

The E-Mail Mechanic

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Odds and Ends

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After an absence of several issues, the E-Mail Mechanic series of articles now resumes. Since the last article in the series, there have been several interesting questions raised by members of the Austin Healey email List. Similarly, there are recent postings of general interest. So, this column will be a combination of something old and something new; something borrowed but nothing blue. With my feeble attempt at some humor, here are the postings.

Removal of the chrome grill surround assembly

Bodywork issues arise frequently and there are few resources that will answer all questions, thus, the Healey List, using the expertise of hundreds of devotees to our cars is an invaluable source of first hand experience. Dan White recently asked: "I've checked the shop manual and the list archives and can't solve my problem I'm trying to remove the chrome grille surround assembly on my BN7 MkII. The nuts are removed from the backside (top and bottom) and, looking from the backside, I can see the mounting tabs top and bottom, which would prevent pulling it out from the front. So ... I'm pushing it from the front to get out from the rear and it just doesn't want to move. If I push any harder I'm afraid I'll damage the shroud opening. Any thoughts before I use a larger hammer?"

John Snyder responded that: "The grill surround will only come out from the front. The grill itself comes out from the back. You must remove the grill first, then the grill surround. There are 2 very small nuts at the outboard ends of the "grill hood" which must be removed before the grill surround and grill hood are removed as a unit. Then push the top of the surround/hood rocking it forward, then lift it up to clear the bottom tabs. A larger hammer, or any hammer is not a good solution.

Dan made a posting on the next day that he had been successful in removing the grille surround, thanked the list and said that he was now going to have to find another use for his hammer - hopefully far away from his car. Your correspondent had to make this same repair several years ago and wishes that he had had the benefit of these postings, which would have saved several scraped knuckles, and some words that should not be said in public.

Dash Knob Removal

Another question that has an easy answer but is not immediately obvious is the removal of dash knobs as was asked recently by Andrew Katz when he posted the following: "I am changing out all the worn knobs on my BJ7 dash. They appear to be held on with a pin inserted into the hole. Frankly, I expected to find a small screw. How does one get these pins out? Unlike the door handles where you can just use a punch to push them out, the hole is only on one side."

The response from several Listers was that the pins do not come out. Just depress the pin slightly and pull the knob off. When you reinstall, depress the pin enough to get the new knob started and when it reaches the proper point the pin will engage into the hole that locks it in place.

Andrew wrote back: "Yikes, that IS easy! Thanks so much!"

The point in this exchange is that from start to finish, it took approximately 30 minutes in an exchange of e-mails to solve what was initially perceived to be a serious problem.

Topping off the rear end fluid

Brian Collins recently asked if there were "Any suggestions on the best way to top up the rear end fluid? I have the Castrol Quart bottles. Looks like I am going to have trouble getting the bottle up high enough to pour or squeeze it in."

A few days later, a Healey Lister responded with a solution that I have used. A pump designed to change the transmission fluid in an outboard engine is ideal for this purpose. It screws into the top of the lubricant bottle. If you have not been cursed by a boat, and don't have one of these pumps lying around, you might find one of them at a marine supply store.

Being cursed by the boating bug I can attest that the two happiest days with a boat are the day you buy it and the day you sell it. This, happily is not the case with Healeys. I have never been so sad as when I saw two of my best friends being driven off by strangers. I had one of those pumps but, unfortunately, it was sold with my last boat. Luckily, there are marine stores nearby which will be visited soon.

Electrical questions

Bearing in mind that Healyphiles come from a variety of backgrounds with varying skill levels, recent questions such as: "is SW on the wiring diagram negative or positive?" and "the car will crank with the wiring to the coil hooked up

either way (wht-blk wire to positive or negative). What happens if you reverse the connection?" may seem obvious to some, but the strong point of the list is that where one is deficient in one discipline, there is always someone who is strong in it and more than willing to share his expertise throughout the Healey fraternity.

Dave Russell responded to these questions: "SW = ignition switch. CB = contact breaker points). For a stock Healey positive ground battery, SW is negative & CB is positive. For a negative ground battery, SW is positive & CB is negative. Other respondents added that your ignition coil work both ways, driving the car, you will not notice any difference, BUT, put your engine on a scope and the ignition picture will be upside down. Change the L.T terminals and now the picture will be correct. Ignition coils marked SW-CB are made for Positive ground cars. To be correct, you need a Lucas coil that is listed for your car marked + and -. This coil is wound to suit Negative ground and will give you 10% more voltage on Negative ground.

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 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***.