



The Pavilion Gardens (73)

Thu, 28th Jul 2005, The Pavilion Gardens

Lot 48

Estimate: £14000 - £16000 + Fees

1954 Austin-Healey 100

Registration No: TKJ 39

Chassis No: BIV/1/156108

Mot Expiry: July 2006

Dominating the 1952 Earl's Court Motor Show, the 'Healey Hundred' drew crowds like a magnet. Penned by Gerry Coker, its low-slung stance, swooping lines and fold flat 'racing' windscreen screamed sports car. Conscious that there was a gap in the export market between Jaguar's XK range and the MG T-series, BMC supremo, Leonard Lord immediately propositioned Donald Healey as to a joint venture. A facsimile of the show car, the resultant Austin-Healey 100/4 utilised a box section ladder frame chassis with independent coil sprung front suspension, live rear axle and all round drum brakes. Powered by the Austin A90 Atlantic 2,660cc engine developing some 90bhp and 144lbft of torque, it offered strong acceleration and a 110mph top speed. Eager to boost sales in the vital American market Donald Healey set about a determined publicity campaign. As well as having a production 100/4 average 103.49mph over a 5,000km Utah Salt Flats endurance run, he employed 'local hero' Carroll Shelby to drive a much modified one netting sixteen US and International speeds records (at close to 160mph) in the process. Unsurprisingly perhaps, America accounted for a massive 85% of all 100/4 sales. Of the approximately 14,600 100/4s built, just 5% were allocated as home market cars.

This particular example was purchased by the current owner as a restoration project in Devon some thirty-two years ago. Returned to the road in July 1976 (despite the need to source a good many minor parts from A-H Spares etc), it was treated to a respray in its current dark green over white livery two decades later. Given an engine rebuild and overhaul of its three-speed (plus overdrive) manual gearbox by the Northern Healey Centre, Castleford at a cost of almost £9,000 + VAT in 1998, it is described by the vendor as "generally in very good condition but would still benefit from some minor cosmetic attention". Apparently, always garaged and "only run in spring / summer / autumn with limited mileage", its 'TKJ 39' registration number was first issued by Kent County Council in 1954.