

The E-Mail Mechanic

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Odds and Ends

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In the last issue of *Austin Healey Magazine*, most of The E-Mail Mechanic article was devoted to the Laycock de Normanville overdrive unit which, when working properly, is a thing of beauty. It does, however, cause quote a few comments, suggestions, questions and discussion on the Healey Mail List.

Rather than devoting another article to one subject as we did in the last issue, a more representative sampling of items appearing on the Healey Mail List will be presented here.

Timing chain positioning

In a rebuild of the engine, the correct positioning of the timing chain is essential if the engine is to function properly. Robert Barback asked, "Yesterday, I was told by a local British car shop to make sure the 13th and 15th link was set on the timing chain for a 29D, 3000 engine. He then took off to answer the phone and I was told he would be a while. Since I couldn't wait does anybody know what's special about those links?"

David Nock of British Car Specialists responded, "When installing the timing chain there are a lot of mistakes made. You need to have 13 links between the dots on the opposite side of the timing chain tensioner. This would work out to 15 links total from dot to dot. The easiest way to set it up is to lay the chain out on the bench and mark one link with WhiteOut, then count out 13 links and mark the next link with the WhiteOut. Then mark the two dots on the gears, then install the chain with all the white marks and dots lined up with the short side opposite the tensioner, also you should reference the service manual page A16."

Doug Reid (Mr. Finespanner) of 18G Motorworks added: "Another way to check, beyond counting and marking links, is this: on a 6-cylinder Healey motor the cam and crank are in correct position relative to each other when the keyway on the crank and the keyway on the cam both point straight up. If you look at the photo on the factory manual it's only obvious if you know that the link locating dot on the cam sprocket is directly above the keyway. So you can rotate your 2 shafts to "keyway up" and fit the chain and sprockets easiest like that. This leaves you

timed on #6 cylinder, so one crank rotation is necessary to bring the timing to #1 cylinder.”

Third Brake Light

With the low profile of the Healey, several Listers have installed a third brake light mounted on the top of the rear shroud to provide for better visibility for vehicles following. Mike Brouillette asked: “This is a question for the 3rd brake light folks or folks who have magnetic knowledge. I am looking to install a removable 3rd brake light on the car this spring and want to attach to the car using magnets underneath the light and probably underneath the rear cowl. How strong a magnet did you use? What kind of magnets were they? My plan is to attach them to the 3rd light, put felt over them and then attach to the body of the car. Underneath I was going to use magnets or just an iron strip. Ideas?”

In a very innovative response, Steve Mickelson responded: “If you want some strong magnets, try to find some out of a computer hard drive. I have two, stuck on the side of a file cabinet, and it's all I can do to get them off with two hands . . . they're easily small enough for your brake light scheme. One is shaped like a miniature disc brake caliper that would be used on about a 3 ½ or 4” diameter disc, and is about 2 ¾ x 1 ¼ x 3/8” thick. It even has some small mounting holes that could be used to attach to the light.”

Mike emailed several times with updates and he finally decided to use thin strip magnets glued to the underside of an 80's GM LED enclosure that was then used on vans and SUVs. He placed it on the trunk lid and said that the magnets were strong enough so that none were needed under the lid. This assembly required no drilling and it is easily removable. There are other methods of fastening a 3rd brake light and the point of this part of the article is that, in many cases, the solution to a problem is found in the common ingenuity of the Healey Mail List members.

Vital Statistics

In other postings to the Healey Mail List we noted the passing of another Healey to the great rust pile in the sky. We only hope that there was a parts donor card available so that parts of this Healey may live on in his fellow cars. On the positive side, recently there also were notices of the rebirth of two Healeys - long in pieces and on jack stands - but now making their presence known by a beautiful sound and occasional drop of oil.

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 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 141 of the 2001 ***Austin-Healey Resource Book***.