

Building a Hawk/AC Ace hybrid

By Paul Anderson



The 2.0 Litre AC donor car.



Pedals etc. may be salvageable.

I have just recently finished building a TR4A that made the cover and inside pages of Practical Classics (The recent October issue). And, apparently I have been entered in to the Practical Classics Car Restorer of the Year.

My next project was meant to be restoring a Jensen C-V8, but I had always wanted to build an AC Ace replica, so when the ideal engine came along, it was all systems go! I have given myself 2 years to complete it all (fingers crossed). So, if anyone has any original AC Ace parts or advice, please let me know – I could really use the help.

I have been hanging out with Gerry Hawkrigge at Hawk Cars to discuss my project. It is a massive learning curve as no manual exists really, but we are getting there. The first stage is to get the chassis bracketed for the motor and box and then there is the issue of the pedal linkage. I am trying to use as many of our original AC parts as possible.

You can follow my progress at <http://accetc.weebly.com>. This site is dedicated to the build of my Ace recreation. The plan is to use as many AC parts as I can to keep it looking authentic. My replica will have an AC engine and gearbox,

just like the very early Aces, as well as many other original AC parts. The chassis is provided by Hawk Cars as it is a very close replica of the original AC Ace and represents a true reflection of the Marque as does the bodyshell they provide.

So far, I have an engine, gearbox, radiator, steering wheel with centre, wheels, pedals and linkage, fuel cap, some switches, some chrome. Chassis and body from Hawk. Spares for the 2 litre engine are readily available from Rod Briggs. Rod has an excellent website with a lot of reference information. He also manufactures parts. We are under no illusion that building our Hawk AC Ace will be nothing but a huge learning curve – but a lot of fun with an incredible car at the end of it!

It's hard to find an engine and box together, but I was with Gerry recently and he has a 1950 AC 2.0 litre engine and gearbox for sale for just £1500, if anyone is inspired to do the same as me.

Pictured here is my AC 2.0L engine. It has a 'D' suffix engine number which I've have been told denotes 'Development', so potentially, an AC works engine that was used to replace a de-

fect 2.0L engine in their saloons. It is thought that the engine was used in the development of the shell bearings for the AC Ace. My engine is one of the 9 consecutive numbers that are missing in the AC Records. It is a really great find. So, could it be a 2 Litre AC ACE Development car? Who knows? The donor car was brought back from Southern Ireland on a trailer. If anyone has any information on the history of this car please get in touch. In any event, the chassis and engine numbers don't match due to the 'D' engine. I will be selling the whole car, rolling chassis, body and interior, but will retain the engine, gearbox, differential and radiator for my recreation.

The 16 inch, 48 spoke, 42mm splined wheels came of an original AC Ace - 639 UXB. The owner of the Ace, Mike Ormond, had a new set of wheels built and they went with the car when sold. The original wheels remained for some time in Mike's garage, until I bought them. Many modern replacements are 15 inch but it ruins the look in my book. Pictured, are my wheels when they were on the original Ace. The splines are in great condition, no lose spokes or damaged rims as they

were professionally reconditioned some years ago with subsequent little use and dry stored since. Exhaust Manifold engine plates – Many thanks to Michael Beresford for passing on these superbly engineered plates for my AC Ace project 2.0 Litre AC engine. They fitted like a glove on dry fit. A dynamo bracket has to be created to move the dynamo to the front of the engine. Chaiting to Rod Briggs, he said that these parts are very simple and any machine shop should be able make them for you if you cannot do so yourself. The dynamo housing cover can be made out of a piece of 1/8" aluminium (or thereabouts) from a paper pattern. Rod Briggs kindly drew a layout for me. If you have any AC-6 questions, Rod is your man and can be contacted at www.ac-6.co.uk Or call: 01458 273476

The Ac Ace, 2 bolt, engine mounts were also supplied by Rod Briggs. I need to get good pictures from an Ace to finally decide on how I will mount the engine and what chassis brackets will need fabricating to keep it all as authentic as possible. Great find though and

thanks to Rod we now have a couple of mounts that are very serviceable.

The AC engine, before I stripped off the carbs and got it ready for the rebuild, was photographed by Rana Dias, in its "as found" state. It looks fabulous with the oil and dirt all over it. It's amazingly clean underneath the muck!

The gearbox that will go in to our Hawk AC Ace, is a Moss unit that I intend fitting with an overdrive. I have the original AC Ace 2.0 litre Engine starting handle and the original AC Ace Steering wheel manufactured by Blumells. The curled tightening nut was also by Blumells. This steering wheel was used in many British sports cars but notably the Daimler Dart 250 and the AC Ace. If you are having problems trying to find a wheel or the centre boss and nut you can obtain them new from Daimler Dart spares outlets. I managed to buy a steering wheel that had come out of an original AC Ace but it needed restoring. I had it restored locally at Steering Wheel Restorations in Kent. I'm aiming for Blue Metaline paint, that was a fine metallic, but it is impossible to

actually find the colour from any reference. A friend had a colour panel done from an A paint chip. It is a variant of Guardsman's Bl used on Cobras and as close to Blue Metaline as I can get it.

Original AC Ace instruments are hard to find. Matching the Smiths instruments exact is a tall order. You'll find some that are close but not identical. So, what to do? My plan is to get as close as I can and have the gauge recalibrated and the face reprinted. There are specialist companies that can do this.

The body for my AC Ace replica is a Ha GRP item. I was lucky enough to visit Hay Cars when they were in the middle of making it. The body will be allowed to cure in it mould for a few weeks before being removed. Thanks to Aron at Hawk for talking me through the process and great to see the car in this stage.

The pedal linkage is from the 2.0 Litre AC donor car. I'm not sure yet how much if any all of it we will be used.

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The original 2.0 Litre AC 'D' development engine and box.



The original AC Ace sporting the wheels I now own.



16 inch wheels in fine fettle.



One of many badges on the donor parts.

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For owners and enthusiasts of the Cobra 289 and its replicas

*Season's
Greetings*



Cover photo: Nik Bagshaw's 289 FIA.

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