

Healey Arm Rests

By Peter Svilans

The Healey's tunnel-mounted saddle-type armrest, was a marvelous piece of the upholsterer's art. My own notes on the assembly sequence of its dozen-odd parts make up a whole paragraph, while the later sewn-on pad is just a flute panel and an edge strip.

The BN 1 with its aluminum tunnel had a straightforward saddle-type armrest that began where the tunnel carpet ended and ran back to the heelboard, with a length of 19". There were three flutes and rectangular sides that went to the floor, with a sweeping cutout for the handbrake. The U-joint cover and fixed rear tunnel were covered in carpet.

The BN 2 with its new steel tunnel got a totally redesigned tunnel carpet which ran from the bulkhead to just past the rear end of the removable tunnel cover. The saddle-type armrest needed modification to fit, and so the flutes were shortened to 15.5" and the side flaps shortened by 1" at the floor, with a gentle "S" curve connecting them. (PS. My Armrest write-up in the concours Guidelines contains a typo- reads 17.5" instead of 15.5" for the BN2 - sorry). The fixed rear tunnel was covered in Armacord.

The BN 4 carried on from the BN 2 and used the same tunnel carpet ending just past the rear edge of the steel cover. It differed from the BN2 in that the fixed rear tunnel was covered in carpet instead of Armacord. The armrest was the same as the BN 2, but the longer four-seater layout meant that there was now a strip of carpet showing behind the armrest.

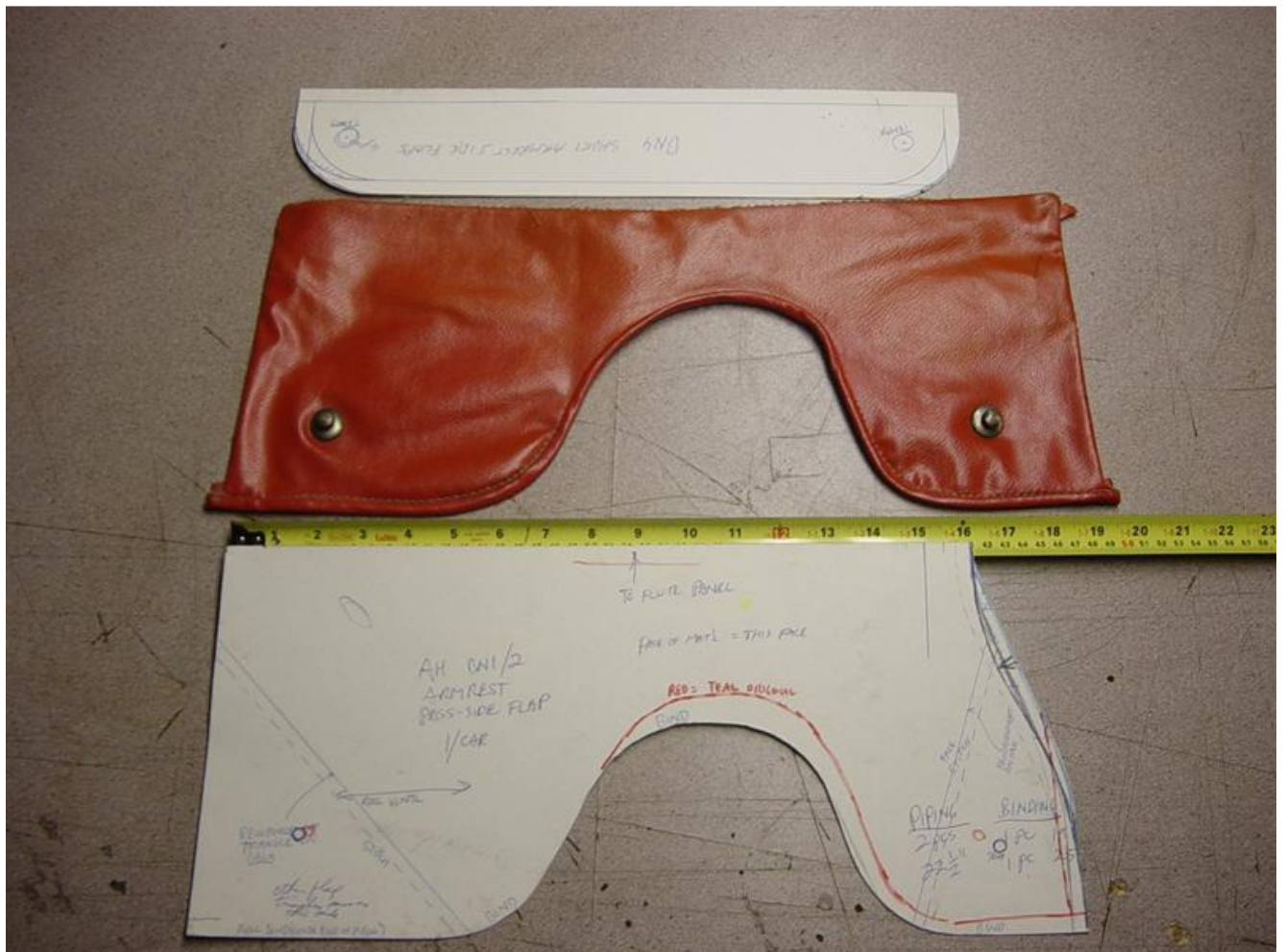
Meanwhile, the next model was under development at Longbridge in the form of the BN 6 two-seater. A factory photo of the prototype BN 6 shows BN 1 -type seats, a vinyl spare wheel cover, and a unique armrest like the earlier saddle-type armrest, but with the side flaps simply cut off, with piping only at the front and rear. The tunnel carpet now extended to the heelboard, with jute felt, not Armacord, glued to the rear fixed tunnel.

Things get fuzzy at this point, as there is no documentation in the Parts Lists. A saddle-type armrest appeared with side flaps drastically shortened to 2.25", but still fastened to the tunnel and carpet with Tenaxes. It may have been a development of the curious flap-less prototype BN 6 pad (as in "No, doesn't look right. Put the sides back on but shorter"). This armrest was definitely seen on late Longbridge BN 4's. Also, being the 15.5" length, it would have stopped short of the heelboard by 2".

During the hiatus where only the BN 6 was produced at Abingdon, the design settled down to a much simpler small armrest pad sewn directly onto the tunnel carpet for both

2 and 4 seaters built at Abingdon. These are often wrong in repro kits. Looking down, the original's sides are not parallel, but taper slightly to the rear, and the pad is only 3/4" thick.

Pictures enclosed comparing the BN1 (orange) armrest side flap with the BN 2- BN-4 side flap patterns. Different contour lines are tracings of original armrests.. I still have slides which I had at my trim talk at Breckenridge, showing the different complete armrests, but I haven't transferred them to digital yet (time flies, no ?). Also a shot of an original short side flap pad, and the BN 6 prototype.





BN4



Early BN6