

Flatwater Austin Healey Club Newsletter

Austin Healey CLUB OF AMERICA, INC.

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Editors: Bob Shaw & Martha Johnson



UPCOMING EVENTS

Ice Cream with HRMNP

Ice cream will be at Baskin Robbins at 70th and Stacey in Lincoln December 9th at 7:30 p.m.

Breakfast at Mahoney

Breakfast at Mahoney State Park on December 11 at 9:30 a.m.

AUSTIN SEVEN COOPER Phase VI (The Sills)

By Frank Grover

In the Mini Books that have chapters on purchase and restoration they all have statements alluding to the joys that await you when completely replacing rusted out sills. What understatement! At first you think I'll just simply remove the old sill and quickly slap the new ones in - believe me it don't work that way! When I got the old sill off I found the following:

1. The small bracket just inside the front inner fender missing.
2. The mid frame member extension and jacking point missing.
3. Seat belt attachment bolt rusted off.
4. Rear sub frame attachment seriously rusted and bolts seized.
5. Inner sill rusted through from front to rear.
6. Evidence that the right front fender had been replaced.
7. The front fender inner sheetmetal and portions of the fire wall missing.

So where does one begin? I searched my various Mini part catalogs and was only able to order the replacement jacking point brackets and the sills (four vent). No one seems to have the small bracket just inside the front fender so I fabricated them using a catalog picture as a guide. I later located the mid frame extensions but only after I had made several; so I decided to use these as I had already welded in the jacking point brackets. There wasn't much left of the real sub frame attachments and since they are made from multiple panels/layers it seemed best to fabricate the parts as I proceeded.

I had begun this aspect of my Mini adventurous the driver side sill, as the rear sub frame attachment appeared to be my biggest challenge. I wish this had been the case. As I explored the right front fender replacement I found that it was held on by several brazes, two small brackets, and beyond belief amounts of bondo. Notice that the word weld does not appear in the previous sentence. There was someone in this car's life that must have been to bondo what Red Green is to Duct Tape. I have become a believer that there are people who view bondo as a super healer and "metal Mender" even if it isn't referenced in the Old Testament of the Bible. Well smite me! There in the New Testament it is: Mathew, Mark, Luke, John and Bondo. So where you least expect it there was bondo "healing" together the sill, the door pillar, the inner fender, the fender top, the grill support, and the lower front valance. So with Bondo removed the fender just politely fell off; I guess there is a bright side to most things. Or maybe Rush was right about Bondo being just another far-left liberal conspiracy. So with the welder in hand and numerous pieces of cut and formed sheet metal I began the task of reattaching the fender at the aforementioned "healing" points. The process was pretty straight forward once I had all the previously mentioned body undercoating removed as even the slightest trace of undercoating will result in serious weld splatter.

Both front fenders had serious rust damage around the hinges, which required several repair panels. As a side note, all four of the door hinges had damage that required me to drill out the old studs and braze in new bolts. Two hinges had repairs previously attempted that now required drilled through holes to be brazed over. As the area forward of the doorjamb up to the fender seam is double paneled. This makes it a little more complicated to weld on the inside especially up the firewall. There were also rust holes in the firewall just beneath the uppermost fender surface. There holes which could also be viewed behind the dash (once the vinyl material near the door jamb is removed) must have provided a previous owner some very cool winter time ventilation. One should be careful in welding near the upper doorjamb on the driver's side as the wire harness passes up to the roof inside this post.

I had previously welded in all new inner sills and had repaired the floor (front foot area) and the lowest firewall rust damage so I had good solid metal for the outer sill replacement. The most difficult aspect of this task is welding in the repair panels in the rear seat passenger storage pockets. As these pockets are quite narrow and extend to the floor of the body shell it requires a lot of severely "out of position" welding. Welding in the most forward bracket, the mid frame member extensions, and the seat belt attachment bolt was straightforward. The rear sub frame attachment points required exterior replacement panels and new bolt attachment brackets. Most of the time here was spent in forming and fitting the replacement panels but once that was accomplished the welding was rather painless as I could rotate the body shell on the stand.

Son Dave finished his courses at the London School of Economics and now has a job with a London bank. His daily transit to and from work takes him past Keen's Rover where we viewed the new Minis together. This is both good news and bad news. The good news is that I now have a "parts man" near the sources in England. The bad news is that I have been slow to send him a want list so a chance to get the needed rear sub assembly parts for my birthday came and went. I best now blow it again with Christmas so near. He did send me two really nice magazines. The official Mini 40 souvenir magazine of the Mini to include

articles on current production, the future, model evolution from the Austin Seven to Mini 40, movies, John Cooper, Issigonis, and competition.

The second magazine, a Mini world guide to buying, building, and tuning... "Mini n- Keeping your Mini Alive" deals mostly with repair and modifications. It pretty well details what the current engine builders in England are doing to get that extra ounce of horsepower.

Even the simple task of titling the Mini in Iowa proved to be a most challenging exercise. For most foreign cars (especially English) the title process begins with the clerk trying to locate the proper vehicle identification code in a document the extent of a large city phone book. I remember her exact words "Sorry sir, our records show the Austin Mini Cooper was not made in 1962 so could it be an Austin 850 or an Austin Healey Sprite?" I took a gander over her shoulder and pointed out that the Austin Cooper was listed for 1963 which, of course, got me nowhere. If I were to insist that it was a 1962 then she politely informed me that I would have to accept it as an Austin 850. I thought big deal as I have the car and I know what it is. So we proceeded. She turned to her computer to type in the information but paused about half way through as something had made her smile. She turned and asked me if the color was still "copper" commenting about the spelling mistake. So the State of Iowa now states that I am the proud owner of a 1962 Austin 850 Copper.

P.S. When I was at a local neighborhood gathering several weeks ago a Mrs. Cooper who was quite pregnant joined us at our table. Being a person short on tact and known to let the jaw fire up long before the brain is engaged I asked her how her Mini 41 was coming along as I was working on a 1962. While I thought the comment showed keen insight and sensitivity she proved to be neither understanding or impressed. How was I to know that there might be someone who didn't know that the year 2000 was the 41st year for the Mini? But I do think that it is actions such as this that truly prove beyond any doubt that I am a genuine member of the MADMEN.

CONDOLENCES

We were saddened to learn of the death of Justin Phillip Shaw, 21, on November 6th. Judd was the son of FWAHC members Dick and Sherri Shaw and the nephew of Bob Shaw and Martha Johnson. He loved farming, hunting, the out of doors, his family and fast cars. He was a kind and compassionate young man who will be greatly missed by his family and many friends, all of whom we hold in our thoughts.

CAR SALES TERMS EXPLAINED

By Geoff Wheatley

As winter arrives many of us begin to look for a project. We need something to be occupied with while awaiting the disappearance of salt and snow. In an attempt to provide aid to those looking for that new project with which to occupy your time until driving season, we humbly present the following glossary of British Automobile Sales Terms. Please consider them before calling Moss Motors with your request for a restoration account.

- **RARE MODEL** - couldn't sell them when they were new either.
- **OLDER RESTORATION** - worn out to the point you could never tell its been restored.
- **NEEDS ENGINE WORK** - its been seized for 30 years.
- **NO RUST** - The parts that rust on this model have already fallen off.
- **ROUGH** - This car is so bad that there is no way I can get away with lying about it.
- **ONE OWNER** - who has been trying unsuccessfully to sell this lemon ever since he bought it.
- **NO TIME TO COMPLETE** - Even Indiana Jones couldn't find the parts this turkey needs!
- **NEEDS INTERIOR** - seats were lost shortly after the floor rusted out.
- **REBUILT ENGINE** - I put new spark plugs in it.
- **MAY RUN** - but never has.
- **LOW MILEAGE** - starting around the clock yet again.
- **CLEAN** - It sat out in the rain yesterday.
- **PRIZEWINNER** - hard luck trophy three times in a row.
- **STORED 25 YEARS** - there is a tree growing through it.
- **EASY RESTORATION** - the parts come off in your hands.
- **TOP GOOD** - only leaks when it rains.
- **GOOD INVESTMENT** - Can't depreciate any more.

THANK YOU MOSS MOTORS



Moss Motors has been quite generous with their support of the Flatwater Austin Healey All British Show. Moss is also known for the quality of their parts as well as the quality of their service. Please consider this when next you need parts.

