

# HEALEY HAPPENINGS



**APRIL 2025**

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Carolinas Austin-Healey  
Club**

*Healey Happenings* is the official publication of the Carolinas Austin-Healey Club and is published January through November.

Membership in the Carolinas Austin-Healey Club is open to all owners of Austin and Jensen Healeys and to all others who have an interest in the car, or the purpose of the club. Ownership of a Healey is not required for membership, nor is driving a Healey required to participate in events.

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

Officers, Editor, Meeting,	
Membership	2
President's Message	3
SIA Interview	4-8
Past Events	10-14
Upcoming Events	15-17
Regalia	18
Classified	19-21
Club Calendar	22-24

## SAVE THE DATES

**April 10-13, 2025** The Gathering at Shelton Vineyards, Dobson, NC

**Caravans: Saturday the 12th on backroads. Meet Glenn (Morris Minor) Knight at Cosco in Mooresville exit 35 off I77. Leaving promptly at 8:00 am**

**Dick Lunney will lead a group up I-77 leaving from the Quik-Trip at exit 28 in Cornelius at 8:45 am**

**April 19, 2025** Garden Tour at the Bove's  
**3:00 PM** 5119 Bevington Place, CLT

**Details will follow in a group email. Stay Tuned**

**April 26, 2025** Broad River Classic Dog Head Farm, Twin Chimney Rd.  
**9:00 AM** Shelby, NC

**May 30, 2025** **NOTICE NEW DATE is on Friday**  
**Club Meeting and Drive to Landsford Canal State Park to view the Rocky Shoals Spider Lilies 2051 Park Drive, Catawba, SC**

**May 18-23, 2025** CONCLAVE Branson, MO

**June 11-13 2025** Trip to West Jefferson River House Inn and Restaurant @ Grassy Creek.

**July 31-August 3 2025** Annual Mountain Trip, Waynesville, NC

**September 18-21, 2025** Southeastern Classic XXXVIII  
Franklin, TN

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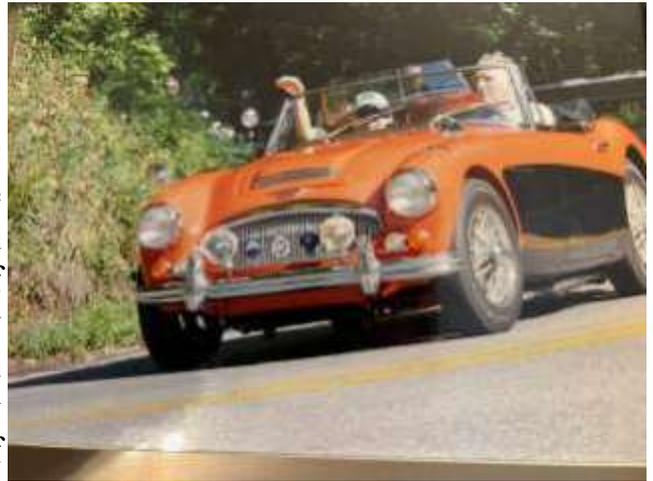
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### **EDITOR'S NOTES/**

Later in this edition I hope you enjoy an interview of Donald Healey that appeared in the February 1982 edition of Special Interest



Autos. The copy that follows is from the November 1984 edition of Healey Happenings just prior to my taking over as 2nd VP and Newsletter Editor. Back then the 2nd VP also published the newsletter just like this year. That changed when it got harder to find a 2nd VP and we were able to trick a poor soul into becoming a semi permanent editor. **Now that the 2nd VP position is a piece of cake, we are still looking for someone to raise their hand.**

### **CLUB MEETINGS**

For dates, times and places please see our club calendar which will be in each newsletter January through November and on our website [www.carolinasahc.com](http://www.carolinasahc.com)

### **Newsletter**

Submissions to the newsletter can be sent at any time to Ed Farnell. Deadline is the 5th of each month.

Classified "For Sale" ads: Advertising British cars for sale are FREE to members. Ads selling Healey parts, or Healey related items are FREE to all. Non-member "Cars for Sale" are \$10.00 per issue. Send information (photos should be jpg format) to eafarnell@gmail.com All Commercial Ads: Advertise your business in the Healey Happenings! Annual display ad rates are as follows:

Half Page 5" X 8" \$150.00 per year  
Quarter Page \$100.00 per year  
Business Card \$ 50.00 per year



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone!

Hope everyone has been able to get out and enjoy this beautiful Carolina weather!

First off, I'd like to thank John Jones and Stuart Shepherd for presenting the Spring Tune up session. We had a great turnout and I hope everyone that attended felt a little smarter afterwards. If John and Stuart don't know it, I'm not sure it needs to be known when it comes to Healey's. I know I always feel like I've learned something when I'm around those two for any length of time.

If you didn't get to join us at the Carolina British Classic Show, you missed a great time. The cars were beautiful, the Games were interesting, and the bagpipes were playing! Don't think the bagpipes will ever make my personal play list but I can appreciate the talent.

This coming weekend is The Gathering at Shelton Vineyards and I hope everyone can make it. I know the issues with the hotel rooms created some problems but hopefully the Carolina Club will be well represented. I am planning on going up early Saturday morning and will be helping the Triumph club with parking. If anyone else would like to volunteer that would be great.

A lot of events are in front of us so I hope everyone is rested up and ready to go!! Also, we are still in search of our 2<sup>nd</sup> VP. I encourage anyone that wants to have more of a say in the future of the club to step up.



I HOPE YOU ENJOY GETTING TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SPORTS CAR WE ALL LOVE THROUGH THIS 1982 SPECIAL INTEREST AUTOS INTERVIEW WITH DONALD M. HEALEY. I ANTICIPATE SEEING MORE INFORMATION OF THIS TYPE IN THE CHATTER AS A RESULT OF JIM DAUGHERTY'S RECENT INTERVIEW WITH DONALD HEALEY AT CONCLAVE '84. KC. AHCA

IT WAS OUR extremely good fortune that precisely at the time when we were scheduled to travel to Los Angeles to do the driveReport on Fred Cohen's Austin-Healey 100-M, Fred was entertaining a house guest: Donald Healey! Eighty-three years old now, the originator of the Austin-Healey (and many other memorable automobiles) is a sharp, lively, delightfully witty gentleman. Upon being introduced to Mr. Healey we inquired whether he is to be addressed as "Sir Donald." "No," he replied. "The Queen has conferred upon me the Order of Commander of the British Empire. That's one step below knighthood." We then observed that since Prince Charles is a sports car buff, perhaps when he succeeds to the throne the knighthood will be granted. Donald Healey's eyes sparkled in an impish grin crossed his face. "Oh," he said, "that will be rather too late for me, I fancy!" Then, in a thoughtful aside with reference to the Prince, he added, "Poor chap!"

Our interview with Mr. Healey lasted well over an hour, as short an hour as we've ever experienced. Here are some of the highlights:

SIA: We understand that your father had cars when you were a boy. Tell us about him, and about his cars.

DH: His first car was a Panhard-Levassor. French car, with a peculiarity I'll always remember. It had "hot-tube" ignition. That is, you lighted a blow-lamp and warmed up the tubes which extended into the cylinder head. He did a great engineering job, I thought; he transferred it to a Bosch magneto, driven by a bicycle chain. My first memory of him and motorcars is him breaking his arm cranking it!

Then some years after that, 1914-1915 I suppose, the war years, he had a Regal Motor Company car, made in the United States. It had an underslung frame. Most unusual. That was a four-seater open car.

SIA: That would have been about the time you joined the Royal Flying Corps?

DH: I can't remember accurately whether that was when I went in or when I came out. Because I had an

# SIA Interview: Donald Healey

by Alex Meredith



photo by Vince Manocchi

aviator's certificate before I had a road license.

SIA: In American terms, you were licensed to fly before you were licensed to drive?

DH: Yes. The only thing I could drive was a motorcycle. You could drive a motorcycle when you were 16, but you couldn't drive a car until you were 17. I started to fly when I was 16. But then the war was on. I was in the Flying Corps, and you couldn't get to drive anything.

SIA: Then following World War I you went to work at Triumph?

DH: No. Halfway through the war I was invalided out of the Flying Corps due to a crash in France, and I went into the Air Ministry in the aeronautical inspection department. I stayed in that until about 1920, 1921. During that period I did my engineering studies, preparatory to going into the automobile industry. I wasn't able to go straight into the industry because my health was so bad, and I opened up a repair shop and worked in that for a year or two.

And then I started driving competitively. I did some racing in a car called the ABC, which you've never heard of! My biggest successes were in a car called the Invicta, a four-liter car. I had my first success in winning the Monte Carlo Rally. That was mixed up with some successes with the Triumph. I once drove a Triumph "Seven" with a maximum speed of 48 miles an hour, competing in the Monte Carlo race. We arrived three minutes late. Somehow we didn't qualify! A few years later I did finish second in a Triumph, and then third again.

SIA: What was Triumph building at that time?

DH: Triumph was then building a seven-horsepower car. They advanced to a ten-horsepower job. The Triumph "Southern Cross" was one that I did. That was in 1934—there's a good guess! I joined Triumph in 1933 or '34 as experimental manager for both cars and motorcycles. They were then building the best motorcycles in the world. Then I went over the whole time on cars, and became technical director. I held

that job until the war started. During that time we made a series of cars called the Gloria, the Southern Cross, the Dolomite.

The first Dolomite was an eight-cylinder in which I pulled an Alfa-Romeo eight-cylinder racing car apart and copied the engine, nut and bolt, as closely as I could in English dimensions.

SIA: We thought only the Japanese did that!

DH: Even Rolls-Royce did it! Rolls had no idea how to make V-8s, so they were wise to go to one of the best engines of its kind, Chrysler. The Americans had all those years of experience making V-8s. So I don't apologize for making that copy!

SIA: That was in the Dolomite?

DH: That was in the eight-cylinder Dolomite, yes. That car never went into production because the first prototype was wrecked when a train hit me in northern Germany—cut the front of the car off and didn't hurt us. The second one I ran in the Monte Carlo Rally. That one was a two-and-a-half liter without a

supercharger. And then that and a box of parts, unfinished engines and cars, were sold. The car seems to have disappeared.

Then there were the war years. I went into the RAF Training Command and then out of that into armored car work.

At the end of the war, when the war was still drifting on, I decided to design a postwar Healey, using an engine supplied to me by a very old friend who made the Riley car, Victor Riley. There were no engines available at that time, but he'd got a few stored away underground somewhere during the war years, and he let me have one. And that was the first of the Healeys.

SIA: That was introduced when, late 1945?

DH: Forty-six.

SIA: Let's go back to the Dolomite for a moment. Were just the two of them built?

DH: Well, we probably built three engines and two cars. There must have been two cars because I wrecked one! It was a beautiful car.

*At this point, Russ Thompson, who was responsible for the restoration of our driveReport car, joined the conversation.*

RT: Was that the accident where you thought the train whistle was the supercharger?

DH: I heard this screaming noise and I said to my mate, "This bloody supercharger's seized up!" But it was no supercharger, and there we were, sitting. There was no front on the car! This chap said, "My mouth's bleeding!" He'd knocked his tooth out.

They took us to the police station because I had to prove to them that I had insurance to cover damage to the train! They held us there for a couple of days. But the funny thing was, we felt no pain until a whole day after, and then neither of us could move. We were stiff as could be! Probably started my hip on its way. [Mr. Healey recently underwent surgery for the replacement of his left hip joint.] The orthopedic man told me, "Yours is a typical overworked hip!" It was probably from pushing out cone clutches with straight-tooth gears!

SIA: In developing that first Healey you were teamed with [A.C.] Sampietro, [Ben] Bowden and [James] Watt, right?

DH: Sampietro was working with me in armored car research in the Humber company. He was an alien, being an Italian, and he was working under license. Bowden was the body designer at Humber. Watt was an active pilot in the Air Force, and I had a good connection with the Air Force because I was in the training command. It was one of the big jokes of my Healey that—you know when you make drawings, you make tracings for production pur-

## "...all the tracings on the Healey were made by women Air Force personnel at an Air Force station!"

poses. And all the tracings on the Healey were made by women Air Force personnel at an Air Force station!

Then when I started making the Healey we did it in our evenings during the war, Sampietro, Bowden and myself. Sampietro's contribution was the most expensive suspension that's ever been built on a motorcar. That was these high-duty alloy links and very expensive bearings. Quite an impossible design for production, but we didn't think it would matter when we only made two or three cars a week.

So we did the whole car in the last year of the war, when we were waiting to know whether it was all over or not—while you Americans were finishing off the Japan job. Then after the war I formed a very small company, mostly with my father's money, and I got one or two friends to subscribe. One of them was Watt. He was the sales direc-

## "Then we were doing the most complicated manufacture of motorcars you could ever believe."

tor of the company. Did a good job of selling them, but unfortunately he passed away after a few years. Sampietro and Bowden couldn't see any future in my little company, and they departed to America.

The original Healey cars were the Westland and a sedan on exactly the same lines which we called the Elliot; and I suppose the most famous of that line was the Silverstone. It was a short-chassis edition of the Westland. Had a Riley engine. But I suppose what made it famous was that I had an order from Briggs Cunningham for some of the Silverstones and one was equipped with a Cadillac motor. And that car I'd like to find! I have no idea where it is.

I've an idea it was wrecked. There's no Healey in [Cunningham's] museum, and if there was one it would be that one.

SIA: What happened to the balance of the Silverstone when you popped a Cadillac V-8 in it?

DH: Terrific improvement! Because the Cadillac V-8 didn't weigh any more than the Riley engine. Perhaps a shade lighter.

I went to Cadillac to meet Ed Cole, to see whether he could let me have some engines, to tool up for production of these [cars] in small numbers. He said, "We'd like to do it, but we haven't got enough engines to satisfy even our truck line." So he couldn't promise us any engines. But I had met George Mason, president of Nash-Kelvinator, and he said, "If you don't get engines from Ed, come back and see me."

SIA: We'd often wondered about that. The Nash Ambassador engine was as good as you'd find anywhere from a durability standpoint, but it wasn't performance engine. A Hudson-Healey or a Ford-Healey would have made better sense.

DH: It was doing something under a hundred horsepower. We raised the compression ratio, altered the manifolds. We got it up to perhaps 106, not more. And it ran third at LeMans, as you know. Fantastic! Kept going 24 hours without a break.

SIA: The Nash-Healey always intrigued us, and this helps get it into context. The car really did rather well for itself!

DH: Yes. I'm surprised it ever worked, because that lump of iron was so heavy! It must be nearly the weight of two of those Riley engines. It's a wonder it ever held the road! And it had a most awkward gearbox. You went through freewheel to get into overdrive.

SIA: How did the Alvis-powered Healey compare with the Nash-Healey?

DH: Well, it was a better car. The handicap we had in styling the Nash-Healey was that they wanted to use that great "Joe E. Brown" grille. But at a later date we decided it looked so damned awkward it wouldn't sell very well, so we created another body which was very much better looking. That was quite a pretty car. Then we were doing the most complicated manufacture of motorcars you could ever believe. Engines and transmissions were

## SIA Interview:

continued

coming across in boxes to England. We were putting [them] into chassis and shipping them to Farina in Italy, who was shipping them back to America. I don't suppose any car ever traveled further in its production.

**SIA:** You're right! And you're right about those later Nash-Healeys being beautiful automobiles.

**DH:** They were too high-priced for the market. That was what the American dealers told me.

**SIA:** What Mason apparently intended it for was to draw showroom traffic, to help sell his other lines.

**DH:** I think you're right, and I have heard them use that expression.

**SIA:** Looking back to the earlier cars, prior to your Austin association, do you have a favorite among them?

**DH:** Oh, the Silverstone. Has to be. I drove a Silverstone in one or two Alpine rallies. It was a very tough car to drive. Never broke it, except I broke a rear spring once. Had to replace a coil spring with a block of wood, and you can imagine what the rest of the drive was like!

**SIA:** How come the first Austin-Healey used a three-speed gearbox instead of a four-speed?

**DH:** It's no secret now. Austin used that gearbox in a car where they didn't use anything like the power out of that engine that we did. A car called the A-90. It was a four-speed box, but

them. I showed them a sackful of gears! But in order to be strong enough for their new taxicab they had to have a stronger gearbox. The BN-2 gearbox, then, was the tax gearbox. It never broke.

**SIA:** What were the differences between the Austin-Healey 100, 100-M and 100-S?

**DH:** Well, the 100-4 was the straight four-cylinder car. The 100-M was a "gimmick" car, to increase sales; so we altered the induction pipe and put some louvers in the bonnet and a few other gimmicks.

**RT:** Higher compression, higher-lift cam.

**DH:** Yes. Now it did follow quite a successful run of cars at LeMans, so the "M" stands for "LeMans."

**RT:** In the book it says that the LeMans had dual valve springs where the regular ones didn't, but all the cars I've ever taken apart had the dual valve springs.

**DH:** We put the dual valve springs in when we put two carburetors on the first Austin-Healey edition. When we received the first of the A-90 engines from Austin for our experimental work on the 100, we couldn't get revs over about 4000, so we had to put dual valve springs in. Because I pushed the red line up to something like five-two. Am I right?

**RT:** Well, the red line on the tachometer is four-eight, but they'll go to six, reliably.

**SIA:** What about the 100-S?

**DH:** The 100-S was one of my ideas to

**"He was a great old motor man. I say what this industry lacks today is motor men!"**

ferent engine. Then I said we wanted an aluminum head, and the whole failure of the 100-S was that Austin didn't know how to insert valve seats in an aluminum head. So there are a lot of these 100-S cars running around that have ordinary engines in them, because the heads are in such bad condition that they can't be re-cut any more. You see, Austin got this crazy idea that you put the seat in andpeen it over. Impossible! It's so silly. Austin was one of those companies that wouldn't copy. Now if they'd gone to Fiat, they could have found out how to put valve seats in. But no, they knew it all. I found that, with English designers right through, you see, you get a good designer and you'll find a clutch of foreign engines lying around the shop. That's the only way you can make good merchandise, by being able to take the best out of somebody else's motorcar.

**SIA:** The MG-TF was widely regarded as a stopgap. What we're wondering is, why didn't they bring out the MG-A at the same time you brought out the Austin-Healey? What was the delay?

**DH:** I think possibly—MG was always in friendly competition with us—that the TF was an answer to the 100. Am I right?

**RT:** I think that's true. The 100 came out first, and MG figured they'd better do something with the style of their body, to try to compete with the Healey. Because the late TF and MG-A engines are identical.

**SIA:** In other words, they weren't ready with the MG-A, yet, so they face-lifted the TD?

**DH:** I was very closely connected with John Thornley [of MG]. He was chief of engineering. We worked very closely with MG because we knew that the Austin [production] line was no good for the job it was doing, and that was simply putting engines and gearboxes in. Jensen was doing everything else. So we moved it down to the MG plant—a pure assembly plant, nothing else—the bodies came from Coventry, and so on. It was an ideal line for receiving parts and putting them up.

**SIA:** You're saying that the Austin-

## "We had trouble with that gearbox. A lot of trouble."

we couldn't get that bottom gear to stand acceleration starts with the power we were delivering. We used to tear them up. So Geoff [son Geoffrey Healey] said, "Shall we lock it out and put an overdrive in it?"

**SIA:** So it was a four-speed unit with first gear locked out?

**RT:** It was basically just a sleeve over the shifting shaft, so it didn't go in [first gear].

**DH:** That's right.

**RT:** I have a question about that. The shift pattern being backwards: Was that because of the right-hand drive?

**DH:** Yes. It was a right-hand-drive gearbox, and you changed with your hand.

We had trouble with that gearbox. A lot of trouble. I had a great job persuading the Austin engineers that we were getting trouble, but I proved it to

make it into a very much better sports car, in performance apart from its appearance. So the first effort was to tear off all the clobber, such as bumpers and windscreens. Then we had to lighten it, so we went back to all-aluminum panels.

**RT:** The chassis was still steel, though, correct? And all the sub-structure was still steel?

**DH:** Yes. Well then we had to have a special engine for it, and Austin had under contract a chap called Weslake, who was the finest designer of engines in England at the time. So we said we wanted a new head for the Healey, for a true cross-flow engine. To do that engine he had to completely redesign the block because the studs wouldn't allow for the induction and inlet ports through the same stud position. So the 100-S engine became a completely dif-

Healeys were assembled in the MG plant?

DH: From the end of the original 100, I would say, MG and Austin were both part of the British Motor Corporation. The merger was in the hands of a man called Leonard Lord. He was a great old motor man. I say what the industry lacks today is motor men! You know, the Fords and the Buicks and the Oldses and the Morrises and the Austins. Lord had the big, nasty job of trying to merge the two biggest manufacturers in England [Austin and Morris]. And all the wars between the designers and the sales departments... He had a nasty job, and I seemed to come into the picture with the Austin-Healey right in the middle of it. Because the Austin-Healey was first seen by him and Lord Nuffield at the motor show. Well, they got together and said, "This is something for us. We can sell this in large quantities." So Lord said, "Come and have a drink with us tonight." So I did. This would be something like six in the evening, and after too many dry martinis we shook hands. There was never any other agreement between us. The name was to be changed to Austin-Healey.

RT: Was it that you had this car and didn't have the facilities to produce it in quantity?

DH: Well, the conversation was something like this: We had this car on the stand, surrounded by thousands looking at it. It was a great sensation. And Lord said, "You can never make enough of these cars to meet the demand. You can turn out perhaps 20 a week. We can make 200. So why don't you become associated with us? You hand over all your drawings, you supervise all our drawings. We will make it as best we can, at Austin." And overnight the tool room got down to it and made a badge, Austin-Healey. They started on the car the next day.

And I had very good friends, the two brothers Jensen, who were making the Jensen car. Not a very well received car, but they made the odd one or two a week, with a big Austin engine, a big four-liter straight six. They called it the Jensen Four-Litre. They were then making bodies for Volvo. But for some reason the Volvo contract dried up and they'd got no work. They were quite close to Austin, because they were doing cabs for them. So I said, "Go after Austin and get that order!" And they did. And every Austin-Healey body was made, trimmed, electrical panel hung in, all they could put in before it became a running car. It was all done at Jensen. Then it was shipped by road to Austin to have the bodies put on.

We were great friends. John Thornley and I, and old Lord used to make us competitive. So he had us meet him one day, and he said, "I want a little car,

the cheapest little car that can be made. You two chaps have a go at it. Both of you must make a draft and bring it along to me as soon as you can." Well, of course, John's was a much bigger concern; and the bigger a concern it is, the longer it takes to do anything. We had a "bug" in to Leonard Lord in weeks—before, I think, John's drawings were finished. So he told us to go ahead with the Sprite.

SIA: That was the "Bug-Eye"?

DH: It wasn't called the "Bug-Eye" then. When the Americans began to love it they called it a "Bug-Eye." We called it the "Frog-Eye."

SIA: Getting back to the 100, why was the exhaust system placed so low?

frills. I think the original car probably looked better with those louvers in the bonnet; but the original car must be the best.

SIA: We've heard it said that the original 100 handled better than the six-cylinder cars.

DH: I'm sure it did. The 100-S was the best-handling car we had. That was possibly due to a slight saving in weight in the aluminum head, and the saving in weight of all the bumper gear and stuff, and having non-standard shock absorbers.

SIA: Somebody told us that there were more Austin-Healeys sold in San Francisco than anywhere else in the world.

## "...there are times when your artistic mind overcomes your engineering mind."

DH: Well, there are times when your artistic mind overcomes your engineering mind. I had a young man working for me, by the name of Gerry Coker. He'd had some experience in the body shop at Humber. He was always drawing pretty pictures, and I loved them. And when the day came that I wanted to do the 100 I said, "Look here, Gerry. You do me some pretty pictures of what a sports car should look like, in your mind. I will correct them from my experience." So his first picture had fins on it. But he and I both wanted to stick to that very low profile. As soon as you jack the car up, it looks all wrong. So then we got the smallest muffler that it's possible to make, but I'm afraid they'll never come up the ramps to people's garages over here! But I think that's what sold the car: It was very low, had a beautiful side line, and it had that folding windscreen—which was quite useless, but it did have the effect of making the car appear to be moving when it was stationary.

SIA: Among the Austin-Healeys, which one is your favorite?

DH: Well, it must be the original, mustn't it? You can't help picking the original, because I thought that was the perfect picture of what a sports car should be. When you start to modify it, after... I don't know if you know the expression, "When an artist has finished his picture he never goes back to it again." And isn't that something like this? I probably never went back to it except to tell them to put a bigger engine in it and to lengthen it and to do whatever was done to put a "six" in it. As far as the little things like the 100-M, the 100-S—well, they were just

DH: Well, 80 percent of the Austin-Healey production went to America; 60 percent of the 80 percent went to California. There was a very good distributor here, called BMCD—British Motor Car Distributors.

SIA: Mr. Healey, what's in the future? Any more Healeys? We read something about a new car, based on the Ford Fiesta.

DH: No, no. The Ford Fiesta that we did was purely an exercise. Ford's advertising department had to have a "shop-window" car to publicize the Fiesta. *Road and Track* got in on the act and did a story. That was all done by the advertising people at Ford.

RT: One car you haven't talked about is the Jensen-Healey. What exactly was your involvement in that one?

DH: It's rather a long story. It goes back to a gentleman named Kjell Qvale, who owned BMCD, who wanted a car to replace the big Healey after it had gone out of production. I think it's too long a story.

RT: I think it's an important story, because there are a lot of fallacies about it.

DH: Well, briefly, very briefly. Qvale said, "Can you make a car by next summer?" So Geoff and I decided we'd got to get the units out of a big production run, as we were doing out of Austin. We settled for the units out of the current Vauxhall, which was a General Motors car. And we used them in the original prototype. We were to make a protot running car with a makeshift body... test it; and the original car was built. Our idea was to get this car into production with the Vauxhall engine, because it was cheap—so cheap, as a mat-

## SIA Interview:

continued

ter of fact, that we were able to buy engine, gearbox and transmission for about 250 pounds—whereas the final engine and gearbox that went into the Jensen-Healey cost nearly a thousand pounds. That decision wasn't made by me. Anyway, the car—I thought—was good enough with the Vauxhall engine in it. He tried various engines, the Ford V-8 made in Germany, BMW, until he lighted on the untested, unbuilt Lotus engine. And that poor car suffered every fault. The first run of a thousand engines by any maker.... We shook out every fault—everything, *everything!* Took it on the hill, the carburetors used to flood. Leave it overnight in the cold and in the morning the timing belt used to jump off and wreck the engine. Every sort of break! It was junk.

RT: So you were not especially happy with the finished product?

DH: As unhappy as I am with anything with my name on it. But I had this agreement, and I had to accept it. My whole future, my money was tied up in it. I will say this: With that light Lotus engine the handling properties were better than any car we'd ever had. We had a Dunlop test.... We could test the car up to its limits, and that car went further than anything else, including Porsche and the Lotuses and the rest. So there was nothing wrong with the handling of that car, ever. But its troubles, from the start, were phenomenal. It had a gearbox from the Sunbeam Alpine. Wasn't strong enough. We then went to a five-speed Getrag, a German box, made for BMW. It was too heavy, and a very heavy change. But I don't want to go into all its problems.

Now you asked if there's ever going to be another Healey. I don't know whether I should tell this funny story. I went into his (Qvale's) office in San Francisco one day, after the Jensen-Healey had blown up. And he said, "Did you see that chap going out the door? His name is DeLorean. He came over here to see if he could buy the Jensen-Healey tools, to make a motor car in Puerto Rico." That was the first I'd heard of Mr. DeLorean.

SIA: To make a car *where?*

DH: In Puerto Rico.

RT: And now they're making them in Ireland!

DH: And I'm helping pay for it! He had nearly a hundred million of the taxpayers' money, British taxpayers. That we call the biggest ripoff in the British motor industry!

They did one thing right. They put a Volvo engine in it. But I can't see how he can make a sports car with only 130

horsepower! Even the Saab comes in doing better than that.

He must be a great entrepreneur, DeLorean. I'm absolutely amazed that he could sell that project to the British government, never having made hardly a prototype. *Road and Track* told me it was not a running prototype that he displayed.

We had a very left-wing government in England at the time. Chap called Harold Wilson was Prime Minister. And he would do anything to try and push away the unemployment problem. Northern Ireland was suffering very badly because of the war between the Protestants and the Catholics, and this chap came along and it was a wonderful reason to flood millions of pounds into a project to satisfy the political situation there. It was a political gesture. We all know the small number of men that operation can employ can't make a... I think the promises were that on every car the British taxpayer would get 40 pounds back, or something like that. He ran out of money a year ago, and came back and drew another 40 million or so. And of course the present Conservative government, politically, couldn't say, "We've turned off the tap and ruined this great project." But I don't think there's any more money coming forth.

One of the people whom the government put in to save the British-Leyland Corporation, after Lord Stokes had made such a mess of it was—well, I've forgotten his name, but his right-hand man was a top Ford executive. And the boys at Jensen, after the company had undergone complete liquidation and the bank had it for sale, said to me, "Can't you find some means of saving this company?" And this Ford executive and I decided that we needed three million pounds to get the work going again and to re-hash the models to an economic price. There were 1400 men engaged in the production of Jensen cars. We went to exactly the same department that DeLorean went to, to raise money. We needed three million pounds. We had raised a million pounds among some friends and we were asking the government for another million and a half to start Jensen up—a going concern—to save 1400 jobs. They laughed at us. Only a year, two years after, DeLorean got his money. So I may be a bit bitter. And I don't mind that part of the story being told.

When the big Healey was due to go out of production, the Austin had changes of management; and they decided that they would replace it with a car of their own design. And for this car they built an engine that was to be called the "C Series." They built a car in which the "C Series" engine went. It was a useless car.

RT: Was that the MG-C?

DH: It was to be called an Austin-Healey and an MG-C. And I wouldn't agree. So then Austin decided.... They were making a car called the Princess, which was using the military version of the Rolls engine—which was originally designed to be a multi-fuel engine. It didn't give very much horsepower for its size, about 140 from four liters, because it had side exhaust valves. With side valves you can't take the power out of the engine. That was why you started to make valve-in-head engines over here. It wasn't designed to give a big power output, but it was quite nice, a very smooth, reliable engine.

Well, this car didn't sell very well and Austin was landed with the contract to use a quantity of the engines and to take a continuing number of engines from Rolls-Royce. So they said to me, "Can you make any use of these engines in a future Healey?" So with the help of Rolls-Royce on the engine side, we took a Healey and split it down the middle, made it six inches wider and a few inches higher, and put the Rolls in with a five-speed Jaguar gearbox and Jaguar rear axle. It made quite a nice little car. It was smooth, quiet, just about the same performance as a good '3000.' A little better on the bottom end.

It was decided that it was to go into production; and we went as far as Rolls agreeing to put that beautiful little badge that they had on the side of every airplane. What does it say? "Powered by Rolls-Royce." What a selling gimmick on the Healey!

Anyway, at that time the political upheaval started. The British Motor Corporation wound up; all the models they had in production were more or less thrown away, and British-Leyland took over. And this car would not comply with all the Nader requirements of the day, the front impact, side impact, what else? And if you put a catalyst under it you'd be liable to burn the carpets! So that car disappeared. It could have been a good-selling motorcar, because it looked good. It made a bigger car, a more salable car.

Now Rolls did make a handmade, twin-cam engine. That came to Austin just about this time; and I said to Geoff one day, "There are some of those engines down there and they're worth a fortune!" (I think there were two.) So I said, "Get on your bicycle and go to Austin and see if you can get 'em. So he rushed over to Austin. They had gone to the scrap!

So that's the short story of why there's no Austin-Healey being built today. It came in the middle of two terrible upheavals in the industry: one, the takeover of British Motor Corporation by Leyland—they made a complete failure of it as you know—and also Mr. Nader got into motorcars. □



**Happy Birthday, CAHC Members!!**

Are you a new member or not sure if I have your birthday?

Send an email to [eafarnell@gmail.com](mailto:eafarnell@gmail.com)

- |          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| April 5  | John Jones    |
| April 8  | Alan Teague   |
| April 12 | Wright Bagby  |
| April 15 | Betty Bender  |
| April 20 | Phyllis Allen |
| April 26 | Dennis Maurer |



- |        |               |
|--------|---------------|
| May 5  | Roger Dahnert |
| May 18 | Kim Lee       |
| May 26 | Mary Shepherd |

Lee and Carol Levesque  
Waxhaw, NC 1980 MGB

## EVENTS IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR

Chester State Park Drive

March 14, 2025

What a gorgeous warm day for a drive. Attending were 26 club members, 6 Healeys, 3 MGs, 1 Jaguar, 1 Triumph and a number of SOB's (Some Other Brands) We were happy to welcome Paul and Bonnie Glendinning from Myrtle Beach to their first CAHC event. The picnics broke out under our private shelter and we also had a birthday cake for those birthdays January through March.





Top right: Pretty women being totally ignored by the car guys.

Above: Dick and Stuart talk with the Glendinnings who drove their beautiful TR6 from the coast.

Above right: Charlie shows off his newly refurbished ride.

Right: As I was sitting across from Stuart he looked to the right and in his usual wit said "it looks like the order is low class, middle class and upper class" (based upon the picnic items.)



March 22, 2025 Spring Tech Session at John's Garage  
Stuart Shepherd presenting





## Austin Healey tech Session, March 22nd 2025

John Jones graciously hosted this tech session at his wonderful British car Maintenance shop located in Marvin.

We were blessed by nice Healey weather and quite a few of those in attendance drove their cars topless.

All in attendance brought a picnic lunch and came with chairs so it was very easy to set up for this event

We estimate that there were about 15 members present, some we haven't seen for quite a while.

Stuart had been asked to make a presentation for this event, and he focused on two topics

### First, four ways to diagnose the fuel to air mixture in the SU carburettors.

Note: mixture strength of a good running engine should be 14 parts of air to 1 part of fuel.

- a) A small lift pin tucked away behind each carburettor is useful in that by just lifting the pin a small amount it temporarily changes the mixture. By doing this, the carburettor and engine response will let you know whether it is set correctly or needs to be adjusted. For example, if by lifting the pin a small amount, the engine increases in speed, that indicates the **engine is not getting enough fuel and** might need to be enriched. **To take the mystery out of this, we should understand that fuel is metered to the engine via an orifice which effectively varies in size as a tapered needle is raised or lowered through the orifice.** A quick survey showed that many of those present were unaware of this test pin.
- b) The sound of the exhaust along with smoke or lack of smoke can give us a pretty good indication of the mixture setting. The SU manual describes how exhaust sounds are affected by mixture strength. An even sound with no smoke indicates correct mixture setting.
- c) After a journey when the engine has cooled off, by pulling out the spark plugs it is possible to determine if the mixture is correct. A quick Google search of this topic will result in pictures indicating the effect that mixture strength has on the spark plug colour.
- d) Where it is possible to hook up a vacuum gauge to the intake manifold, adjusting the carburettors to produce the highest possible vacuum will also give the best mixture ratio.

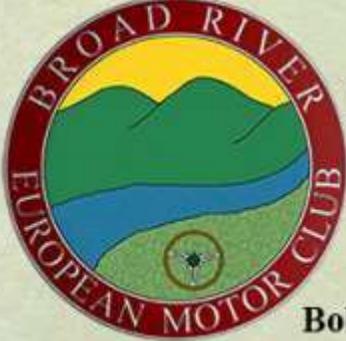
EVENTS IN THE WINDSCREEN

**Save the Date!**  
**Saturday, April 26, 2025**

# 2025 Broad River Classic

**Presented by The Broad River European Motor Club**  
(See [www.broadriveremc.com/broadriverclassic/brcinformation](http://www.broadriveremc.com/broadriverclassic/brcinformation) for info and registration)

**Dog Head Farm, Twin Chimney Rd., Shelby, NC (Near Shelby Airport)**  
**9:00 am - 2:00ish pm**  
**Food Truck will be on-site**



**Everyone is welcome and if you have a classic or modern European car, bring it out and join the show!**

**Proceeds to benefit local children's charities.**  
**For more information, please call**  
**Bob Cabaniss (704) 692-7871 or Cindy Cabaniss (704) 692-7870**



THE MIDDLE TENNESSEE AHC  
PROUDLY INVITES HEALEY FANS  
TO THE 38TH  
**SOUTHEASTERN  
CLASSIC!**  
SEPTEMBER 18-21, 2025

In the fall of 2025, the country roads take you home to Franklin as the Middle Tennessee AHC welcomes you to our neck of the woods!



Register today!

<https://clubregistration.net/events/signUp.cfm/event/15694>

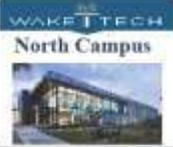
[Southeasternclassic.org](http://Southeasternclassic.org)

**OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND OUR CLUB CALENDAR**

March 29th, 11-3 Upstate SC and NC Car Clubs Cruise-In, Tryon International Equestrian Center, 25 International Blvd., Mill Springs, NC

March 29th 11-3 Best of Britain car show, Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC

May 17

<b>28th ANNUAL TRIANGLE BRITISH CLASSIC CAR SHOW</b>	
	<b>May 17, 2025</b> <b>9:00 am to 3:00 pm</b>
Great Venue Free to Spectators Over 125 British Cars	
	<b>The Hendrick Center for Automotive Excellence on the campus of Wake Tech North 6600 Louisburg Road, Raleigh, NC</b>
<b>Car Show, 50/50 Raffle, Silent Auction, Regalia</b>	
	The Triangle British Classic is proud to support the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina with a donation from the show's proceeds and collection of canned food.
For more information on the event contact Dennis Taylor, Show Chairperson (919) 610-7166, or <a href="mailto:dltplst@hotmail.com">dltplst@hotmail.com</a> or the club's website at <a href="http://www.ncmgcarclub.org">www.ncmgcarclub.org</a>	
	<b>Sponsored by: The North Carolina MG Car Club &amp; Hagerty</b>

June 7th Calvary Church Charlotte Car Show

<http://www.shop.creativeadscreenprinting.com/>

## Club Regalia Now Available

Your club now has available a selection of high quality Carolinas Club clothing items at very reasonable prices. Our regalia can be found on the vendor's website [https://shop.creativeadscreenprinting.com/index.php/product-category/carolinas\\_austin\\_healey\\_club/](https://shop.creativeadscreenprinting.com/index.php/product-category/carolinas_austin_healey_club/) and can be ordered directly at any time with shipping to your address.

All items are available in both men's and women's styles and in a variety of colors. There are also several options available for embroidery.

### Selection includes:

Polo shirts in both 100% cotton and 100% polyester

Long sleeve polo shirts with UV protection

¾ zip sweatshirts

Vests

For questions contact Ed Farnell

[eafarnell@gmail.com](mailto:eafarnell@gmail.com)



Hats will also be available for sale at club events, meetings and functions.

The cost of each hat is  
**\$16.00**

## CLASSIFIEDS

### Be Seen! Install a 3rd Brake Light!

Add a 3rd brake light to reduce the risk of being hit from behind. Our kits come complete with easy to follow instructions, custom bracket, wires, fuse and a highly visible LED light as used on emergency vehicles.

Kits available for all big Healey's, Sprites, MGA's and other LBCs (No drilling)  
(Specify application: 100-4, 100-6, BJ8, etc)

Complete Kit \$75 + \$10  
shipping Contact: John Jones  
[nadadawgracing@yahoo.com](mailto:nadadawgracing@yahoo.com)  
704-351-0933



### WANTED

Needed for my Austin-Healey BT7 project car.

Top frame and any upholstery panels that are good enough to be used for a pattern, John Cork, 404-202-4565, [cork9663@aol.com](mailto:cork9663@aol.com)

### WANTED

I would like to purchase a lightly used or new Carolinas Austin Healey Club grill badge Please contact club member Ric Anderson

[smilingric@gmail.com](mailto:smilingric@gmail.com)

# CLASSIFIEDS

1961 Bug Eye Sprite. 1275 motor, new wheels and tires. Runs good. \$16,000

Call for details. Chip Teague 704-718-0052



## SERVICES OFFERED

By Ian Gail

*Do you need vintage Lucas or Cibie spotlights, Smiths or Lucas gauges, a stopwatch panel or a variety of racing and rally equipment, etc. Please check my eBay store at [www.sheridangailinc.com](http://www.sheridangailinc.com).*

*DO YOU HAVE PARTS LYING AROUND IN YOUR GARAGE DOING NOTHING BUT GATHERING DUST? GIVE THEM TO ME ON CONSIGNMENT. I'LL FIX THEM (WHERE POSSIBLE) AND CLEAN THEM UP, RESEARCH PRICING, PHOTOGRAPH THEM AND PUT THEM ON MY eBAY WEBSITE WHICH I HAVE BEEN OPERATING FOR OVER 19 YEARS NOW AND HAVE A 100% POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM, LITERALLY, THOUSANDS OF BUYERS AND SELLERS.*

*IF INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT ME AT [ian@thegailgroup.com](mailto:ian@thegailgroup.com) or (954) 593-0034*

## REGALIA FOR SALE



A few special, limited edition Southeastern, Case Trapper knives remain for sale.

Only 50 of these exist making them a great collectable. They come in the original box along with a special drawstring bag

To purchase go to our website: [carolinasahc.com](http://carolinasahc.com) Under the SE Classic tab and look under Regalia Store.

CAHC SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR 2025			
Date	Event	CAHC Host	Details
<b>FEBRUARY</b>			
17 <sup>th</sup> 10:30 AM	<b>Club Meeting/</b> Mini- Tech Session and Drive(weather permitting)	Andy McIntyre <a href="mailto:andy@mcappsllc.com">andy@mcappsllc.com</a>	Stacks Kitchen 521 N. Broome Street Waxhaw, NC
<b>MARCH</b>			
6 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup>	Amelia Island Con- cours D'Elegance		Ritz Carlton 4750 Amelia Island Pkwy Amelia Island, FL
14 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 AM	Club Drive	Ed Farnell <a href="mailto:eafarnell@gmail.com">eafarnell@gmail.com</a>	Chester State Park 788 State Park Road Chester, SC
22 <sup>nd</sup> 10:30 AM	Spring Tech Session	John Jones <a href="mailto:nadadawgracing@yahoo.com">nadadawgracing@yahoo.com</a>	9913 Heritage Oaks Lane Waxhaw, NC
<b>APRIL</b>			
5 <sup>th</sup> 9:00 AM	Carolina British Classic XVII	Ed Farnell <a href="mailto:mailto:eafarnell@gmail.com">mailto:eafarnell@gmail.com</a>	The Historic Columbia Speed- way 2001 Charleston Hwy, Cayce, SC
10 <sup>th</sup> -13 <sup>th</sup>	The Gathering	Hosted by: <a href="https://triumphclub.org/">https:// triumphclub.org/</a>	Shelton Vineyards Dobson, NC
27 <sup>th</sup> 3:00 PM	Bove Garden Tour	Bob & Debbie Bove <a href="mailto:Bobbove50@gmail.com">Bobbove50@gmail.com</a>	5119 Bevington Place Charlotte, NC
26 <sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM	Broad River Classic		Dog Head Farm off Sam Latimore Road Shelby, NC
<b>MAY</b>			
17 <sup>th</sup> 9:00-3:00	Triangle British Car Show	North Carolina MG Car Club <a href="https://ncmgcarclub.org">https://ncmgcarclub.org</a>	Hendrick Center of Wake Tech North 6600 Louisburg Road Raleigh, NC
18 <sup>th</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup>	Conclave		Branson,MO
24 <sup>th</sup>	Great Scot Car Show/ Scottish Games	<a href="https://fbccsc.org/">https://fbccsc.org/</a>	Furman University Greenville, SC
30 <sup>th</sup>	Club Drive/ <b>Club Meeting</b>	Ed Farnell <a href="mailto:eafarnell@gmail.com">eafarnell@gmail.com</a>	Landsford Canal State Park 2051 Park Drive Catawba, SC
31 <sup>st</sup>	Cape Fear British Car Show/ Highland Games	<a href="https://bmccf.org">https://bmccf.org</a>	3600 Burnt Mill Drive Wilmington, NC

<b>June</b>			
11 <sup>th</sup> -13 <sup>th</sup>	West Jefferson Trip	John Jones <a href="mailto:nadadawgracing@yahoo.com">nadadawgracing@yahoo.com</a>	Details to follow
<b>JULY</b>			
12 <sup>th</sup>	Club Drive	Bob Bove <a href="mailto:Bobbove50@gmail.com">Bobbove50@gmail.com</a>	Victory Lane Indoor Carting, Charlotte, NC AutoBarn Classic Cars, Concord, NC
July 31-August 3	Annual Mountain Trip/ <b>Club Meeting</b>	Chuck Reeves <a href="mailto:Wolfpackqb1@outlook.com">mailto:Wolfpackqb1@outlook.com</a>	TBD
<b>AUGUST</b>			
TBD	Regional Ice Cream Socials		TBD
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>			
11 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup>	Encounter		Camelback Lodge Tannersville, PA <a href="http://Austin-Healey.STC.org">Austin-Healey.STC.org</a>
18 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup>	Southeastern Classic XXXVIII	Bob Bove <a href="mailto:Bobbove50@gmail.com">Bobbove50@gmail.com</a>	Franklin, TN <a href="http://southeasternclassic.org">southeasternclassic.org</a>
27 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn in the Mountains	Larry Griswold <a href="mailto:larrygris@gmail.com">larrygris@gmail.com</a>	<a href="http://bccwnc.org/">http://bccwnc.org/</a> Mills River, NC
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup>	Britfest & Beach Trip	Bill Walton <a href="mailto:Bill.walton@mac.com">mailto:Bill.walton@mac.com</a>  <a href="https://grandstrandbritishcarclub.com/">https://grandstrandbritishcarclub.com/</a>	Market Commons Myrtle Beach, SC
18 <sup>th</sup>	British Car Day		Palmetto Islands County Park Mount Pleasant, SC
<b>NOVEMBER</b>			
8 <sup>th</sup>	Tech Session/ <b>Club Meeting</b>	Marcus Burch / Stuart Shepherd <a href="mailto:stuams@gmail.com">stuams@gmail.com</a>	8022 New Town Road Waxhaw, NC
15 <sup>th</sup>	Club Drive/ Lunch/Antique Mall	Ed Farnell <a href="mailto:eafarnell@gmail.com">eafarnell@gmail.com</a>	Billy Dreher Island State Park 3677 State Park Road Prosperity, SC

<b>DECEMBER</b>				
13 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Christmas Party	Andy McIntyre <a href="mailto:andy@mcappsllc.com">andy@mcappsllc.com</a>	<b>DECEMBER</b> Camp Cherokee, Camp Cherokee Road	
13 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 AM	Annual Christmas Party	Andy McIntyre <a href="mailto:andy@mcappsllc.com">andy@mcappsllc.com</a>	Kings Mountain State Park Blacksburg, SC	Camp Cherokee, Camp Cherokee
11:00 AM			Kings Mountain State Park Blacksburg, SC	

**NOTE: See out CAHC website for information about each event. Many times there is even more information including a Google map with directions to the event. Many thanks to the members who volunteer to host events.**