

Ten Tenths – February 2026

It might be February but, as this is the first time I am addressing you this year, I will start by wishing you a belated 'Happy New Year' (may be Chinese New Year is more proximate!). This is the first edition of Ten Tenths for 2026 and being the middle of Winter, one might expect there is less to report but we have all the usual headings, through to Rear View Mirror and Final Thoughts at the end, and Part 2 from Adrian Mingay regarding his restoration project in the middle.

Who has done what?

RAC Club (belated) Christmas Dinner: On Friday 13th February, just over 30 'lucky' members of the Centre travelled to the RAC Club, Pall Mall in London for a 'black tie' dinner. We were welcomed with a champagne reception in our private dining room, before sitting down for a delicious three course dinner with wine, plus petits fours and coffee. The photos show a Lola T70 mark III parked in the Rotunda of the building and Michelle McDonough (the event organiser) welcoming guests at the start of the dinner. A number of members booked a room for bed and breakfast, to ease the travelling and enjoy the facilities. I hope we will be able to repeat this memorable event. "Thank you" Michelle. May be, if we ask very nicely, we can do this again sometime?



Events

Drive It Day (DID) - Sunday 26th April – your committee is busy planning for the 2026 DID with the help of Bob Beaumont, one of your fellow members. Full details and an Entry Form will be circulated shortly but, to give you a flavour, our aim is to invite you to The Surrey Oaks, Parkgate Road, Newdigate RH5 5DZ, for any combination of breakfast, lunch and

dinner that you fancy PLUS (what used to be called) a Treasure Hunt. In essence, this is a quiz that will require you to drive out to a few adjacent villages on the Surrey/West Sussex border, park and follow the clues on the quiz sheet to find the answers ('the treasure' – hence the title). Examples of answers might be the name of a pub, the date on a building, or an unusual aspect of a building. The route will be around 20-25 miles and the intention is you will be able to complete the quiz in a couple of hours. There will likely be a 'tie-break', to be announced on the day. If the weather is inclement, or your Healey is off the road, you will be just as welcome in a modern car, or any other form of transport. Healeys will, of course, be most welcome. Stopping at The Surrey Oaks to eat is optional but is encouraged and will need to be pre-booked. We will also ask for an entry fee of £10, with the proceeds going to the NSPCC. Members may be aware of the strong link between DID and fund raising for the NSPCC via the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, by purchasing rally plates. If you also wish to support this form of fundraising, please do go ahead but it will be in addition to our entry fee.

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

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

Summer Picnic – Sunday 26th July – contact Jeff Snell

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

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

Cranleigh Lions Car Show – Sunday 9th August – contact Geri Barnden

Capel Classic Car Show – Saturday 15th August – contact Nick Varlow

Classics at Penshurst – Sunday 16th August – no Club stand but you are free to apply for an individual entry

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

London to Brighton Veteran Car Run – Sunday 1st November – we are hearing the Victory Inn may be closing its doors. We will explore options and report back later in the year

National AGM – Sunday 6th December – contact Carolyn Woodrow

Housekeeping

- We are considering the merits of a Tool Library. I think it more likely we will end up with a register of available tools and hold this on Healey Help. The caveat with any loan is that you are expected to return the tool in a reasonable period of time, or pay the owner for its replacement. The same payment expectation applies in the unlikely event of a breakage. We envisage 'swaps' / 'loans' could be made at a Noggin, or by individual arrangement, or post. If you have a tool that you think other members may find useful to borrow, please let our Webmaster know: ahcsite@gmail.com. We plan to list the tool but protect any personal data.
- We feel it is time to consider a new limited run of grille or bumper badges that are unique to Southern Counties. More to follow.
- Search functions are now available on both the Revcounter archive and the Club's archive of Technical Articles; both found on the National site. There is also a link to the Club's Technical Articles from HealeyTech on the Southern Counties website.
- I should also remind you about Healey Help: <https://ahc-sc.org.uk/healey-tech/healey-help/> . Enquiries may be made via the Southern Counties website HealeyTech tab. Just send your question using the enquiry form on the Healey Help tab.



- The Club takes Safeguarding as seriously as you would expect. You are encouraged to acquaint yourself with the Policy Documents, found in the Member's Area of the National website under Club Docs.
- We are continuing to develop our new look Southern Counties website and have 'soft launched' a Member's Area for Southern Counties Documents, so you can learn what your Committee members are up to. Head for <https://ahc-sc.org.uk/> . On a largish laptop, the 'Members' area is on the top far right. On an ipad or phone it's at the bottom of the menu list. If you are a member who has not logged in before, simply click that button, complete, and send your request. You'll then receive an approved invite. It may take a few hours; a volunteer will check you are a current member. As it's Southern, use a new password when requested, NOT your National Password.
- STOP PRESS: West Sussex Noggin date change. The February meeting at the Welldiggers will be on Wednesday 25th (not Tuesday 24th)

BT7 L 6364 - part 2

Having decided to take the plunge and bite the bullet – here we go with part 2!



I started by stripping the body trim. Removing the aluminium covers over the door sills revealed a series of pop rivets. To some it could be considered a stunning piece of modern art! In my case, that's the bodge of all bodes that was not expected and rung alarm bells.

Modern Art or a Bodge?

With a car constructed on a box section chassis, it's not a prerequisite that the door posts are braced. But, with the alarm bells ringing, and not knowing what other treasures were still to be revealed, it seemed a wise idea to make use of the door braces collecting dust in the corner. Whilst it could easily be regarded as 'overkill', the braces were fitted before cutting any further panel-work, thereby minimising the risk of the door posts collapsing inwards.



Initially working on the right-hand side of the car, removal of the front wing exposed another section of galvanised sheet steel located with pop rivets. The section behind the rear wing, whilst not plated, was in an equally poor condition. Unsurprisingly, the lower sections of the back of the front wing, the front of the rear wing, and the inner wings, were all being consumed by the rust mites. The left-hand side was actually worse than the right, with the majority of the footwell adversely affected.

Not much of the original left!



The sills were well past the point of salvation, but I chose the softly, softly approach. Using a small thin cutting disc, and a narrow belt sander with 60 and 120 grit belts, I carefully removed the old sills. Getting back to the lip of the floor pan confirmed this was the right approach, as the floor pan was sound enough to take the replacement sills.

Sill removal in progress – floor useable.

The alternative was to chop the sill out and cut a thin strip off from the floor pan, then butt or lap weld an angle to the remaining floor to replicate the original upstand on the floor.

On the Big Healeys, the sills are made from three sections, with the inner and middle being folded to form a box section that runs through from the front to the rear wheel arches (I should add here, my welding skills are very limited, so I hired the skills of a good friend to assist in sticking it back together.) The inner sill was clamped in place, with the floor lip marked up so that it could be removed and a row of holes punched. With the sill re-clamped to the floor pan, the holes were then MIG welded to the floor lip and filled. The middle section could then be seam welded to the inner, with the ends of both the inner and middle sections being welded to the repaired wheel arches.



Inner sill – welded in situ.



Centre section located.

Then the fun begins. To achieve the best fit for the third outer section, both wings and the door were rehung. Once certain that we had the best possible fit, all joints were seam welded. To minimise heat distortion, this was done in very short sections, and the sections then joined

up (if I had appreciated that I would be writing these articles, I would have taken a lot more pictures! In the words of Emerson Lake and Palmer, every picture tells a thousand words!).

With the sill's reinstated, the inner wings and foot wells were made good. This was all achieved by cutting, folding and shaping sheet steel.

The 'B' post / sill gussets, boot floor and door skins were beyond repair. Complete replacement panels were sourced, together with 'repair' panels for the lower section of all four wings.

The lower sections of the doors were rapidly returning to nature! Again, the softly, softly approach: removing the door skins revealed frames that could easily be repaired and readied for the replacement outer skins. These skins fitted remarkably well with very little reworking required.

Sorry no pictures from the frames or the door skins.

It's worth stating here that I think I have used all the recognised 'specialist' suppliers for Healey parts, for both panel and mechanical parts. The quality and degree of fit from all fluctuates from being excellent to requiring a total rework. I believe that some of this stems from the then acceptable tolerances in build quality in the 50's and 60's, to just poor-quality re-manufacture. The latter to such an extent that I don't, and can't, recommend a preferred supplier.



The boot floor was another story, but thanks to Keith's many talents in panel work (you will never hear of the lesson in 'French' that graced the workshop whilst installation was in progress!) the boot floor now looks like it was purpose made.

Boot floor – re-worked.



All the repair panels were adequately proportioned, so we were able to cut them down to make the best and minimal fit as possible. Whilst it would be great to have a car with no filler, considering the age (unless replacing the complete body), that is realistically not possible!

Lower wing repair section laid over wing.

With all the obvious repairs to the inner panels completed, the chassis and inner panels were stripped (twist knot and wire brushed) back to bare metal. That resulted in a few more repairs but nothing major.

Once back to bare metal, a coat of epoxy primer was applied before being sent to the paint shop for a coat of 'Raptor' to be applied to the underside and colour to the topside.

Taking delivery of a pile of performance enhancing components, I realised the outrigger needed to be reshaped to accommodate the twin exhaust pipes. Fortunately, Wayne at the paint shop is 'dam mean' with the cutting and welding torch. Out rigger modified, the primer made good and ready for Raptor again.

It's easy to say 'never again' but the lessons learnt so far will make the next project a lot easier second time round!



In Primer

Realising it doesn't fit!

Other than it should have been a ten day turn around that ended up being nearer a ten week turn round, the end result was well worth the wait. Very red, and looking good (see photo in December Ten Tenths).

Rear View Mirror

March 1996: Plans for another season were afoot. 'The Egg Cup Treasure Hunt' was scheduled to run from the Burford Bridge car park to The Parrot pub near Capel. 40 miles with navigational instructions and clues. "All that is required is a pen, a car and a navigator. Healeys, tin tops and anything else welcome". So fast forward to Drive It Day (DID) 2026 and what has changed? No navigational instructions today, just locations to go to, and the Egg Cup (this large wooden cup is possibly the oldest AHC trophy in existence) now repurposed to the Daffodil Event in Norfolk and therefore (sadly) not up for grabs. But the DID trophy will be!

Plans were also afoot for a technical day, a visit to Amberley Chalk Pits Museum (we might bring that back), a visit to Belgium, a Go-Kart challenge against Thames Valley Centre, and a camping weekend (not so sure if many folks are still keen on camping?).

February 2006: There was a photo-report on the Southern Counties Christmas dinner, a black-tie event in a Baronial Hall. The 2006 Calendar of Events took up most of an A4 page and included a Spring Lunch, a Scatter Rally, a Sprite race, mystery tour and BBQ, two Wings events, a French trip and much more. They knew how to pack it in.

February 2016: the provisional 2016 Calendar of Events was published, both in Ten Tenths and on our website. The Editor kindly commented: if you know a member who isn't 'internet connected', don't forget to let them know about any last-minute changes to our calendar,

that appear there after the newsletter has been published. The editor also issued a plea, that I will echo, for a “few lines and a picture or two” from the readership.

Final thoughts

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose – the more things change, the more they stay the same. Well, almost. I am so pleased Adrian Mingay has shared part two of his project with us, and has promised more. If anyone else is prepared to “(write a) few lines and (share) a picture or two”, I would be delighted to include them in a future edition of Ten Tenths. It could be about an event you have attended, a trip you have undertaken, your search for a car etc. Almost anything to do with the Austin Healey make and Southern Counties would, I'm sure, make interesting copy for us to read. If you need a little help, just [ask me](#).

It won't be long and the Spring weather will encourage us to pull off car covers and stir our slumbering steeds. ASJ (our Healey) has been patiently waiting for two gauges to come back from Speedy Cables in Wales. The Speedometer has been re-calibrated (£170) and the dual oil/water gauge overhauled (£110) – both plus VAT and carriage. Be aware Speedograph Richfield, which many of us have used in the past, appears to have gone into liquidation.

Don't forget all those sensible checks for fluid level, leaks, brakes that still come on and stop in a straight line, lights that work, even vermin that have made a temporary home(!), etc. And perhaps pop the battery charger on the day before, unless you use a Maintainer - I use a CTEK MXS 5.0 (around £80 and I believe well worth it for longer battery life). I hope to see you out on the road at a Noggin or event very soon.

Jonathan Woodrow

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