

The FLASH

MARCH 2011 | ISSUE 402



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AUSTIN HEALEY SPORTS & TOURING CLUB



THE AUSTIN HEALEY SPORTS & TOURING CLUB

www.austin-healey-stc.org

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Main Cover Photo: North Jersey Photo Addition

*Bottom: Arnold and Lois Landvoight's 1926 Pontiac hillclimb car;
Dave Wagner's Sprite (For Sale); Spring Gymkhana, Floyd Bennett
Field, April '08*

RPM*by Ray Donovan*

I'm going for two months in a row, that'll set the bar. There are several areas new to the club which I wanted to point out. First, did anyone notice our new web site? The new site contains a member only section! You will have to create a user name and password but once completed you will have access as long as you are a member in good standing. The members section will contain: a library of all Flash's for the calendar year. Miss a month, go back and read it several months later. Want to refer back to a tech article written a couple of months ago, no problem, log on and go the Flash section on the site. We will also be introducing a renewal button so you can pay in a secure section through PayPal. The regalia page will show items which can repurchased on-line with a couple of clicks of the button. These last two areas associated with PayPal are still under construction but keep checking back.

The next news item is the replacement of the Club's banner. Joe Spear, President of the Harrisburg Region is leading this effort. As part of the process we are raffling off the opportunity to have your Austin-Healey be forever remembered. The raffle tickets are five dollars a piece, I'm sure you will find the raffle information elsewhere in this months Flash.

Next, have you registered for Encounter? The Brandywine Region has been working extremely hard to make this summers event a memorable one, please register today. If you are still planning your summers vacation and are unsure about Encounter, do yourself a favor by making hotel reservations now. The hotels cancellation process is quite reasonable and since rooms are limited it would be best if you were to reserve your room today.

Speaking of Encounters, the Board has agreed to host a joint Encounter-Conclave with the Club of America in 2015. if you have an idea for an appropriate venue, please let me know. The site would need to accommodate between 300-400 Healey's and close to 900 guests.....Sounds like fun!

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What's In The Flash

by Steve Jekogian

We got through the worst snow storms and by now you are starting to think about the Healey again. Great, now it is time to start working on the cars.

The overdrive has always been a really cool thing about the Healey but has caused a lot of problems for members. Rich Ippoliti's article about overdrive was very interesting.

And some good news from the government about stopping E15 gas.

House Approves SAN Supported Measure to Suspend EPA E15 Program; Senate Action Next

The U.S. House of Representatives has approved a provision to prevent the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from using agency funds to permit an increase in the amount of ethanol content in gasoline to 15% (E15). The provision is part of a larger bill to fund the federal government during fiscal year 2011 which must also be approved by the U.S. Senate. The SEMA Action Network (SAN) requested this action and worked hard to secure the vote. When signed into law by President Obama, this timely legislation will protect automotive enthusiasts and consumers from misfueling and other unnecessary harm.

On behalf of millions of auto enthusiasts across the country, SAN applauds the House of Representatives for acknowledging the need for more unbiased and independent testing on the impact of E15 on vehicles and engines. The provision suspends EPA's premature efforts to permit E15 in the marketplace in fiscal year 2011. The SAN is now working to help pass a newly introduced bill (HR 748) to repeal the EPA E15 program altogether.

The SAN will continue to take proactive steps in Washington, D.C. to oppose E15 until there are conclusive scientific findings that demonstrate that it will not harm automobiles of any age as a result of corrosion or other chemical incompatibilities.

Please forward this Alert to your fellow car enthusiasts. Urge them to join the SAN and help defend the hobby! Thank you for your assistance.

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Lehigh Valley

by Joel Keefer

The past month has been another quiet one for the Lehigh Valley Region. Despite that wonderfully warm recent Friday, we're still not out of winter so our Healeys will have to wait for the real arrival of spring. Regrettably, our mid-week ski trip to Blue Mountain turned out to be not a good day for our hard-core skiers, but there may be other opportunities, so keep an eye out for an E-Flash from Mike if we try another one.

Last fall, we instituted a member participation award, in which members who attended region and club events and activities in their Healeys will receive 25 points. The member scoring the highest total at the end of the year will receive a free year's membership. Since there weren't many opportunities to drive our Healeys after we announced the program, we're going to carry over points earned through 2011, with the winner getting a free membership in 2012.

A reminder to all Lehigh Valley Region members that it's membership renewal time. You should have received notification from club membership chair Rick Brodeur; please renew promptly, by mid-March if possible, so the club doesn't have to send out reminders.

NOTE: Change in time and location for next month's region meeting: Monday, March 21, 7:30 pm, at K&T Vintage Sports Cars, 1511 E. Woodlawn St., Allentown, for a tech session on wire wheels and tire truing. The region will provide pizza and drinks. As always, watch for e-Flashes regarding upcoming activities.



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Harrisburg

by Don Hoffer

Pulling into the parking lot for the Feb. 15 mtg. and finding it virtually full, indicated that, just maybe, food service could be a little slow that night. Our back room section of our meeting place got its first noise abatement test and was found to be immune to any disturbing racket from the big crowd spread throughout the rest of the establishment. We got through the meal segment OK and Joe was able to start the meeting at 7:45. He ran through his latest update of the 2011 season and other club business including a plethora of late season options to be resolved later. Copies of the meeting agenda with these options listed was passed out. The Treasurer's report indicates our region has done better than the city of Harrisburg, the state of Pennsylvania or the Federal Government. Since they all are all in the red and we're in the black, we have more money than all three of them combined. Way to go Priscilla!

The 18 faithful had gathered in response to the great guest speaker. Joe had touted as the highlight of the evening and now was the time for the Main Event. How would a Pontiac guy ever find himself speaking to an Austin-Healey bunch? What he better have is a really good story and this guy sure had one. The subject was an old Pontiac boat tailed racer. How old you ask? How about the very first Pontiac racer ever! Built in 1926 as a two door sedan it had a fire in the interior shortly after being sold and the dealer took it back. The dealer removed the body and fabricated a boat tail body in its place. The car weighed 2,350 lbs. originally. The conversion reduced this by 600 lbs. putting it close to a Mk III Sprite. It first raced in August of the same year in a hill climb, a very popular event of that time. It was powered by a 186 cubic inch flat head six.

Arnold and Lois Landvoight, the current owners who had completed the car's restoration had researched this gem extensively and had uncovered old photos of the car that enabled them to duplicate its appearance in 1926. The slide show they produced was well done and being declared the featured car at the G.M. Nationals was a nice reward for all their efforts. Arnold's admonition for us was to thoroughly research our cars – you'll never know what you'll find.



Arnold Landvoight prepares to speak



Arnold and Lois Landvoight's 1926 Pontiac hillclimb car



Priscilla and Dave Hooper with Bob Quickel

Harrisburg Cont...



This was one interesting meeting. By the way, the 50/50 winners were Bennet, Hooper, Hoffer and Border. See you at our next meeting at the Hillside Café on March 15th.

*Joe Spear conducts the meeting while
Rishells look on*

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Philadelphia Region

by John Heffron

Let this be a lesson to you. Never show up late for a meeting. That is how you get elected! Anyway, Hero Racer is back on the beat. Be forewarned!

We had 12 people show up for our monthly gathering in spite of the predicted snow storm. Jason and Holly Urban, John Heffron, Trish Woglom, Ray and Lois Dunckley, the Paynes, Mark Weinberg, John Davies and Dick Doherty were all there. Oh yes, and His Excellency The Honorable AHSTC President Mr. Donovan. Not much local business. We still have money in the Exchequer –we think.

The big news, hot off the press is we (that is Philadelphia) will be co-hosting the 2015 joint Encounter and Conclave! Apparently, it is semi- done deal. Apparently our board has a commitment from the other club to do a joint meet again. It has been several years since this topic has been addressed.

Other news is the corporate clubs finances are in good order with some income still outstanding. El Presidente stated that it looks like a \$300+ NET SURPLUS for last year with some major expenditures made. Advertising revenue is up and the Board is looking to increase this exposure. Apparently, we need to replace our credit card machine and the addition of using PayPal for dues collection and sale of regalia will be major 2011 expenditures. The website is also being upgraded. Each member who wants to access the site will now be able to develop their own password. A key concern for the club will be getting member's email addresses to distribute the Flash.

On Sunday February 20, Philly region was treated to a tour of Leydon Restorations. This is one of those shops that focuses on high end restorations. A 1954 Frazer-Nash and a Ferrari Super America were in for some work. Oh yes, a 1965 BJ8 was in the shop as well. All told, there were around 25 people from area clubs attending. Aside from the cars, this shop has a great deal of specialty machines to design and fabricate unavailable parts for these vehicles. What I really hate is the floors in this shop were cleaner than ours in our house!

Speaking of our house, the region picnic is scheduled for Sunday, June 5. Hopefully, the snow will be gone by then. Stay tuned. Also, plans are under way for a spring tour. A couple of options are being worked out.

Our senior sage, John Davies, announced his Jag XK 140 is nearly finished. Only the wiring and interior needs to be done. This has been JD's passion for several years. Those of us who have followed this project have been quite impressed with the work. Anyone who knows JD will understand this is simply "normal".

Speaking of projects, as many of you know our friendly auctioneer, Alex Tricarb (aka Paul Woglom), has been pursuing a career as a racer. It seems that last fall, ol' Alex had a close encounter of the third kind with the tire walls (plural) at New Jersey Motorsports Park..Ol' Alex is OK but the 914 was a write off. Anyway, the Thursday Nite club has been assisting Ol' Alex with the Phoenix Project. A new 914 is emerging from the ashes and will probably be on the track this year.

You heard it first here.

Yr. Obt Srvt

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Brandywine

by Ernie Leser

Saturday, Feb. 19th found the group at Pete Roberts' house for the annual "Pizza at Pete's". In addition to Pete (who was in charge of the beverages), a triumvirate of chefs (Dee Caffrey, Kris Garrett, Joan Leser) provided an excellent assortment of pizza during the afternoon. Salad and desserts rounded out the fare. Intermittent power outages due to the high winds provided the necessary suspense as to whether we would be having uncooked or cooked pies – all worked out in the end however.

Dave and Ann Ehret got the "You did What?" award. They drove to Pete's in the gale force winds with the top down in their BJ8. Needless to say, they both made a fast entrance to huddle around the fireplace. Also attending were John and Noel Dixon, Steve Garrett, Andrew Leser, Dick Doherty, Les Lewis, Bryan Ehret and his fiancée Heather, Kathy Ehret and her fiancé Tom, and our club president Chuck Ott.

Chuck arrived directly from the AHSTC corporate meeting held earlier in the day. After some food and brew, he gave the group a report on the latest happenings. The news was encouraging: the club and Encounter are well funded; a new AHSTC web site is up; memberships are showing a modest increase; registrations for Encounter have started to come in.

Dave went over the status of Encounter 2011. He reviewed the responsibilities of the various chairmen, suggestions for a guest speaker, and preparations for the Friday night luau. Much yet to do, but all is coming along well.

Upcoming events are as follows:

March, Sun. 20th, 1pm. "Taj Garage" tech session. The Ott's house, 109 Airmont Dr., Middletown, DE. For info call Chuck (302-378-7287). If your car needs some minor repair, take advantage of Chuck's super lift among other goodies.

April, Sat. 30th, 12 noon. Brandywine Social. The Whip Tavern, 1383 North Chatham Road, West Marlborough, PA. RSVP to Kris (610-558-1334) so she can make reservations.



Noel, Kris, Ann, Joan, Dee, and Les



Steve, Dave

Long Island

by Paul Parfrey

It is raining as I write this, a big improvement over snow. It is 51 degrees outside, the snow pack is melting, the sand and salt on the roads are washing away. There is light at the end of the tunnel and there will be Healeys out on the road again!

The annual LI Region post-holiday luncheon has been delayed due to the closing of the restaurant we normally use and to the bad weather in January, which made it difficult to check out alternate places. We are now looking forward to a welcoming spring luncheon. We found a delightful Italian restaurant in St. James, Mauricio's Orlando's II, which has superb food and a parking lot perfect for a line-up of Healeys. You will have already received an E-Flash with the particulars by the time you read this. The date is set for Saturday, April 10 and the starting time is 4 PM. If you haven't already gotten back to me, please do. Hope you can make it!

The spring events schedule for the month of April is as follows:

April 10 – AHSTC LI Region Post-Holiday Luncheon

April 23 - ENYMGA Gymkhana and Lobsterfest

April 24 – Garden City Easter Parade

Further details and any changes will be forthcoming in E-Flashes.

The accompanying photos constitute a pleasurable trip down memory lane.



Beach Run destination: Robert Moses State Park, from WWII B-25



Spring Gymkhana, Floyd Bennett Field, April '08



Holiday Party Dec. 2005 at Allen's home in Smithtown

North Jersey

by George Crombie

The February meeting was held at The La Cucina Restaurant in Denville on Tuesday night the 15th. As I pulled into the parking lot at about 6:45, I couldn't believe how many cars were already in the lot. There must have been close to 70. I actually took the last spot available in the back lot. My first thought was that we were drawing a heck of a crowd, and that the entire North Jersey contingent was there for the Valve Cover Racer session. Goes to show what I know. Apparently, we weren't the only group there that night. Most of the other folks were sequestered in the basement. We were assigned our normal room on the second floor. I was the third one there. My next thought was (I'm only allowed three, maybe four, thoughts per day... on a good day!) "Where the heck are the masses going to park when they show up?" Attending the meeting were Art Herkomer, Tom Mulligan, Mike Busche, Steve Jekogian, Ian Kessen, Jim Vollmuth, Richard Ippoliti, Ralph Scarfogliero, and George Crombie. That would be me.

We jumped right into the meeting, the first topic being Valve Cover Racers (VCR), as both Richard and I brought samples, and they were rather hard to ignore, once they were placed in the center of the table. After a bit of discussion, we ordered dinner, poured some wine, drank some wine, poured some more, and went back to critiquing the two Racers. My Racer is basically ready to run again; it ran last year at Encounter, and with a little tweaking, is ready to run again this year. It is a fairly heavy entry, weighing in at around 40 pounds. Richard's VCR is in the early stages of development, consisting primarily of four wheels, a platform, and the valve cover at the moment. Richard then mentioned seeking sponsorships for bragging rights. I wouldn't put it past the scoundrel into bribing some heavy hitters with a bottle or two of homemade wine! Anyway, I made some copies of the Official Rules, and passed them out to those members who were interested in them. We'll see if anyone else is planning to enter the competition this August in Paradise, PA.

While we were having dinner, Steve Jekogian updated those present with the results of his and Allen Rosenberg's efforts in scouting out venues for Encounter 2012. The front-runner at the moment is the Marriott in Hanover, NJ. This facility seems to have most, if not all, of the requirements needed to put on a terrific event. I think Steve mentioned that they were in the final stages of making their selections and having them ready to present to the rest of us. My understanding is that our next club meeting will be held at this location to get "board approval" to see if the Marriott passes muster. If you would like to be one of the board approving, come on out to the next meeting and see what it is all about. Stay tuned to your e-Flashes from Richard for the particulars. The next monthly meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 15th at 7:00 PM.

Speaking of Encounter, now would be a great time to get your registration form filled out and mailed in for this year's event. It will be held from Wednesday, August 10th through Saturday the 13th. The location will be the Best Western in Paradise, PA. Please help out the folks who are planning this event and register early. It sure takes a lot of the pressure off their minds to see people commit early, as opposed to waiting until the last possible minute. I plan on getting my registration in within the next few days; just as soon as I can confirm that I can get those days off from work.

North Jersey Cont...

As usual, we also spent a good part of the evening getting caught up with each others' projects. Steve is making very good progress on the dismantling and assessment of the Bugeyes he recently picked up. Lots of pictures were taken and passed around for us to comment on. Ralph is making progress on his MGA/Jag/Corvette hybrid. Be sure to read your e-Flashes from Richard to stay abreast with what is going on in our region. We are rapidly filling in quite a few activities in our Events Calendar; you can find quite a bit to do with your Little British Car and fellow enthusiasts during almost every weekend throughout the spring, summer, and fall. All you have to do is look and get involved.

I hope to see you at the March 15th meeting.



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Gymkhana _____ Funkhana _____ Kiddiekhana _____
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Is this your first Encounter? Y / N
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When will you arrive? Wed 8/10, Thurs 8/11, Fri 8/12, Sat 8/13

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Concours requires additional registration through the National Concours Registry. To purchase the required concours packet send \$20 to Mike Osipik, 39 E. 55th Terrace, Kansas City, MO 64113. Email mikeosipik@earthlink.net or phone 816-333-2506. Concours packets must be obtained prior to arrival at Encounter. There will be a \$70 Concours fee per car payable with your registration for judging at Encounter. Deadline is 7-31-2011

****All Flea Market Vendors must register for Encounter
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Encounter 2011 update

by Chuck Ott

The Encounter registration form is in last month's Flash. If you haven't registered already, now would be a good time. And speaking of registrations, make sure you get your hotel registration in early. The hotel has 80 rooms blocked for us, so far on Friday and Saturday we are up to over 30 of those booked. One more thing to consider, of those 80 rooms, only 23 of those are the \$84.99 rooms in the annex. The \$84.99 rooms with the one king bed in them are gone, the remaining rooms have two double beds and there are still some of those left. The next level up is a very nice room in the main building with two queen or one king bed. There are 50 of these, and as of this writing 21 of them are booked for Friday night.

FYI, here is the cliff notes version of the schedule:

Wednesday – Strasburg railroad dinner train

Thursday – Rallye, tech sessions, charity auction

Friday – Gymkhana, kiddiekhana, tech session, luau dinner, valve cover races

Saturday – Funkhana, popular car show, concours judging, kids pizza party, awards banquet

Of course Hospitality, regalia and flea market are open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday

So pick your agenda, pick your hotel rooms, send in your registration and get ready to have a great time at Encounter in Paradise 2011!



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Transportation to Conclave 2011

by Baird Foster

For those AHSTC folks considering attending AHCA Conclave Colorado 2011, but who haven't the time to drive their Healey to/from the event in Colorado Springs, July 3-8, you may want to ship your car.

Michael Oritt is coordinating a one-way or round-trip shipment of Healeys from the area. The costs vary per location, but one-way costs are about \$1,000/car for a full truckload of six cars.

Contact Michael by phone (443-295-7888) or email michaeloritt@gmail.com.

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FREE CATALOG

Carlisle Car Show

by Joe Spear

The annual Import and Kit Car Nationals is being held from May 20th to May 22, 2011 at Carlisle Fairground in PA. This is probably the largest import car show in the country, featuring over 1,200 imported cars from seven countries from 37 different manufacturers.

This is a club sponsored event organized and staffed by members of the Harrisburg Region. We have a tent for protection from inclement weather and the sun. On Saturday, our own Shawn Miller, master griller of hot dogs and hamburgers will be on hand to take your order for a burger or dog grilled to however he gets it done. The Sweeneys provide coolers of drinks, the Spears bring the buns and many others bring covered dishes for you epicurean delights. The Rishells are on hand to relieve you of some your retirement funds for Regalia items. And lastly, the Hoopers are on hand with their ever constant companions: 50/50 tickets. We'd sure like to see some of our brethren from the hinter regions join us on Saturday the 21st for friendship, fellowship fun and food. There's plenty of parking on the show field next to the tent for your Healey.

To register go on line to www.carlisleevents.com and follow the directions. You'll see they have much more than the car show, including bands, a huge flea market, autocross and more. We encourage you to register early for a number of reasons. First, if we have 25 registrants before the start of the show, we get the use of a tent next year for free, saving the club almost \$200.00, secondly, you get your window sticker early and drive right to our tent without having to stop and register. Thirdly, they know how much space to give to us to park our Healeys. The cost is \$8.00 per day and \$15.00 for a three day pass. Come early and stay late.

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354 GEARS

Here is some info for AHSTC members who are interested in changing their A-H 3000 rear differential gears [with overdrive unit] from the standard 3.9 ratio to a 3.54 ratio. Results are more usable first and second gears and a reduction in rpm at highway speeds. Orders are being taken by Daniel Lempert of Lempert Wheel; for details, email Dan at 354gears@gmail.com

The cost is \$425 US which includes the ring and pinion only and also shipping. To place an order, send check payable to Daniel Lempert, 18 Princeton Ave., Rocky Hill, NJ 08553. Checks will be deposited when the minimum run order is placed for manufacture. I've ordered mine already. Perhaps you could make note of this in The Flash. According to Baird Foster, a group of these gears were made about 8 or 10 years ago with outstanding results; this next batch will be made by the same American manufacturer.

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Approx 78,000 miles. 1965 Sprite Mk III in good condition. Car has been garage kept for last 10 years. Body is in good shape and has new top that has never been outside. Car has aftermarket seats installed, but have original frames for reupholstering, if desired. New gas tank, leaf springs and fuel pump in last 5 years. Car was passing yearly NJ inspection but switched to QQ plates 4 years ago simply to avoid inspection under new state guidelines. The engine starts easily and runs strong. However, clutch slips once engine is warmed up. Engine has a significant oil leak.

\$6,500 or best offer. Contact Dave Wagner; Pittstown, Hunterdon County, NJ

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Overdrive – What is your school of thought?

by Richard Ippoliti (North Jersey)

While for many of you this may seem like a no-brainer question, for me I learned something positive about how to get the best driving experience by getting the most out of my Overdrive.

A few months ago, fellow AHSTC club member Steve Jekogian and I were on our way to a Board meeting in Pennsylvania. I was driving my '59 100-6 to the meeting. While on our way, Steve noticed that I had engaged my O/D while on the interstate and had not dis-engaged during our many stops on the local highways. He asked “why do you leave the O/D engaged all the time?” I said because I never knew any different. Steve said that he turns it on and off when slowing down and stopping.

On the way home, I tried driving with O/D as Steve recommended. It certainly enhanced the driving experience. I had not seen anything written on the use of O/D and was curious what is best for the driver and the car. Being a member of AHCA, I contacted the editor of Healey Marque and asked if there were any past article(s) on the use of O/D. Reid Trummel responded that no such article existed and referred my question to John Jones who is responsible for Marque back issues.

John contacted me and said he was not aware of any back issues on the O/D subject and went on to say that given all the electrical components are in working order, there would not be any damage to the O/D system leaving it on all the time. Driving in this manner would however cycle the electric O/D solenoid quite a bit since it will drop out in first and second gear once you come to a stop and reengage once shifting to third and fourth gear. John said a part of the driving experience is accelerating through the gears so why would you want to leave it on.

Still seeking more input, I found two articles in the technical section of the AHCA web site authored by Roger Moment on overdrive problems. I sent an e-mail to Roger Moment asking the same question. Roger called me back and we had a long discussion a good part of which was similar to John’s only Roger got into the more technical aspects of using O/D. Following our discussion, Roger graciously volunteered to write an article on the subject. That article is attached.

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Using the Overdrive

by Roger Moment (printed with permission by Richard Ippoliti)

Thanks to John Hodgman for providing a critical review and valuable suggestions.

I have been asked numerous times over the years “How should you operate the overdrive when shifting in or out of it?” In thinking how to respond I have concluded more than just one technique will work quite satisfactorily. However, there also are procedures which I believe could result in, or lead to, internal damage to the overdrive unit. Before describing how I engage and disengage overdrive, I think it is best to first review how the unit and its electrical control circuit work.

The overdrive adds a “higher” gear to the gearbox and reduces engine rpms for either of the top two gearbox gears when it is engaged. The following table lists the ratios of final drive to engine rpm:

Final drive -- ratios:1

| Gear | BN1 | BN2 | 100-Six | 3000 Mk I | 3000 Mk II | 3000 Mk III |
|----------|--------------------------|------|---------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 1st | 9.28 | 12.6 | 12.6 | 11.453 | 11.453 | 10.038 |
| 2nd | 5.85 | 7.85 | 7.85 | 8.025 | 8.025 | 8.095 |
| 2nd O'dr | 4.43 32.4% 4.56 28.6% | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 3rd | 4.125 | 5.46 | 5.46 | 5.116 | 5.116 | 5.105 |
| 3rd O'dr | 3.12 32.4% 3.28 28.6% | 4.24 | 4.24 | 4.195 | 4.195 | 4.196 |
| 4th | N/A | 4.1 | 4.1 | 3.909 | 3.909 | 3.909 |
| 4th O'dr | N/A | 3.18 | 3.18 | 3.205 | 3.205 | 3.205 |

Note: the BN1 has a 4-speed gearbox with first gear blocked out, making it a 3-speed box. Thus, 3rd gear is direct drive, the same as 4th gear in 4-speed gearboxes of the BN2 - Mk III 3000s. In terms of the gear shift “H” pattern, on 4-speed gear boxes, 3rd and 4th are on the (right) side of the “H” pattern while on the BN1 3-speed gearbox 2nd and 3rd are on the (left) side -- the shift pattern is a mirror image of that on 4-speed gearboxes. To keep things simple, I will refer to gear selections in the 4-speed boxes from here out. Also notice that 3rd overdrive final drive ratio falls between 3rd and 4th, though it is closer to 4th than 3rd.

Shifting within the overdrive unit is accomplished by oil under high pressure (around 400 psi) being directed through an operating valve (which is activated by the electric solenoid) to internal operating pistons.

The electrical control circuit consists of a number of components: a dash toggle switch that is used to initially connect to electrical power; an electrical relay is used to energize the overdrive wiring harness; a switch on the gearbox that connects power to the overdrive solenoid when the gear lever is in the right side of the “H” shift pattern on 4-speed gearboxes (left side on BN1s); and a throttle switch that keeps the circuit energized under less than 1/4 throttle to prevent down-shifting out of overdrive unless power is being transmitted from the engine to the rear wheels. On BN1s there is an additional centrifugal switch that prevents the solenoid from actuating below about 40 mph.

Using Overdrive Cont...

On cars with 4-speed gearboxes, with the gear lever in the right side of the “H” pattern, flipping the dash switch will immediately cause shifting into overdrive. If you move the gear lever into neutral, the solenoid will be deactivated and the overdrive will immediately shift back to direct or “NORMAL”. If you down-shift from 3rd to 2nd (with overdrive engaged), you will “skip” direct/normal 3rd gear and experience a jolt when you release the clutch because of the larger mismatch of rpms between the engine and gearbox than if you had been down shifting from 3rd-normal. (Note: on Healey 100 BN1s, the equivalent down-shift would be from 2nd to 1st).

If you leave the dash switch in “OVERDRIVE” as you brake to a stop, the unit will shift out of overdrive when you put the gearbox into neutral, but the electrical circuit will still be partially energized. When you start up again you’ll be out of overdrive in 1st and 2nd, but upon moving the gear lever over to 3rd the gearbox switch closes, actuating the solenoid and engaging the overdrive. By the time you release the clutch (from your 2nd-3rd shift) you will find you are not in 3rd, but rather 3rd overdrive -- almost as if you had shifted from 2nd directly to 4th (but not quite as large a jump). As a result, you’ll notice a substantial drop in torque and acceleration.

If you flip the dash switch to “NORMAL” while your foot is off the accelerator pedal, the overdrive circuit will remain energized, and the overdrive will stay engaged. You will be able to continue driving in overdrive as long as you don’t depress the accelerator more than about 1/4, at which point the throttle switch contacts open causing an immediate shift out of overdrive.

This electrical control was designed to assure that shifting of the unit out of overdrive will not occur under engine braking, which could harm internal overdrive components from a shock being transmitted through the unit in the reverse direction. Such a situation could result from a misadjusted throttle switch.

To summarize, I feel it is best to have the overdrive circuit de-energized before starting up from a stop. This is best done when shifting out of overdrive from 3rd or 4th gear by depressing the accelerator enough to open the throttle switch contacts. It also can occur when starting from a stop as the accelerator pedal will likely be depressed past the 1/4 point during acceleration in 1st gear, which will cause the throttle switch points to open. Additionally, I would not recommend down-shifting from 3rd to 2nd without first disengaging overdrive.

There are various techniques you can use to manage control or operation of the overdrive unit. In practice, this is what I do:

- When stopped, I always make sure that the dash switch is in “NORMAL” and there is no “residual” activation of the circuit if I had been driving in overdrive. Quickly depressing the accelerator about 1/2 way and immediately releasing it is one technique to assure the overdrive circuit is fully off.
- I typically shift into overdrive from top gear, rather than from 3rd (2nd for a BN1), and only when I expect to be travelling for some time before having to slow down or stop.
- When in overdrive, if I anticipate a slow-down or stop approaching soon, I will flip the dash switch to

Using Overdrive Cont...

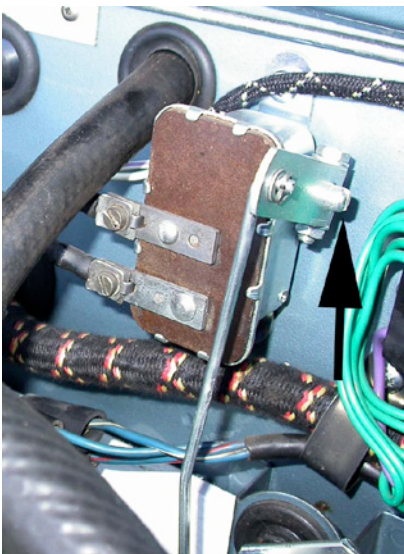
“NORMAL”, but continue to drive with a “light” foot on the accelerator, thereby keeping my speed, but with overdrive still engaged. At a reasonable distance before having to brake, I quickly depress the accelerator enough for the throttle switch to disengage overdrive and then release it, effecting a clutch-less down-shift and assuring that the overdrive circuit will not be energized when I start up. I also use this procedure when using exit ramps from freeways.

With a little practice, and an understanding of how the electrical circuit is controlled by the various switch components, you will develop skill at getting in and out of overdrive quickly and avoid putting unwanted stress on its internal components.

Post script: Backing up with overdrive engaged will cause costly internal damage to the unit. If you suspect it is stuck in “overdrive”, when trying to use reverse let the clutch slip as you gently release it, but disengage it immediately if the car seems to not want to creep backwards.



Overdrive switch. Round escutcheon plate was used on BN2s - BJ7s.



Throttle switch. To adjust, make sure that the ignition is turned off, remove one terminal wire (and bend it out of the way), and clip ohmmeter leads to the two terminals. Make a spacer (e.g. out of wood) to fit between the accelerator pedal and floor and stop it at about 1/4 depression. While a helper pushes the accelerator against this stop, loosen the pivot arm clamping screw and use a screwdriver to turn the shaft (arrow) first a bit clockwise (if necessary) to get the ohmmeter to read zero and then counter-clockwise to the point where the resistance jumps from 0 ohms to a high value, and re-tighten the clamp screw. Remove the spacer and check that the ohmmeter reads zero with the accelerator fully “off” and jumps to its high value as depression of the pedal reaches the 1/4 position. Finish by removing the ohmmeter and re-connecting the terminal wire.



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