

# **The E-Mail Mechanic**

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### **Odds and Ends**

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It is often said that the simplicity of older cars as compared to the highly computerized new ones on the market today enables the casual driver-owner to keep their vehicle running with a minimum of professional help. This holds true especially with the help of the Healey Mail List and the associated Archives. There are, however problems in the repair of out of production cars that can be very vexing and, sometimes require a little thought to work out. This is especially true of some older restorations in which it was difficult if not impossible to match all of the numbers because of the scarcity of parts years ago.

Recently there has been a rather intense "thread" on the Healey List about matching numbers and the Certificates available from British Motor Industry Heritage Trust. In some instances, the numbers just do not match. A good case in point would be my BN6. The body numbers indicate that it was probably produced in May 1958. However, the engine number is from a car produced sometime in early 1963 and the transmission is from a later car. This brings up a point that is sometimes discussed on the List - namely - which is better a Gold restored car or one that sometime in the past had been cobbled together. It reminds me of the two dogs that I had as a child. One was a purebred Boston Terrier and the other was a mixture that his parents probably were not sure of. Did I love one over the other? No. They were both wonderful dogs, I remember them still and miss them. Would I be happy with a Gold car? Yes. Am I happy with my mongrel? Yes. A Healey is a Healey is a Healey. The problem with this is that when ordering parts, I must be sure to get the proper replacement part for the transmission, engine, etc. and not just go by model and year. And, this leads us into another subject - the stories that in the British car industry during the 50's and 60's, there was a lot of labor unrest, a government that make it difficult for manufacturers and a sense that if the part fit, use it if it was handier than one that may be more proper. Nevertheless, with all of these pitfalls, a magnificent automobile was produced.

Now, off of my soapbox.

**Kingpin Oilite Washers**

Rich Holman write recently "I am reassembling my kingpins after having them rebushed and was curious what, if any, grease/oil I should put on the "iolite" washers. Did not see it in the instructions.

Steve Byers responded that: "The Oilite washers are sintered bronze, with microscopic pores in them that will retain lubricating oil. They are intended to be self-lubricating, but I like to soak similar parts in engine oil for 24 hours or so before using them." Jack Aeckerlin from The Netherlands added: "I used to be the Dutch agent for Oilite. Their recommendation is to submerge the bearing(s) in any type of engine oil you have around, heat to 90 degrees C (Approx. 194F), take away the heat source and let the oil cool to room temperature with the bearings still submerged. Take the bearings out, which by now, should have expelled all air from the pores and replaced by oil.

Rich wrote back: "I took Jack's recommendations and just as he said, when the oil was hot, small bubbles started appearing as the oil permeated the bearing. I tried again, but no bubbles. I guess once is enough."

In order to keep peace in my family, I have come up with a way to do this outside rather than on top of the stove in the kitchen. In testing thermostats, I use a pot (flame proof such as cast iron) full of water and a candy thermometer. The thermostat is submerged in the water and I place the pot on my outdoor barbeque and watch for the thermostat to open making note of the temperature on the candy thermometer. I am sure that this same procedure can be used to be sure that the temperature is correct for the bearings.

## **Fuel Filters**

Sometimes, logic can be an enemy. Alan Cross wrote that in trying to solve a problem of "lumpy idling/stalling when hot". He stated that he had: "switched out my metal-bodied fuel filter for a plastic see-thru type. I was surprised to find that, regardless of engine speed, the filter body appeared to run all-but empty . . . I would have expected the filter body to fill with fuel and stay that way while the pump is active."

Dave Russell responded that: "It may be an advantage to not be able to see what the fuel is doing. Obviously if the engine runs fuel IS flowing. Maybe it goes up the inside of the filter element which you can't see. The flow direction is usually from the outside to inside of the element. I think that unless fuel was flowing at full filter capacity there would be air in the filter. So much for speculation. I have never observed a large filter in operation that didn't have air in it."

Other Listers have noticed the same thing, which leads us to the old adage: "if it ain't broke, etc. etc."

As stated in the opening of this article, our cars are simple to work on as long as one takes a break from using logic once in a while and there are Listers available to explain the tricks of the trade. Frankly, there is more enjoyment to be had in reasoning through a problem, asking the list for help and seeing the results than in hooking the car up to a computer as is now done. The frustration of some of our problems - many of our own making - just adds to the reason why we love our Healeys!

## **Vital Statistics**

These messages and others can be found in the Healey Mail List Archives at <http://www.team.net/archive/healeys>

If you are interested in joining the Healey Mail List, all that is necessary is to send an email message to: [majordomo@autox.team.net](mailto:majordomo@autox.team.net) and in the text field enter: **subscribe healeys** and send the message. Leave the subject line blank. Then follow the instructions in the automated email message that you will receive in return. You will not be disappointed. The procedure for subscribing is also described on page 149 of the 2003 ***Austin-Healey Resource Book***.