

280SL MERCEDES-BENZ

THE RESTORATION OF AMF 2H - A BRIEF HISTORY

RECEIVED FROM MALCOLM UNDERWOOD
WHEN I BOUGHT THIS CAR ON
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AMF 2 H was first registered in August 1969 and at the time of issuing a V5 document, was owned by a Mrs. Arnett of Southsea. The vehicle was then purchased by Mr. Gladstone from Sam Hartley Car Sales in February 1982. After having used the car for four years and covering approximately 8000 miles, Mr. Gladstone took the car off the road in March 1986 in order to completely restore it.

The next two years were spent totally dismantling and labelling every part. By the summer of 1988 the shell was ready to start rebuilding. This work was entrusted to a local panel man whilst Mr. Gladstone worked on the mechanical aspects of the car.

Work progressed very slowly due to career commitments, particularly as much time was spent abroad. Then in 1993 it was decided that the family would live permanently in Dubai, the decision was also made to sell AMF 2H.

When I bought the car in July 1993, the bodyshell had been fitted with new inner and outer rear wings, new rear panel, new front wings, new front panel, new box sections at the top of the front wheel arches, and some small repair sections to the front bulkhead, the rest of the bodywork was remarkably rustfree, which confirmed my opinion that the car had always been garaged during its life.

Here follows a summary of work that I have or have had done.

BODYWORK

I stripped all underseal and sound deadening material from inside and outside the car, it was then taken to John Timms (Contract Paint Ltd.), where it was grit blasted, new boot floor fitted, all repairs checked and re-worked where necessary prepared, resprayed and wax injected.

All chrome work was cleaned, many parts replated, and some renewed. Stainless steel fastenings have been used wherever possible and many improvements to the original build quality been made, for instance the chrome side trims are fixed by machine screws and nuts rather than the original self tapping screws.

The door panels have been re-trimmed by Aldridge Trimming on new back boards prepared by myself. These boards are coated with polyester resin and surface tissue on both sides to improve stiffness and vapour protection, they also incorporate a sheet steel re-inforcing plate in the area of the retaining screw under the armrest.

The window winding mechanisms have been re-built with new nylon sliders, felt channels and rubber seals and the correct upper and lower stops fitted.

The door locks have had brass inserts fitted to the operating cams to ensure correct operation and new exterior handles fitted. Both doors fitted with new rubber seals, also new rubber seals were fitted to the boot, soft top lid, rear lights, and petrol tank filler tube.

The interior trim is mostly original and has only been cleaned. The exceptions being new under dash panels which are vinyl covered hardboard fixed by machine screws into threaded inserts rather than the original crude self tapping screws.

The carpeting is new but is as near to the original pattern available, also new but not original are the boards under the carpet in both front footwells. These help level the floor and prevent the carpet rucking, which is a common problem on these cars.

The carpet over the transmission tunnel is not stuck in place as original, but is loose fitting to enable easy access to the inspection covers underneath.

The boot area has been fully carpeted, and although not original, is a great improvement, and should have been done from new?

Behind the dash, all parts have been cleaned and checked and all clips, grommets, and fixings fitted to original specification. The heater matrix was re-built along with the water radiator and oil cooler by Wembley Radiators for Geoff Gladstone. I made all new foam seals for the heater tubes, and also fitted a new "o" ring to the water valve. Rather than fit new original equipment heater operating levers, which are prone to age hardening and breaking, I made and fitted solid aluminium levers spot the difference?

The aperture for the radio was found to have made slightly oversize to enable an eight track unit to be fitted, so that the original blanking plate even if available would not cover the hole! I therefore made a new oversize plate and also an escutcheon plate to enable a "din" standard radio to be fitted.

During the fitting up of the body every part was waxoyled and then the entire car was given a further wax injection treatment, the intention from the start had been to build a road car that would withstand the rigours of every day use!

MECHANICAL

Brakes:

When I purchased the car it came with one new rear brake caliper, I dismantled the three used calipers and found them to be in perfect condition so just renewed the seals and painted them. The master cylinder had some wear and so a new one was fitted. All the brake lines were renewed using Kunifer tubing and MB original flexible pipes. all rubber insulators, brackets, and retainers were renewed. New handbrake cables, operating linkages, and brake shoes were fitted, as were new brake pads to all calipers.

Axles:

The front axle had been rebuilt before I bought the car and invoices and examination verified all moving parts had been renewed. I have fitted new track rod ends, steering damper, idler arm bushes, and subframe mountings.

I stripped the rear axle but not the differential. all parts were cleaned, painted and then reassembled, re-torquing the internal universal joint, fitting new bearings and seals to axle shafts and new rubber boot to swinging axle. The axle was then fitted to the car using new coil springs, new top rubber mounting on differential, new radius arm rubber bushes and new radius arm rubber front mountings.

Fuel system:

The fuel tank was cleaned inside and out, and painted by John Timms. It was then fitted to the car using new rubber pads.

The fuel pump was cleaned and painted and fitted with new flexible hoses to the car. The pump is the original "large" type and so the pump shroud was cut away to the correct profile to allow the newer "small" type to be fitted should the need arise. Both steel fuel lines were cleaned, painted, and fitted using new rubber insulators.

The fuel injection pump was new when the engine had originally been rebuilt at 87035 miles and therefore was in good order, but new one way valves were fitted as a precaution.

The cold start solenoid and valve were checked for correct operation as were all the injectors.

To aid hot starting the factory approved one second timer p.n. 001 545 16 24 and harness p.n. 108 540 10 09 were fitted.

Engine:

The car had been fitted with a new MB short engine, new cylinder head, and new injector pump at 87035 miles (see invoice in file). but as a precaution I decided to strip it down. It was found to have slight corrosion in no. 3 bore due to water having settled on the piston, probably caused by pressure cleaning the engine with the spark plug loose.

I stripped and cleaned the entire engine and had the block bored out to repair size 2, and the crankshaft checked and polished by Staines Diesels.

I decided not to undertake to rebuild the engine myself, and Tony Montalbano of T.M. Motors agreed to do the work.

The engine was rebuilt using new pistons, bearings, timing chain, hoses, gaskets etc. with all pipes and brackets cleaned and replated.

The cylinder head was welded where it had slightly corroded, surfaced and fitted with new valve guides and new valves

The engine was fitted to the car using new engine and gearbox mounts.

Gearbox:

The gearbox was stripped and found to be in perfect order and was re-assembled using all new gaskets and seals. New bushes were fitted to the remote linkage,

The propshaft was cleaned and checked, and fitted with a new prop coupling.

Exhaust:

The car came with a stainless steel system but I was not entirely happy about the quality, and so had Tony fit a complete new original MB system.

Electrical:

The alternator has been checked and new brushes fitted, as has the starter motor, the latter also has had a new pinion gear fitted.

New headlamp units came with the car and have been fitted.

All other electrical equipment and wiring has been checked for operation and correct routing and clipping, involving many trips to TM Motors to check for originality against other cars.

In summary, the aim in rebuilding AMF 2H had always been to create an original perfectly working car which would be as reliable as possible and easily maintained.

This aim has been achieved with the added bonus that the car is also a National Concours prize winner, having won "BEST IN SHOW" in the 1996 MB Owners Club National Day, the only concours competition it has entered!

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excl steering wheel.