If you set your Healey points using only a feeler gauge, stop here, ignorance is bliss. If you use a dwell meter you know how frustrating it can be to get the proper dwell angle. Point gap is really just an approximate guess by the manufacturer as to what will give a satisfactory dwell setting.

Satisfactory engine performance requires the proper dwell angle and a stable dwell angle. If you connect a dwell meter to your 30 year old car and run through the RPM range most show a fluctuation (points bounce) caused by distributor wear. Your dwell angle will also change as your points wear.

The solution of fitting a new distributor for a minor wear problem is not cost effective. Often the new ones have just as much slop as the originals. You would still retain the dated ignition design of points.

One of the newer products available for Healeys is the Pertronix Ignitor Ignition System. The company literature describes it as:

“The Ignitor is a precisely engineered solid state breakerless ignition system. Consisting of permanently mounted magnets for each cylinder rotating with the rotor. These magnets trigger an electronic chip (hall cell) which is embedded in the switching module. The entire Ignitor system is immune to dirt, oil, heat and moisture and is contained within the distributor. Firing down to 0 rpm’s it switches at twice the energy of conventional systems. Installation is fast and simple, the Ignitor requires no "black box" and can be installed in the time it takes to replace a set of points. It is just as easy to switch back to conventional points”

I confess to being a skeptic. Points are cheap to replace and reliable. In a worse case scenario you can change them on the side of a the road using a match book as a feeler gauge (I’ve done that). As a way to avoid the expense of changing points it’s not really cost effective. Owners report their cars run better. Again, I am a skeptic. Cars probably needed a tune-up anyway and of course they now run better.

But I bought one for the BJ8. The reason is because I received so many positive comments from knowledgeable people who raved about the improved performance and driveability of their cars. Knowledgeable people who had a good baseline of performance who could measure the difference in ignition systems. Faster starting, improved idle and more responsiveness were noted most often. The system itself is simple to install and simple to operate. In the event of failure it is easy to revert back to the original setup. If you look at it as a performance increase and not just as a way to
avoid points maintenance it is a worthy investment. I really can’t say how it changed my BJ8, so many factors on that car changed during it’s recent redo.

I purchased my Ignitor system from Ed Kaler at JustBrits (JustBrits@aol.com). About $80. I also replaced my 20 year old K-Mart coil with the optional 40,000 volt Petronix coil.