octagonal. The table mats were octagonal, as was conference table. In fact if it hadn’t been anatomically inconvenient I am sure the toilet seats would have been octagonal.

John Thornley was a very dynamic character, good leader and fended off the politicians from Longbridge. He had managed to preserve MG at Abingdon from the marauders of Austin and Morris. Once a year we would have a competition’s meeting with BMC Chairman George Harriman, Alex Issigonis, MG General Manager John Thornley, John Cooper (who was very much stirred up by the legendary Ken Tyrrell) sometimes Donald Healey because of the importance of the American market and me. I don’t remember never getting what we wanted. I have actually kept the minutes of these meetings and can remember saying in 1964 and 1965 that the Porsches are going murder us next year. Looking back it’s no wonder that Porsches are so successful in historic rallying. But back in those days Porsche under competitions manager Huschke von Hanstein was more interested in winning the Targa Florio or Le Mans. Rallying was a side issue.

It was also an interesting time as the Japanese were starting to take an interest in European rallying. Not actually taking part but certainly about, observing and taking lots of photographs. There was one time when during a Monte Rally servicing we thought we would play a trick on a Japanese observer and fixed a tin can to the carburettor of a Mini and then while he was watching we poured some baked beans into the can. We joked amongst ourselves for years later about the Japanese coming up with Heinz fuel injection.

AAHC: You joined BMC during the early days of the Mini?

ST: The Minis were certainly linked with the 1960s and the Monte Carlo. To some extend the Minis had a window of opportunity. Paddy Hopkirk’s win in the 1964 Monte was on a handicap basis while the Ford Falcons were actually quicker. The dinner after the event was simply wonderful with the likes of Graham Hill and Fangio in
attendance. The 1965 and 1966 Monte wins with Timo Makinen driving were straight wins but Rauno Aaltonen win in 1967 was by just 13 seconds. You could argue that the 13 secs was from a mechanic that I had sent to look at a special stage. When he got there he found that the gendarmes had closed the road. Now most would have just turned around and reported that the road had been closed but he actually ran two miles further on, checked out the corner and then ran back and phoned in. We then fitted the appropriate tyres and Aaltonen went on to win.

In the BMC days there were two battles. One was to win the rally and the other was to win enough to hang an advertisement on with the Monday press. That’s why my predecessor Marcus Chambers had entered Rileys, Wolseleys and sometimes he would enter five different makes of car so that some vehicle would feature in one of the class results. That clearly made nonsense of servicing the rally cars. Like how the hell do you fill your service car with enough spares for five different makes in the one rally?

AAHC: What are your memories of the drivers from the 1960s?

ST: Motor sport was definitely becoming more professional with drivers changing as well. BMC had some super drivers who were highly professional in their approach but still very gentlemanly. Donald Morley, perhaps the best Healey driver, except for Makinen on a straight bit, would never do the Liege-Rome-Liege Rally, the non stop 84 hour event that he and his brother Earl would have been perfect. The rally clashed with the harvest on their farm in Suffolk and they weren’t going to go rallying when the harvest was on. They had their priorities right, but they weren’t my priorities. So there was a shift to more professional drivers that also coincided with the Finns coming on the scene. Having seen Eric Carlsson I could see how the Swedes could drive. Rauno Aaltonen was from Finland and I first met him when I was navigating in a Healey 3000 during the Polish Rally and Rauno was navigating for European champion Eugen Bohringer in a Mercedes. We came to a special stage and Rauno got behind the steering wheel of the works Mercedes and murdered the rest of us.

So Rauno came on board the BMC team followed by Timo Makinen after the Morris dealer in Helsinki suggested that we give him a drive. Later I bought them over to Ford where I had very much the same sort of team with different mechanics from a small area around Boreham airfield where the Ford Competition Department was situated. This certainly helped the team spirit whereas today in a Formula One team the mechanics would be situated all round the world because these days the sport is much more international. Also helping the team
spirit was that we were not located near BMC headquarters, the same later with Ford. Sadly if you had been to the old MG factory at Abingdon you will know that it’s now a supermarket.

AAHC: What about racing with BMC?

ST: It wasn’t all rallying while I was at BMC as we were also racing, entering MGBs at Le Mans, Targa Florio – I was there with Timo Makinen and a MGB when Carroll Shelby was there with the Cobras. There were four of them and later when Paul Hawkins drove me around the circuit in a Healey there was a Cobra broken down approximately every twenty-five percent of the route.

The most important event for MGs was of course at Sebring because of the American market. There was also a 3 hour race where we would take Sprites or Minis and work very closely with Donald Healey or his son Geoff. One year when we had Stirling Moss driving for us, he arrived, did about four laps in practice and then asked what time the race started and left. Graham Hill did four laps, then five and kept practicing. Half an hour later he got down to Stirling’s time, which illustrate the genius and natural talent of Stirling and also the determination of Graham.

I couldn’t understand why our pits were full of stunningly beautiful women, who I thought were there to see Stirling or Graham. Then I met an extremely pleasant American driver, who was Steve McQueen the film star which explained it all.

Frequently we used to test our cars at Silverstone and invite ten or twelve drivers to see how they would go. One year Ken Tyrrell tuned up with a young driver that he wanted us to see. While Paddy had won his class at Le Mans in a MGB, this guy was quicker. He was also quicker than Timo in a Healey 3000 and was actually quicker than everyone else in every car except in a Hydrolastic Mini. That was the first time I met Jackie Stewart. I can still picture John Cooper running up to me saying “Sign him, sign him!”

AAHC: What happened after BMC?

ST: Marcus Chambers had seven years and I had roughly the same amount of time and I know it sounds rather crazy now but you kind of have enough of it. Travel is less than glamorous and the thought of lining up for yet another aeroplane would bore me to tears. I think underlying my feelings was that I knew that all was not right in BMC and it just wasn’t working. So I moved on to Castrol where I had a couple of years.

While at Castrol I was asked to sit on the Board of the 1968 London to Sydney Marathon. That was the first time I came to Australia. After being involved in the organisation of the event I was given a clock and sat on a bench in Turkey, Afghanistan, the Kyuber Pass and in the Australian Flinders Ranges. Then my passion for motor sport came back to me and I decided that it was definitely more fun than oil. Walter Hayes PR Manager of Ford UK, the Ford man behind the Cosworth DFV had approached me to join Ford. He had asked me while I was with BMC but, and it might sound strange these days I thought it would be ungentlemanly to go straight to Ford from BMC. So I thought the break with Castrol made it very gentlemanly and I decided to join Ford.

AAHC: What were your first thoughts of Ford?

ST: I walked into Ford, and to illustrate the contrasts between the two companies my last expense account with BMC was half of an A4 sheet of paper and the first person I met at Ford introduced himself to me as my Financial Controller. I didn’t even know what a Financial Controller was as I never had one of these at BMC. I think it illustrated why today Ford is still strong and BMC is part of automotive history.

The first major event as Competitions Manager for Ford of Britain Motorsport was the London to Mexico Rally, which was 16,000 miles, the longest rally of all time. Our budget was around US$40,000 and I managed to spend $140,000. Thank heavens we won, otherwise we wouldn’t be having this conversation. Then Hannu Mikkola went on to win the Safari Rally at a time when it was thought that a European would never win in Africa. There was something about it, the altitude and the Kenyans thought they would always win because of their knowledge. While Hannu didn’t get the same publicity as the London to Mexico it was very (continued on page 36)
2008 was a steady year for the Austin-Healey Club of Western Australia. A core group of members attended most social functions with a few others joining in when they can. The committee was very active with most months seeing 2-3 social events organised for members.

Our traditional Cobweb runs on the third Wednesday evening of each month have continued from a regular meeting point with an organised drive to various destinations. In the past year we have changed the format a little and visited members homes more frequently for coffee and cake or sometimes a barbecue supper.

The Winter Woollies run, another old favourite, continued in 2008 with a run to Bridgetown, where the inclement weather meant cozy log fires, hearty food and a warming red wine or two! This weekend was also special as we had chance to catch up with several country members from Bunbury and Albany.

The All British Day and the Classic Car Show are still popular and are enjoyed by regular attendees.

On one of our weekend runs we visited a deep space tracking station courtesy of committee member Mark Brockman, finishing off with lunch at the historic New Norcia Hotel. We attended Toodyay Music Festival, some breakfast runs and a Barbecue in Kings Park.....and of course the usual Annual Dinner and Chrissy Party. The 1932 Alvis owned by John Rowe took centre stage in the driveway at the home of the president for the Christmas Party.

As a club that incorporates AH Sprites we celebrated the 50th year of the MkI with a well attended display of “frog eyes” at the Classic Car Show at Whiteman Park, organised by Derek Lamont.

Members who still enjoy the thrill of competition mostly attend events organised by the Combined Car Club Association with some more adventurous members like Charlie Mitchell and John Rowe participating in events such as Phillip Island and the Adelaide Classic Rally.

This means that trophy winners are really now based on participation in social events, rather than competition. This year the President’s Trophy was awarded to Carole Noble for her long term commitment to the editor’s role and the Clubmanship award to Mike Hopkins for his many and varied contributions and support of all aspects of the club.

Next year we are making sure that we have a Club Champion Award presented by keeping point scores for participation in events (mainly social), contributions to the magazine and hosting and/or assisting at events.

2008 saw a return to a monthly hard copy magazine (previously two monthly with an online mag in between) as club finances allowed and this seems to meet the approval of most members.

2008 also saw some members still driving their Healeys long distances. Tony Ash covered 30,000 kilometres in 193 days around Australia in his AH100 “green machine” with the “Wheelie Healey Hilton” towed behind – a trip never to forget! Arthur and Sandra Wallis drove to Pt Hedland for a family wedding during the year and also joined many other members travelling across the Nullarbor to Port Stephens for the 2008 Easter National Rally.

Car numbers have been boosted by some completed restorations, Peter Hayward’s 100 and Max William’s 3000 MK1, George Pickering has unearthed a BJ7, and a couple of imports that we see frequently at events are that of Paul Pendrill and Arthur Wallis and very recently Vic and Val Johnsen, all acquired 100s from the East.

Towards the end of 2008 a first time Healey Calendar for 2009 was produced by Derek Lamont and son with some great pictures and good sales – maybe something to be revisited for 2010.

Our National Rally Committee has been meeting and working hard throughout 2008 planning and organising yet another great National Rally in the Swan Valley for 2009.

Rod Lloyd
President
AH Car Club of WA
Gorn with the Wind

“Gorn with the Wind”. Sandra summed up the trip pretty well!

It was a great experience for me. The crossing of the Nullarbor was awesome - 45deg C. My feet and legs were burning in the “Little Yella Car” (Noel’s 100). You could not touch the dash or move your hands around the steering wheel. Our feet were burning, even with Noel’s 4-inch plastic tube he ran into the car for extra air.

I hit a dead roo! Must have thought I was in my Troopy and could clear it. Bang! The car jumped about a foot! The smell was awful and when we pulled in to a little one pump station a dog ran out, dived under the car and ate the remains!!

Noel was more upset with me when he got out the car and had my chewing gum stuck to his new shorts!! I threw it out of the window, but it must have stuck to the door.

We passed by a petrol station with the gauge reading half to quarter. Noel said we would make Iron Knob ok. We arrived to find the station derelict! It had been closed for 3 yrs!! Noel went up the deserted street to find help and someone directed him to Peter up the road, next to the little chapel. Out came this guy - massive great white mop of hair and beard followed by his 90yo dolly bird in micro shorts and top looking like a stick insect!! St Peter!! He sold us 10lt for $20.00.

After that the trip went well until we left our motel in Lithgow. The town looks like it is in the centre of an old volcano so we had to drive upwards to get out and at 7am it was very misty. It got worse as we climbed, misting the screen and of course the wipers did not work. I was struggling to follow the white line on the road with sheer drops down the mountain all around. Eventually I managed to punch the side flap open and wipe a portion of the screen.

I transferred to Nigel’s hire car at Penrith - A “Purple” Commodore. Felt like Priscilla - Queen of the Desert.

It was raining at Port Stephens, but we had a great rally. I think 85 Healeys turned out, including four 100s from WA. Nigel and I did a few practice bike rides around the area, to warm up for the big one. Then he bought a 100 that had been in bits in a guy’s garage since 1968. It took us two and a half days to get it into a container for shipping to WA.

Then we were off to Lithgow for the start of our 8 day marathon bike ride around and over the Blue Mountains. Every morning bar two, our tents were covered in ice. It was freezing and the hills were enormous. We cycled the highest at 1,100 metres. When the ride finished we hired another car (a White one) and toured the Aussie Alps, the Great Divide, Sydney, Canberra then Ned Kelly Land and ended up in Melbourne. In the six years I have lived here I have now been to all the states bar Tasmania and that’s next.

Keep Motoring
Mike Hopkins

Travelling East for the 2008 National Rally

We set off in our BNI on Friday 14th March to meet up with Noel Gorn and Mike Hopkins (travelling in Noel’s BNI) in Norseman, via Lake King and Esperance, for the trip across the Nullarbor to the 2008 National Rally.

The trip did not start off well for them as they were delayed a day and a half due to Noel having to replace his clutch at the eleventh hour. They were going to camp out each night as a practise run for Mike’s bicycle tour following the Rally. However after the first night they realised that they had camped next to the freight rail line and Great Eastern Hwy and what with trucks and freight trains passing all night they didn’t get much sleep, but Mike made some new friends with kangaroo ticks.

We waited for Noel and Mike at Norseman and the weather was starting to get hot. We finally took off together late on the Friday afternoon and it was a mad dash to Caiguna for our first overnight stop. This was to be the first of three long very hot days and the boys decided that they needed to sleep in a real bed and have a good shower. Noel had installed his own version of “air-conditioning” that looked...
more like a torpedo tube hanging out the passenger side of the screen and we named it the “bazooka”. He called it the Nullarbor Cooler. The next three days were to be in excess of 45 degrees.

Saturday 15th as promised was a real scorcher. The dynamic duo, with Mike driving, took off before us as Arthur had an argument with a big green steel pole that put the wheel alignment out and a dent in the front right mudguard. Fifty kilometres down the track we discovered that we had left a mobile phone at the motel in Caiguna so a round trip of 150 clicks meant that we had become very familiar with that stretch of road. We also decided to put our hood up as we were frying in the hot sun with hot winds.

We caught up with the duo about 11.00am with Mike very sheepishly saying “I hit a kangaroo” and we became airborne and frightened the hell out of Noel”. But Noel was not amused as the ‘roo was already dead before they hit it and he wanted the car to make it to Sydney and back to Perth. At least Mike now has bragging rights with his UK friends that he has driven the Nullarbor in a 50 year old Healey, hit a ‘roo and survived to tell the tale. This is not the end of this tale.

When we arrived in Ceduna that evening we learned that it had been 50+ degrees across the plain that day. Sometime later the boys turned up at the same hotel and decided that after such a harrowing experience with the ‘roo, the extreme heat and Noel’s engine overheating, they needed some luxury that night. So much for the camping out! For the rest of the trip their camping gear became excess luggage.

We had a wheel alignment done at Ceduna and found that the little nudge given the steel pole actually improved the steering. At Ceduna we parted company as the odd couple wanted to go the shorter way via Broken Hill and back to Perth and we elected to take a cooler route via Mildura and we were to meet up in Dubbo for the final run to Port Stephens.

Mike kept in touch with text messages and the tail end to the kangaroo story. When they arrived at Broken Hill and stopped at a small petrol station a mongrel dog came rushing out straight at the car and stuck its head underneath and started eating the well roasted ‘roo meat.

Noel and Mike’s excitement reached a peak when they ran in to heavy fog crossing the mountains on their way to meet Nigel Egginton at Lithgow. There was mad panic when the wipers wouldn’t work and with a hard top and side curtains on they were unable to stick their hands out to clear the windscreen. Now we have all had moments like these, but coming from Mike what was a potentially dangerous situation became a humorous tale.

We arrived in Port Stephens late on Wednesday without too much fuss except when we backed the BNI in the dark in to a low retaining wall to put a small dent in the rear left mudguard so now we had a matching pair. We were the first people to arrive at the resort for the Rally followed a couple of hours later by Nigel and Mike.

I am sure there are going to be a few articles about the 2008 Sea Change National Rally so will not go in to any great detail here. The Salamander Shores Resort was the perfect location for a national gathering. Perched on high land at Soldiers Point overlooking the waters of beautiful Port Stephens we were lucky to have a room with a balcony and the magnificent views. As we were on the fourth floor we could look down at all the Healey’s and call out to friends from WA and all other parts of Australia as they arrived. This is one of the greatest things about a national rally, you get to catch up with people you haven’t seen for at least 12 months or more.

I believe there were around 80 Austin Healey’s, and other exotic cars such as a TVR V8, Porsche and a special bodied BNI Healey with a racing history. It always intrigues me in such a large gathering of cars, that when a bonnet goes up the men come from everywhere to gather around to offer advice or just get a look. There were many stories exchanged about who had done what to their car.

All of the evening events were held around the resort which meant we could walk to everything. The day trips were also within easy picturesque drives. The district of Port Stephens is very beautiful and although well populated, still quite rural.
There were many interesting drives and walks to take and visits to light house, air force museum, and plush oyster beds - so lots of fresh oysters and other seafood were always on the menu.

After six days of meeting, greeting, driving, eating, drinking, catching up with old friends and meeting new ones, it was time for us to depart to visit Arthur’s 92 year old mother in Tweed Heads before driving south to meet up with Noel and Imelda Gorn and Tony and Faye Mellor at Port Augusta for the trip back across the Nullarbor. They were travelling down the south coast of NSW and Victoria to do the Great Ocean Road. Mike and Nigel were off to do their bicycle tour of the Blue Mountains (after packing up Nigel’s “new” car, but that is another story). Tony Ash and Anne went back to Sydney before Tony takes off on the next leg of his epic voyage. Graeme and Gail Shearer were also headed for Sydney and other delights before returning home.

Whilst the return home was not as exciting as the drive over, it was very pleasant with wonderful driving weather (cool that is), great company and good stories to tell. We all parted company in Norseman on 1st April with Noel and Imelda travelling home via Coolgardie; Tony and Faye going to visit friends in Esperance and Albany; and we went home via Esperance and Lake King – a fourteen hour drive from when we had left Caiguna in the morning until we arrived home at 10.30 that night.

It was a whirlwind trip of 18 days, most of which were full days of driving. But it is a great way to travel to and from a Rally, see this wonderful country of ours and all in a 55 year old Austin Healey that ran beautifully the whole time.

And we are still getting text messages from Mike about their bicycle tour so I am sure he will have a very interesting and humorous article to write when he gets back.

Congratulations and thank you to the Austin Healey Owners Club of NSW for a great Rally 2008.

Arthur and Sandra Wallis

Grass Gymkhana at Grass Valley

After what seems like weeks of rainy days, Sunday 16th September dawned bright and sunny. Brian Jarvis and I met up with Nigel Egginton, his brother Adrian and Adrian’s son Simon who were driving a BMW Mini Cooper S at Midland and shortly after, Tony and Faye Mellor, Keith and Andrea Patching, and George and Sandra Pickering arrived. As it didn’t appear as though anyone else was coming, we headed off. It was a very brisk run up to Northam and on to Grass Valley. Coffee was the first order of the day and we were just having that when Marcus Wilson arrived in his Sprite.

The location was “The Nut Factory” home of the Pistachio nut. Bert and Angie Hayes own and run this place and we were all most impressed by the size of the shed, which is home to a number of beautifully, restored classic cars.

Having finished morning tea, it was time to get down to business. We had a huge paddock made available to us, free of rocks and just wet, slippery weeds to drive on. Arthur Wallis had set out the course, which was a bit tight in places, which only added to the risk of big spinouts.

After a practice run, competition began in earnest. Adrian and Simon were first up in the Mini and set the pace for the rest. The morning session consisted of each driver competing the course in the fastest time. Of course, the faster you went, the more slipping and sliding occurred which caused great amusement to the spectators.

We returned to the gazebo area of “The Factory” for lunch and then went back to the paddock for the afternoon session of the gymkhana. This was the same course, but driven in teams. We had just started when Tony Ash arrived to join in the fun. Sandra was very confident handling the Healey and was doing very well, but unfortunately her navigator and co-driver (Tony) let her down by doing too many spinouts and therefore taking longer time to compete the course. None the less, it was all in good fun and we all did a lot of laughing and cheering at all the antics. Fay and Andrea hadn’t driven their Healeys before and both really enjoyed the experience. Fay was so impressed with her driving skills; she even drove the Healey half the way home!

Despite there only being 15 of us who participated in this event, we all thoroughly enjoyed it. The day stayed fine until a bit of rain on the way home. The location was ideal, the company was great and all in all it was a really good day.

Thanks to Arthur and Sandra Wallis for organising this and to Bert and Angie Hayes for being lovely hosts. It was also pleasing to see George Pickering up and about after his recent surgery.

Winners were: Adrian and Simon, Keith Patching, Sandra Pickering and Tony and Faye Mellor in the team event.

Tasma Paterson
Wildflower Brunch Run

The weather was good to us - 23°C and no rain. Twelve Healeys, an E-type and a Fake Snake (plastic Cobra) turned up at the Midland start. I originally planned to bring my 100 out for an airing but while out topping up the tank I felt that the brake pedal was a little lower than normal. On checking the reservoir I found only an inch of fluid. Even more disturbing - I could not detect any leaks! I had the 3000 in bits fitting an 8 track stereo that I found on eBay. Vintage 1960/70 it came from Kent in the UK and was new and still in its box along with 30 cassettes to go with the 25 I already had. Having just converted the car to negative earth I could now fit it. My other job was converting my rear reflectors to stop/flashing lights and reflector (it works a treat) so I quickly refitted the console and headed off to Midland with Colin and June.

The route to Toodyay was via the Great Northern Hwy to Bullsbrook and then the Chittering Valley Road. What a beautiful route, after all the rain everything was green and there were wild flowers everywhere. Nigel managed to find a red dirt road for us! Just as I had managed to get my new chrome wires clean after the Coalstream Park run!! We stopped at Black Boy ridge and some of us walked the nature trail up to the ridge. The view was well worth the effort. I was amazed at the variety of beautiful wild flowers, the descent was a bit hairy in places.

Off again on "Nigel's" dirt road, finally we arrived at Toodyay only to find the main road blocked off for a music festival, craft fair, vintage car display (ours was bigger) and exotic dancer. We decided to park on "Holy" ground under a very old and large tree, an elderly gent from the church took great pleasure in pointing out that we were on church land and if the tree fell on our cars we would not be insured as it would be classed as "An Act Of God" Mmmmm! Holy Healeys! Or, should it be "Heathen Healeys"? Oh well let's go for brunch!

Coca-Cola Cafe was heaving, but after a bit of shuffling we managed to fit 8 on a table for 4! Brekkie was excellent and for a bonus we had a jazz band nearby.

Colin and I deserted our wives to browse the car display and craft stalls, we stopped at a "little" longer to watch the blonde exotic dancer. Back at the car I had to break my diet and sample a delicious walnut & caramel ice cream - yummy! Time to go home.

A slow run back through the Chittering Valley and its wonderful wild flowers. Who said Devonshire cream tea? Bang goes my diet! We stopped at a delightful little tin tea house on the Chittering Valley road and sat on the veranda sipping real tea, munching scones with cream and jam looking across at the green hills covered in orange groves. Then we walked around the back over the Chittering Brook to the orangery with chooks, ducks and guinea fowl running wild. At the big shed I bought their oranges, mandarins, grapefruit, honey and fresh pressed orange juice - no preservatives! What a great relaxing day, well done guys.

Pommie Mike Hopkins

National Rally Hard Luck Award

Noel Gorn was sent this special award from the Austin-Healey Owners Club of NSW to commemorate his problem ridden trip to the National Rally at Port Stephens in March.

The saga was reported in the April edition of the magazine, but Noel was asked to relate the story to the July meeting again, which he did in good humour.

Funny how we find other people's troubles entertaining.
satisfying to me as it debunked the myth of Kenyans would always win the Safari.

AAHC: Didn’t you head up Ford’s Advanced Vehicle Operations?

ST: Walter Hayes’ office was just around the corner from mine and frequently I would walk into his office and he would be sitting there feet up on the desk and smoking his pipe, just thinking. I don’t think the Americans could really understand what he was doing, but he was doing the one thing that I think business people don’t do enough of, and that’s just to sit and think. It was Walter’s idea that cars like the Escort Twin Cam was just a bloody pain to mainstream vehicle production. So Ford set up this thing called AVO or Advanced Vehicle Operations and in almost every aspect it mirrored mainstream with a marketing department, sales and industrial relations areas.

I was asked to take over AVO as well as Motor Sport because there was a strong connection between the two. This stopped the bitter feuding between the groups, especially when it came to such projects as the GT70 that Roger Clark and I were strongly involved with. However all this coincided with the energy crisis and exotic little Escorts didn’t sell very well and what do you do with little boutique factory. We thought with such diverse vehicles as Escort Mexico Estate cars and Ford owned the DeTomaso Pantera and we experimented by fitting a Ford V6 engine instead of the V8. Eventually I got the call from Ford headquarters saying that I had 135 people, and to get it down to 35 in three month’s time. Anyone who thinks motor sport is glamorous just doesn’t know that making 100 people redundant is far from glamorous. Eventually it wound down.

AAHC: Did you still have a job?

ST: I moved on into Public Affairs of Ford of Britain and with my experience with Castrol and BMC gave me a very happy time as Ford was and still is very much PR orientated. To be there during the height of Maggie Thatcher’s time as Prime Minister made it very interesting to say the least.

Eventually I had a call from Walter Hayes who had moved on to the US and had become very close to Henry Ford. Karl Ludvigsen was running Ford Motor Sport at the time and Walter said that he was getting vibes that all was not good with Motor Sport and would I put out a few feelers and let me know what you think. While I deeply involved with motor sport we did have a Motor Sport Press Officer so I had an idea of what was happening.

So I dropped Walter a personal note and within three weeks I found myself running Ford Motor Sport in Europe. Looking after fifteen countries, trying to get synergy between such countries as Switzerland and Austria, trying to get the best for everyone, that sort of thing.

At the very first meeting I put forward two pieces of paper, one to
cancel the RS70 two-wheel drive Escort and the other to cancel the C100 sports car. There was a palpable sense of relief around the table but everyone wondered what sort of competition car Ford would use. Rover was winning every touring car race so I took the chairman and president of Ford Europe up to see Keith Duckworth. We walked in to see a Formula One engine and there on the floor was a two-litre Pinto engine with a cylinder head conversion which we were clearly meant to see. Keith Duckworth said that he could 200 kits for sale. So the Chairman and President of Ford, Keith Duckworth and I went around the corner for a pub lunch. I suggested that we could put a turbocharged version of the Pinto engine into a Sierra. We ended up building 5,500 and had no problems selling the RS500 Sierra and taking on the World Touring Car Championship.

Then we had to have a rallycar, as the RS500 was purely for racing. We got approval to build one car and did so in about six months and that must have impressed them and received further approval to build 200. Each retailed for just fifty quid under fifty thousand. Just three weeks after we finished the two-hundred, Henri Toivonen crashed in Corsica killing some of the spectators. Do you want to know what real fear is? It’s the look on the face of a Ford finance man when you tell him that there are 200 cars at forty-nine thousand nine-hundred and fifty quid and the category is cancelled.

I left home that morning expecting to come back home with my payslip. In fairness as soon as he realised it wasn’t our fault he could not have been more supportive. When we sold them all, the first letter of congratulations was from him. It has left me very clear that finance people should be constructive and not destructive.

AAHC: What car did Ford end up with?

ST: All we had left was the two-wheel drive turbo Sierra Cosworth. Not being an engineer I suggested using the existing front-wheel drive Escort body on the Sierra floorpan along with a four-wheel-drive conversion. I can remember everyone laughing and saying that it couldn’t be done. However that’s exactly what we did and Stig Blomquist the World Rally Champion drove it and it was quicker than the Sierra Cosworth. We took it to Ford’s head office, gave the keys to all the top brass and without exception each came back with big silly grins on their faces. Eventually we got approval to build the car. Over time Ford have made mistakes but overall the company has been consistent in helping motor sport. I remember back when I was with BMC and we had Graham Hill in a Mini in the RAC Rally and Ford was using Jim Clark in the Cortina. Graham hated the Mini and Jim loved the Cortina.

When I moved to Ford a few years later they were still raving about Jim. In the Ford of Britain boardroom there used to be a photo of Jim Clark on three wheels in a Lotus Cortina. When we were trying to get approval for the Sierra Cosworth the Chairman of Ford asked if the car would do the same for the Sierra as the Lotus Cortina did for the Cortina. The answer was yes and without the Sierra Cosworth we wouldn’t have built the Escort Cosworth and won the Monte with it. The day it was signed off Ford was on one of its shrinking things and offering improved pensions to those who wanted to leave. Now Ford doesn’t make many mistakes, but they made one that day at a certain director grade, and I said that’s me. At the same time I looked over my shoulder and noticed a top finance person doing the same thing.

I moved into gentle retirement of public speaking, building houses and writing. I even became involved in club level motor sport and bought a Dellow trials car.

“Eventually I got the call from Ford headquarters saying that I had 135 people, and to get it down to 35 in three month’s time. Anyone who thinks motor sport is glamorous just doesn’t know that making 100 people redundant is far from glamorous.”
Austin-Healeys at Bathurst Easter 2008

It had been 35 years since a club motor sport event had been staged at the Mount Panorama circuit at Bathurst, New South Wales. To say it lightly putting it all together was nothing short of a mammoth task by the organisers of the Sydney based Festival of Sporting Cars.

It’s pleasing to note that the event was a resounding success as it attracted over 480 entrants from every Australian state and territory. Amongst that entry list there were a total of 14 Austin-Healeys running at the Mount. From New South Wales there was the 100 of David Lawrence, the 3000s of Cameron Sell, Brian Duffy and Colin Goldsmith and the Sprites of Barry Cockayne and Judith Dorrell. Visiting from the south were Victorians Damian Molony and Geoff Leake in their 100s, John Goodall in his 100/6 and Peter Williams in his 3000. With membership in two states Peter Jackson represented both NSW and Victoria in his 3000. From sunny Queensland Paul Cuthbert was there in his Sprite and from a little further afield Mark Goldsmith came over from South Australia for a run in his 3000. From much further afield John Rowe brought his 3000 from WA.

As happens in motor sport, some Austin-Healey drivers fared better than others with the unforgiving Bathurst concrete barriers proving to be irresistible in a number of instances.

However, without doubt the most successful Austin-Healey driver at Bathurst in 2008 was Peter Jackson in his 3000. At qualifying Peter managed a best time of just over 2.57 minutes. Remember Mount Panorama is not your average Mickey Mouse circuit as it goes up hill and down dale for 6.213 kilometres.

Peter Jackson’s 3000 with the Alfa Romeo Alfetta GT of George Tillett following. Garry Cooper Photo.

In Peter’s first race on Saturday he finished very much middle of the field, but did improve his lap times to 2.52 minutes. Remember Mount Panorama is not your average Mickey Mouse circuit as it goes up hill and down dale for 6.213 kilometres.

In the end it wasn’t finished until 2000 and my first race was at Sydney’s Eastern Creek where the Healeys were invited to run at an Historic meeting. It was the first time I had ever raced and after qualifying the car about seventh I managed to spin it 3 or 4 times during the races. I finish the meeting last, but I gained a bit of experience to the point that maybe if Bathurst did come around again I would have had enough to at least run mid-field.

In between then and his last race on Sunday Peter must had quickly put in an appearance at a local church service as not only did he improve the lap time to 2.46 seconds, Peter was also in front of the Mazda and was first across the line.

The camp of Austin-Healey enthusiasts was ecstatic as Peter not only improved his personal lap time dramatically, but was first home in a field of 37 cars all of which, except for a MG Midget and Geoff Leake’s 100 were younger than his BJ8.

We recently caught up with Peter Jackson and asked for his thoughts on being at Bathurst during Easter 2008.

Q. Why was Bathurst such an attraction to you?
PJ. I originally went to Bathurst in 1998 to watch the All Healey race that was won by Denis Welch. Everyone will remember the courageous effort put in to that race by the late Peter Hopwood. At that stage I had a Healey under construction that I wanted to be a rally car. I was so impressed with the number of cars that turned up and the support that the Healeys received that I decided to put the rally car on hold and turn it into a race car.

While the differences between the body and chassis weren’t going to be great, not so the engine. Before that I had plans to build it as an endurance engine for rallies and the like. All this meant that the change of plans delayed the finishing of the car. I had planned to have it finished in 1999, but that had to be altered.

In the intervening time I had gained quite a bit more experience, including running in America in 2005. I thought it was the time to make amends for ‘98 and ‘99.

Q. How did you go in 2008? Did you beat the Porsches?
PJ. When we got there I wasn’t 100% sure how we would fare. We went out and practiced on the Friday and qualifying on the Saturday morning, I was very dubious as how I would go as I had only...
ever seen the circuit on television and had never been around it before. I suppose the first time out was a little daunting.

I followed a couple of guys in Porsches and we did a few laps and thought it was going to be interesting as while it was fine to tour around it looked to be very different under racing conditions. At first I really didn’t know how we were going to go.

In fairness the grids were huge. I think we had about 60 in the group I was in and the first race was a mixed bag of Porsches, turbocharged MX-5s and 1 or 2 old Healeys. We did reasonably well.

Then the organisers decided to split the field into two. A lot of the quicker Porsches, mainly GT3 or modern cars were put into one group and the older Porsches, Healeys and various other makes into a second. The nice part about that was that I ended up on the front row of the grid with a turbocharged MX-5 next to me and 4 or 5 Porsches behind.

I recall thinking that it wasn’t too bad and if we could maintain the pace, we might actually do alright. In the first race in the different groupings we managed a second and the same in the second race. In the third we managed to win it. I was pretty happy.

Q. That must have been a wonderful experience after missing out in ‘98 and then building up to it over the years.

PJ. It certainly was, but it was a bit of a surprise as I didn’t really believe that a Healey would be as quick as a Porsche around Bathurst. I have raced against Porsches at Sandown, Eastern Creek and in the US and the actual top speed of the cars isn’t much different, but Porsches do stop and handle better. But interestingly enough, at Bathurst I found that if you could keep your foot in, particularly across the top of the mountain the old Healey manages to become very wide. They don’t handle all that well, but on the other hand the guy behind you is not a 100% sure what you are going to do next. In fairness they become quite competitive for an old car.

Q. Are you running again in 2009?

PJ. Yes we will be running again, but not in the same car. Well the plan is not to run the same car as I have entered a new Groups S car which puts me in with Sa and Sb. That being mainly MGBs I think.

So that in itself should be quite interesting as the Sa cars are running twin SUs, whereas my other Healey has triple Webers. I am hoping we will have enough grunt up the mountain to hold the MGs out. Certainly across the top I don’t think they will be able to pass and by the time we get to Conrod Straight, maybe we will have enough speed to keep out in front.

Well that’s the plan and the plan is to win.

Q. That sounds wonderful Peter and thanks for your time. It’s a MkI 3000 that you will be running at Bathurst in 2009 and it was a MkIII last year?

PJ. Yes that’s right. Thanks very much for talking to me.
John Goodall (100/6) at Bathurst. Steve Oom Photo.

Paul Cuthbert takes a wide line with his Sprite. Jeremy Dale Photo.

Barry Cockayne's Mk I Sprite. Steve Oom Photo.

Judith Dorrell's Sprite at Bathurst 2008. Garry Cooper Photo.


Colin Goldsmith (3000) and Paul Cuthbert (Sprite) descend the Mountain. Steve Oom Photo.
David Lawrence at the Celebration of Motorsport,

Geoff Leake at speed in his 100. Steve Oom Photo.

Peter Williams and his 3000 Mk 1 on Pit Straight.
Steve Oom Photo.

Damian Moloney (100) chases the MG Midget of
Brian Weston. Steve Oom Photo.

Peter Jackson cuts the corner in his 3000, in front of
Stewart Temesvary’s MX-5. Garry Cooper Photo.

Victorian Mark Goldsmith and his BJ8. Jeremy Dale
Photo.
Austin-Healey Owners Club
of Victoria 2008

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HUNDREDS & THOUSANDS Registered by Australia Post. Publication No. VBH 1552
The year 2008 was an interesting year for the Club with our monthly meetings being well supported as in the past. During one meeting we were particularly honoured by having John Sprinzel, well known racing driver and preparer of Sprites and Big Healeys.

We were pleased that during the year our clubrooms were improved with the installation of a new sound and big screen system.

Our Midweek and Peninsula Runs continue to be well supported and together with our weekend events, there is ample opportunity for members to drive their Healeys. Once again our concours was held at the Como Oval North and I would like to thank Brian Froelich and the judges for all their efforts.

Also requiring special recognition is Rod Vogt for his efforts during the year. Rod has taken over as our MSCA/Competition Secretary. Through his enthusiasm and commitment, members participating in Motor Sport have risen to record numbers. Well done Rod.

In regards to Social, I would also like to thank everyone who organised the suppers at our monthly meetings. Their efforts are very much appreciated by all the members. Social Events held during the year, varied from early morning runs to lunch runs. Our Club was also well represented at the 3rd European Healey Meeting/Rally in Sweden.

On the subject of Rallies, the Victorian 2010 event will be held at Creswick, a town near Ballarat. Situated on a golf course, this 4 ½ star establishment promises to be the ideal spot for Easter 2010. Our special guest will be Stuart Turner, who has a long history as Manager of the BMC Competition Department. In case you don’t know Stuart has a reputation as a public speaker of some excellence.

In conclusion, it is the Members who make a Club and my personal well done to all who have done their best for this Club. Thank You.

At the time of writing I would also like to wish the best of Luck to the Western Australian Austin-Healey Club for their Rally in the Swan Valley 2009.

I look forward to seeing you all in 2010 at Creswick.

We were pleased that during the year our clubrooms were improved with the installation of a new sound and big screen system.

Regards
Chris Coughlin
President
AHOC of Vic.
The year of 2008 saw the successful introduction of a new format and scoring system for our COMPETITION CHAMPIONSHIP. Traditional events such as the economy run, observation and trial events and the motorkana are now included in the CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP. They have a higher points weighting than attendance points at meetings, social events, the Concours / Show’n’Shine and Presentation Dinner etc. This has been done in recognition of the increasing difficulty of running serious events on public roads in our more valuable Healeys with partners beside us who do not always appreciate the pressure of competition.

The CLUB CHAMPION for 2008 was LEON O’BRIEN

The COMPETITION CHAMPIONSHIP is now based solely on motor sport circuit events. A new point scoring system rewards participation and skill, but gives ALL competitors an equal chance of winning. This includes the fastest race prepared Healey to a novice driver in a standard car at a Regularity/Sprint event on a basic Level 2 speed licence.

Twenty-four members competed variously at twenty-five different events covering Historic and Marque Sports Car racing, Regularity and Sprint events at Phillip Island, Sandown, Calder, Winton, Wakefield Park, Oran Park, Eastern Creek and Bathurst. Bill Vaughan even travelled to Qld. to attend the Warwick Historics and Leyburn Sprints. Some events were attended by up to 10 Team Healey entrants, some by just one – the scoring system accommodates this nature of attendance.

HIGHLIGHTS for 2008

1 The usual strong participation at March Phillip Island, May and October Winton as well as November’s Sandown Historic meetings. Racing were Steve Pike, Brian Duffy, Damian Moloney and Peter Kaiser. Regularity was popular with John Goodall, Trevor Smith, Peter Kent, Larry Varley, David Kelly, Bill Vaughan, Hugh Purse, Rob
Jamieson, Colin Wallace and Rod Vogt competing at different times.

2 The Festival of Sporting Cars event at Bathurst at Easter – truly spectacular for Peter Jackson, Geoff Leake, Damian Maloney, Peter Williams, Brian Duffy and John Goodall.

3 The June weekend at Wakefield Park for the Super Sprint run so well on Saturday by the NSW Austin-Healey Club and then the All British Race Day on the Sunday. Peter Jackson and Geoff Leake set their fastest times ever at Wakefield, while first timers Russell Baker, Colin Wallace and Rod Vogt enjoyed the “Fish Hook” and meeting our NSW fellow Healey enthusiasts. We will aim for stronger Victorian support in future years.

4 Peter and Anne Stanley “managed” Team Healey to a brilliant 3rd place at the Winton Six Hour Relay Race in October with Peter Williams 3000 and Geoff Leake 100 ably backed by some Sprite Club members. Great to see big and little Healeys together.

5 Probably most pleasing was the tremendous support for the club level sprint/regularity Marque Sports Car Association CAMS Level 2 S competition run over 9 rounds for 2008 (similar to CSCA in NSW and MSCASA in South Australia). Tim Westover, Cary Helenius, Rob Raverty, Bill Vaughan, Leon O’Brien, Bill Petschack, Hugh Purse, Colin Wallace, Russell Baker and Rod Vogt were regulars and appreciated the support of Peter Jackson and Geoff Leake (twice), and Brian Dermot (once) to show us how it should be done.

2008 COMPEITION CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS:

1st PETER JACKSON
2nd RUSS BAKER
3rd GEOFF LEAKE

ROD VOGT
Competition/MSCA

Trophy Winners
AHOC - Vic

Concours d’Elegance and Show’n’Shine
Show Car Award -
John & Fay Raisbeck (Rally Replica)
Best Healey in the 100 Class -
Warren & Heather Gartner
Best 6-Cylinder Roadster -
Andrew & Kaylene Nielsen
Best BJ8 Convertible -
Simon & Julie Maan
Master Class -
Bill & Jeane Metcalf (BN6)
John Hope Trophy for “Most Original” car -
Simon & Julie Maan

Club Trophies
Club Champion -
Leon O’Brien
Presidents Award -
Rod Vogt
Editors Award -
Anne Kruger

Donald Healey Trophy -
Peter Jackson

Competition
Competition Champion -
Peter Jackson
Runner-up in the Competition Championship -Russel Baker
Third in Competition Championship -
Geoff Leake
Our South Pacific Editor, Patrick Quinn, recently caught up with ex-British Motor Corporation works driver John Sprinzel in Sydney, while John was on a brief visit to Australia.

**What brings you to Australia, John?**

Sprinzel: 2008 is the 50th birthday of the Austin-Healey Sprite, and I was invited by the Victorian Sprite Club to come and help celebrate the occasion. As I am also the patron of the Sprite club in New South Wales, it would have been remiss of me not to visit here as well.

**You currently live in Hawaii, don’t you?**

Sprinzel: Yes, we’ve been in Hawaii for over 26 years. When I retired from motor sport, I took up windsurfing with my wife Caryl. I am probably the oldest windsurfer in the world.

We first moved to Greece from England and established a windsurfing school. Actually, we represented Greece in the world championships three years running. Not that we’re that good, but the Greeks weren’t into windsurfing. After that, we came to Hawaii for some of the best windsurfing in the world.

**How did you start out in motor sport?**

Sprinzel: It was the mid-1950s and I was more into crewing ocean racing yachts and actually had no interest in cars whatsoever, but was very interested in racing motorcycles.

I was at a party with a very good friend and both of us were looking at a copy of Autosport. Inside, there was a small note stating that entries to the RAC Rally opened the next day. Always on the lookout for some fun, I suggested that we could have a go at the rally.

So, the next day, we went down to the Royal Automobile Club, and we were the first to register and they gave us car number 1. That felt good, but then we asked ourselves what car we were going to use. My mate said that we couldn’t use his father’s car as he needed it for his job as a sales representative. So, I called my mum on the phone and asked her if we could borrow her car for a driving holiday around Wales in March. My mum was a good sport and said “yes” immediately. That was okay, but there was one snag. Being number 1 meant that we were first away from the start in Hastings, and the mayor gave us a letter to present to the mayor of Blackpool, where the rally was to finish. That was okay, too, but it was on TV, and mum and dad were watching. Later, I heard that mum had said to dad, “That looks like John! That looks like my car!” As I said, mum was a good sport.

That was my start, and we came 5th in class out of 20-odd cars. In those days you used to get over 300 entries in the RAC, Monte Carlo, and rallies like that. So, we thought we’d done quite well, and we went three up with my ex-wife and looked fearless in an Austin A30 would you believe; so we thought we were really good. It was a very icy rally, snow and ice everywhere, so it sort of evened the playing field.

So, that’s how I started, and soon I got really keen and bombarded Marcus Chambers the BMC Competition Manager at Abingdon with letters about how wonderful I was and how great it would be to have me on the BMC team. I did another year of rallying on my own and then swapped the A30 for a TR2, which seemed to be winning everything anyway. Then due to the Suez fuel crisis, I swapped back for an A35, which turned out to be a really good little car in a good class. I was bright enough to know that the class you go in counts very much for the results, and the results mean very much for whether you are going to get a works drive or not. The A35 just happened to be perfect, as everyone else was in TRs. So, I won a few classes and a few rallies, and then moved on to racing and was lucky enough to win my first race. In the end, due to the fuel crisis, BMC was going to the Italian Sestriere Rally because they couldn’t do the Monte, as there was no petrol in France. Marcus asked if I would like to come along and said, “We will prepare your car for you.”

So, I was kind of a works-assisted entry and I’d beat all the Works small cars like Triumph, Standard, Morris, and the others. So I kind of got a nice bit of journalistic coverage.

**Wasn’t Pat Moss in that rally?**

Sprinzel: No, Pat wasn’t there, but Annie Wisdom was there with her father Tommy in one of the first major outings for a Big Healey. Pat was a great friend and it was so sad when she died not long ago. I introduced her to her husband, Eric Carlson. I co-drove for him and introduced them on a Liège rally, and they met again on a Swedish rally when we went to his house, and that’s how they got involved.

Ah, wonderful! How did Speedwell come about?

Sprinzel: Well, just after that, we started Speedwell Performance Conversions in September 1957, and around that time I did several rallies supported by
BMC—the Tulip, Liège, and a few national rallies. My first race in England was at the International Meeting at Goodwood, which I luckily won. I was interviewed by John Bolster, who was the well-known commentator in those days. He had a few minutes between races and sat me in the pit counter. I was in jeans and checked shirt, which is what we wore in those days, no racing overalls. John asked how come my car went so quickly. I said we did it at Speedwell.

Speedwell was my father’s trade name for his decal business. He was a printer where I was apprenticed, and it was the first name that came to my mind. On the Monday morning after, especially if you have been on television in those days when there were only two channels, we got loads of phone calls, all asking if we could do their cars!

At lunchtime, I used to meet with a guy called Len Adams and an American named George Hulbert. We were all mad keen about motor sport and hung around for a few years before that. We agreed that we had to take advantage of this, as these people wanted conversions to their cars. So we opened up a business, working part time, and it got so successful, so quickly. Then, a young man named Graham Hill walked in the door during my printing morning shift and said, “I hear you need some mechanics!”

At the time, Graham was the works boss for the engines at Lotus, and Colin Chapman wouldn’t let him race because he was too good at engines. So I said, “Sure!” He came to work for us, and later did his drive at Lotus and finished up World Champion—a very, very competent driver. In the end I sold out to Graham, because Speedwell by then had four partners and two wanting to go into the speed business with boxed goodies, flash labels, and all this stuff, while George and I just really wanted to build individual cars for individual people.

So I sold the business to Graham, who became chairman and I went to work for Donald Healey to start a speed equipment division for him in London. We did this for about a year, but the rent on Grosvenor Street near the American embassy was so enormous and there was no way you could make a tuning business pay in the middle of town, never mind about the parking fines. So, I bought the speed equipment business from Donald, and kind of went into opposition, because Geoff Healey was still doing speed equipment for Healey in Warwick and we found a little place in London. I put an ad in the Evening Standard newspaper looking for a mechanic and employed a really good guy to be our works foreman; his name was Paul Hawkins. Paul literally came straight off the boat from Australia. He’d done a little bit of racing and was a very good mechanic, very good as he knew his stuff, and certainly knew the best parts of the English language, too.

He was never lost for words, was he?

Sprinzel: Right up to 1961, they were the Bugeyes with the quarter-elliptic rear suspension that I loved, because the back was lovely and smooth and floppy. If you put a nice anti-roll bar at the front, you didn’t get wheel lift or wheelspin. The later model with the stiffer half-elliptics used to lift the wheel a lot and you had to really work at the front to keep it from losing traction, which is kind of an important thing, because we were racing and rallying. I mean, I wasn’t just a rally driver, because all through ’58 I had raced my Austin A35 for Speedwell and we led the first British Touring Car Championship all year long. I only lost to Tommy Sopwith in his Jaguar and the Austin A105 of Jack Sears, because I missed one fastest lap, which dropped me out of the lead at Mallory Park.

We raced the Sprite quite a bit, and then when I joined Healey’s, I raced at Sebring beforehand. I would have driven at Le Mans, except that I broke my wrist in a rally in Greece, and it took a while to get the car back, and at Le Mans they won’t let you drive when you have your arm in a cast. Especially when you’re in a good car that they think might win. I must say that Le Mans had little rules of their own.

On one occasion, they made them repaint a Healey because they said the color would upset the other drivers, so they made them repaint it between scrutineering and the race. With the funny little
Our Vice President, John Read is a stickler for eating out, can’t hold him back. John started the year off by arranging a great family night out early in January at a recently refurbished Hotel. Good food, good company, a great night and a good start for 2008.

Continuing in this relaxed manner late January saw 20 members on a morning brunch run to Beachfront Café, where we indulged in all the wrong things for breakfast and then remained, sitting at the waters edge, yarning for most of the morning. Then we invaded the new dwelling of the Hindson’s, where we continued with the chatter and eating until late in the day.

Every February Adelaide holds one of the best All British Days in Australia. The 2008 event was even bigger and brighter with 750 British vehicles on display. There was some early panic with temperatures forecast to be in the very high 30s, but fortunately 28 was the order on the day. Some 24 Healeys were on display to the 5,000 plus people who visited the display at the Uraidla Showgrounds. It is great that Club members are viewing this type of event as an opportunity to show our treasures to the world. The Sprite Club was Featured Club in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Bug Eye with 54 Sprites turning out for their display.

February saw our Club move into new meeting quarters - the Public Schools Club. Located on the eastern side of the Adelaide CBD it has a Restaurant, three meeting areas, wood panelling and old world décor. Our Club is to become a member of this organisation and thus we have a home at last. Our general meetings are held every second month with the alternate months classed as a Club Night. This is when members and partners have a casual meal night with a quick activity update mid-meal. Due to the set-up of this establishment it’s an arrangement that suits us well.

March offered another chance to display our vehicles with our Annual Display Day held on the Fishermans Wharf at Port Adelaide. Due to the daily temperatures being in the low 40s the crowd at the Fishermans Wharf Market was down on the usual, but we still managed 18 Healeys and quite a reasonable public turnout. Being sited next to the water, we were seated under sails on artificial lawn we still managed to enjoy a rather pleasant day. Travelling home on the hot tarmac was another story.

Early on March 17th four Austin-Healeys and a support Commodore left Adelaide and headed east for the NSW 2008 National Rally in Port Stephens. Nothing unusual about that except the weather was extremely HOT with a promised 42 degrees starting to show. By the time a late lunch was called at 2.00pm the Healeys had just crossed the Murray at Tooleybuc with inside Healey temperatures at 45. The cars were fine but the occupants were melting. Cool air vents only allowed hot air off the road to invade and driving with the doors open hardly changed the atmosphere either. After a cool cheese and ham sandwich (Henry Ford type menu selection), a drink and a rest in the Tooleybuc Club, the outside heat did not seem so daunting, so off to Balranald for a quite evening. Quite an experience. This adventurous group continued slowly on through the NSW
countryside sightseeing on good secondary roads away from the main stream traffic to arrive at Port Stephens midday on Registration Friday. 17 South Aussies attended this rally which was a great event with plenty to do with little stress. Ralph Boord, AHOC of SA, deservedly won the Tappet Cover Racing Championship trophy.

The Annual Dinner and Award Night was held at the famous Grange Golf Club in June.

This dress-up night was well attended and we all enjoyed a great night. Kent Farminer received the Peoples Choice award for the Best Healey at the Display Day. Yours truly received the Club Champion award for attendance at Club events and Don Polkinghorne deservedly won the Luke Trevonivic Memorial Trophy for being the most energetic and active member for the year.

June also saw the inaugural mid-week ROF and Wannabe lunch run. These midweek runs have continued on a bimonthly basis for retirees with nothing better to do and about 16 members enjoy these runs.

July saw the Annual General Meeting held in our new headquarters and I am please to report that, after 6 years at the helm, Gavin Williams replaced me as President of the AHOC of SA. David Woollard took on Treasurer, Kent Farminer as Secretary and Peter Barreau are the other new committee faces.

The rest of the year continued smoothly with numerous weekend lunch runs to Clare, McLaren Vale and similar areas finishing in December with our annual Christmas Party. This year we had the use of Bronte and Grant Trotter’s home and 70 members enjoyed the Club sponsored, fully catered Christmas spread. The Trotters must be gluttons for punishment as the time to prepare the place before, and then clean up after, the event must be quite daunting.

2008 was a great year for the AHOC of South Australia finishing with 87 Family memberships.

Happy Healeying to you all. Ian Hay. Immediate Past President, AHOC Inc. S. Aust.
(continued from page 57)

Falcon-bodied Sprite, I drove at Sebring, where most of your body was sticking up past the bodywork; they were made to fit a huge windscreen on it to slow it down, but it still won its class. I drove that with Johnny Colgate, who I saw just last year at a Healey meet. It was like yesterday, it was just like we had left each other in the Stork Club in New York, which was the last time I saw him; shows how long ago that was. Great guy!

What happened after you bought the business from Healey’s?
Sprinzel: We moved to Lancaster Mews and ended up with a really thriving business. We were the biggest selling MG dealer in the world, as I had the American bases in rivalry to Healey’s. We were also the Marcos distributor, and that’s how it met my wife when I sold her a Marcos. It was a great competition with Allan Foster who used to race MG Midgets for Dickie Jacobs who had an MG dealership and another guy in London. We used to go around the distributors and look at the sales charts to see who was leading. It was great fun. You have to be competitive in everything don’t you?

You kept on racing then?
Sprinzel: Yes, we won the 6-hour relay a couple of times at Silverstone, which was great fun. The last time I raced there was when I was driving for Triumph in GTs that had been at Le Mans. We bought the three of them for the 6-hour race for my friend Pete Riley, Pauline Mayment, and me. That was my last real motor race; well maybe the Ford Galaxie was after that. I raced the Galaxie in a 6-hour race or something after that.

It was the first Galaxie in England, and had belonged to a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force. He brought it over to do sprints, and it had a Holman and Moody engine, Hurst shifter and all this stuff, except for a good suspension. He was doing sprints, and I got the biggest start money I ever got in my entire career because Nick Sorate, the boss of the British Racing Sports Car Club, wanted it there to run against the Jaguars. So he gave me this huge start money and, when it came to the race, Jack Brabham and Dan Gurney also had one, as did Gawaine Baillie and Peter Jock. So, he could have got me for a hundred bucks. Funny thing was, just before the start, the heavens opened, and Brands Hatch has a lot of rivers running across it. So, if you’re on tires that aren’t good, you’re as good as, well I won’t use the word “dead,” but close to it. It was literally a river running and every lap you hit that, and you could let go of the steering wheel, like all the good it’s going to do. So, anyway, I have got two sets of rain tires which I had spent all my start money on, and we were on the start line just behind Jack.

Both Jack and Dan came over and said, “Oh, John, you’ve got some rain tires!” I said, “Yeah!” I knew Jack, as we were both in the tuning business and he said, “So you want to sell me a pair?” So they jack up this car on the start line with a 5-minute gun gone and the marshals and organizers went berserk and Jack said, “We’re just changing the tires.” That was on the start line. You wouldn’t get away with that today—but that was fun.

What happened after Healey’s?
Sprinzel: We started John Sprinzel racing in Lancaster Mews. I used to take apprentices on in those days, take a good guy from school and, in those days, if I put an ad in Autosport I’d get 50–60 applications, and for the interviews, they’d bring their parents to interview me. I mean things were different, and the kids all wanted to be apprentices of John Sprinzel Racing you know; it sounded so cool and I got some really good apprentices.

I think the word “racing” was very attractive, but the parents came to find out about this bloke who was going to have their son for the next 3 years. I let them go to college, one or two days a week, and we had some really good mechanics. I mean Paul Hawkins was a good man who worked by my side, and a guy called Reg Banner who was from St. Vincent in the Caribbean. He was about 6 foot 3, God knows how heavy he was, but he could lift an A35 or a Sprite engine out on his own—wonderful mechanic. He’d been working on my car since the very first days in ’57; good guy.

So, we had good people trained by these expert mechanics and, when they had finished their apprenticeship, they’d come up to me and say, “Well boss! What am I going to do now?” So, for the first one, I leased another garage and another dealership and put them in charge. Then the next apprentice would qualify and would say, “Well, you bought Steve a garage, what about me?” So, I finished up with 14 dealerships, and we were selling 5,000 new cars a year, which kind of gave you a little bit of pull with British Leyland—or so I thought; They were hopeless; I’ve never known such a mismanaged bunch. On one occasion, one of my friends overheard two of the directors talking to each other and saying, “We’ve got to watch this Sprinzel, he sells too many cars.” I thought that’s what we were supposed to be doing. They had a very strange way of thinking.

So, times with Sprites eventually came to a finish. Sprinzel: Yes, it did, and I moved on to Triumph, when they brought out the TR4, but I was pretty old by then, especially for special stage rallies. I suppose that as I had done so many events, they
wanted a captain who could kind of bring the youngsters on. We had Vic Elford and Mike Sutcliff, but you know I was kind of senior. Graham Robson was there as Competition Secretary. We had the smallest budget in the entire universe, and to get aluminum parts for the Triumphs you had to go in on a Saturday, talk to the union guys, and drop them a few quid. They would put these sheets in the presses until you had wings and bonnets and stuff—all off the record. Sid Hurrell did the engines; S.A.H. Triumph were the big Triumph tuners in those days, but it was all off the books. How Graham managed I’ll never know, but he did very well with the budget he had. Ken Richardson who ran the Triumph TR2 and 3 teams was very, very famous, and a good team manager. Stuart Turner and I drove for him and he would never let you do anything to the car. They took the cars off the assembly line, assembled them properly, sent them out on the local main road to be run-in, and that was it. If I said the pedals are too close together, Richardson would say, “Buy narrower shoes.” Whereas Graham was the total opposite, and if you wanted something, he would try and get it done, even on his budget.

Tell me about the Safari rally?
Sprinzel: I drove the Safari rally, and I beat all the works-entered Mercedes in a privately owned model. That was the first time I went in, and that got me a couple of drives with Ford in Cortinas and then a drive with Peugeot. I think I was the first non-East-African to drive for Peugeot in the Safari. That would have been in 1965 or ’66 and was great fun; but with the Peugeot, unfortunately, somebody had left the bush out on the steering, so the rack would move from side to side so you tended to leap off the road even on a straight road, which is a bit embarrassing.

Earlier with the Cortina, I thought I was going to do best with—well, Vic Elford drove it on the recce and wrote it off totally. So they gave me a new Cortina out of the showroom and said, “Well, we’re a bit busy, can you prepare it yourself.”

So in four days, with my codriver Peter Garnier, we built a rally Cortina in the Nairobi workshops. What we couldn’t do was to weld all the seams. If you know about Cortinas and Fords in general, unless you weld the seams which are just spot welded you’re in trouble. On a really rough rally like the Safari, they just split and we found ourselves on the third day actually going very well, but not for very much longer.

Then I took a Range Rover, the first 4WD car on an international rally, even before the Audis. That was fine until we shipped the cars as deck cargo to Mombassa from England, and in those days they didn’t plate the fuel tanks properly. So, on the way across, the salt air must have rusted the inside of the tanks, which just filled the carburetor up with rust particles, and it just went slower and slower and slower ‘til it stopped.

So that was all mid-’60s, wasn’t it?
Sprinzel: I think I won my last rally in ’62, but managed quite a few placings from time to time after that, but you know I was fast approaching 40 and, while I still wanted to compete, there was no way anyone will pay you to do it, where there was all those youngsters coming up.

Very different from today, as during the ’50s we were all gentlemen farmers and the people who knew the boss, got works drives. Pat Moss and I, along with Peter Harper, were the first people who were trying to make a living out of motor sport. Then Paddy Hopkirk came along, because he was a motor dealer in Northern Ireland. Pat Moss and I opened his speed shop in Belfast. It was before the “Troubles,” and I know the hotel we stayed at was subsequently blown up about seven times.

I had my worst ever accident in Ireland; I don’t remember anything about it, but it was an 1275 MG Midget on the Circuit of Ireland and we were leading the class. I think it was the 2nd or 3rd day and we were approaching Limerick, and I was told afterward that I pulled up at a crossroads with a convoy of cars, and every vehicle went across one at a time. It was pouring rain apparently, and I got nearly across, and a marshal in a Morris Minor was coming down the road and, when he saw all these cars going across, hit the brakes and spun into me. We finished up in intensive care next to each other in Limerick hospital—so I did all the ribs, and the lungs, collarbone, concussion, and all that.

So, after motor sport, you went back to sailing.
Sprinzel: Yes, after a frustrating few rounds of golf, we went into windsurfing and then moved to Greece to open a windsurfing school. It did quite well and made the best earnings in all my life for just 6 months each year. Then, we did the same in Turkey before traveling the world looking for more places that might be good for windsurfing. Eventually, we found Hawaii, and we stayed.
Greetings to all Austin-Healey club members around Australia from Queensland.

One of the unexpected joys of taking up a committee role is the opportunity to review the club’s activities for the past year without having taken any notes because you didn’t know that you would need them. Luckily given the average age of Austin-Healey owners, I have no doubt that no one else will remember the events that I have forgotten to mention!!

Our post 2007 rally committee put in some great efforts to keep the momentum going. While I have acknowledged them a number of times, I simply can’t resist the opportunity to once again thank our dynamic duo, Tim and Elaine Robertson for the events they organised through the year.

Our year kicked off with a cobweb waking run to “Polly’s Country Kitchen” for the evening meal.

Before we knew it, Easter was on us and a record 65 Queensland members descended on Port Stephens for a terrific NSW rally. One of the great things about holding a rally in your state is the enthusiasm it develops in member participation and that obviously flowed on to the NSW rally. We all had a great time with some of the costumes on the boat cruise making some people unrecognisable. One of our members admitted to spending the evening with Jon and Kerry Rowe and not recognising them at all.

Even the trip home was memorable for some when the infamous “Navman” made a re-appearance taking 4 Healeys up a 1.5 hour cruise along corrugated dirt roads to the astonishment of four-wheel-driving locals.

A boys run to Leyburn for the annual sprint races to watch Phil Cuthbert peddle the Yellow Budgie around the streets of Leyburn saw Rod Shepherd's almost restored 100/6 get its first bit of punishment. One has to admire Rod’s passion for driving as he borrowed seats from another car under restoration, just so he could drive it sooner. At the time of writing it was planned that the car will be fully upholstered by the time Rod and I leave for Perth at Easter.

Another event that attracted aircraft fanatics was an early morning run out to Watts Bridge near Esk for the annual Historic aircraft fly in. Some absolutely fantastic historic planes flew in for a display day. The money spent on these aircraft made our Healeys look like hobby cars. Sadly, two glider pilots were killed in a crash the next day when they hit a fence while attempting to land.

Tim and Elaine tracked down the band that played at the presentation night at the 2007 Rally and organised another night of dancing to Credence Clearwater Revival music. We all thought it was great that they were able to secure tables right in front of the band until they fired up their instruments and we all immediately lost another 10% of our hearing.

A lot of excitement through the club as our international Healeyists discussed their upcoming plans to take their cars to Sweden for the International Rally along with a send off party organised by Tim and Elaine. A number of members also attended without their cars and stories and photos keep arriving and are a regular event at our monthly meetings.

Later there was a very sad event for our club when Gold Coast member Bob Nesbitt
succumbed to a tumour that surfaced while he and Marilyn Gay were touring through Europe on their way to Sweden on a ‘boy’s own’ adventure camping in a Bugeye Sprite. A large number of members attended Bob’s funeral and a cavalcade of Healeys formed a guard of honour for him. Jim Berting wrote and delivered a great story about Bob at the service and Pam Pierce also wrote and delivered a terrific poem.

Past president and long time club member Nigel Quinsee also passed away late in the year.

Another Tim and Elaine organised run was to Mount Mee that bought out all of the navigators. Since then I have been reminded more than once that a long drive (1 hour) with good food and wine as a reward is what at least 50% of our membership are expecting from now on. Probably the reason why we had 6 Healeys turn up at the MG concours at Sirromet Winery a few weeks later.

Late in the year all attention turned to the Northern Rivers with the now famous club tennis day at Bob and Pam Pierces banana plantation which is preceded by a Healey drive through the hills of Northern NSW. Enough turns to unscrew the spinners off a set of spoked wheels made for an interesting run.

We were back to the same area a few weeks later for the last ‘Speed on Tweed’ event. Although current talk is that it will resurface in 2010 and run every 2 years. Oddly, this was the first time I had been to this event and I was amazed at the complexity yet smoothness that seemed to surround every part of the day and left with total admiration for the people who put it together.

Club member, Myles Patching drove his 100 with distinction over the two days after competing in a friend’s car, a 1926 Lea Francis Brooklands Special the previous year. Just when we thought we had seen enough of NSW, the Gold Coast chapter held its Christmas party at Fay Bryant and Ray Hick’s beautiful property outside of Bangalow and the run involved turning just about every other corner in Northern NSW that Bob and Pam missed. A great lunch catered by 2 chefs and equally great company made it a day to remember.

Our year finished with another Tim and Elaine organised event, with a 1 hour drive that ended at a winery that served great food and wine. They know how to please that 50% of the members!!! Great day with the yearly awards going to:

Chris Miles for his article on the trip to Leyburn.

Miles Patching for his drives at Speed on Tweed

Helen Standfast as the undisputed women’s driver of the year after driving around Europe.

Tim and Elaine Robertson as joint Clubmanship winners

Bob Nesbitt was posthumously awarded the Club Champion trophy.

Our 2008 committee has left us with a high mark to reach and we have started the year with some great stuff which I had better write down now for next year’s yearbook.

Wayne Rabnott
QLD President
A Victorian View