

RELIVING HISTORY

Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity to Witness Famous Speed Events Recreated

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*Photos courtesy
of Gerry Coker*

Most of us would be thrilled to turn back the hands of time and relive exciting moments from the past. That opportunity will become as close to reality as possible this September. The "Healeys Return to Bonneville" team will be taking their recreations of the 1954 Austin-Healey Streamliner and Endurance Car to the Bonneville Salt Flats, and their goal will be to reenact the record-setting runs of Donald Healey's crew.

After successful speed runs with Austin-Healey 100 endurance cars in 1953, Donald Healey had the dream to build a streamlined Austin-Healey 100 with an objective to take it to the U.S. Bonneville Salt Flats and become one of the few people who had the distinction of driving over 200 MPH.

The real work began in 1953 when Donald asked his stylist, Gerry Coker, to design an entirely new streamliner that would be able to crack the 200 MPH mark. Although Gerry came up with the design (see photo of clay model), it was deemed too expensive for Austin of England to finance, and so another, more economical approach was undertaken.

In the second design attempt, Gerry started with a stock 100 and removed the body forward of the front axle and from behind the rear axle. In its place was constructed a long, low-slung nose and an extended, tapered tail. In an effort to give the car a futuristic look, Gerry included a modest fin and a Perspex driver's seat canopy enclosure. The whole car was



The original Streamliner, seen here, has been re-created in every detail for the 2009 re-creation of the 1954 record runs.

finished in silver blue with a scarlet flash down the side. The design was striking to everyone who saw it and appeared to be at speed even when standing still.

The engine for the Streamliner began as stock and was then upgraded with a new, better breathing cylinder head developed by Donald's engineer friend, Harry Westlake. Along with the new head, a Shorrock supercharger was fitted resulting in over 240 BHP for the original Streamliner. It proved to be just short of the horsepower needed to reach the goal of 200 MPH. (However, Donald did set an average speed of 192.62 MPH in 1954 and 203.11 MPH later in 1956, with the six-cylinder Streamliner.)

If you haven't seen the original films of Donald Healey's Bonneville speed runs, take the time to watch the 1954 film, which as of this writing is available on youtube.com (search for "austin healey 100") and witness that first attempt to break the 200 MPH barrier with the Austin-Healey. It was a thrilling sight



website of the Utah Salt Flats Racing Association: www.salt-flats.com. Here you can find information about the Association itself and a link to hotels and motels in the area. You can also go to www.healeysreturntobonneville.com for information on the cars progress and the specific plans for the Bonneville speed runs.

I personally inquired into room reservations several months back and found that most of the local Wendover hotels and motels were already booked-up for the World of Speed week. I did find a casino in the area that still had rooms available and was willing to do advance bookings into September.

The resort casino I located was the Wendover Nugget

Nugget at: www.wendovernugget.com/hotel.html. Their telephone is 1-800-537-0207. This is a three-star resort hotel and has reasonable prices (around \$100). As of this writing (mid-July), they still have about 400 rooms available.

According to the development team, a significant number of people from around the world are planning to travel to the Bonneville Salt Flats to share in the thrill of seeing and hearing these two cars streak across the horizon. With just a little imagination, you should



Clay scale model of the first proposed 1954 Streamliner in the Armstrong Whitworth wind tunnel.



be able to feel that you are standing on the Salt Flats, seeing Donald Healey making his famous first run to attempt break the 200 MPH barrier! **HM**

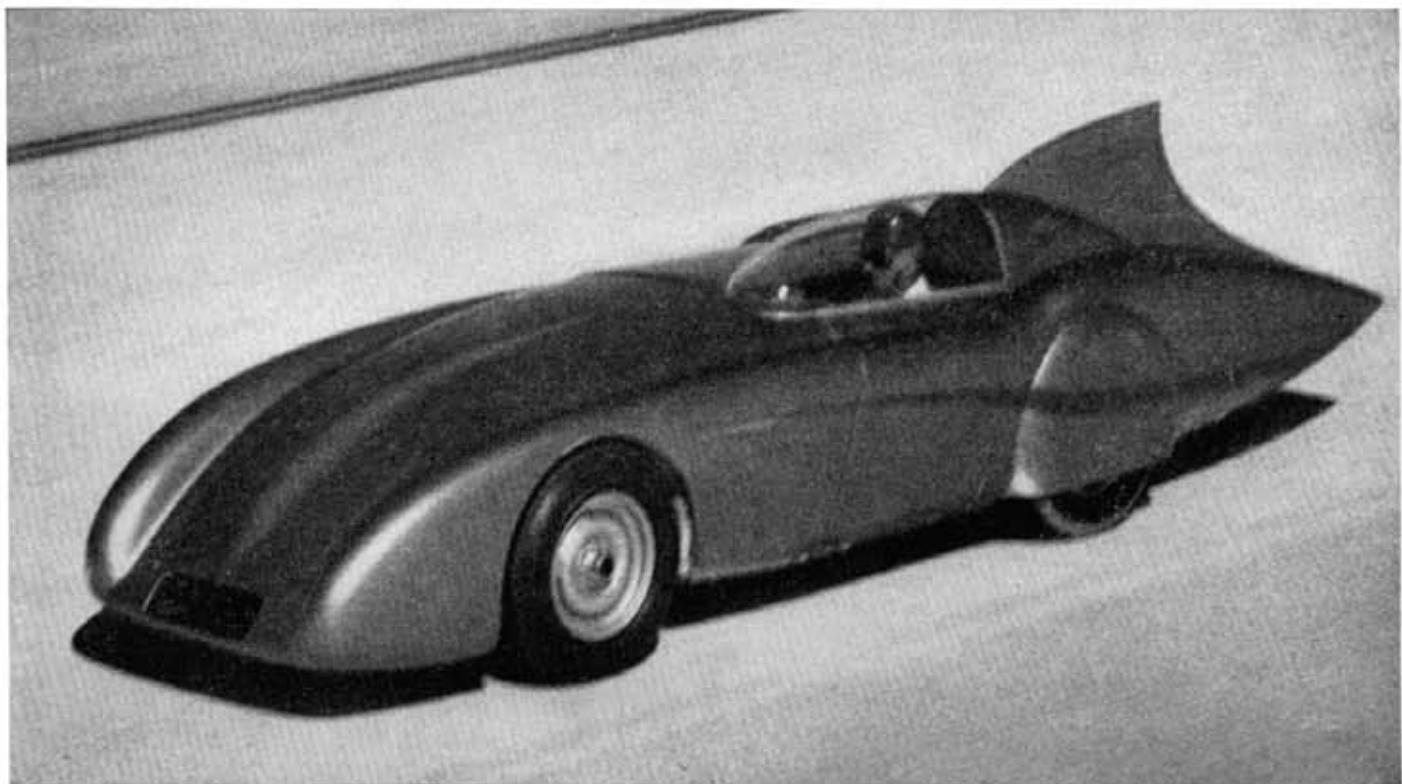
then and it will be an amazing event this year, to see both of these cars reborn and thundering across the shimmering and majestic Bonneville Salt Flats.

The Bonneville Team has already completed the construction and track testing of the Endurance Car. Now, the Streamliner is entering its final finishing phase. Paint is being applied and a multitude of details are being addressed, and by the time you read this it should be well on its way to the USA. The clock is ticking and the ocean liner is ready to take these two record setting cars across the Atlantic to America.

Healey clubs are helping to make this historic event one that will be remembered for years to come. Many Healey enthusiasts are planning to witness the runs scheduled to occur September 16-19.

If you want to be a part of this amazing automotive occasion, you should start planning immediately. The Bonneville "World of Speed" week is always packed with spectators and hotels book-up fast. The Bonneville Team has suggested the

Austin-Healey "100" world's fastest modified production sports car-192.62 M.P.H.



This Record Breaking Austin Healey "100" is basically standard, but a longer nose, tail and stabilizing fin have been added. Forced induction was used to compensate for the 4300-ft. altitude of the Salt Flats

Donald Healey, car's designer, drives modified Austin-Healey "100" over the flying mile at 192.62 miles per hour, timed by AAA!

On August 22, 1954, Donald Healey drove a modified Austin-Healey "100" at the mean speed of 192.62 m.p.h. over a flying mile at Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah. This record, officially timed by the American Automobile Association, makes this Austin-Healey "100" the fastest modified production sports car in the world *regardless of engine size*.

On August 23-24 an Austin Healey 100 "S" covered 3174.96 miles in 24 hours—132.29 m.p.h.! The 100 "S", a new competition model with 130 b.h.p. engine, close-ratio 4-speed gearbox, disc brakes, all-aluminum body, etc., will soon be available on the U. S. market at \$4995.*

(All records subject to official confirmation)

*F. O. B. coastal port of entry.



AUSTIN OF ENGLAND

27-29 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y.
600 Gough, San Francisco, Calif.
9126 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, Calif.

Number 13, the modified Austin Healey "100", above, is raced by its owner, stage and screen star Jackie Cooper. The Austin-Healey "100" at \$2985*, comes completely equipped with custom features like overdrive, heater, defroster, twin carburetors, tachometer, adjustable windshield, disappearing all-weather top, leather bucket seats, wire-spoke knock-on wheels at no extra cost. Modification kits for racing are available.