

Protecting Your 100M

Internet Sales of Fraudulent 100Ms Prompt New Effort by The Worldwide 100M Registry

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Over the last several years we have seen a dramatic increase in fraudulent sales of Austin-Healeys being advertised on the Internet as factory-built 100Ms. This has occurred at the same time that we have seen a significant increase in the value of these rare cars.



These photos show an unrestored car that recently appeared in fraudulent internet ads. The car's photos had been stolen from a previous, real ad on the Internet, and then reposted with a very low price. Several people sent deposits and then lost their money when the advertiser disappeared.

The most recent scams involved people who stole pictures from real Internet ads for 100Ms, and then reposted the photos in a fraudulent ad on other websites. These con-artists post all of the details about the car, making it look like a very authentic ad. The ads are usually for unrestored cars listed at very low prices to attract a potential buyer. Of course, the sellers don't have the cars, only the photos they stole.

When a potential buyer inquires about the car, they reach someone who seems to know all about the car's background. The seller answers the inquirer's questions, sending additional photos and even a fraudulent car title from the foreign country where they say they reside. Because the price is so tempting, the buyer will frequently offer to send a deposit to hold the car until shipping arrangements can be made. Only then does the buyer find out he has been defrauded, as the seller disappears!

How severe is the problem?

The Worldwide 100M Registry has heard from a number of people who, in good faith, sent anywhere from \$2,000 to \$10,000 as deposits, never to hear from the "seller" again. When they try to contact the seller, all e-mails and all traces of their existence have vanished.

Based on data provided by the FBI, the Internet Crime Complaint Center received 1,685 auto-auction fraud complaints with a reported loss of \$4.9 million the first half of



Registry member Daniel Frakes' beautifully restored 100M in Florida Green over Old English White. Meticulous attention has been given to every detail. This car resides in Michigan.

2012. In all of 2011, they received 4,066 complaints with \$8.3 million in reported losses. This is a huge problem!

The Worldwide 100M Registry has assisted several defrauded buyers with trying to trace these phony ads. One seller, mentioned above, who posted the ad from Indonesia, turned out to be residing in Canada. These are very sophisticated criminals. Currently, we have turned information over to international law enforcement agencies for tracking and prosecution.

Another problem:

Cars that don't have the needed identification numbers

The other major problems we are seeing today are cars that don't meet the test of having all of the needed, original identification numbers. These cars are often ones that were restored in the past with some Le Mans equipment, but were never genuine factory-built 100M cars. In some cases the seller doesn't fully understand their car is not a 100M. However, in most cases, the seller is all too aware they are trying to sell a fraudulent or duplicate car that doesn't have the required identification numbers to confirm its ancestry as a real factory-built 100M.

In one case, we discovered a restoration shop in southern California that built-up several duplicate 100Ms using the numbers off a legitimate BMIHT certificate. Their fatal mistake was that they sent a copy of the same BMIHT certificate to each of the three buyers in three different countries! When the owners tried to register the cars in the Worldwide 100M Registry and we saw the duplicate BMIHT certificates, we immediately knew the cars were fakes. Unfortunately, once the buyers found out about their misfortune, they often withdraw and then try to sell off their car, under the radar, to another unsuspecting buyer.

What events brought on this situation?

When the 100M Registry was founded eighteen years ago, the value of a well-restored factory-built 100M was about \$40,000 to \$50,000. Many people didn't know what a 100M model was, or how to identify a real one even if they saw one. Today, values of well-restored genuine 100Ms are in the \$170,000 to \$200,000 range, making it very tempting for unscrupulous people to sell non-confirmed cars. Of course, the increasing use of the Internet has only compounded the problem.

This increase in values came about to a large degree because the Worldwide 100M Registry has published dozens of articles about the 100M in club publications around the world for eighteen years. As a result, people have learned the dramatic history and value of the 100M model and how it was based on the first Le Mans, limited production, race-modified Austin-Healey model, appearing even before the 100S racing model.

Additionally, the 100M Registry published the first 100M *Identification Guidelines* in 1996 that described and pictured



This classic, white over black 100M with period-style whitewall tires, makes an impressive sight roaming the colorful back roads of Utah with its proud Registry member Kevin Cowan at the wheel.

18 different points that can be used to determine if a 100M is a genuine factory-built model. This publication has been the definitive (and often copied) guide for identifying 100M cars for 17 years. It is available to Registry members or non-owning supporting members at www.100mregistry.com. This booklet has sold hundreds of copies worldwide and helped to build the identity and value of the 100M.

The Worldwide 100M Registry now has 183 of the original 640 factory-built cars registered from over 17 countries around the globe. This is about 30% of the original cars and estimated by experts to be 99 percent of the cars remaining in existence. With Austin-Healey enthusiasts learning just how few of these special, high-performance cars remain in the world, it has greatly increased the number of collectors looking for them.

How can the problems be resolved?

As of 2011, the Worldwide 100M Registry began a premier level of registration called "Registry Confirmed Factory-Built 100M". This new, higher level of registration was started because of the growing problem with counterfeit and duplicate cars being sold as real, factory-built 100Ms.



Registry member Philip Kruger of Switzerland regularly drives his handsome, Healey Blue over white 100M. The beautiful mountains of Switzerland are the perfect backdrop for spirited Healey touring.

Considering the value of a factory-built 100M is at least double the price of a converted car, it's easy to see the motivation for people to build-up duplicate cars.

Auction houses and knowledgeable individuals told us they wanted a way they could quickly be assured a car being offered for sale was already inspected and confirmed to be a factory-built 100M. The new "Registry Confirmed Factory-Built 100M" premier registration offers this ability.

The Registry requires any car registering or renewing its registration to provide photographs of all of the numbered identification points on their cars. These are carefully examined by the Registry to determine if a preponderance of evidence is there to say the car is a factory-built 100M before a special, gold "Confirmed Registration" certificate is issued.

Registration to establish identity

Only 640 factory-built 100Ms were made, and all were BN2 models. They were based on the four, very first Austin-Healey race cars that were prepared for the Le Mans race in 1953. To determine if the car is genuine, the owner must first obtain a copy of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust (BMIHT) production records trace certificate that states whether the car's chassis number is an original factory-built 100M or standard 100. See www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk/archive-services/. Of course, the build certificate, by itself, does not prove the car being offered for sale is a factory-built 100M, only that some car, somewhere, was built with that chassis number.



A dramatic black 100M belongs to Richard Desurmont, a Registry member in France. Note the unusual Gerry Coker designed, early 100M Registry grille badge.

To prove the car in question is the actual car, the owner will need a Worldwide 100M Le Mans "Confirmed 100M" Registry Certificate showing the car's numbered body parts have been examined by the Registry and it is, in fact, the car described on the BMIHT build certificate.

Potential buyers should be aware that the Registry's early, "owner registrations" have limited value because these ID points were not confirmed. The new certificates note in red lettering that the car is a "Registry Confirmed Factory-Built 100M". The early registrations did not have this special red notation. If the car is not properly identified and registered in this category, it cannot be assured to be genuine.

What are the benefits of this new "Confirmed Registration" Program?

By utilizing this new "Registry Confirmed Factory-Built 100M" category, the problems of duplicate or fraudulent sales of 100M cars can be a thing of the past. We urge any potential buyers of a 100M, for their own protection, to buy only cars that are properly registered and confirmed. If you buy an unregistered, unconfirmed car, you are buying at your own risk.

In the case of the fraudulent internet car which didn't exist, the new registration procedures will make it impossible for the seller to deceive people. Buyers need only to ask to see the "Confirmed 100M Registration" before even considering the car. They should let the owner know that if there is no Confirmed Registration Certificate, there is no sale. This simple step can stop the illegal activity.

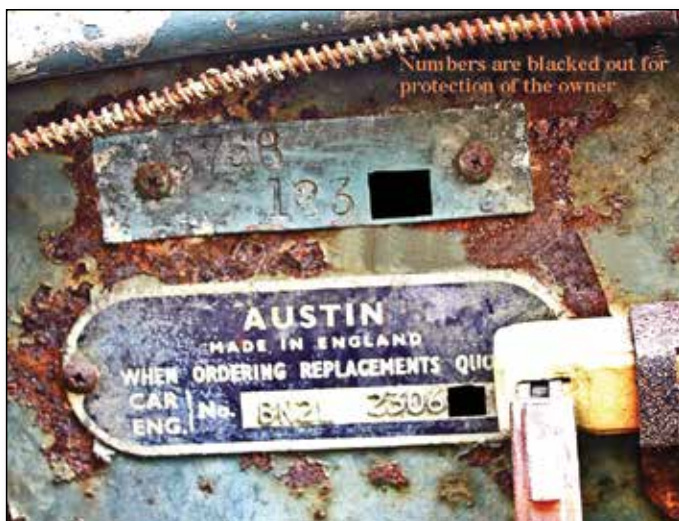


South Carolina Registry member, Mike Lewis, has his concours-level 100M decked out with badge bar, spot lights and the current 100M Registry grille badge.

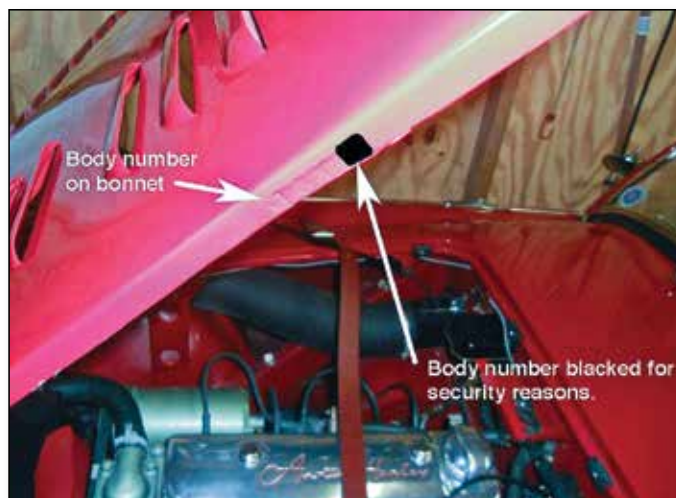
How should 100M owners proceed?

For 100M owners to register or renew their car at this highest level, the "Registry Confirmed Factory-Built 100M" category, the Registry requires an application, information and photos to be submitted by mail. Following is a list of the identifying photographs and information that needs to be submitted. *All photos must be clear and sharp.*

1. A close-up photo of the chassis and body number plates on the firewall.



The original chassis and body number plates are key ID points.



The body number also appears on the edge of each bonnet. Sometimes the paint must be sanded just over the number to reveal this critical identification point.

2. A close-up photo of the body number in the edge of the bonnet, about 8 inches from the rear corner, (left side, from drivers seat).

3. Close-up photos of the body number on the rear of each of the three front cockpit surrounds. (Just a few screws hold each of these on.) Photograph all three surround numbers in a single photo.



Cockpit surrounds were hand fitted and numbered. Note that this is how the cockpit surrounds should be photographed for registration: all in one photo.



Each 100 has a boot lid bracket with the body number stamped in it.

4. Close-up photo of the body number on the boot lid strut, "half-moon bracket."
5. Close-up photo of the numbers on the side of each carburetor.
6. Close-up photo of the number on the side of the distributor. This can be photographed with a small camera held down beside the engine.
7. Close-up photo of the ignition switch face plate showing the number.



Both 100M carburetors have special embossed and engraved numbers on their sides.



The factory-built 100Ms had special distributors, model number 40522 on early examples and 40520 on all later ones.



The ignition switch number appears on the BMIHT Certificates.



Each registered 100M is issued a solid brass dash plaque, designed by Gerry Coker to resemble the 100S dash plaque that he also designed. This is worn by all factory-built 100Ms to quickly tell an observer the car is a registered, factory-built 100M. Only one plaque is issued per car, and it must remain with the car when sold.

8. Some general photos of the exterior, interior and engine compartment.
9. Completed Registry Application (available on the website www.100mregistry.com).
10. Copy of the BMIHT certificate must be sent with application.
11. Provide last owner's name and contact info; present owner's name, address, phone and e-mail; purchase date and purchase price and the known history of the car. (Sale prices of cars are used only to track values and reinforce the high values of the cars, it is strictly confidential and never released to anyone.) If some of these items are missing, let the Registry know. It normally does not prevent registration provided enough ID points are present.

Can Le Mans conversions be registered?

Many stock 100 cars have been modified to Le Mans specification by owners or dealers over the years. These cars can look like a factory-built 100M car. They are called modified or "converted to Le Mans specification", they are *not* properly called 100M cars. These are legitimate cars because Donald Healey originated the Le Mans Kits with the intention that owners could upgrade their standard cars to the Le Mans specifications.

To register a car in the "Le Mans Conversion" category, the car must have a louvered bonnet, Le Mans strap, Le Mans manifolds and carburetors, cold-air box, plaque and tube. The Registry requires the following application, information and photos be submitted by mail for these Le Mans-modified cars.

1. Close-up photo or the numbers on the sides of the carburetors also showing bolts mounting to manifolds, cold-air box, plaque and tubing.



This is the new Gold Registry Certificate that is used only for the "Registry-Confirmed, Factory-Built 100M" cars. The red lettering points out it is a confirmed factory-built 100M. When buying a 100M, this document is indispensable.

2. Photos of interior and exterior plus the engine compartment.
3. Close-up photo of the chassis and body number plates.
4. Completed Registry Application (from the website www.100mregistry.com).
5. A copy of the BMIHT certificate must be sent with application. Provide last owner's name and contact info; present owner's name, address, phone and email; purchase date and purchase price and the known history of the car. (Sale prices of cars are used only to track values and reinforce the high values of the cars, it is strictly confidential and never released to anyone.)

gives permission to divulge information when a car is being sold. The Worldwide 100M Le Mans Registry is endorsed and supported by the 16 largest Austin-Healey clubs worldwide.



This is an enlargement of the certificate with the special red notation stating the car has been examined and confirmed as a factory-built 100M.

Final notes

All photos and registration information for both types of Registration must be sent together by mail. If only part of the photos or information are submitted, it will not allow the registration process to go forward.

The 100M Registry is a volunteer and non-profit organization. All fees go to running the Registry (printing materials, producing regalia, postage, supplies, etc.). No one receives any salary or compensation for administration of the Registry; all time and effort is volunteered. All car numbers and information are kept strictly confidential unless the owner

Registration for either a factory-built 100M or a Le Mans-converted car is done **at no charge**. However, if the owner would like to receive the Gold "Confirmed Registration" Certificate in their name plus the full registration membership packet (consisting of a brass dash plaque; jacket patch; a copy of the booklet, "Original Tuning Instructions"; newsletters; copy of an original Le Mans ad and Gerry Coker's original measured drawing of the 100), submit \$55 plus \$5 postage US or \$10 foreign to purchase all these items. Mail check payable to: Bill Meade, Worldwide 100M Le Mans Registry, 533 Cedar Drive, Watsonville, California 95076. www.100mregistry.com, email: billmeade@100mregistry.com 