

Hello Rod

Hope this will do what you want, maybe a bit over the top but that's how I felt:

"Club motor sport in 1962 was a simple thing.

On Friday nights after work, you race prepped the Healey Silverstone by checking the oils and bleeding the brakes (and renewing the flexible coupling again), loading the tool box, jack and sandwiches. Before dawn, you crept outside and drove off into the freezing air. An hour or two later, after a flat out drive through the dawn - no limits then - you arrived at Brands Hatch or Silverstone or Goodwood or Prescott, where a grumpy old bloke would check you in. You'd find a spot in the paddock and unload all the gear into a lonely pile on top of the spare wheel, pump up the cross plies with your foot pump, try to stick on your numbers in the icy wind and go off to scrutineering. The sprint or race or hill climb was always so exciting, the old Riley engined car loving the long drifts around Goodwood or the heart in mouth blind plunge around Paddock Bend at Brands. Then you'd drive home, the enemy of any poncy, spiv driven Jag or weedy Triumph you could blow off.

Last Sunday brought all that back as AH3000 and I pointed into the red sky above Lake Nillahcootie and the exquisite beauty of a High Country dawn. It had been five years since we'd been on a circuit, nearly three since we'd had any numbers on at all. Healey was supposed to be in retirement, on 'pub duties'. Our affection had shifted to our less costly Torana XU1 for tarmac rallies.

But somehow, I had never got round to changing the 4.3 for a 3.9, putting on the bumpers, fitting the exhaust out the back, taking off the blue triangles and kill switches and 'tow' stickers. So he was still ready to race. And it seemed as if AH3000 sensed something was up - that after months of living in the shadow of the younger, flashier Aussie he was at last going to be given a go. He started instantly, warmed up fast, couldn't wait to get there.

Rod Vogt is a great inspirer and his efforts to get Team Healey together inspired me. I'll never forget the last great triumph of the Team was in winning the Marque Team Award in Targa Tasmania 2002 - Freestone, Pyne, Moore and Dermott. So we decided to give Rod some support at the MSCA round at Winton, see if we can get more club members to enjoy their cars like Donald wanted.

Rod was there early, bagged a spot. Russell Baker arrived, blotting out the sky with his fantastic rig, in which lurked a mobile luxury house complete with full size washing machine and wide screen TV and green Chesterfields, sailboat and ... a beautiful BT7 in the right red with correct white hardtop. A fantastic example of Healey Factory magic.

Scrutineering was relaxed and the briefing was casual and organisation simple - then go as fast as you want. Check oil, three clicks up on the rear shocks, set AO48's to 32 psi, we're ready. Immediately, it was just utterly fantastic. A fully developed Healey (FIA tarmac rally to C2 regs) is a wonderful experience. Thanks to Simon Gardiner and Mike Conway, everything is just so right. The power is strong, the grip is amazing, the brakes are mighty, the overdrive on the tulip straight cut box orgasmic - instant electronic changes at 6000 revs - the sound of the old Austin C series six in full flight is the worlds best. Winton may not be the best for a Big Healey, but I love it's challenge and we quickly did a string of 46's. Which is bloody slow but that's what I felt like doing and it didn't matter that it wasn't the 42's AH3000 and I have been used to.

After lunch we had another go - and this time I had a shitty little bright green slick tyred, bulging arched, steroid pumped Sprite behind me - and it passed on the warm up. Cheek ! So now we have some of the old competitive spirit flowing - just like the glory days of Healey Racing. Soon got by, then it was on for young and old - side by side round the Keyhole and then AH3000 pulled rank down the straights.

After a few more laps to rub it in, AH3000 wanted to shed a few more secs but I said not this time. Time to go - that's enough for today. Took off the numbers (same roll Bill Ingham did for me before Bathurst in 1999), loaded up the stuff, bade everyone goodbye and cruised off to the Benalla Art Gallery to meet Linda for tea and friandes. When we were leaving, we found the (lady) Chairman and

(gentleman) Director of Collections admiring the Healey parked under the trees - we discussed at some length the relationship between the emotions evoked by art in the gallery and by art in the automobile. They thought the Healey, posing in the late afternoon dappled sun, was as evocative of speed and escape as any painting could muster. If only they knew !

The drive back to Mansfield in the shade of Mt Samaria under the cool canopy of trees was just pure enjoyment, enhanced as it was by the realisation that we had struck a blow for Healey freedom (as well as knocking off the decent Triumph TR4 which was there).

Next time ? Yes, we'll do it again for sure. And maybe Rob Rowland, Paul Freestone, Peter Jackson, John Moore, Geoff Leake, Hardi Kuhn, Tim Pyne and Bill Ingham who all still have their cars and still enjoy them hugely, could consider joining in. The racing we all did together was competitive and intense, but the MSCA creates a wonderful day of just enjoying the cars for \$180 total cost. Just like the old days.

See you there, Team"

Brian Dermott