

Cutaway Art Prints

Beauty may be only skin deep, but not in the case of Healeys. We all know that what lies beneath that beautiful skin can be just as beguiling as the exterior. If only we could see through aluminum and steel.

Visitors to the Healey Museum will have the opportunity to do just that thanks to the recent donation of a limited-edition cutaway drawing of AHS 3504, the Spruce Green 100S raced by actor Jackie Cooper.

The cutaway was done by Vermont illustrator David Townsend, whose history with British cars goes back to the age of 14 when his Dad gave him a decrepit Morris Minor 1000, a box of tools, and a shop manual and told him, "As soon as you can get it running, it's yours." A parade of other British iron including a Triumph TR3, several MGBs of various years, a Jaguar 3.4 sedan, and a frogeye Sprite has since rolled through his life. And like most of us, David devoured the pages of magazines like *Road & Track*, *Car and Driver* and *Sports Car Graphic*, filled with cutaway illustrations that revealed the underpinnings of the latest sports car offerings.

After a lifetime spent in advertising and marketing, David ended up revisiting those cutaway drawings as a second career. Illustrations that were mostly confined to technical work for paying clients with the occasional personal work thrown in when he had the time ... and inclination ... rather accidentally turned an avocation into a vocation, or as he calls it, "Plan B." And hence the initial name of his venture, "Plan B Automotive Illustrations," now known as "Sports Car Art."

It began with David fulfilling an inquiry on an online MGB forum to reproduce a rare Lockheed brake decal on a works MGB racer. That blossomed into another inquiry to improve a well-known cutaway drawing of an MGB-BT. Orders for copies of the B-GT illustration rolled in, which led to an MGC illustration, which led to a Triumph TR3 illustration ... which eventually led to Healeys.

David's technique in creating an illustration is not unlike building a real car. He starts with the basics – sets the wheelbase, then pens in the wheels and tires, followed by the frame, then suspension, brakes, differential, and drive shaft.



The Cooper 100S, AHS 3504, by David Townsend.

Next he draws the rest of the major mechanical components: engine, gearbox, clutch, cooling system, etc. Lastly come the interior, the body, and any accessory components like mirrors, spot or fog lamps and the like. He works primarily from original cross section drawings or factory profile sketches for the mechanical components and supplements that with photographs and visits to the real cars to get detail information. The typical drawing takes about 150 hours of which about 1/4 of the time is spent in research. Complicated or rare cars where information may not be plentiful can take upwards of 200 hours to complete. The transparencies that give his illustrations a life-like quality are a proprietary technique David developed and separates him from other illustrators, as are his methods of reproducing accurate chrome plating.

So that's great, but how does he really do it? David recounts the following story when he is asked about how he executes

each drawing. "I had a friend who carved decoys for a living. These weren't the kind destined for some pond, but so life like they were better suited as works of art worthy of a museum. When I asked him how he did it, he said, 'I start with a block of wood and take away everything that isn't a duck.' While I start with an idea instead of a block of wood, the point is the same: to be able to draw each car I have to have the complete idea of what I want to end up with locked in my mind before I start."

It also helps that, working on his own cars, he has a better than average knowledge of how things are supposed

to go together. And, if you put his mechanical knowledge together with some 40 years or so of illustration experience as he says, tongue in cheek, "Almost anyone can do this."



Healey Museum Chairman Hans van de Kerkhof with the Cooper 100S print #1.

His illustration "toolbox" is pretty basic: Adobe Illustrator and a drawing tablet are his only tools, eschewing all of the fancy filters that are available in favor of technique. He says, not depending on the computer to do his thinking helps keep that hand-drawn quality that gives the illustrations warmth and depth.

David struck up a friendship with long-time New England Region AHCA member Rick Neville when they were pursuing parallel projects of fitting V-8 motors into their respective MGB and BJ7. When it came time for David to do his 100S rendering, Rick asked him to do one of the Cooper 100S, with which he became acquainted when it was in the hands of former *Chatter* editor and Healey collector, Bill Wood. Bill was a driving force behind the formation of the then Northeast Region of the AHCA and his garage near Lime Rock Park housed some truly unique Healeys, such as the Cunningham 100S, the Earls Court 100M, the Healey Fiesta and two factory Sebring Sprites to name a few. Rick and his son, Mike, spent many hours with the Wood family on Lime Rock vintage race weekends and the illustration of the Cooper car was a way to recapture those times.

David's attention to detail led him to contact a number of Healey experts for assistance in ensuring his illustrations were correct. Former 100S Registrar Ken Freese, 100S owner Mike Salter, and David's technical editor, Carroll Phillips, spent many hours reviewing the drawings and making suggestions and corrections.

The plan built more momentum when David and Rick decided to donate Print Number 1 of AHS 3504 (the Cooper 100S) to the Healey Museum. The offer was made to museum Chairman Hans van de Kerkhof, who graciously accepted and agreed to display the cutaway, and the timing was propitious as 2015 marks the 60th anniversary of the 100S. Hans liked the drawings of AHS 3504, a standard OEW over Lobelia, and of NOJ 393, the infamous Le Mans accident 100S that he and David reached an agreement for prints to be available at the Museum, with a donation for each sale going to the Museum.

However, the 100S will not end David's Healey involvement. He has been working with 100M Registrar Bill Meade on a 100M version that will be available with a matching chassis plate to current and prior owners. Additionally, each print can be customized to include period accessories such as aeroscreens, Raydyot mirrors and the like. Like the 100S, a portion of each sale will be donated to the Worldwide 100M Le Mans Registry. Cutaways of the standard 100, 100-Six and 3000 are scheduled to follow.

Plans are underway to reunite Bill Wood with AHS 3504 and members of the New England Region AHCA when Print Number 2 is presented to him later in the season. David's illustrations can be viewed at his website, sportscarart.com and he is planning to be in attendance with his drawings at Enclave 2015. **HM**



Highland Automotive has been restoring and repairing Austin Healey sports cars for over 30 years.

Let our experienced staff help with the planning of your next project. From frame up restorations to routine maintenance call Gabe to discuss your needs.

Highland Automotive

3329 Route 9W
Highland, NY 12528
845-691-2265

A NEW LOOK

A new image reflecting the beautiful lines of the Austin Healey from designer Nick Zarkades. Shirt and hat are black, shirt is screened gray, hat is embroidered silver/gray.

T-SHIRTS - M - L - XL \$15.00 + shipping

HATS - \$20.00 + shipping

E-mail nzdesigns@comcast.net to place order, you will be contacted with payment options.

Or call direct at
978-590-6067

