

AUSTIN HEALEY BRIEF HISTORY of the "Big Healey"



1952 -The birth of a legend! Sensational launch of the Healey 100 at the Earls Court Motor Show. Austin's Leonard Lord concludes manufacturing agreement with Donald Healey. The car is re-named the Austin Healey 100 type BN1.



1953 - While Austin's Longbridge factory is being prepared for production of the Austin Healey 100, work begins at Healey's Cape Works, Warwick, building the first BN1 models for motor shows in New York, Los Angeles and Frankfurt. A fourth car is prepared for a sales promotion tour of the U.S. The Austin Healey 100 wins the Grand Premium Award at Miami's World Fair and is acclaimed the International Motor Show Car of 1953 at New York. A standard production car is taken to Utah Salt Flats and records an average 103.94 mph in a 5000 kilometre endurance run. By the summer, production at Longbridge tops 100 cars per week.

1954 - Donald Healey achieves almost 193mph over a flying Kilometre in a 224 bhp supercharged streamlined 100, while Carroll Shelby goes on to break sixteen U.S. and International speed records at averages of nearly 160 mph.



Record and race achievements result in the development of the famous 100S model, the 'S' standing for Sebring. Only 50 cars are made.

1955 -Production of the BN2 model commences in August but is not launched until the Motor Show in October. Changes include a new gearbox.

A modified version, referred to as the 100M is made available, there are 640 100M's manufactured.

During the period January 1953 to August 1955, approximately 10,000 BN1s are sold.

1956 - Production of the 100 BN2 ceases in August, after just one year in which 4600 had been made. Total production of Austin Healey 100 models is 14,600 in a little over three years.

Less than 10 per cent are made right-hand drive and only 3.5 per cent are 'home market' cars, making original UK registered models very rare indeed.

Production of 100/6 models begins in August of this year. Sitting on a slightly longer wheelbase, the car used the 2639cc BMC C-Series six-cylinder engine. The grille changed, and a pair of 'occasional' rear seats were squeezed into the cockpit.

In standard form, the new engine produced 102bhp, but the car was 400lb heavier than before and this in turn led to a drop off in performance.



1959 - The engine would again be enlarged, this time to 2912cc. Front disc brakes were now standard, and the legendary "Austin-Healey 3000" was launched. The new engine was good for 124bhp, and would give the 3000 a top speed of around 115mph. Immensely popular, the 3000 would enjoy an eight year run, during which time the engine power would be progressively increased to 148hp.



1962 - A re-style would see the 3000 fitted with a curved windscreen and window-winders fitted to the doors. Then in 1964 the interior was embellished with the fitment of a lovely wooden facia and plush new interior, and by the end of 1967 some 57,352 six cylinder engine cars had been manufactured.



The 3000 was an extremely successful competition car, particularly in rally's, where it would notch up outright wins in the Alpine Rally of 1961 and 1962, the Austrian Alpine of 1964 and Liege-Rome-Liege of 1960 (Pat Moss) and 1964.