

## Healey Hints for a Weekend Mechanic

The following is a very much edited and updated article taken from 1973 publication of "Healey Highlights" which at the time was the monthly newsletter of the Austin Healey Club, Pacific Centre, San Jose, CA.

This is for all of you BJ8 drivers who are fumbling around in the dark trying to find which of the four switches on the center console are for lights, overdrive, and wipers and wondering - where are those damn heater controls. One thing is for sure, the dimly lit instrument lights are of no help in lighting the console or anything near it. In fact they do a poor job of lighting the instruments. There is a solution!

Go to your local hobby shop where they sell HO railroad stuff and purchase two or three 12 volt "grain o' wheat" bulbs. It has been so long since I installed these lights on my own Healey I forgot whether I got by with two or three bulbs. Once you purchased the bulbs, locate some light gauge braided duplex wire and splice the bulbs in parallel along the split duplex wire. Tape the splices carefully. The recessed area located under the lip of the vinyl dash panel below the rear view mirror is 11" long so space the bulbs about 3" apart along the last foot of the duplex wire. I found a small gap at the upper right corner of the center dash panel through which I threaded the wire down behind the dash. The next step is to split the other end of the duplex wire and connect one lead to a good ground and splice the other lead to a dash lamp switch or main lighting switch. I have since wired both my instrument lights and head lights onto the same switch and used the empty instrument light switch for the driving lights that were added later. If you have done everything correctly, turning on the light switch should light up these small bulbs like fireflies. At this time a suggestion is in order. As small as these bulbs are they are capable of throwing out a lot of annoying light causing reflections on your inner glass surfaces. I did a little experimenting and found that if you dip the bulbs in white paint and let them dry it cuts down the glare and gives you a soft glow at night onto your dash switches, heater controls and center console. The final step is to tape the whole system up into the recess area under dash panel below the mirror. There is so little weight that I found a couple of small pieces of duck tape holds everything in place. The light bulbs will be well hidden from the cars occupants. I have had my lights in place for many years and I have yet have them burn out. Now that I made that statement they are probably doomed to burn out!

**By: Kent Wittmann**