

# NEWSLETTER



## The sleeping giant reawakens as the 200 mph Club beckons...

(by Joe Jarick)

September 2009 saw a small group of Austin Healey enthusiasts realise a dream by taking two very special Austin Healeys to Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah, USA. *(Pictures by Joe Morely)*



Turning back the clock to September 1954, Donald Healey and his team from Warwick used two prototype Austin Healey 100S' to take an impressive bag of records in the United States national and international three litre class. In the Fifties, record breaking, where reliability was paramount, was seen as a very effective way of promoting sales. In Donald Healey's case it was to mean vital sales for the new Austin Healey sports car in its primary market, the United States of America.

Sadly, the 1954 record breaking Austin Healeys did not survive the ravages of the salt. Consequently, the Austin Healeys for 2009 were very faithful recreations of the two 1954 cars, built by Marsh Classic Restorations of Bacchus Marsh in Victoria, Australia.

While the similarities to the Donald Healey Team were there, on this occasion there would be no support from the Austin Motor Company, Lucas, SU and a host of other 1954 suppliers. This time the 'Healeys Return to Bonneville' was achieved by Steve Pike, the proprietor of Marsh Classic, his small but dedicated restoration team and Bruno Verstraete, with the support of a close knit group of 100S owners and Healey enthusiasts.

Steve built the 'Modified' or "Streamliner" Austin Healey for himself and the 'Stock' or 24 Hour 'Endurance' Austin Healey he built for Bruno Verstraete, a Belgian living in Switzerland. Bruno and his father, Marc, are great Healey and Austin Healey enthusiasts!

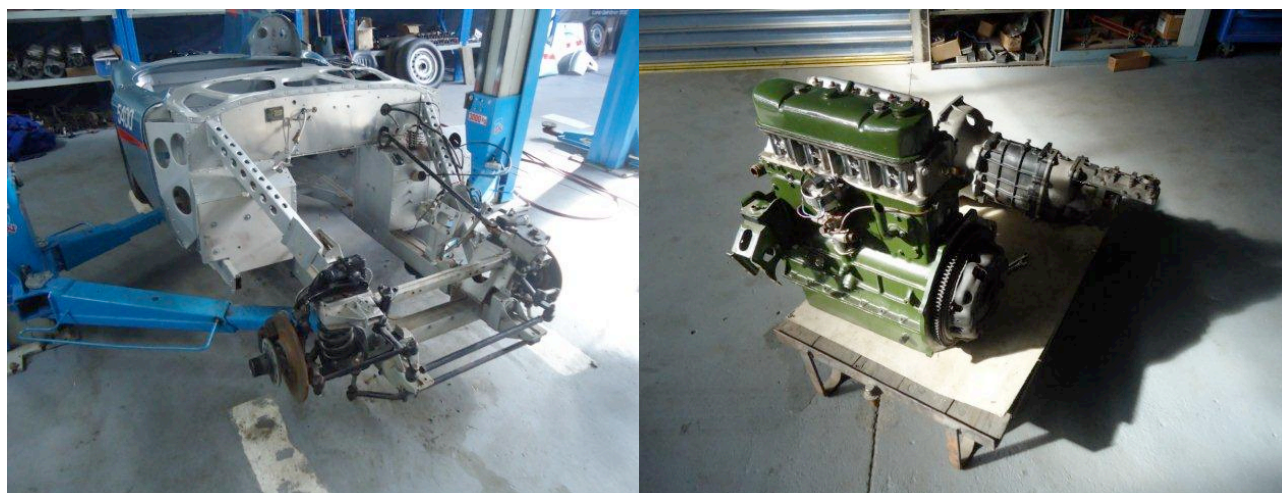
## The final step for the Streamliner...

The aim of the 'Healeys Return to Bonneville' Team was to emulate Donald Healey's 1954 record breaking exploits on the Bonneville Salt Flats. The team's desire was nothing more or less than to go back to Bonneville with the two Austin Healeys and relive the Austin Healeys on the salt at speed, to both create and take in the atmosphere..... In that they were successful and their success was witnessed by some 200 Austin Healey enthusiasts literally from across the world. They came to Bonneville almost on a whim to share in some small way this little snapshot of history repeating itself.

The Utah Salt Flats Racing Association (USFRA) officials were a great bunch of people who were incredibly supportive to the Healeys Return to Bonneville Team. However, they did warn that the salt would get into our veins. They also knew just how difficult it was to field two cars, particularly bringing them all the way from Australia! (see [www.saltflats.com](http://www.saltflats.com) for more information)

Not unsurprisingly the salt did get into Steve Pike's veins, but in a big way. In March 2010 Steve and David took the Streamliner to within a just handful of revs of 200mph at Lake Gairdner in Australia. Being so close to achieving membership of the elusive 200 mph Club, Steve is now committed to finding those extra revs and intends do just that at Bonneville this year!

**As a result, the entry is in for the Streamliner for the Utah Salt Flats Racing Association (USFRA) World of Speed, the event is scheduled for 8-11 September 2012 at Bonneville.**



In recent weeks work has commenced to strip and rebuild the Streamliner. While all the painted surfaces on the Streamliner were well protected from the salt, unfortunately, any zinc plated components and some suspension components suffered significant corrosion. As a result, currently the Streamliner is being totally checked over during the dismantling process and from there the car will be completely and carefully rebuilt. In this way the Streamliner will have every chance of reliability with safety all the way up to the 200 mph and beyond.

The accompanying photos show the Streamliner as it is in the process of being dismantled.

## Background

After all the work and build up to get to Bonneville, it almost didn't happen. Torrential rain both delayed and shortened the 2009 World of Speed event and these restrictions were compounded by the requirement for rookie grading for all drivers.



The Healeys Return to Bonneville Team would have no opportunity for records as no record class existed for a 1954 classic sports car. As a result, the 1954 speeds achieved became the teams target speeds. This was to become problematic as both the original 14 mile Straightaway and ten mile circular 24 Hour Endurance Course used by the Donald Healey Team no longer existed.

Despite the Endurance Austin Healey, driven by Bruno Verstraete and Joe Jarick, being limited to short straight runs instead of the 10 mile circular course, a highest speed of 127.7 mph was achieved. In 1954 the strategy was for a slow start then to gradually build speed as the car circulated the ten mile course and to reach and hold the target speed. In 2009 such a strategy went out the window with the short straight course as each run saw the Endurance Austin Healey rocketed

from the line, rather more reminiscent of a sling-shot dragster!



Roy Jackson-Moore provided the team with some historic facts about the record breaking attempts in 1953, 1954 and 1956.

In the Streamliner Austin Healey, drivers Steve Pike and David Pike managed a 149.06 mph run showing the promise revealed in March 2010 when this figure was increased to 189.88 mph at Lake Gairdner in South Australia. During the Lake Gairdner is run, at one point the GPS was showing the Healey touched 195 mph. Regardless, the Streamliner was now officially the fastest four-cylinder Austin Healey in the World. Sadly, on this last run, the engine cried 'enough'! A new engine is currently under development.

A future Newsletter will provide photos and details of the subsequent damage to the engine and discuss the development of the new engine. Suffice to say there was little that was re-useable of the original one that performed so valiantly at Bonneville and Lake Gairdner.



We are proud to announce AH Spares as a supplier of Austin-Healey parts for the 2012 Event and a sponsor for our run to the 200.