

# Nash Healey



December 2011

NEWSLETTER

## Nash Healey Racing



Donald Healey built four lightweight Nash Healeys for endurance racing. The intention was to create a racing pedigree for the marque. Like the road cars, they had Nash Ambassador engines and drivelines. (The engines were non-stock: power output was increased by fitting higher-compression aluminum cylinder heads, special manifolds and twin SU carburetors.) The cars had spartan, lightweight aluminum racing bodies. Three open versions were built, and one coupe. They looked completely different from the production Nash-Healeys, none of which ever competed at the Le Mans or in the Mille Miglia.

These special race cars competed in four consecutive Le Mans races and one Mille Miglia.

Tony Rolt and Duncan Hamilton debuted the prototype at the Le Mans in 1950. It was the first-ever Le Mans entry to have an overdrive transmission. Not only was the car one of the 29 finishers from the field of 66, but it finished in fourth place—an outstanding achievement that sealed Healey's contract with Nash for a limited production run of the road cars.

In the 1951 Le Mans, Rolt and Hamilton (who would win two years later in a Jaguar C-Type) took fourth in class and sixth overall behind a Jaguar, two Talbot-Lagos and two Aston Martins. They finished immediately ahead of two Ferraris and another Aston Martin.

In 1952, when only 17 of the 58 starters finished, the entry driven by Leslie Johnson and motoring journalist Tommy Wisdom took third overall behind two factory-entered Mercedes Benz 300 SLs, also first in class, ahead of Chinetti's Ferrari and second in the Rudge-Whitworth Cup for the best performance over two consecutive years; and won the Motor Gold Challenge Cup. The drivers said the car was more nimble through the corners than its more exotic competitors. It delivered and the engine needed no oil or water during the entire 24 hours.

In the 1952 Mille Miglia, the thousand-mile Italian road race banned as too dangerous five years later, Johnson took fourth in class and seventh overall in another Nash-Healey lightweight, this time one of the open cars, with Bill McKenzie as passenger. The coupe version driven by Donald Healey and his son Geoffrey crashed out.

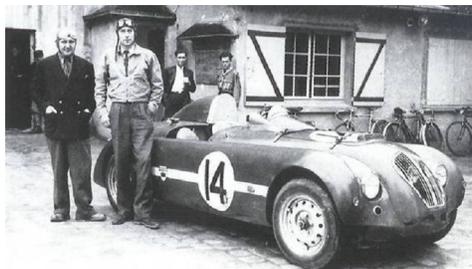
For the 1953 Le Mans race, the factory partnered Johnson with Bert Hadley. They could only manage 11th overall even though the average speed—was faster than the previous year's third-place finish. This concluded the race history of the lightweight competition Nash-Healeys

In the wake of the heavily publicized 1955 Le Mans disaster, Nash adopted a new advertising slogan - "The only race we're interested in is the human race" - and abandoned all sporting pretensions..

This following photos and race results which are reproduced from the book Les Healey au Mans 1949-1970 written by Hervé Chevallier.

#### 1950 Nash HEALEY nr.14

Engine:	Nash 3846cm <sup>3</sup>	Total Distance:	3384,88
Group:	3001/5000	Average Km/h:	141,036
Drivers:	Hamilton & Rolt	Finishing position:	4



Rolt & Hamilton arriving to Le Mans by road.  
It is a tight race since the 3,8 litre. car of Rolt and Hamilton almost won the third position but problems with the gear box forced them to let the Allard J2 overcome them

#### 1951 Nash Healey nr. 19

Engine:	Nash 3842cm <sup>3</sup>	Total Distance:	3448,730
Group:	3001/5000	Average Km/h:	143,697
Drivers:	Hamilton & Rolt	Finishing position:	6



That year, Donald Healey prepares one single car for Le Mans. The new coachwork, with aluminium panels fitted onto a light iron structure, had a wide two-part windscreen and side windows giving the pilot exceptional visibility for this type of car at the moment.

#### 1952 Nash HEALEY nr.10

Engine:	Nash 4135cm <sup>3</sup>	Total Distance:	3534,030
Group:	3001/5000	Average Km/h:	147,521
Drivers:	Johnson & Wisdom	Finishing position:	3



The year 1952 is the year of Mercedes and also a great year for the Warwick team.

Donald Healey enters two cars: one of them is the coupe of 1951 redesigned in a barquette way and raced by Leslie Johnson and Tommy Wisdom.  
It took 2 weeks for Roger Menadue and J. Reed to build this car

### 1952 Nash Healey nr. 11

Engine:	Nash 4135cm <sup>3</sup>	Total Distance:	x
Group:	3001/5000	Average Km/h:	x
Drivers:	Cabantous & Veyron	Finishing position:	X



This car is the prototype of 1950 with two French drivers, Giraud Cabantous and Pierre Veyron. This car is equipped with an experimental cylinder head of British origin with hemispheric combustion chambers, and valves with vertical and horizontal pushrods; these changes give the car a 203 hp engine. After two hours they have to stop with engine problems.

### 1953 Nash HEALEY nr.10

Engine:	Nash 4143cm <sup>3</sup>	Total Distance:	x
Group:	3001/5000	Average Km/h:	x
Drivers:	Cabantous & Veyron	Finishing position:	X



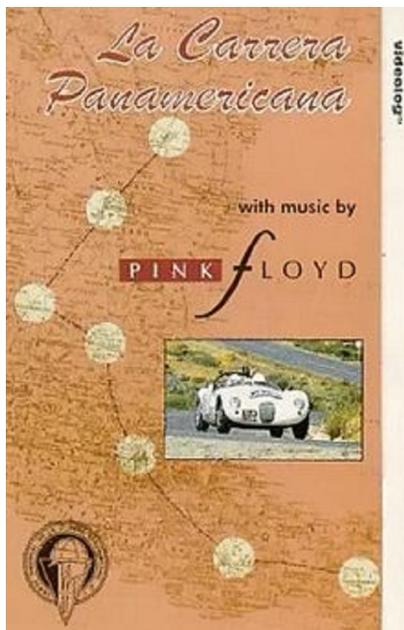
This year the two Nash Healey are registered for the second time and for the second year the French team of Cabantous and Veyron retires at the very beginning of the race.

### 1953 Nash HEALEY nr.11

Engine:	Nash 4143cm <sup>3</sup>	Total Distance:	3570,430
Group:	3001/5000	Average Km/h:	148,768
Drivers:	Hadley & Johnson	Finishing position:	11



The Nash Healey raced by Leslie Johnson and Bert Hadley end up the race 11th overall covering 22 additional miles with an average speed of 92,46 m.p.h. against 91.52 m.p.h. the year before.



*La Carrera Panamericana* is a 1992 video of the Carrera Panamerica automobile race in Mexico. The original Carrere Panamerica was a border-to-border sports car racing event on open roads in Mexico similar to the Mille Miglia in Italy. It ran for five consecutive years from 1950 to 1954 and it was widely held to be the most dangerous race of any type in the world. It has since been resurrected.

A Nash-Healey served as the course car for the 1951 Carrera Panamerica, described as one of the most dangerous automobile race of any type in the world. Driven by Chuck Stevenson, the Nash-Healey ran ahead of the racers to ensure the way was clear on "the world's greatest road race".



# Nash Healey Racers Today



Jim Walton negotiating an off camber corner at Thunderhill Raceway in his 1953 Nash Healey Roadster.



Leonard McCue of St. Petersburg Florida with his 1953 Nash Healey Coupe



Bob Munce 1953 Nash Healey Coupe while running in the Mountain Mille, the 1000 mile event that runs through the twisty back roads of West Virginia and Virginia.



This is a photo of the entries of the 2011 California Mille sent by Jim Walton who did this race with his 1953 Nash Healey Roadster



## Nash Healey Racing

This is a much larger topic than I had anticipated and deserves way more coverage. We will devote more time and space to it in future issues. Please send me any racing photos or stories you may have to [jbrookes@moradnet.ca](mailto:jbrookes@moradnet.ca). I look forward to hearing from you. Everyone would love to see your pictures .



### Registry Update

The Nash Healey Registry now has a total of 129 registered Nash Healeys. To date, we have amassed a total list of 369 Nash Healeys believed to still exist. It is excellent that we are still finding and registering Nash Healeys not previously known.. I appreciate the info and leads everyone sends me. Together we are building an accurate record of surviving Nash Healeys 60 years after production began.

### *A Holiday Wish*

*With the festive season upon us, it is time to reflect on the past year and give thanks. We are so very fortunate to enjoy these wonderful cars and the fellowship they create among us. We hope you have a joyous Christmas and health and prosperity throughout the New Year.*

### Thank You

As we approach the end of 2011. I would like to thank everyone who has helped in the production of these newsletters. Your input is invaluable and appreciated by all. I would also like to send a very special thank you to our on-line gurus, who graciously answer so very many questions and help so many. We all so appreciate the time, effort and willingness to share your wealth of information and knowledge with the rest of us.

### Mark Your 2012 Calendars

2012 Grand Nashional  
Post Falls Idaho July 25 – 29, 2012

#### Healey Conclave 2012

June 17 - 22, 2012; Louisville, KY

#### Healey Rendezvous 2012

June 25 - 29, 2012; Parksville BC

### Items for sale

\*\*Front Spring Seats all Nash Healeys \$700.00 per set  
 1952-54 Nash Healey Roadster Windshields \$695.00  
 1953 Nash Healey Coupe back Windshields \$695.00  
 1953 & 1954 Nash Healey Coupe Windshields \$695.00  
 1954 Nash Healey Coupe back windshield  
 weatherstrip. \$450.00  
 All Nash Healeys extended front suspension caster  
 adjuster \$350.00  
 All Nash Healeys front stabilizer bar (3 times stiffer)  
 \$395.00  
 Nash Healey rear motor mounts recast in urethane for  
 \$95.00 each on an exchange basis only

Contact Jim Walton [nshjw@aol.com](mailto:nshjw@aol.com) or  
 Dennis McAllister [denmca@comcast.net](mailto:denmca@comcast.net)

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