

A 100S in New Zealand

Most would be aware of the 100S story with some knowing a considerable amount, while others know that such a model exists. Thanks to Bernie Huynen of the AHCCNZ we have two observations of the one car that started life in the US, went to New Zealand, then Australia and eventually back to the US.

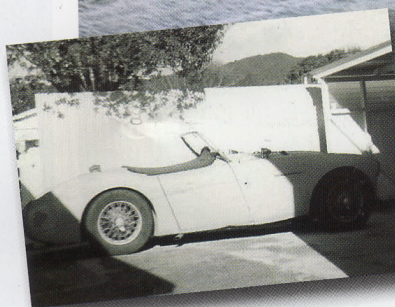
By Roger White

AHS3802 was the 32nd Austin-Healey 100S built by the Donald Healey Motor Company in Warwick and was despatched on 15th April 1955 to Royston Distributors in Philadelphia.

Its first owner was John Mull an amateur racer who raced in Sports Car Club of America events on the East Coast. After racing the car reasonably successfully for a couple of years he sold the car in 1957 to Commander Dr. Fred Losee, a US Navy orthodontist. In 1958 Commander Losee was transferred to Dunedin NZ, and brought the car with him. It was registered in New Zealand with CO8551 (later re-registered GH9426) and Losee along with G Pierce raced this car extensively in the South Island.

In 1960 Commander Losee returned to USA and sold the car to Ernest Tims of Timaru who continued to compete in the car. It was sold again in 1963 to Tony Shelly, a well-known Wellington driver, but he sold it fairly quickly to Graeme Collett in Lower Hutt, on the North Island.

By that stage it was just a tired ten year old racing car and like many others it changed hands quickly. First to Rodney Pomeroy and Edwin Edwards.



I had sold my Morgan and was looking for a suitable replacement. A MGA Twin-Cam was tried, but it looked a bit complicated and the engines had rather a poor reputation at the time.

A friend of mine who worked at NZ Railways in Woburn told me about one of his colleagues who had an Austin-Healey for sale. I visited Ed Edwards to look at the rather sorry sight under canvas on the front lawn. Lifting the canvas I was surprised to see the large quick release fuel filler and even more so to see four-wheel disc brakes, very rare, even in 1967. That it was wearing a standard 100 grille added to the confusion.

No Brakes

"Does it go?" I asked. "Sure" was the reply. "But there's no brakes!" (All the fluid had leaked and taken the paint off the wheels - it looked a real mess) "And 1st gear is bugged".

We took off down the road starting in 2nd - "Good for 70 you know!" He said. "Stop, stop!" I shouted. "I'll buy it!"

After parting with £625 pounds, I carefully drove home in 2nd gear, using the handbrake to slow down. My mother was appalled - "It looks a mess and it doesn't have a roof!"

The disc brakes were a very early Dunlop version with round pads that couldn't be removed without dismantling the callipers. Pads were available ex Jaguar Mk1 3.4, but seals were not. I made seals on my father's lathe from neoprene sheet and I think it took me about 40 attempts using a parting tool to get eight satisfactory ones.

Taking the gearbox to bits, I found that the lay shaft and gears were knackered. An attempt had been made to repair some teeth but things were not good. I went to the local Austin Agents, Magnus Motors, where the parts guy was most helpful and said he had some gearbox bits out the back. He came back the correct gear set and I couldn't believe my luck!

NEW ZEALAND

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Soon I was on the road and loving it!

A bit of research showed what a special car I had got. It still had the badge on the dash signed by Donald Healey, stating that this was a replica of the car that had achieved 132mph as well as several competitor badges from SCCA races.

The car was a light metallic blue and the paint was not in great condition. I used the car a lot and raced in several Vintage Car Club events. Unfortunately while holidaying in Nelson a Triumph Herald ran into the back while I was waiting to turn right. It was a bit ugly!

I was forced to leave the car in Richmond with a panel beater who had good knowledge of aluminium repairs. I asked him to repaint the whole car in ivory and while he made a great job of the repair, the colour was cream! I was pretty disappointed.

Sebring Grille

Not long after I got the car back, the other 100S (AHS3601) in the Valley was involved in a serious crash and written off. Fortunately for me the correct Sebring grille was not in the car at the time of the crash so I was able to purchase it.

I worked as an engineering cadet at Todd Motors and many of my colleagues had sports cars.

At the end of 1968, with marriage looming I sold 3802 for \$1600 to my colleague and friend Peter Mair who enjoyed it until he too had to sell for the same reason. Sebrings are not a family friendly vehicle!

Peter sold it to another colleague Phil Eglinton in 1970. Phil repainted the car Red, rewired it and fitted 60 spoke wheels. Phil had the decency to offer 3802 back to me in the early '70s. The price suggested was \$4,000. But....kids on the way, sadly we couldn't do it.

Phil sold it to a Nicholas MacFarlane in Central Otago. For many years it was on display in the Queenstown Motor Museum. Eventually it was sold to Australia.

AHS3802 is now in Northern California, owned by Dr Robert Griffin – an orthodontist with the US Navy. Some coincidence!



By Bernie Huynen

I met with Roger White for coffee in Plimmerton to discuss his ownership of one of the three Austin-Healey 100Ss to come into the country.

This car resided in Stokes valley for some time in Roger's ownership, then Peter Mair and Philip Eglinton, who all worked at Todd Motors at the time.

Roger was very kind and provided me with some photos and above history. I then caught up with Philip Eglinton who resides in Waikanae who owned the car before Nic MacFarlane, and offered a number of excellent photos when it was painted ivory.

Mark Donaldson recounts a letter and according to Peter Lawson dated 3rd Feb 1961 the Losee car was sold to Ernest Tims of Timaru on 11th Feb 1960 for NZ£1,700. Nic MacFarlane purchased the car, complete with spare engine, from Phil Eglinton on 13 April 1973 for \$3,600. Nic eventually decided to sell the car after losing an eye in a shearing accident on his farm.

Expatriate New Zealander, Murray Wells, living in Sydney purchased the car sight-unseen for a reported price of NZ\$12,000. After enjoying the car Murray offered the car for sale and Tom Kovacs of Fourintune in the US called Bob Griffin (who has a private orthodontics practice in San Rafael, California) and said there was a very good and complete 100S for sale in Australia.

Bob bought it that day sight unseen in 1999 and sold his 100M. The 100S was sent to Tom Kovacs to restore. Since purchasing the car, Bob has driven it in a wide variety of prestigious events, including three times in the Mille Miglia and twelve times in the Colorado Grand.

