

The 1997 Austin-Healey

BT7 Rebuild Complete

by Tom Mason
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I guess that I would have to say that I am a fan of the Jule tub, and by that I mean the frame and sheet metal assembly. It is certainly stronger than the original frame, and you can feel the strength in the doors and in the way the frame takes bumpy roads. The Healey is still in many ways a hand-fitted automobile, so you must expect to do some fitting and work to get everything lined up just right.

This photo shows the BT7 after nearly a year and a half of rebuilding. You could almost call it a new or remanufactured car. I had some problems with the engine being down on power. It started and idled like a dream but was very lackadaisical on acceleration. We began double checking everything, from timing and advanced to valve timing and compression. For a moment I had the dreadful feeling that I might have put the camshaft in off a tooth or two. Not a great thought. Finally, we discovered the front carb was not getting any gas. After rectifying that problem, we had a Healey that wanted to get up and go.

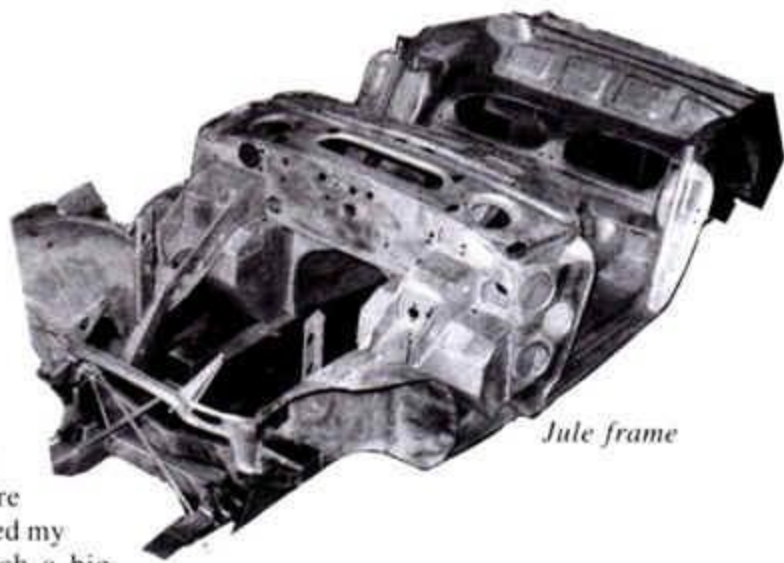
I still have to finish some small things like the wiper motor, heater switch, etc. On one test drive the oil filter started to leak like a sieve and the O-ring gasket had bro-

ken. I guess this shows why we test drive — to find this stuff so the owner does not have to have these problems. Anyway, the car looks and runs great. There were times when I questioned my sanity about taking on such a big project; and yet, here I am with it almost done. The feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction is hard to express. I want to thank Mark Brandow for giving me the chance to do this car. I hope the owner, Keith Fredericks, has a great deal of joy from it.

My own Healey has had a few problems. I had the speedo redone and it now works better than new with no fluctuations. I sent the tach to Palo Alto speedo, and they deserve a plug. The tach came back well packed, clean, and working perfectly. I highly recommend their service.

So, finally, what do the horn and radio have in common? I was taking a hundred-mile drive enjoying my Healey and no radio. I started to check the electric stuff and everything worked but the horn and radio. I stopped and checked the fuses in the dark, and they looked okay under a street lamp.

Later, I got out the wiring diagram and a magnifying glass; and the current goes from the ignition switch to the control box and over to the bottom terminal of the fuse box and then to the horn. The radio comes



Jule frame

off the ignition switch by the horn wire ... so then I must have knocked the wire off when I put the tach in — Right? I searched for a dangling wire, and then I got scientific about it with a meter. Let's see ... current on one side of the fuse box but not on the other. It was a fuse after all, but it looked good. Well this made my Healey 100 percent again and so I decided to go out for breakfast. I drove a few feet and had a flat tire.

I carry a spare tube and alas I got it in, but pinched the tube with my small tire irons. I had to go to town on the spare and get a patch. Now my Healey is again 100 percent. I finally got breakfast a little late. I share these foibles with all of you to help you avoid the same mistakes and realize that what the heck, a flat is only an inconvenience — not a disaster. It looks like we will have nice weather again in a few weeks, and I for one am going to drive my Healey every last chance that I get.



Tom Mason (L) and colleagues admire the freshly rebuilt BT7.

Installing the Austin-Healey Engine in Your Nissan Car

(Reprinted with permission of Nissan Owners Club)

By Tashō Destructomoro

Recently some Austin-Healey engines have become available on the market from unknown sources; but the prices on these engines has always been high, and their current low prices won't last forever. Perhaps if your Nissan engine is tired, you might want to consider replacing it with the Austin unit, as it offers several advantages over the original motor.

The Nissan engine was originally built using the Austin six as a reference and starting point. As you probably know, parts for a Nissan motor are both hard to come by and very expensive. The engine will

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