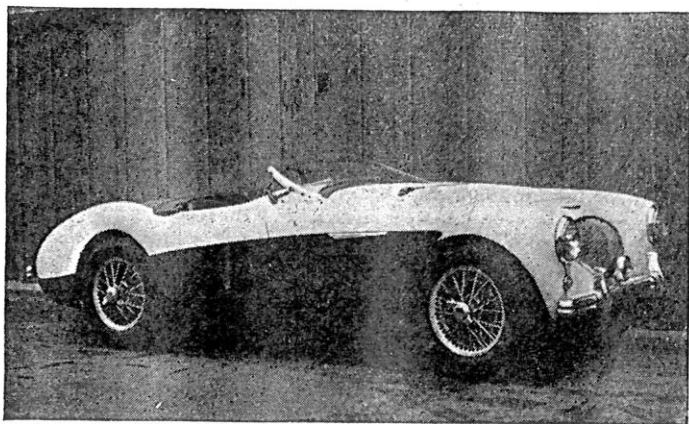


## THE AUSTIN-HEALEY CONVERSION

The "100" Becomes the "100M"



**I**N the latter part of the summer MOTOR SPORT found itself in need of a new staff car. It was to replace the Jowett Jupiter IA which was needed for another member of the staff. After some discussion it was decided to purchase an Austin-Healey, and the one that was eventually procured from a local garage was an ordinary 100 model in perfectly standard form. Running-in was less tiresome than many cars, as a fairly high road speed could be maintained with low revs. Maximum revs. for the first 1,000 miles were 2,500 r.p.m., which gave the following m.p.h.: first gear, 20 m.p.h.; second gear, 31½ m.p.h.; third and top gear, 45 m.p.h.; and with the overdrive 60 m.p.h. was top running-in speed. As most drivers know, a speed of 60 m.p.h. in this country is faster than that used by the majority of road users.

After 1,000 miles the revs. were gradually increased until at 2,000 miles it was possible to try using maximum power, which showed that 100 m.p.h. was possible on medium-length stretches of road. Braking, however, from that speed felt slightly odd, as though the rear brakes were not working, but when the brakes were checked they were perfectly balanced. The local agents assured us that they were normal, which seemed to infer that Healey brakes were not much good. On one occasion when travelling at about 15 m.p.h. it became desirable to stop instantly, but this proved impossible, as the front wheels locked solid and the rear wheels hardly braked at all. The resulting bump had its compensations, as it resulted in replacing the inadequate headlamps with Lucas P700, making night driving considerably more pleasant.

On another occasion, at a speed approaching 100 m.p.h., the car grounded on a shocking section of the Southend Arterial road near Hornchurch, causing damage to the sump drain plug and the side-screens to disintegrate. It was possible to go on using the car and a replacement sump was delivered in six weeks.

After 3,000 miles a clutch judder began to creep in, and developed during the next 2,000 miles until it shook the whole transmission on getting away from a standing start. The controllability at all speeds was good, and cruising speeds of 85 to 90 m.p.h. proved the most comfortable as long as one remembered the braking distance.

In the middle of October an advertisement appeared for a conversion for the Austin-Healey 100 to a 100M, or, as the advertisement stated, "the Le Mans conversion." It consisted of raising the compression-ratio from 7.5 to 1 to 8.1 to 1, high-lift camshaft, enlarged S.U. carburetters, steel-faced cylinder-head gasket, racing-type anti-roll bar and special setting of the shock-absorbers. Externally the car is resprayed in two colours and has a new louvered bonnet top held in place by a leather strap. The cost of these modifications is £105.

Having decided to have the conversion, arrangements were made for the car to go to the works, accompanied by a list of defects, most of them very minor ones. Heading this list was "clutch judder and poor braking." It took a fortnight to complete the job, and when the car was picked up the improvement was tremendous. First the clutch judder had gone, and the brakes now worked perfectly. Afterwards it was learnt that the front linings had been reduced in width by ½ in., which made all the difference to fast driving. The handling at all speeds had improved tremendously—the car felt more balanced and stable on corners, and with a new set of Michelin SDS tyres the improvement was even more pronounced.

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## NOSTALGIC

**F**ROM time to time readers send in cuttings or links which provide the Editor with interesting and often amusing reading. Amongst such links with the past are books containing cuttings from motoring journals of the twenties lent to us by Major J. L. Iremonger and compiled when he was a schoolboy—indeed, one of his books looks so fresh as if it was procured in the classroom!

Here we find pictures of the heroes of those days—Parr H. O. D. Segrave, Malcolm Campbell, T. B. Andre, C. M. R. M. V. Sutton, A. Waite, E. C. Gordon England, Gordon the Earl of Cottenham, Eric Longden, C. W. Johnstone, (the French Amilcar exponent) and many others. It was when Halford used the hand-brake of his Halford Special at artificial corners in the 200-Mile Race which Segrave won lands in one of those fascinating, low-hung, straight-eight A race in which Douglas Hawkes (Eldridge Special), Harry Alvis) and Moriceau (Talbot) were able to indulge in crash-injuring themselves.

Parry Thomas is seen breaking long-distance records from to 1,000 miles in his Leyland-Thomas, all four wheels being petrol and oil replenished at spells of 1½ hours, the caption claims, being made by a team of mechanics in 1898. There are interesting pictures of the 4-litre V12 Sunbeam colours, with Talbot radiator, at Gaillon hill-climb, and Jackson sand-racing at Southport in another Sunbeam. From another caption that Aston Martin driver Miss H. was formerly a Russian ballet-dancer, we are reminded that a streamlined o.h.c. Fiat Eight ran in a 200-Mile Race a reminder of the splendid streamlining of one of Gordon's later racing Austin Sevens.

There is an amusing error in a newspaper caption, where Cunliffe's Bentley is said to be cornering at Blackpool 1908, and is seen ascending Shelsley Walsh! There are pictures which show that Djelmo was planned originally as a two-engine breaker with splayed-out ¼-elliptic springs and a seat from a driver wouldn't have seen a thing! One cutting shows Chiribiri on fire in a Continental race, there is a rare racing Lancia front suspension [Anyone remember this one?—Evidently current with the P2 Alfa-Romeo, and a Beardmo upsetting at Shelsley Walsh. Other rare cars are a G. straight-eight Diatto for which 125 m.p.h. was said to be achieved, and a sports 9.5-h.p. Donnet-Zedel selling for £250. seen filling the single seat of a 7/17 Peugeot racer in a cycle at Monthlery, Oscar Leblanc is found winning a 12-hour race over the Guadarrama circuit at Madrid in a Salmson, and are lots of views of the Land Speed Record cars of Thomas, and Segrave. Alfred Moss, Stirling's dad, is seen winning a lands race in a rather spent Fronty Ford Speed Sport from oil smoke is pouring, and there is a sports version of the F said to give 32 b.h.p. at 4,000 r.p.m. and to reach 70 m.p.h. 5.1-to-1 top-gear ratio and 27 in. by 4.40 in. tyres—it has staggered seating I have ever seen, and Rudge hubs. These some of the interesting memories which Major Iremonger's books convey.

Another interesting relic from the past, kindly sent in by me is a *Daily Mail* dated February 10th, 1908, which carries on the 20,000-mile New York/Paris Motor Race. The "motorists" were apparently being entertained royally in New York prior to the start and were to engage in nightly races in the Hippodrome stage at 50 m.p.h. It was explained that this largest stage in the world, which was probably just as "Sporting Anarchist" in a Werner announced his intention of "racing the race," entering Alaska at the Skaguay Pass and coming off the Arctic shore in Siberia by way of Lena instead of the race route to the Amadir River. Ten entries were entered: De Dion, Motobloc, Sizaire-Naudin from France, a Proctor from Germany, a Thomas from America and a Brixia-Zust from Austria. Apparently later editions of the *Daily Mail* omitted any reference to this great motor race.

Incidentally, some idea of the appalling manner in which the pound has diminished in the last 47 years can be gathered from the advertisements in this old newspaper—in 1908 a tweed coat cost 10s. 6d., a made-to-measure suit 30s., granules for £7 10s., a Panhard motor veil 3s. 11½d., a pair of boots 8s. 6d., and a good umbrella 4s. 11½d.

# NEW ZEALAND GRAND PRIX

The Grand Prix of New Zealand, held at Ardmore Airfield, near Auckland, on a 2.1-mile circuit in the shape of an elongated figure of eight, drew a vast entry ranging from Grand Prix production sports cars, driven by everyone from near-World champions to "local boys." A contingent of cars and drivers from all over the world journeyed out to the far shores of the Commonwealth and New Zealand. S. Moss with his own 1954 Maserati Grand Prix car, Parnell in a single-seater Aston Martin from the factory, built around the components, Marr with his streamlined B-type Connaught with a standard D-type Jaguar engine running on pump fuel, Whitehead and Whitehead with a brace of hybrid Ferraris. These were the cars they used last year in this event, being 1953 Formula II cars with 3-litre Monza Ferrari engines. On their previous visit they ran normal sports engines running on pump fuel, but this time they were converted to run on an alcohol mixture, with a consequent increase in power output. Brabham entered the rear-engined Cooper-Bristol that appeared in England during the 1955 season, and Mackay had DB3S Aston Martins that had competed in the 1955 European season. The race was held over 100 laps of the aerodrome circuit and Moss was the winner, more or less his own way, there being little in the way of competition for either car or driver. In spite of his car suffering from a fuel leak, so that he had to stop and take on more fuel, he was able to finish comfortably from the two Ferraris. The single-seater Aston Martin had mechanical trouble in practice and could not start, so Moss borrowed Whitehead's sports Cooper-Jaguar, which that day he had with him to run in the sports-car event. In this sports-car event, which was on handicap, Moss drove a borrowed Porsche and succeeded in finishing ahead of the aforementioned Cooper-Jaguar and also Gaze driving an H.W.M.-Jaguar. The 100-lap Jaguar power unit is a surprisingly versatile engine, for apart from being used in staid saloons, it forms the basis of the power unit in every powerful D-type Jaguar, is used in specialised sports cars as the Cooper and the H.W.M., and was also running in the Grand Prix fitted to an early Grand Prix Bugatti chassis.

**Results :**

<b>NEW ZEALAND GRAND PRIX—100 Laps—210 Miles</b>			
1st:	S. Moss (Maserati 250F)	...	78.4 m.p.h.
2nd:	P. N. Whitehead (Ferrari 3-litre)	...	
3rd:	F. A. O. Gaze (Ferrari 3-litre)	...	
4th:	L. Marr (Connaught-Jaguar)	...	
5th:	R. Parnell (Cooper-Jaguar)	...	
<b>ARDMORE HANDICAP RACE—15 Laps—31.5 Miles</b>			
1st:	S. Moss (Porsche Spyder)	...	71.2 m.p.h.
2nd:	P. N. Whitehead (Cooper-Jaguar)	...	
3rd:	F. A. O. Gaze (H.W.M. Jaguar)	...	

## CLUB NEWS

**THE LONDON E.C.C. ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE (Jan. 6th)**  
 This was the most hilarious and successful of these functions so far held. The chair was taken by A. F. Rivers Fletcher, President. The guests were presented by Mrs. Norman Wisdom. Raymond Mays was to have been guest of honour, but was unable to make it owing to a thick fog on the Great North Road, and his place was taken by Eric Flockhart. Speeches were made by Eric Findon, Rivers Fletcher, David Render and John Eason-Gibson. The principal trophies awarded were as follows: The William P. G. Trophy to Ian Walker for his successes in rallies and trials organised by the club. The Rivers Fletcher Trophy to Ian Wilson, presented to the late Jim Mayers. The Lombard Trophy and the David Yiend Memorial Trophy to A. F. Rivers Fletcher for his successes in sprints and hill-climbs.

**THE TON LE MOORS C.C. NAVIGATION RALLY (Jan. 8th)**  
 Weather conditions were favourable although owners of "heaterless" open cars suffered from the strong, cold wind which found any gap in hood or sidescreens.

**Results :**

<b>Drivers' Class :</b>	
1st:	F. Snaylam (navigator, T. Warburton), no marks lost.
2nd:	K. Cunliffe (navigator, D. Prakes), 2 marks lost.
<b>Passengers' Class :</b>	
1st:	R. K. Walsh (navigator, J. Smith), 2 marks lost.
2nd:	I. W. Smith (navigator, K. Darby), 26 marks lost.

**THE DEVON M.C. ILFRACOMBE RALLY**  
 This event will take place on April 20th and 21st and is a qualifying event for the B.T.D.A. Silver Star. Details from S. Guard, Vicarage Lane, Barnstaple, North Devon.

### B.A.R.C. (EAST SUSSEX) MIDNIGHT FILM MATINEE AND SUPPER (Feb. 17th)

The sixth annual midnight film matinee will be held at the Picture-drome Cinema, Langney Road, Eastbourne, at 10.45 pm., when some of the major races of 1955 on home and Continental circuits will be shown. In addition a supper party will take place at the Cavendish Hotel at 8 p.m. for 8.30 p.m. on the same evening.

### M.G. C.C. (S.W.) SALISBURY "TRALLY" (Feb. 5th)

The above event is a provisional one for 1956 and, in conjunction with the 750 Club, will take place at 11 a.m. at the High Post Hotel, Salisbury. It is a combined trial and rally, with driving tests to count for the final marking.

### FORCES' M.C. WINTER RALLY (Feb. 5th)

At 10.30 a.m. on February 5th, at the Grasshopper Inn, Westerham, Kent, the 100-mile-long winter rally will start, the major accent being on navigation. Entries to A. V. Matthison, 93, Fairlands Avenue, Thornton Heath, Surrey, by January 30th.

### RHYL & DIST. M.C. BRAID RALLY (Feb. 4th/5th)

This rally is known locally as the Monte Carlo of North Wales. It is a closed-to-club event run over minor roads in the mountains of North Wales. In the past snow on the high ground has made the event very interesting, tough navigational sections and the mountainous nature of the course giving it the Monte Carlo atmosphere.

Regulations from R. H. Piper, Bexley, Conwy Street, Rhyl, Flintshire.

### CEMIAN M.C.

The annual dinner and dance and presentation of awards will be held at the Rembrandt Hotel, South Kensington, on Friday, February 3rd, from 7 p.m. until 2 a.m.

### MAIDSTONE & MID-KENT M.C. HASTINGS RALLY (Feb. 17th/18th)

The Hastings Rally is being held on February 17th/18th as an invitation event for the following clubs: Kentish Border C.C., London M.C., B.A.R.C., Thames Estuary M.C., Hants & Berks M.C. and the M.G. C.C. The start will be from the Swan Hotel, Charing, at 8 p.m.

### 500 M.R.C. OF IRELAND

Once again the 500-c.c. Championship of Ireland race meeting will be held at Kirkistown, on March 17th, over a distance of 20 laps.

First prize will be the Perpetual Trophy and Replica and the sum of £25.

### LONDON M.C.

The London M.C. Coventry Cup Trial will be held on Sunday, February 12th, in the Aston Rowant area, starting at 10.30 a.m. from the "King's Arms," Stockenchurch. Full details available from W. C. Podevin, 68, Bute Road, Ilford, Essex.

### MID-THAMES C.C. WINTER RALLY

The Mid-Thames C.C. are holding their Winter Rally on Sunday, February 19th. Mileage to be covered will be 150 to 180 miles. A cordial invitation is afforded to all enthusiasts. The outright winner will be awarded £5, with other trophies for class winners and navigators for this all-day event. The start will be at "The Marquis of Granby," Kingston By-Pass. Regulations and entry forms are obtainable from R. Avey, 5, Cardinal Avenue, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey.

### AUSTIN-HEALEY CONVERSION—continued from page 70

For ordinary open-road driving overdrive and top gear are all that are necessary with the extra 20 b.h.p. at one's disposal. On stretches of road where 100 m.p.h. was reached previously, 110 m.p.h. comes up on the "clock," and over a well-known stretch of road the acceleration from a standing start to a certain lamp-post has improved from 50 m.p.h. to 59 m.p.h. On the petrol consumption checks that have been made since the conversion there seems to be no increase at all, as it is remaining between 21 and 22 m.p.g.

The car in its present form is a comfortable high-speed means of transport and as long as the driver doesn't use the road as a race track, a safe means of transport. On long runs in this country, with normal traffic conditions, an average of over 50 m.p.h. can be maintained, weather permitting.