



I N T R O D U C T I O N T O H E A L E Y B O A T

Any Healey history of power-driven transportation has to include information on the series of boats bearing the Healey name, produced during the mid-1950s. Unfortunately, detailed information on the actual number of boats produced is difficult to ascertain; the records, which were never particularly well kept anyway, have disappeared with the passage of time. Additionally, certain specifications are also missing; "unknown" is used when discussing some specifics of production or physical measurement, such as weight. Where measurements are given, they are as accurate as possible and based on available knowledge, much of it having been made either using a tape measure on a real boat, or coming from sales brochures but then verified through actual measurements.

Donald Healey had a lifelong love of the water and speed. In addition, during his many visits to the United States, he acquired an enthusiasm for water skiing. He was able to combine these three interests in the field of boating, specifically, Healey boats. In the mid-1950s, Donald saw the opportunity to expand the Healey line beyond just automobiles and into the field of high-performance marine craft. He formed Healey Marine as the basis for this endeavour, located with the Donald Healey Motor Company headquarters in Warwick, England. Production of the early boat hulls was undertaken in Cornwall, but the assembly of the engine and transmission was completed at Warwick; when both outboard and inboard engines were used. Healey Marine was franchised to supply the customer with Scott Atwater, Mercury or Johnson outboard engines for the Ski-Master range of boats. The other boats powered by inboard engines all used BMC products, which came from development completed at Warwick. Early boats in this range used 1500cc single carburettor engines, later increasing to 1600cc and dual carburettors. The well-known Austin-Healey 3000 engine with its three carburettors was also used during the final period near to the end of the boat production.

All of the Healey boats had one thing in common; they could pull a water skier. Some, with just a small horsepower single outboard, could effectively pull one skier; those such as the dual outboard engine Corvette could easily deal with multiple skiers and several brochures showed the boat pulling four or even five skiers! During the period the boats were in production, Donald Healey could often be seen driving a Healey boat, or on skis behind a Healey boat. In both cases, he was doing it with a smile on his face; for he was doing something he loved.

B i c H e a l e y o n H E A L E Y B O A T S 1 9 5 6 - 1 9 6 0

The sports boat company was an interesting chapter in the history of the Donald Healey Motor Company, as it not only helped to satisfy a growing market with boats of high quality and performance, but it provided a source of relaxation for the family and its friends.

Formed as a result of Donald Healey's foresight and enthusiasm generated from visits to the more exotic parts of the world, Healey Marine was 'launched' in the early 1950's, and initially the craft were produced in Bridport, Dorset, as a result of DMH being introduced to a young marine architect, Geoffrey Lord, who was making small numbers of boats in a disused mill. Geoffrey had designed a 13'9" hull for outboard motors and a 16'0" inboard hull for which he was seeking a power unit.

The Ski-Master as the first of the line, was constructed from marine ply on a wooden frame, and with a 16 hp motor it would tow two water skiers with ease. Lord's design was revolutionary in that it featured a round bilge hull form as opposed to the normal hard chine type normally associated with sports boats. Its advantage was that it gave a much softer and drier ride than the traditional hull. The Ski-Master was produced in large quantities and was sold throughout the USA by British Marine Products in Port Washington.

The 1500 cc MGA power unit proved to be ideally matched for the larger hull and coupled with a Morris navigator gearbox the boat offered good performance with style and ease of maintenance, at the same time returning a speed in excess of 30mph - above average for those early days.

Following the completion of the Austin Healey 100S build programme production of Healey SportsBoats was transferred to Warwick. A 14'9" inboard boat was introduced to replace the Ski-Master and 16' inboard, and the engine was uprated to 1600 cc and married to a Warner Velvet hydraulic gearbox imported from the US.

The Sprite outboard replaced the Ski-Master and this together with the inboard hull were produced in GRP, with ply decks. A 16'0" day cruiser, the Corvette, was produced in small numbers for propulsion by the more powerful outboard motors arriving in the UK from the US.

Donald Campbell, holder of the world's water speed record, was managing Director of Dowty Marine who were producing a speed boat utilising the Ford Consul engine couple to the Dowty Turbo Jet of New Zealand origin. He persuaded the Healey team that they should consider using this unit with its distinct advantages over the conventional propeller driven craft.

The 707, named after the popular jet aircraft at that time, was introduced using the Dowty unit with a marinised 3000 'Big' Healey engine, and a similar craft was built for Sir William Lyons of Jaguar using a Jaguar 3 litre power unit.

Various prototypes were built but never went into production. The Ski-Master with an Austin A30 power unit and direct drive, a 14'9" wooden hull fitted with an AH 100 unit - this craft exceeded 60 mph on the Seine whilst practising for the Six Hour Race in Paris. This hull was also used with Coventry Climax power units including the Formula 1 V8.

An interesting chapter in the Healey story. Unfortunately no production records exist, but over 1200 boats were produced in total over a period of some 7-8 years. The marine side of the company was wound up when the Healey business was transferred from the Cape to the old cinema in Warwick in 1960, and availability of space was drastically reduced. Ironically, and seemingly in true Healey tradition, any Healey boat, regardless of condition, is eagerly sought after by the enthusiast, and they are commanding prices which one never dreamed possible.



HEALEY MARINE

The Healey Marine Sports Boat Model 55 was first introduced at the London Boat Show at Earls Court. The creator of the Sports Boat was Cornish designer Geoffrey Lord, the man who later designed the outboard Healey Ski-Master. The boat was 16 feet in length and had a multi-coloured hull with two separate cockpits both of which were very well equipped, being fully seated and trimmed with red with white cushions. Mahogany wood gleamed on the decking and heavy chrome fittings were used on the deck for tying the boat to the dock. The boat was designed to pull skiers and the attachment for the towrope was a beautiful, removable, four-leg chrome platform that placed the towrope high

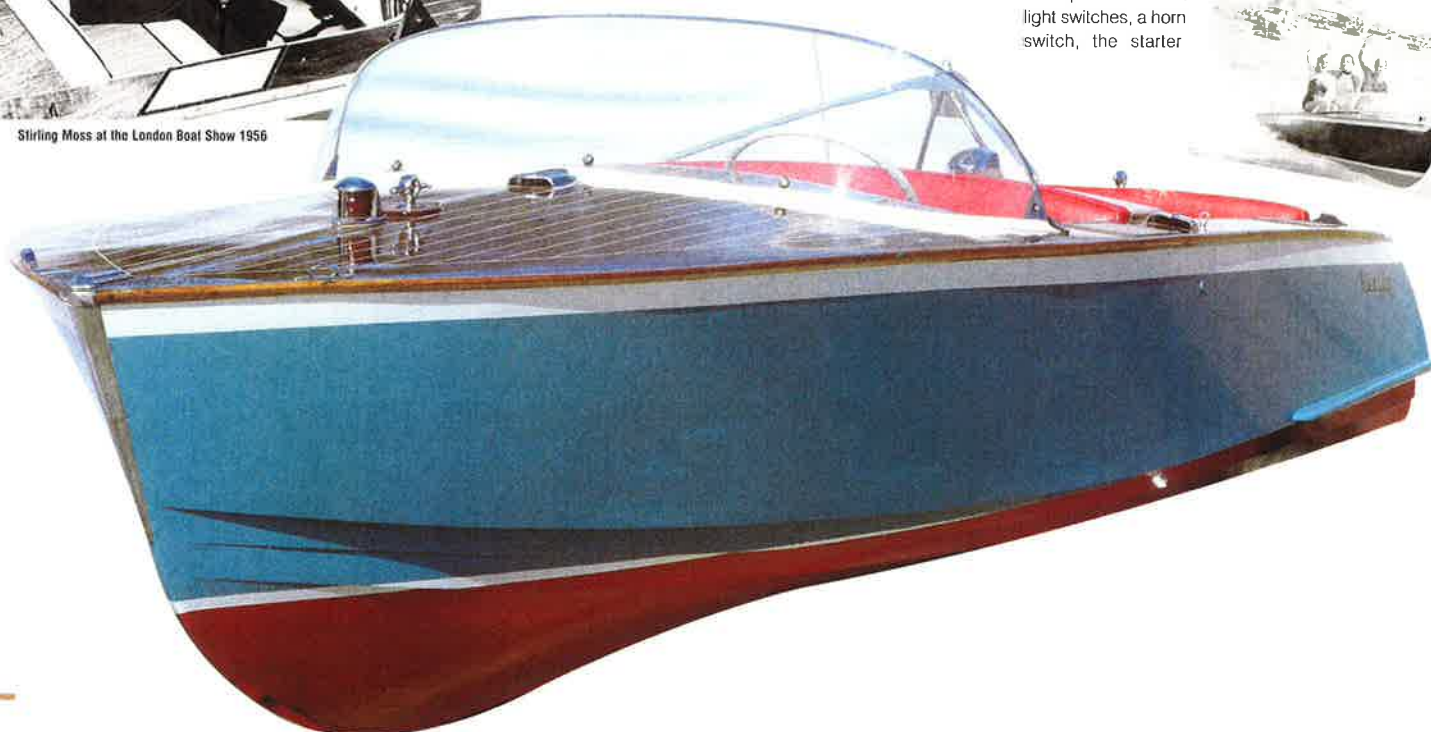


above the stern when in use. In order to pull water-skiers, the Sports Boat was equipped with a 1500cc BMC Series B engine, similar to that in the MG "Magnette". This engine was a re-designated Austin-Healey 55 and the nameplate was attached to the valve cover. As the engine was to be used in a marine application, a Healey-designed heat exchanger manifold was used for cooling instead of a radiator. The transmission was a Morris Navigator with the Healey name cast into the housing. At the rear of the transmission, there was a clear plastic window for viewing the operation of the final output, this is the only known boat with the window and it may have been installed during the initial checkout of the design. Later boats using the Morris Navigator transmission had a cast metal covering with raised lettering that provided information on Healey-recom-

mended lubricants for the engine and gearbox. The engine/transmission area was covered with a highly polished wooden covering to keep it free from any water that might be thrown up by the boat and as a noise-deadening barrier for the comfort of the passengers. The transmission was remotely operated from a floor-mounted gear lever in the forward cockpit. The forward position allowed the boat to move forward, the central position was neutral and the rear position was reverse, this was not totally obvious as no markings were on the gearshift knob as was normal in the Austin-Healey cars. The accelerator pedal was located on the forward part of the floor beneath the steering wheel. Instrumentation for the Sports Boat consisted of three gauges; oil pressure, water temperature and a 6,000-rpm tachometer, also located on the instrument panel were two light switches, a horn switch, the starter



Stirling Moss at the London Boat Show 1956





The First Boat 1956

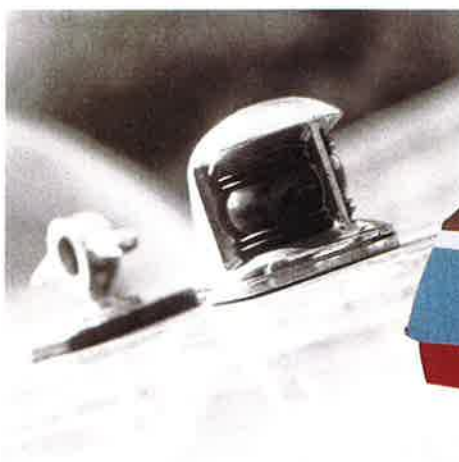
specifications

NAME	Healey Marine Sports Boat "55" (First Model)
YEAR OF PRODUCTION	1956
VOLUME	Less than 50
ENGINE	Healey Marine "55" (1H 113 DH)
CUBIC CAPACITY	1,498cc
CARBURATION	Single SU H4
POWER OUTPUT	60bhp @ 4,600rpm
TRANSMISSION	Morris Navigator
HULL MATERIAL	Marine plywood (Hull Number 1001)
BODY	6-seater
LENGTH	16ft
WIDTH (BEAM)	5ft 5.5in
HEIGHT	3ft 1in (without windscreen)
DRAUGHT	16in
WEIGHT	1,340lbs

switch, the key-operated ignition switch and a red ignition light.

One of the boats on display at the London Boat Show was hull number 1001. (In keeping with other Healey numbering systems, when numbers start at greater than one, it may be assumed that this was the first hull.) A Dutch dealer named Berkleo purchased this boat for a customer in his home country. The boat remained in Holland for many years and was used each summer as a ski boat. Today this Healey Sports Boat resides in the U.S. where it is still as beautiful as the day it was presented at the London Boat

Show As a publicity stunt it was reported in the press that the owner of the first Healey Boat was good friend of Donald Healey, Sir Stirling Moss. Much was made of the fact a Healey boat was owned by such a high profile personality and Healey Marine used photographs of Stirling together with the boat in much of their promotional material. Stirling then took his boat, not number 1 though, to the Bahamas where after a day on the water with Louise King (later the wife of Pete Collins) it met with an unfortunate demise. "It was in the Bahamas at the time of the Speed Week that I hit a coral reef just below the surface of the water, and down she went. Like every good captain, I stayed with my sinking ship."



HEALEY MARINE

The Healey Marine Ski-Master was first produced in 1956 and was designed by Geoffrey Lord, an accomplished marine architect from Cornwall, England. The boat was of a twin-cockpit design with a walkway between the two cockpit areas. It was built of marine plywood with a hull design utilising a rounded chine instead of the more traditional hard chine. Boat design terminology defines chine as "the area where the side part of the hull meets the bottom of the boat". A boat can be either hard chine (a sharp edge), or soft chine (a curve). It was found that the soft, rounded chine provided the more gentle ride for the occupants, with less water being thrown up when cutting through waves. The other major feature of the Lord design was the apparent use of clinker construction, as seen on more expensive boats, which requires the overlapping of the individual planks that make up the hull. This is a labour-intensive and costly build method, so in his design Lord used offset plywood sections to make a portion of the hull appear to be of clinker construction, whilst still providing a lot of strength in the forward part of the boat.

The initial Ski-Master design was for operation with an outboard engine. The steering could be accomplished from the rear cockpit by holding the motor handle or (at extra cost) from a steering wheel located in the front cockpit. Seating in both of the cockpit areas was provided by beautifully formed plywood seats, but with no cushions. This style of moulded plywood was carried through to the passageway between the two cockpits. Chrome handles were located at the





Ski-Master 1956



Donald Healey and Stirling Moss pose for Ski-Master publicity photographs near Weymouth in 1956

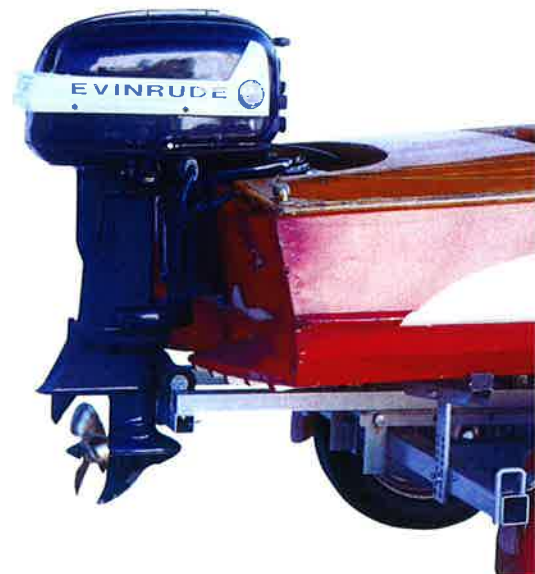
specifications

NAME	Healey Marine Ski-Master
YEAR OF PRODUCTION	1956
VOLUME	900 to 1000
ENGINE	Scott-Atwater Outboard, (Optional: Evinrude, Johnson or Mercury)
CUBIC CAPACITY	Various
CARBURATION	Various according to engine
POWER OUTPUT	30 to 33bhp recommended
TRANSMISSION	On Engine
HULL MATERIAL	Marine plywood
BODY	5-seater
LENGTH	14ft 6in
WIDTH (BEAM)	5ft 4in
HEIGHT	Unknown
DRAUGHT	5in unladen
WEIGHT	260lbs (without engine)



rear of the windscreen and at the front of the rear cockpit. The outboard engines of the mid-1950s were not always reliable so the Ski-Master was optionally equipped with two oars, with the oarlocks integrated into the deck on either side of the front cockpit. The purchaser of the Ski-Master could select from a number of outboard motors offered on the market at the time and although Healey Marine was associated with outboard engine builder Scott-Atwater, it would supply other brands of engine upon request from the customer. With a 30 horsepower motor, the Ski-Master had a top speed in excess of 30 mph with just the driver aboard.

One of the first people to test a Healey Ski-Master boat was motor racing legend, Healey driver and long time friend of Donald Healey, Stirling Moss. Healey Marine used photographs of the two men, together with a Ski-Master boat, which had been taken on the South Coast of England in much of their promotional material.



HEALEY MARINE

The second edition of the Healey Sports Boat was fifteen inches shorter than the first model. In construction, however, it was very similar to the original 16-foot Sports Boat, with the keel and frames made of solid mahogany with three-quarter-inch Marine plywood used for the side and bottom planking. The transom was constructed of two pieces of quarter-inch mahogany plywood giving the total width of one-half inch at the stern. The decks were truly beautiful, made from Teak planking with white caulking and mahogany-surround quarter rails. The rudder and propeller were of Manganese Bronze and capable of being run in either fresh or saltwater. The two cockpits contained snap-in red and white upholstery mounted on plywood seat bottoms and backings. The large white steering wheel was mounted on the left side of the cockpit, while

the central instrument panel contained an oil pressure gauge, water temperature gauge, tachometer, ignition switch, ignition warning light, horn button and a light switch that controlled both fore and aft navigation lighting. The one-piece windscreen provided the driver and front seat passenger with a small amount of protection from spray that might occur when boating in rough water. The engine was located centrally, between the back of the front cockpit and the front of the rear cockpit and was completely enclosed within a wooden cover that provided weather protection and sound deadening. This cover contained six "portholes" for ventilation that are the same size, shape and type as the "portholes" on the body of the Healey Silverstone. The engine for the Sports Boat 55 was a four-cylinder, single carburettor, BMC B-series 1500cc engine



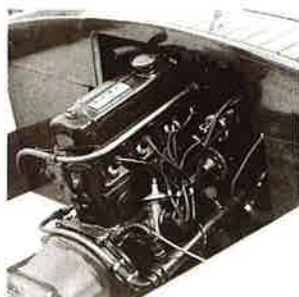
developing 60 horsepower at 4,600rpm. It was a standard BMC unit with the exception that it was cooled through a water heat exchanger instead of the usual radiator as would be used on a car. Donald Healey was able to purchase



Sports Boat 55 1957

specifications

NAME	Healey Marine Sports Boat "55" (Second Edition)
YEAR OF PRODUCTION	1957
VOLUME	Unknown
ENGINE	Healey Marine "55" (151 VH 258)
CUBIC CAPACITY	1,498cc
CARBURATION	Single SU H4
POWER OUTPUT	60bhp @ 4,600rpm
TRANSMISSION	Morris Navigator
HULL MATERIAL	Marine plywood (Hull Number 1277)
BODY	6-seater
LENGTH	14ft 9in
WIDTH (BEAM)	5ft 6in
HEIGHT	Forward 2ft 2in (without windscreen); Aft 1ft 9in
DRAUGHT	17in
WEIGHT	1,100lbs



these engines for the boats and have them delivered with a Healey Marine "55" identification plate on the rocker cover. The transmission was remotely controlled from the front cockpit and provided forward, neutral and reverse capability. The fuel was contained in a 10-gallon petrol tank located in the stern.

On the water, the Healey Sports Boat was beautiful. It cut through the water easily with minimum wake to disrupt a water skier who might be in tow. As with almost all Healey products, there were a number of "optional extras" available. For the Sports Boat, some of these were the same as those that might be offered on a Healey automobile including cockpit tonneau covers, rear view mirror, speedometer, spotlight and toolkit. Other options that were exclusively for the boat range included anchor, bilge pump, boarding ladder, engine hour meter, mooring lines and ski tow. Perhaps the most important "optional extra" offered by Healey Marine were the trailers for carrying the Sports Boat from one location to another. These were simple two-wheel units of very light construction with a small winch with which to pull the boat onto the trailer. The tail light assembly for the trailer was also sold separately, again at an additional cost.



HEALEY MARINE

The Healey Sports Boat model "75" construction was fibreglass hull with wooden decking done in teak. The overall look of the boat was similar to the model "55" however the engine size had been increased providing additional performance. The model 75 used the same one-piece windscreen as the 55 and once again there were two cockpit areas, each capable of hold-

ing up to three passengers. The cockpit seating was vinyl upholstery with a large roll at the top. The steering wheel was mounted on the left side of the one-piece, moulded fibreglass dashboard that extended across the entire cockpit with the instruments being mounted in the centre of the dashboard, an oil pressure gauge, tachometer and water temperature gauge. The ignition switch, ignition warning

light, horn button and a light switch that controlled both fore and aft navigation lighting completed the controls available to the driver.

A Healey script logo in chrome was mounted on the right side of the dashboard. This was the same casting used on the Nash-Healey whilst the hull number was stamped into the wood of the hull on the transom as well as on the for-





Sports Boat 75 1958



ward edge of the engine cover. The engine was centrally located between the back of the front cockpit and the front of the rear cockpit. It was completely enclosed for weather protection and rudimentary sound deadening, within a flush, full-width wooden cover, hinged at the rear. Beneath the wooden cover, a white fibreglass engine-surround isolated the engine from any water that might get into the rear cockpit during heavy seas! Passengers in the rear cockpit could use this fibreglass surround as a footrest for bracing.

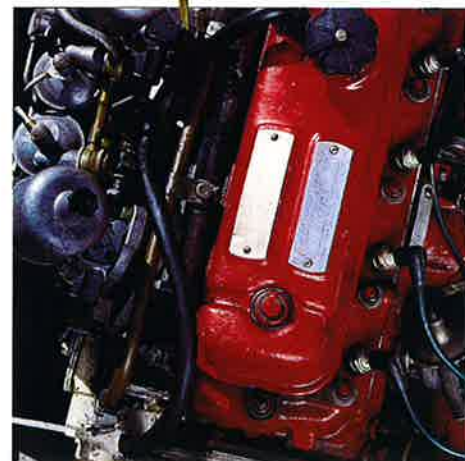
The engine was a four-cylinder, twin-carburettor BMC 1600cc engine developing 80 bhp at 5,600 rpm. The engines were delivered with a Healey Marine "75" identification plate on the valve cover. The Warner Velvet Drive transmission (hydraulically operated) was imported from the United States. A small lever adjacent to the steering wheel controlled the transmission, with positions for forward, neutral and reverse. Petrol capacity for the type 75 was 10-gallons. The model 75 had 20 additional horsepower over the 55 and this allowed it to easily pull water skiers. The "Optional Extras" available were the same on both Sports Boats and included automobile-like

tonneau covers for the cockpit, rear view mirror, speedometer, spotlight and toolkit. Options exclusively for boating included anchor, bilge pump, boarding ladder, engine hour meter, mooring lines and ski tow. The Healey Book research team had the thrill of experiencing a model 75 boat ride. The boat accelerated quickly, levelled out at cruising speed and cut through the water effortlessly. Turns were very smooth and the spray into the cockpit area was minimal. The thrill of riding in a Healey boat is similar to that of riding in a Healey car with the top down...FUN. Without a doubt, Donald Healey successfully transferred his automotive design talent and enthusiasm to the water.



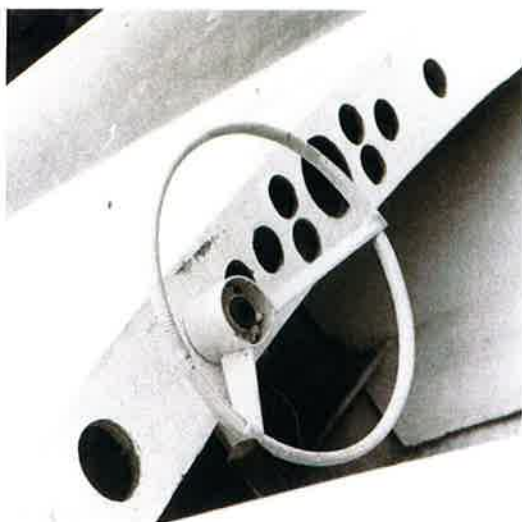
specifications

NAME	Healey Marine Sports Boat "75"
YEAR OF PRODUCTION	c.1958-59
VOLUME	Unknown
ENGINE	Healey Marine "75"
CUBIC CAPACITY	1,588cc
CARBURATION	Twin SU H4
POWER OUTPUT	80bhp @ 5,600rpm,
TRANSMISSION	Warner Velvet Drive
HULL MATERIAL	Fibreglass
BODY	6-seater
LENGTH	14ft 9in
WIDTH (BEAM)	5ft 6in
HEIGHT	Forward 2ft 2in (without windscreen); Aft 1ft 9in
DRAUGHT	17in
WEIGHT	1,100lbs



HEALEY MARINE

The hull on the Healey 707 Sports Boat was built in moulded fibreglass with a wooden sub frame and wooden engine bearing surfaces. The moulded Perspex windscreen and graceful lines of the 707 made it look as if it was in motion, even when standing still at the dockside. Front cockpit seating for three was provided on a bench seat and a second cockpit located directly behind the driving cockpit provided seating for an additional three people, bringing the total passenger load to six. A teak cover spanned the entire width of the boat and covered the

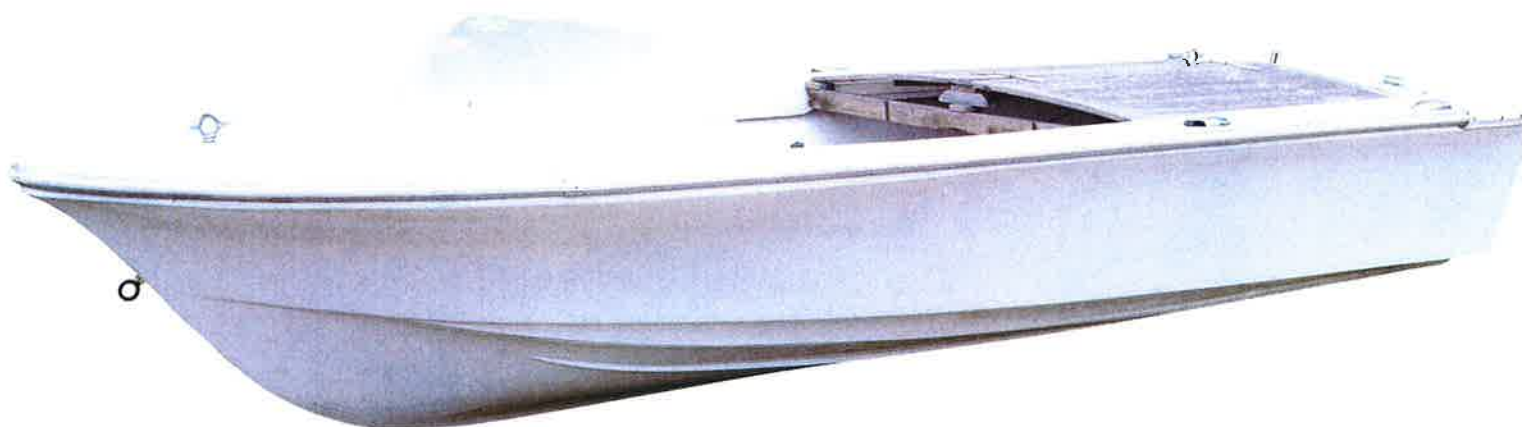


Austin-Healey 3000 tri-carburettor engine. This teak covering extended from the rear cockpit to the rear of the boat, terminating at the fibreglass rear deck. With six passengers aboard, the 707 had a top speed of 36mph but when used to pull a water-skier and with just the driver aboard, the 707 could comfortably exceed 40mph. Steering was controlled using a white plastic steering wheel on the left side of the cockpit, with a floor-mounted accelerator pedal to control speed. The 707 had forward, neutral and reverse gears and instrumentation mounted on the full width dashboard included oil pressure, water temperature, tachometer and ignition warning light. Switches also on the dashboard were provided for the ignition, lights and horn. The under-floor area was foam-filled to provide buoyancy and the petrol was stored in two 10-gallon tanks with SU fuel pumps used to transfer fuel from the tanks to the 3000 engine.

The 707 (named after the popular Boeing jet of the time) was the only Healey Marine product to use "Jet Drive". This jet drive propulsion method eliminated the rudder and pro-



peller normally found beneath the hull on boats. To replace the rudder and propeller, a jet drive unit is placed at the stern of the boat and water is forced at a high speed from a nozzle that can be moved from side to side, giving the craft



Healey 707 1959



it's steering. Speed is controlled by the amount of water that is directed through the nozzle. The engine selected to drive the jet unit was the well-proven Austin-Healey 3000 Tri-carburettor and Geoff Healey personally converted the engine to marine use, which of course resulted in a lowering of the horsepower as well as the maximum rpm. The main work on the conversion was the development/manufacturing of the cooling system and the coupling of the engine output to the jet drive impeller. Dowty Marine manufactured the jet drive that was used in the 707 and the 3000 engine combined with the Dowty Jet Drive provided a boat with exciting performance for those lucky enough to purchase a new Healey 707.

specifications

NAME	Healey Marine "707"
YEAR OF PRODUCTION	1959
VOLUME	Unknown
ENGINE	Healey 6-Cylinder
CUBIC CAPACITY	2,912cc
CARBURATION	Triple SU H4
POWER OUTPUT	118bhp @ 4,200rpm
TRANSMISSION	Dowty Marine Jet Drive
HULL MATERIAL	Fibreglass
BODY	6-seater
LENGTH	15ft 9in
WIDTH (BEAM)	6ft 6in
HEIGHT	Unknown
DRAUGHT	11in static (diverter up)
WEIGHT	2,000lbs



HEALEY MARINE

The Healey Marine Sprite was designed as an inexpensive, high-performance boat that could be used for pleasure boating or to pull a water skier. Stylistically, the biggest change from previous boats was that this was the first time a boat made by the Healey Company was to have individual bucket seats for the driver and the front seat passenger. Another of the key features of

the Sprite was its slightly squared steering wheel, which was felt to give better steering control than the more normal circular steering wheel. The hull of the Sprite was purposely intended to provide stability even during sharp turns and was made of moulded fibreglass with a double bottom construction that provided a high degree of buoyancy while at the same time allowing the floor to remain flat for the entire



cockpit area. The Sprite was intended to be used as a ski boat and had skiing tow rings supplied as standard equipment. An all important ski storage area was also provided underneath the forward decking.

The Sprite could be ordered from Healey Marine with a variety of outboard engines from such manufacturers as Scott-Atwater, Johnson, Evinrude or Mercury. The outboard engine was located on the transom with a self bailing well located between the transom and the main portion of the cockpit area. Healey promotional material from the period featured a colour photograph of a yellow and white Sprite boat being towed on a Healey trailer behind a pale blue Austin-Healey Frogeye Sprite, complete with white-wall tyres, quite a combination.



specifications

NAME	Healey Marine "Sprite"
YEAR OF PRODUCTION	1960
VOLUME	Unknown
ENGINE	Optional Single Outboard
CUBIC CAPACITY	Various
CARBURATION	Various
POWER OUTPUT	Maximum recommended 65bhp
TRANSMISSION	Internal to the engine unit
HULL MATERIAL	Fibreglass
BODY	2-seater
LENGTH	13ft 6in
WIDTH (BEAM)	6ft 2in
HEIGHT	1ft 3in
DRAUGHT	Unknown
WEIGHT	385lbs



Sprite & Corvette 1960



The Healey Marine Corvette was the only "day cruiser" produced during the lifetime of the Healey boat operation. A day cruiser is defined as a boat that provides on-board sleeping capacity and the Corvette allegedly, provided overnight berths for two people, although pictures show the protection from the elements to be minimal. The fibreglass hardtop with sliding side screens that provided weather protection also helped make the Corvette look unique. The boat was somewhat larger than the previous Healey boats with a broad beam and a deep hull design. The hull design of the Corvette enabled it to be out in rough weather and still provide a relatively smooth ride. The large size of the Corvette, with its 70-inch transom allowed the purchaser to select between a one or two-engine configuration. Since the Corvette was

capable of running offshore, records show that the two-engine option was more often chosen. The maximum recommended power output in either the single engine or the two engine configuration was 80 horsepower. Although the Corvette was sold primarily as a day cruiser, it was easily capable of pulling water skiers and ski tow rings were included as an integral part of the boat. The standard

equipment for the Corvette was quite extensive and also included heavy-duty fenders (fend-offs), a panoramic wind-screen, cleats, lifting handles and duo-tone hull/deck combinations with harmonised colour trim in addition to the hardtop, side screens and ski tow rings. No known example of the Healey Marine Corvette still exists, unless any reader knows of one!

specifications

NAME	Healey Marine "Corvette"
YEAR OF PRODUCTION	1960
VOLUME	Unknown
ENGINE	One or two outboard engines
CUBIC CAPACITY	Various
CARBURATION	Various
POWER OUTPUT	Maximum recommended 80bhp
TRANSMISSION	In-Engine unit
HULL MATERIAL	Fibreglass
BODY	6-seater with fibreglass hardtop
LENGTH	15ft 8in
WIDTH (BEAM)	6ft 6in
HEIGHT	1ft 8in
DRAUGHT	Unknown
WEIGHT	650lbs

