



# Another Austin Healey trip: on to Banff, Canada or bust ?

## An adventure to Banff and Lake Louise, Canada

### Trip report

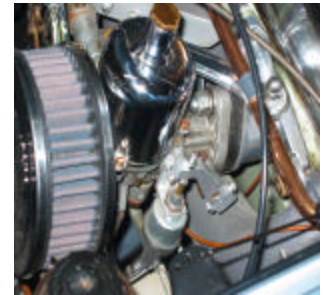
Anticipated round trip: Carpinteria to Banff National Park,	3950 miles
June 1, Tuesday	298
June 2, Wednesday	143
June 3, Thursday	3
June 4, Friday	181
June 5, Saturday	160
Total actual trip mile-	685

### Highlights of the Day

- 6/1 - short visit, where we first lived in California
- 6/2 - following a historical route, 143 years later
- 6/3 - evening on the Tahoe Queen
- 6/4 - the worst news, bust
- 6/5 - home again to gain perspective

Since we began touring in our '55 Healey roadster in 2001 these trips have been a highlight each year for us. California motoring season, for an open car, is May to early October after the winter/spring rainy season. Our first long excursion on our own to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and last summers Healey meet in Eureka gave us the incentive to plan a longer trip to Banff National Park and Lake Louise. We've heard how scenic this destination is. We anticipate a wonderful trip. Charlie meticulously checked over the mechanics of the car. He installed a '78 Ford Victoria's solenoid on a custom bracket to the carburetor. He added backup

lights so we'd be more visible. We purchased waterproof raincoats. Packed rain ponchos and an umbrella in the boot. We made a new lighter weight cockpit cover to protect the interior which is quick to install in case of a fast approaching rain-storm. We attached Velcro to a towel and the back-side of the dashboard to help contain the heater's warmth on our legs in cold temperatures. We put mothballs in a Ziploc to repel potential bears when parked in the northern Rockies. The trip evolved to include our nephew and his wife in Kennewick, WA. They'll take a week off joining us on to Banff. In Montana we'll visit my brother and



Idle stop solenoid to prevent dieseling when engine is turned off.

family and see Glacier National Park. Reservations that far have been made. Open Roads 2004 in Lake Tahoe helped determine the timing for this trip.



55 watt halogen mini driving lights installed as backup lights.

## Getting Packed

My usual procedure before a trip is to collect belongings on the extra bed in my sewing room. We make selections carefully. A lot of space is dedicated to outerwear, protecting us from the sun, rain or cold. For the first time

I was set and had done a *trial fit* in the boot a day ahead. We anticipate taking two and a half to three weeks for this extended trip. Gardens trimmed, bills paid, we are ready for an exciting summer vaca-

tion. Charlie has printed maps and checked lodging. We have our passports and AAA tour guides for the various states and Canadian providences. I slept well our last night home, eager for tomorrow.

**Note:** don't fill your gas tank too full in hot weather. The gasoline expands in the tank and may drip out of the gas cap air vent into the boot.

## Day One, June 1st, retracing familiar routes

Carpinteria to Modesto, CA. At 7:45 AM, 68 ° we waved goodbye to several neighbors. We detoured in Piru to visit Ellery Engle at his shop. Center Street was being set up as a movie set for *"The Moguls"*. At 100° in Delano we stop for a cool drink and salad at Wendy's. Charlie was transferred to Delano October 1972 from Cambridge's main filter factory in Syracuse, NY. We lived in Delano a little over 3 years. We have on our UV hats with neck scarves tucked into our s-

lar shirts. It's just before noon when we stop by the plant where he worked 28 years ago, now named Camfil. To our delight several of the ladies that worked for him are still there, not quite believing what they see. These strangers "from the Space Needle" are *Charlie* and me. Overjoyed by the visit they break briefly from work to see his car. Continuing north on Rt. 99 we pass Tulare Airport's B17. Traffic is steady all day. At Madera I wave at an approaching locomotive. His acknowl-

edging horn makes us laugh. We arrive at the Best Western at 2:30 PM and relish the air conditioned room. We walk to Carrows for dinner and have a good nights rest.

Tuesday evening, Larry King discusses the first day of the Scott Peterson, Lacey/Conner trial. It's ironic that we are in Modesto tonight, where the Petersons lived.

## Second day, June 2nd, on to Lake Tahoe

We're up early, have the Continental breakfast and set off at 6:50. A Korean family says "The only time we have seen a car like yours before was in a movie!" By 8:25 we bypass Sacramento's heavier traffic using a shortcut surface road with pretty farms and new gated communities. This is what is happening near us. Ag land is being sold for housing. Next Rt. 50 E, elevation 700'. Snowy peaks appear in the distance. Charlie turns on the electric fan to cool the radiator as we begin

the mountainous climb. We had a fine breakfast at Sportsman's Hall in Pollock Pines, 2900'. Following the south fork of the American River is a beautiful drive through the pines. Areas of burnt trees on barren slopes are evidence of past wild fires. As we climb to the summit at 7382' log cabins populate the small towns with snow not far off. Descending in 3rd gear we arrive at the Horizon in Stateline, Nevada at noon. While waiting for our room to be readied we go to Rendez-

vous registration and meet several members from our club. Our 11th floor room has a great view of Lake Tahoe, the swimming pool and golf course. An Open Roads reception is at 5 and then we go to Harrah's for the buffet dinner and enjoyable conversation with the Keens, Sharon Tanihara, Wally, Ray Juncal and Anton Krivanek. We ended our day watching a Jimmy Stewart classic movie "Winchester 73" before falling asleep.

## Today the Pony Express enacts a bit of local history at Sportsman's Hall.

Formerly called the Twelve Mile House Sportsman's Hall opened in 1852. In it's heyday, 1859, 1000 horses and mules were regularly stabled overnight. On an average day that year 300 wagons would pass by. The annual reenactment of the Pony Express run from Sacramento to St. Joseph, MO, exchanged horses here this

morning on the 10 day run. Unfortunately we didn't arrive early enough to watch. The Pony Express united the Union and California from 4/3/1860 to 10/24/1861. The transcontinental telegraph ended it's run and hastened the building of the transcontinental railroad. This history is well illustrated on the walls in the dinning room.



## Day three, June 3rd, Thursday, a day to relax

The Popular Choice Car Show at Markleeville is scheduled for 10 AM which is 31 miles away. Horizon's parking lot is active with owners and cars getting ready. Charlie decided to skip the competition. Instead we joined Ruth & Mal Doherty, their son and daughter-in-law, and Bill Barnett and Ronni at Lakeside Inn for a pleasant breakfast. Afterwards Charlie gassed up the car and parked in the hotel's parking garage where he conversed with two local Healey owners. Before joining me for a walk to *California*, just west down the street, Charlie covered the car for the evening. As

usual he fastened on the cockpit cover, then the car cover, slipping elastics over the wheel spinners to prevent wind disturbance. At 5:30 PM we congregated in the lobby for the shuttle bus to the Tahoe Queen for a dinner cruise to Emerald Bay and around Fannette Island, the only island in Lake Tahoe. Ronni reserved us a nice table. In spite of the too loud live music we enjoyed the evening with Ronni, Bill, the Baron's, the Phillips, George, Sharon and Wally. Later up on deck we met more members, observing the stern wheeler and scenic lake views as the sun set.



"Tea House" on Fannette Island in Emerald Bay.



Dinner on board the Tahoe Queen

## Day four, June 4th, trip to Canada is a bust!

Upon rising we dressed. At 7:30 downstairs we discovered the Horizon no longer has the breakfast buffet we'd enjoyed there in 2001. So we decided to walk across the street and check out Caesar's. It was chilly out so we went up to the car for Charlie's sweatshirt. Approaching we notice the elastic is missing from the right back spinner. I walk around the car to see if the others are in place, yes. Then I lift up the car cover on the passenger side and I am shocked and sickened to see that the door has been maliciously keyed many times. Crouching down I begin to moan and Charlie thinks perhaps I'm not well. Coming around he asks "What's the matter Carol?" and sees the vandalism also. We quickly look at the rest of the car

and don't notice any other damage or sense anything stolen. He rushes off for hotel security. I wait with the car and am anguished that BLU HLY was spitefully victimized. Considering Charlie's dedicated restoration and maintenance and our enjoyment traveling in the Healey this violation really hurt. Although most of the cars were in the back parking lot we weren't the only Healey in the garage. We had assumed that some security was provided with this hotel sponsored car event and felt reassured parking there. The Security Supervisor Michael Patterson filed a report and took several pictures of the damage. Charlie then drove the car to the back lot. Our dismay was evident and disgust and sympathy were expressed by

those nearby. Douglas County Sheriff Greg Rooney filed a report. His theory was since the only movie theater in town is in the Horizon many teenagers come here and some youths were responsible for damaging our car. Unfortunately to discover *who done it* is nearly impossible.



11 slashes, Why??

### **Vandal** (van'del), n.

1. A member of a Germanic people who in the 5th century A.D. ravaged Gaul and Spain, settled in Africa, and in A.D. 455 sacked Rome.
2. A person who willfully destroys or mars something beautiful or valuable.

## Friday continued....

Another onlooker notices that the left rear wing was kicked in, leaving an 8" depression. With our spirits deflated we decide to cancel our excursion north and return home in our scarred car. We pack up quickly, call our relatives letting them know what happened and that we will head for home not to see them as expected on this trip. The Horizon didn't charge us for our two night stay. We are on the road retracing our route by

10:30, 76°. At the Sportsman's Hall in Pollock Pines we have turkey clubs where the waitresses agree that it is hard to understand the lack of morality and rudeness common these days. It's 94° when we leave at 12:30. By 5 PM we've pulled into the Best Western in Madera for the night. It's 100°, enough driving for the day in this heat. We have a nice dinner at the Madera Valley Inn, affiliated with the hotel. Kind and respectful service

is appreciated after our emotional day. We shower and retire early after filling our water bottles with ice and refrigerating them. We'll be ready to start early for tomorrow's drive in San Joaquin's summer heat. It was a sad day but we will not allow a misfit to steal our joy of traveling in our special car. Actually we're lucky that worse damage wasn't done, seats or tires may have been slashed, who knows what? We are safe and the car can be fixed.

## Day five, June 5th, Saturday, going home

We are on the road by 5:30 AM, 58° covering miles while the day is cool. Twenty minutes later the sunrise begins to warm the day. It is surprising to us how much traffic is out this early. We pass through Delano at 7:00. We're glad it's not really hot yet as we pass and smell the several dairy yards beside the highway. We

get good service for breakfast at the Grapevine Denney's. There are no problems ascending the mountain pass and we pull into Piru at 10:05. Ellery and his family shake their heads in disgust at the sight of the car which he had such a part in restoring with Charlie. His youngest son questions why would someone

do this? We arrive home by 11:45 surprising the neighbors who didn't expect our return for a few weeks. All agree it was a callous act. Now we settle back into our routines, unpacking, laundry, bookwork, getting groceries, and fixing up our 1955 BLU HLY.

## Epilog

I was not able to write this account for a while. I just didn't want to think about it. I began some sewing projects to occupy my mind and relax. Charlie made arrangements right away with our insurance company and to repair the car. Gold Coast Body Shop fixed the dent and repainted the damaged areas, although the car will need a complete paint job in the future. The insurance covered the expense.

Had we proceeded north on our

original trip chances are we would have been delayed. The succeeding days and weeks of weather in the northwest were foreboding and inclement. There was much rain and even a tornado in central Washington! We would have certainly been held up waiting for dry and safe driving conditions. Perhaps it was better that we came back when we did. We decided to reschedule the Banff vacation to August and we'll drive in our Toyota. We will still carry out our

earlier plans to meet up with our family in Washington and Montana.

The best benefit of the Rendezvous at Lake Tahoe was that we became better acquainted with more club members. The rewards of owning this car are the fun of traveling, the friendships made and the events we attend. We're looking forward to the October Lone Pine trip.

We have taken a few local rides lately. Charlie's assembly of the BN2 is progressing nicely.