



SOUTH EAST MICHIGAN AHC

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# WHEEL SPIN

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## Notes from the Editor

by Ken Klemmer, SEMAHC Editor



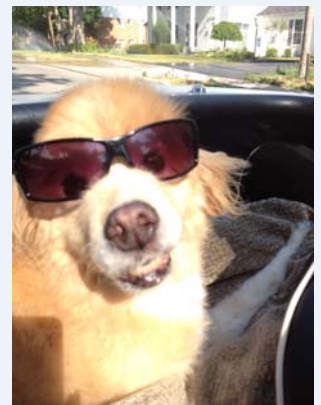
Well, here it is in January, with 6 inches of snow on the ground and about 18 degrees... not exactly good British car weather... in fact they are probably all trembling at the thought of the salt encrusted roads. Fortunately our lot is luckier than some; they have owners that keep them covered and dry, maybe even warm until the spring rains wash off all that salt and we can enjoy the wonderful sounds they make so well.

Here in the Klemmer household, tasks have gotten back to proper priority. The newsletter is back in full swing, a temporary victim to my work and personal life. The cars haven't turned a wheel in months, but are safe and warm. Our latest project, a 1951 MG TD, is now undergoing partial disassembly to rectify some oversights committed during its last restoration, 2 P.O.s ago. Seems they left out a couple important steps that would have been so easy when the car was stripped down to a bare frame. Now I need to work around shiny paint and a nice leather interior to repair a brake/clutch pedal shaft; reportedly the most heinous, diabolical assembly ever envisioned by the fellows from Abingdon. On the way, a few other surprises have cropped up. But she should be back together soon, then Mr. Powers can get a much needed carb rebuild and some new rear suspension bushings.



2012 was a good year, but I am saddened by the loss of Roger Cotting. He was always there for me and Mr. Powers with just the part or advice I needed, at the right price too!

Melody and I have also lost our faithful Healey companion, Samantha. She never liked riding in a modern vehicle, but with sunglasses on and in the back of an old British car, she was the happiest dog in the world.



In the meantime, enjoy the Velocity channel, sit in your garage and make vroom-vroom noises and join our monthly meetings.

Ken

# Dan Frakes

1967 Healey 3000 Restoration



Hello, fellow British Sports Car enthusiasts. It's that time of the year (at least in Michigan) where we have to tuck our "pride-and-joys" away for their winter's naps. But don't let it get you down because winter provides an opportunity to work on those four-wheeled projects you didn't want to start during the season because they'd be off the road longer than you'd like. If your car happens to be in top-notch shape, maybe you have another project or full-blown restoration that will keep you entertained for the winter.

Ron Mitchell suggested that I share with you the restoration journey of my 1967 Austin Healey 3000. This car is quite special in many ways, as most Healeys are, and I would like to give you a few details about this particular one. I purchased the Healey from my brother-in-law, Van, who was the original owner of the car. His father had told him that when he graduated from dental school he would buy him any new car he wanted. As Van approached graduation he started thinking about this offer from his dad. He wanted a sports car but he wanted one with 50's type technology. Van settled on a big Healey and was hoping for one in the ever popular British Racing Green.

Van and his dad went to Continental Cars, the local British dealer in St. Louis, Mo. The only Healey they had in stock was a Golden Beige Metallic. Once Van saw this color, he was sold. It was, in his opinion, better than BRG. This proved to be a good pick as the Golden Beige Metallic was a one-year only color that marked the end of an era. The big Healeys were no longer going to be built after 1967, and to send the car off in style, they built the last 553 cars in this color.

When my sister married Van in the mid-80s I saw the car sitting in the garage and thought it was such a cool British Sports car. Between the times I first saw the car and when I purchased it in late 2006, the car never left its parking spot. But before then, Van drove it about 73,000 miles throughout the United States and Canada.

When I purchased the car it was sitting in the back of Van's garage with no clear way to get it out. Then Van put another twist in the deal. He said if I wanted to buy the Healey I would also have to take the 1974 BMW Bavaria (sedan) with it. It was two-car deal or no-car deal. And having wanted the Healey for such a long time we came to an agreeable number for the two cars.

They both arrived in Michigan in September of 2006 and I started working on them both. I was not planning on keeping the BMW; I just wanted to get it in good roadworthy condition then find it a new home.



In November of 2006 the Healey was running for the first time on over twenty years. So of course this was a celebratory moment. The next summer, after making sure everything was safe, Debbie and I decided to use the car "as-is," and put over 800 enjoyable miles on it that summer.

In 2008, I decided to restore the entire vehicle. So, letting the wrenches fly and labeling all the zip lock bags, the rejuvenation began! One tip: you can't take enough "before" photos. Even though you think you have everything there is always something you missed.



Some familiar faces here: You can always rely on a little help from your friends as Jack Adams and Jamie Coobatis helped with the removal of engine and transmission. Since the Healey was from southern Illinois there was not much corrosion on the vehicle.

And, for a 40+ year old vehicle, everything came apart relatively easy.



Off it went to the media blaster, I remember thinking "Now we'll see how solid this thing really is." But all signs were positive: the car was pretty good. It was only going to need inner and outer sills and a dog-leg on one fender. (Okay, wing.)



The body was now the body shop and I started to work on the engine and transmission.

I decided it was a good idea to get some young blood interested in this great hobby.

My nephew, Morgan, decided to help his Uncle Dan disassemble the motor.

Once we had it taken down to the block I incorporated the help of a friend Brian Thompson, who owns a performance engine building shop. He did the machining of the block and head as well as made custom pistons with low friction skirts, which ended up looking like a piece of jewelry.



As you can see the vehicle then began getting its color coat, and the large rotisserie made for easy access to cover every part of the uni-body chassis.

All panels were painted and clear coated off the chassis.

Once assembled back together the tidiest task of wet sanding began. But, wow, the vehicle was really starting to take shape and this is the point when you can't wait to start putting parts back on the vehicle.



To be continued... (next issue!)

# From the Bluewater Chapter

Top Soldier joined the Army to buy an Austin-Healey



*Retired Major- General quit university, went overseas with military to purchase sports car*

## **YVONNE MARTON:**

SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Retired Major- General Lewis MacKenzie says there's only one word to describe his single-minded desire for his first set of wheels: "Freedom:"

"All through high school, all through university, either walking everywhere or building up enough courage to ask my mother to approach my father - if I could have the car on the weekend - it was strictly [about] freedom:'

"It was constantly-on my-mind - wherever I walked and a car would go by – that's what I thought of."

When he was 20, in 1960, he was instantly smitten with sports cars when he and a buddy attended a motor race at Harewood Acres near Jarvis, Ont. "I saw this race and, quite frankly, my life changed forever. I quit university and joined the army - to get a sports car:'

Although MacKenzie had been an officer cadet, quitting university to become commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Queen's Own Rifles meant he lost his accumulated seniority. But he did gain a military paycheque. Soon after, as a young officer stationed in Germany, he was able to buy his dream car - a new "British White" 1962 Austin-Healey MK II - for \$2,625.

"Healeys were always my first choice; I wanted a Healey for some reason - I liked the sound of the straight six and the exhaust system it had. "It was sort of a macho thing - it was a guy's car. You know, MGA - a bit girlie; Alfa Romeo - a bit girlie; Porsche was really an enhanced Volkswagen in those days, whereas a Healey - it was probably the sound and the look"

The sound was one thing, the drive quite another. "It slid all over the road. You thought you were going so-o-o fast when, in fact, you weren't. It was just that the handling wasn't particularly good."

The car's handling wasn't its only downside. British sports cars were notoriously troublesome and the Healey was no different. MacKenzie's particular model had carburetors that overflowed and leaked fuel, running down onto the exhaust system.

Driving through the Alps with the dramatic changes in elevation, MacKenzie realized just how big a problem he had on his hands. 'I looked in my rear-view mirror and I had this sheet of flame following me and I immediately knew what it was as I smelled -the fuel:'

MacKenzie somehow managed to quell the flames and get to a garage in Monaco. Alive.

In another incident, his fuel pump broke and he drove 500 miles manually working the pump with his finger - difficult in any situation but miraculous on the Autobahn.

MacKenzie says mechanics at the British Motor Co. shop in London were flabbergasted. "They said, 'We don't believe you.' (But) they gave me a new fuel pump."

If necessity is the mother of invention, the Healey served MacKenzie well. He became an adept mechanic, mastering skills that have enriched a lifetime passion for sports cars and motor racing.

At the time, though, the Healey aided more immediate passions (as well as a quick getaway).

"My friend and I went into a camping ground in Nice and we met a couple of girls and we're in their tent, making out, when they advised us that their boy friends were coming back" Quickly packing their gear MacKenzie and his buddy jumped into a white Healey and roared away.

"My friend is sitting in the passenger seat and all of our stuff is packed in the kit in the back and I realize – it's not my Healey. It's another one. Luckily, they- found their Healey nearby and made it back to the base in one piece."

Fit and focused, MacKenzie is still very much the dashing and forthright commander he was when wore the blue beret of the UN peacekeeper almost two decades ago. He laughs recalling many of his youthful exploits traveling through Europe and says that; ultimately, his love for the Healey came down to "sex appeal and performance".

MacKenzie says that in his day it was "sports cars, sports cars, sports cars." "If you went through the officer's mess in the Canadian infantry in those days, the parking lot was full of sports cars. If you go there today, they're all trucks:'

And what became of the Healey? After a couple of years stationed in Germany, MacKenzie was transferred to a peace-keeping mission in the Middle East. He sold the car to a fellow officer but had to borrow it back during his final week.

"Every second day I would drive down to pick up the mail for the soldiers and on the third day of that last week in Germany, a trailer jackknifed in front of me coming up to the base. I was either going to go under and decapitate myself [so] I went off, hit a tree and virtually wrote the car off uninsured."

His posting to Egypt became a godsend. With the extra \$150 a month he earned for being on a UN mission, it only took him two years to payoff the bill for the smashed Healey.

Lewis MacKenzie currently races for Mortimer Racing in the Formula Ford series; his car number is 70. He says of his sport: "Where else can a 70- year-old compete with teenagers?"



FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Major-General (Ret.) Lewis MacKenzie was awarded the Order of Canada three years ago.



COURTESY OF LEWIS MACKENZIE

Lewis MacKenzie quit university and joined the army in order to buy this Austin-Healey sports car.

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# Calendar



The next few month's AH related events and happenings

Date	Time	Event	Contact	Notes
January 9	19:00	Monthly Meeting at Duggan's Irish Pub		
January 26	Noon-4	University Motors 38th B-day party	616-301-2888	Yes, UM is kind of an MG shop... but they will let Healey guys in too.
February 13	19:00	Monthly Meeting at Duggan's Irish Pub		
February 24	11:00	SEMAHC yearly planning meeting	Kevin Livingston	Jim and Mary Fleischauer's house

**REMINDER!**      **Yearly Dues are Due!! Please pay yours today; go to the new website and set up a membership account.**      <https://healeyclub.org>

South East Michigan Austin Healey Club Members meet at 7:00 PM the 2nd Wednesday of every month at "Duggan's Irish Pub". Weather permitting; we like to drive our cars for the pub patrons to appreciate since one can't really drive these little beauties anywhere without drawing a crowd. Duggan's is located in Royal Oak on the West Side of Woodward South of 14 Mile Rd. and of course North of 13 Mile Rd. We usually have a good turn-out of members to partake of food, beverage and casual conversation. Come join us.



# Skid Marks



Recently seen at "Bringatrailer.com" this 1963 Jaguar XKE coupe along with some great comments:



On Ebay for \$7601.00



"In my professional opinion, the car will be restored to excellent condition with the mere application of a small amount of shine and wax."      "Cat with a flat tin roof "      "I'm guessing the bullet holes had nothing to do with the roll-over..."      "Technically, it "ran great" right before it was "stored away". "