

## Gordon MacPherson in Southern Rhodesia

### TOJ 301, Gordon MacPherson and Keith Clapham

AHS 3902 was dispatched to Tanzanian Austin-Healey agents, Ronil Motors Ltd, in Dar-es-Salaam on 30 June 1955. Unfortunately, the person who originally ordered the car died before they could take delivery. Ronil initially declined other offers as the company wanted the car to be raced in order to publicize the marque out there. Ronil then approached Gordon MacPherson in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, who had successfully raced an XK120 and 100M and offered him the 100S.

Gordon purchased it in April 1957 and had it painted in his racing colours of Chinese Blue. Over the next three years, he enjoyed some seventy-five race outings, which resulted in sixty-two top three finishes, including eighteen wins. In 1958 he shipped the car to Madagascar for the Madagascar Grand Prix in the capital Tananarive. Mechanical problems forced retirement whilst Gordon was lying second to a local Mercedes. Another 100S (AHS 3806), belonging to local enthusiast M. Poisson, was running down the field in the hands of his driver A. Peri. He was called into the pits for Gordon to take over his car; such procedures were possible in those days. In this other car, Gordon drove up through the field to finish in second place. Gordon also took the Whitney Straight Trophy in 1959.

The car's last race outing was at the 1960 Belgian Congo Grand Prix. Whilst dicing with John Love's ex-works D-type Jaguar, Gordon clipped a kerb at over 120mph (193km/h) and rolled the car end over end. He got away with a broken wrist, but inevitably the Healey was badly damaged. Returned to Southern Rhodesia by train, repairs on the car got under way, but business commitments and his wife's concern over his narrow escape would result in the car standing, incomplete, for over twenty-five years.

Keith Clapham discovered AHS 3902 in Zimbabwe in 1985. When he flew out to view, it was under a tarpaulin in partly rebuilt condition. Having circumnavigated all sorts of bureaucratic difficulties, Keith flew the 100S back to England in December 1985. The rebuild, which would take ten years to complete, was started in January. Only the second owner of this example, Keith put it back on the road in 1996, when it was allocated the age-related number plate TOJ 301.

Source: Big Healeys in Competition  
by John Baggott,  
page 55

*Gordon MacPherson with his 100S and the trophies he won with it in Southern Rhodesia. The photograph is from a local road safety magazine. Keith Clapham now has this example in England, registered TOJ 301.*





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