

THE TUCSON BRITISH CAR

REGISTER

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Technical tips are for informational purposes only.

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View
Big Healey
Meet Harold



View from the Windscreen

by Ben Cohen

Although this January edition will reach you by the end of December, I wish all of you a Happy New Year and look forward to things slowly getting better in 2021. As Driving Director in 2020 I had...an easy year??? Not really. Perhaps, unlike most of our members, I did drive - sometimes 5 times in a week. Fun...yes!



Exhilarating...for sure! I made it a point to take that “view through the windscreen,” as often as possible. The only caveat was that it was a bit lonely. My only solace was smiles from onlookers and those that appreciate a classic car. It always made me happy to get that “thumbs-up.”

Your new Board members and directors held a meeting in early December (only 7 people...outdoors) to discuss issues for 2021. The results were sobering to say the least. For the foreseeable future, TBCR will remain...quiet, reserved and have no plans for any type of in-person functions. This decision will be evaluated quarterly and we will see if we have any opportunity for changes. Meanwhile, we will have a virtual Annual Meeting via ZOOM in mid-January, which is outlined in our By-Laws. Watch for details and a notice to submit any ideas, questions, etc. for consideration. Since this might be a large group, we will need prior input to make discussions reasonable. Thanks for your understanding.

While it sounds like a bit of Doom & Gloom, it won't be. TBCR is going to focus our efforts to increase the content in our newsletter. To this end each Board member and Director volunteered to write one article. It might be about themselves and their car(s), technical issues or perhaps one of their adventures. I encourage members to please contribute something, so that we can continue to peak and hold your interest in British cars, driving and wrenching. Thanks in advance for your help and to the Board/Directors for their future contributions.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and, yeah, get out there and drive your car. I hope to see YOU through my windscreen in 2021.

Member Chat

The Joys of Driving a Race-Prepped Big Healey on public Roads By Fred Crowley

We arrived back with our RV in Tucson, Arizona for the Winter (November 2020 through end-March 2021). Got the Healey out of storage, and spent some time working on the car this Fall. Being fed up with stupid political restrictions on everything, I decided to blow some cobwebs out of the Healey, as well as what little brains that I have left. On Thursday (Dec 17, 2020), I took the Healey up to Mount Lemmon Ski area (in the Santa Catalina Mountains – about 30 miles north of Tucson, Arizona). Mount Lemmon is the southernmost ski destination in the continental United States. Sunny, little wind, with temps in the low 60s, and a great Healey road. At Mount Lemmon, the ski lift was running. However, ski conditions were marginal – 1” of powder over a “hard base” (rocks, tree stumps, beer cans, lost skis, dead bodies, etc).



The Healey loves the cooler air and ran like a champ, even at 8200’ – a 6000’ elevation gain from Tucson.



Continued on Page 4

Club News and Notes

Regalia

The TBCR hat sale continues – see the December *Register*.

Annual Meeting

This will be a Zoom event. Watch for an email announcement

Club Survey

You will soon be receiving a questionnaire about club events and activities. Your opinions are important in guiding club activities in the post-pandemic world.

TBCR Officers and Directors - Harold Beekhuizen

There are likely many new Tucson British Car Register (TBCR) members who may not be aware of the club board members and their appointed directors. This article (along with future articles) is an attempt to introduce to the membership the board participants and their directors.

My name is Harold Beekhuizen and I'm the guy who maintains the club's website. I've been in this role since September 2007. I joined the club in early 2003 when I bought my 1979 MGB. From 2004 through 2008, I was also the club secretary. I stepped down from the secretary role to work the website (and my MGB!). I recently sold the MGB, but I also have a 1967 Triumph TR4a in pieces strewn all around the house. I also have a 1980 Mercedes 450sl which is my rolling restoration.

In September 2007, we unveiled the clubs' first website – <http://www.TucsonBritish.com>. It was very simple with basic club information. At that time, what did I know about websites? Nothing. I winged it. We used a free Microsoft website tool, which included a free domain name. It was a very simple tool with minimal complexity. My approach was: "Let's try this and see if it works!" Eventually, Microsoft decided to get out of website business and discontinued the tools and website hosting.

This meant we had to migrate the site to a new host and find new tools. What did I know about website migration and website tools? Nothing. I winged it (again). Fortunately, my son was studying business information systems at Northern Arizona University (today he works for a company that builds and maintains websites!). My son was a huge help in selecting the tools and finding a host. Today we use *WordPress* for the site tools and our site host is *DreamHost*. We have very little down time with *DreamHost* and their support has been excellent. *WordPress* is a very powerful tool and does require some learning. Fortunately, there are many online sites that provide support.

About three years ago – we offered online PayPal membership renewals and new member payment. We've also secured the site for online payment – so today's site name is: <https://www.TucsonBritish.com> (notice the "s" in "https"). This was another interesting challenge – but today - is working very smoothly. Last month we added limited online regalia offerings.

I always wanted to play with British cars, and I always wanted to build a website – I never thought I'd be able to do both when I joined TBCR. If you have any questions about the website, or suggested site enhancements - please let me know. If you'd like to be a back-up member working the website – I'd be happy to teach you the tools.

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...and back home at the RV Resort in Tucson...

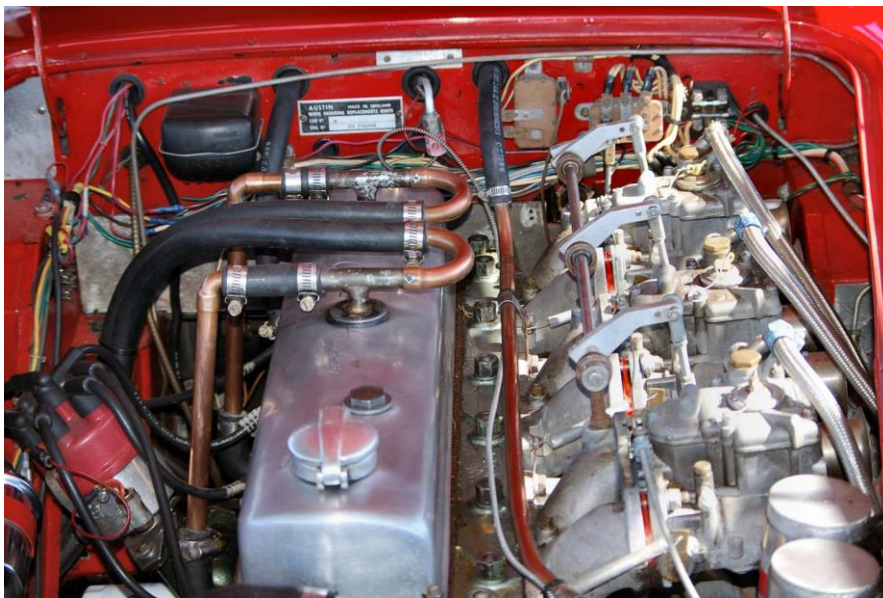
Some background: The Healey is a 1962 Austin-Healey 3000 BT-7 tri-carb (Webers). I purchased it back in 1984 when I briefly lived in Southern California. The car was originally imported via Overseas Motors in Fort Worth, Texas, however I could not trace the history as to how it ended up in California. I was able to recently determine from the previous owner (verbally – no documentation -darn!), that the car had been club raced for about 10 years and had been converted back to a street-car, prior to me acquiring it.



Then - 1984

Competition Specs now:

The engine, transmission and overdrive are original to the car, albeit the engine is bored out 30 thou, giving a displacement of 2963cc, with Venolia domed pistons using Total Seal Gapless rings, significant head work, plus an aggressive competition cam, and now sports about a 12:1 compression ratio. Oil pressure is rock steady at 50#. The transmission uses straight cut “Sebring” gears, plus a competition overdrive. A special lightweight steel flywheel (14 lbs.) using a 9 1/2” competition clutch, plus a Quaife torque-biasing differential gets the power to the rear wheels quite well. Solid aluminum engine mounts are used per the works cars, thus making the engine block a part of the frame. The suspension uses competition NOS lever shock absorbers, and competition springs fore and aft. Competition disk brakes in front, with Alfin alloy finned brake drums in the rear with competition pads. A full roll-cage was added, to replace the original “paper-clip” roll-bar. I felt I really didn’t have the neck strength to keep the car from squashing me should we go inverted!



This is what makes it go....



Here is a pic at start/finish in the feature race at Mosport...



Here are a few pics and videos of the car's exploits:*

In 1996, I took the car up to Mosport International Raceway. Mosport is a former Formula 1 racetrack (Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada – about 40 miles east of Toronto). Here are two youtube links from that event, (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_aMTi0VLf8) showing what happens when one messes up at turn 2/2a. My Mom, sister, Jeanice and her sister watching with commentary by Jeanice. Also, another video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBGekks4e5U&feature=youtu.be>) of the Healey at “full-song” coming up the back straight (now called Mario Andretti Straightaway) at Mosport.

And another in-car youtube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVAGdCYMqsU> at Hallet Motor Racing Circuit about 40 miles west of Tulsa Oklahoma.

Pittsburg Vintage Gran Prix on city streets (Pittsburg, Pennsylvania 1996) youtube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-fjzNVxhfw&feature=youtu.be>

Coronado Naval Air Station, San Diego, 2009 Here's another youtube link (a bit blurry – probably because I was going so fast!) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5pNUtAsy8c&feature=youtu.be>

**I tried these links and they worked great for me, but always be careful with links. – The Editor*



Virginia Int'l Raceway 2006, Danville, Virginia. Ain't this cool!



1995 Pittsburg Vintage Gran Prix on city streets.
First year the big Healeys were allowed.



Terry Cowan in his Sebring Sprite chased by Fred Crowley in his Healey 3000
Photo by Bench Racing

I stopped racing in 2014, as we decided on a major lifestyle change by selling our house, furniture, civilian cars, everything, except the Healey. I kept the car stored in a town north of Dallas, Texas. We purchased a 43' 5th Wheel RV, and hit the road full-time in 2014, spending the first two winters in San Diego (great weather, terrible traffic, and with a few exceptions, not very friendly folks). Starting in the winter of 2016/17, we were now wintering in Tucson, AZ. In late Fall of 2018, I decided to move the car from storage in Texas to Tucson. Made a few changes to make the car "streetable" (lights, turn signals, resonators on the exhaust to cut a bit of the "exhaust bark"). I've always had the car licensed with vintage tags (1962), and insured, even tho' I never drove it on the street. Having the car licensed ensured that I had a valid title to the car. When I moved the car to Tucson, I arranged for storage for the car when we would travel with the RV throughout the US and Canada, and joined the Tucson British Car Registry. I now drive the car for pleasure to car shows, and the occasional day trip.

When I started driving the car in Tucson, the biggest adjustment for me (and the car), was driving the car on public roads. First thing I noticed was that the car was pretty darn small compared to civilian vehicles. On the race-track, the Healey was a pretty big beast, on public roads the Healey (and I) felt intimidated by all the large vehicles around us. No trouble keeping up with traffic on I-10 with the 75mph speed limit. For comparison, a 55mph public road speed limit is pace lap speed!

Coronado Naval Air Station, San Diego, 2009

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5pNUtAsy8c&feature=youtu.be>

Second thing was that since I only had driven the Healey on racetracks for 23 years, it was scary driving on public roads – no corner works or flag marshals (with no black flags for dangerous driving, no yellow caution flags, blue flags for over taking cars, and no debris flags, traffic going in all sorts of different directions, no-one had a competition license, the cars were not race-prepped, pedestrians, traffic lights, plus a myriad of other distractions.

Third thing I discovered was how rough the public roads are. With contemporary cars, the suspensions are tolerant of uneven and rough surfaces. With a vintage and stiff competition suspension (lever shock absorbers, stiff fore and aft anti-roll bars, competition springs, Delrin bushings, anti-tramp bars on the rear, plus a 1 ½ degree negative camber on the front suspension, the car tracks all the undulations and pavement joints of the road (sometimes it can get a bit exciting) – never experienced that on the track.

Last, but not least, we also have speed bumps. With only 2 ½” of ground clearance, it becomes a real challenge to cope with these. Even entering our RV Resort here in Tucson, there is a speed bump just outside the entrance gate. The only way to navigate this is to approach it at an acute angle and lift my butt off the seat to barely make it over. A more serious problem arose last Spring (2020), where we were travelling on a secondary road about 50 miles south of Tucson (not far from the Mexican border town of Nogales. The Émigré had set up a temporary check point. Part of the check point consisted of a temporary rubber speed bump they had stretched across the road. Trying to navigate this, even at an angle proved fruitless – we just couldn't clear it. The Émigré officers were very nice, and were fascinated by the car, and they had no problem with moving the speed bump to one side so we could pass. Needless to say, they didn't think we posed much of a threat.

Boy, I miss driving on the racetrack, where things much simpler, and straight forward!
Y'all take care, eh?

Fred



With the Tucson British Car Registry at Picacho Peak State Park (about 40 miles west of Tucson). This the car now.....



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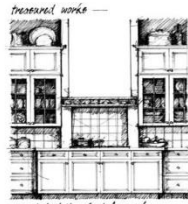


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