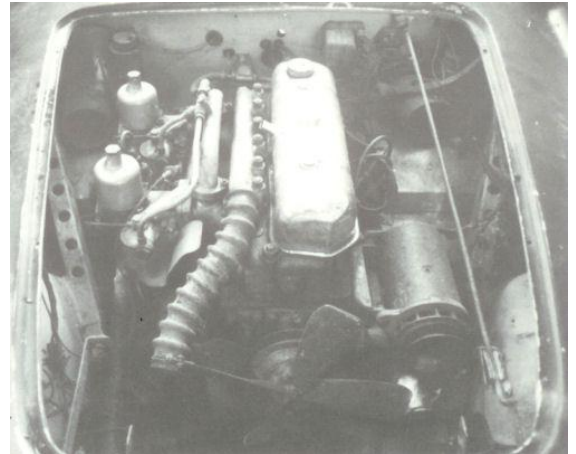


100S Rescued From Zimbabwe

By John Wheatley

Although it was known from the listing in Geoffrey Healey's book, Austin-Healey: The Story of the Big Healeys, that a 100S car had been delivered initially to Southern Rhodesia, its whereabouts and condition were somewhat uncertain, and under the present Zimbabwean government its future and possible rescue was very doubtful.

After months of patient and careful negotiations, Keith Clapham of England received **100S number 3902** back from Zimbabwe. This car was originally ordered on the Warwick factory by Ronil Motors Ltd. of Dares Salaam, Tanzania, East Africa, but the person who ordered it unfortunately died before he could take delivery.



Ronil rejected many approaches from potential purchasers because they wanted the car to be raced in order to publicize the Austin-Healey marque, and eventually approached Gordon MacPherson in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to see if he was interested in buying it. MacPherson had already raced a Jaguar XK120 and Austin-Healey 100M with success in Central and South Africa, and in 1956 purchased the car at the ruling price of 1.1250 plus :£250 purchase tax. He competed with success in the African countries until he crashed the car in a Belgian Congo event in 1959.

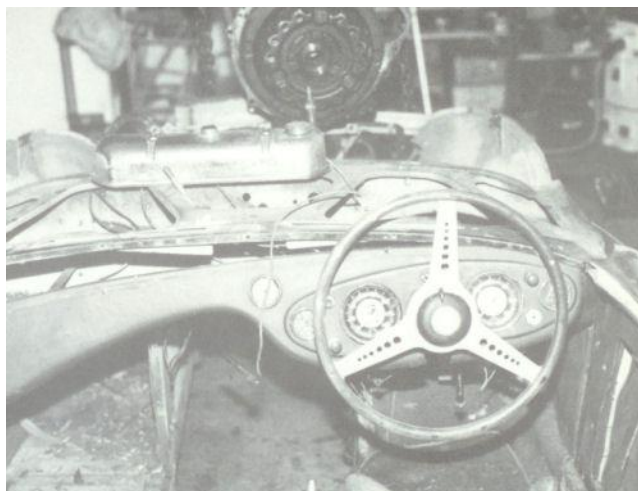
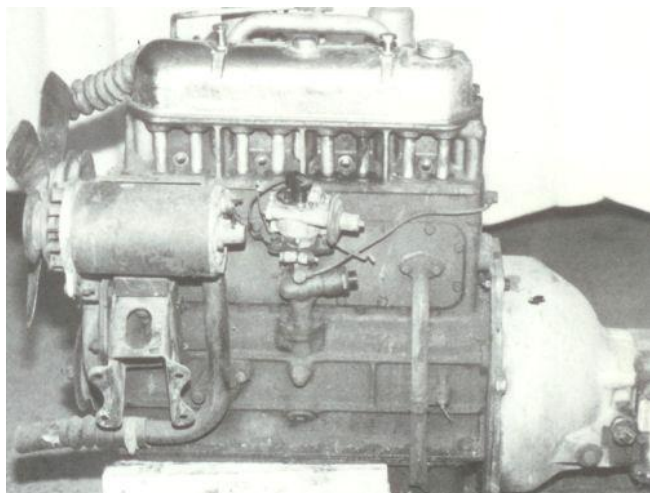


The severity of the accident caused him to lose interest in racing and the car ended up at his mechanic's premises for rebuilding. This task was begun, using standard steel panels to replace the badly damaged aluminum parts. Work went on slowly for a couple of years until the mechanic also lost interest. The partially rebuilt car was returned to MacPherson and was parked under a tarpaulin in his back garden where it remained for the next twenty-five years.



Over the years MacPherson received several offers for the car but always declined. Then in mid 1985 Keith Clapham made a careful approach and flew out to Zimbabwe to meet the owner and see the car.

When assured that the car would return to and stay in England, MacPherson and Clapham struck a deal and after overcoming many local bureaucratic hurdles the vehicle was eventually air freighted to England last December. When this rather scruffy Austin-Healey 100 arrived at London's Gatwick airport, the authorities did not know how to handle it and it was sent to Heathrow airport where there was a grave imminent danger that it would be returned from whence it had come in order to resolve the problem of what to do!



Fortunately Clapham realized what he had to do and raced down to Heathrow with a trailer behind his estate car (that's , "station wagon" to us Yanks. -Ed.) and quickly got it loaded up and away. It is now safe in the Midlands and will be carefully rebuilt to correct specifications.

The car was complete with all documentation and many spare parts, including an alternative crown wheel and pinion set and the factory-supplied "Quicklift" racing jack. (The chassis has special pickup points front and rear to accept this tool. These points are peculiar to the 1 OOS chassis and do not appear on the standard 100.) The car also had a metal half-tonneau and full engine under-tray. This car will raise a great deal of interest when it appears in public, possibly in 1988.

Healey Highlights October 1986

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