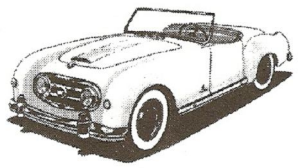
Nash Healey



June 2012 Newsletter

Nash-Healey Registry

The Nash Healey Registry keeps on growing. We now have a total of 138 registered Nash Healeys. A special welcome is extended to our recently added members from Australia. My list of Nash Healeys believed to still exist is at 372 . We are hopeful that we can continue to validate those on the list in order that we may eventually have a true picture of how many Nash Healeys have really survived. A special thanks to those of you who send me the leads to pursue to enable us to continue to grow. Thanks as well to our contributors. We appreciate you taking the time to share your stories and helpful information with all Nash Healey owners.

Please contribute your own stories by sending pictures and stories to jbrookes@moradnet.ca.

Donald Healey

The Man Behind the Cars

Donald Mitchell Healey was born July 3, 1898 in Perranporth, Cornwall . Healey was influenced at a young age by his father's interest in automobiles. Engineer, Pilot, Rally driver, Entrepreneur, Carmaker, Executive, World record holder, Salesman. These are all titles that describe the amazing life of Donald Mitchell Healey.

After serving as a pilot and being injured in World War 1, Donald Healey began studying engineering, learning motor skills the hard way at a shop opened by his father in his hometown of Cornwall. Always keen on racing, he soon was entering every rally he could. In 1929 Healey participated in the Rally Of Monte Carlo with a Triumph Super Seven. In 1934 he became the Technical Manager at Triumph and competed in the 1935 Monte Carlo with a Triumph Dolomite.

By the time Healey became managing director in 1939, production at Triumph had almost ceased. During WWII he developed an aircraft carburettor for the military and also worked on armoring cars. Healey still entertained notions of reviving Triumph after the war. Restarting production proved impossible as much of the tooling had been destroyed in a German air raid on Coventry

Following WWII, Healey wanted to build a sports car capable of excellent handling and speeds better than 100 mph. Healey managed to scrape up £20,000, and formed the Donald Healey Motor Company. The company operated out of a Warwick hangar converted to a factory. His first after the war-car was the Westland roadster, with a trailing-link front suspension and a coil-sprung Riley solid axle. The 2.4-liter twin-cam engine was also sourced from Riley.

The Westland was very fast (speeds of up to 106 mph) and the publicity it received enabled Healey to follow with the production of the Tickford saloon, the Abbott drophead coupe and the Elliot. In the fall of 1949, Healey introduced the Silverstone One of the early Silverstones was purchased by an American and fitted with a Cadillac V-8. The increased performance intrigued Healey and he set out to acquire additional Cadillac engines.

Healey's biggest stroke of genius was recognizing the American market. The Silverstone sale resulted from an inspired idea to drive a Westland B from New York to L.A.
His next trip to the United States was the occasion of the now famous meeting with George Mason, president of the Kenosha, Wisconsin based Nash Kelvinator Corporation Donald Healey was on a sales mission across the Atlantic to the USA to promote his cars and hopefully return with orders. He also had a meeting with Cadillac to ask the American firm to supply him with engines. However, General Motors, Cadillac''s parent company, declined Healey's request and Healey left empty handed. His fortuitous meeting with George Mason on board the Queen Elizabeth became the most important stepping stone in the career of Donald Healey. He maintained that, without it, there would have been no more Healey cars as he was deeply in debt and very few options were available.
Mason flew Healey to his estate in Northern Michigan in his private plane to work out the details. Nash did not yet have a V8engine, but they did have a big 3.8-liter (235 cu. in.) six, which Mason was happy to supply. Even better, Mason wanted to distribute the cars through his Nash dealerships. It was exactly what Healey needed, providing a way into the American markets There were numerous snags to work out, the first being the considerable weight of the engine. Next was that the gearbox could be supplied only in conjunction with an overdrive in which there was a passage through a free-wheel. This was a concern as this configuration had been banned by all race organizers. It was also stipulated that every possible production part from the Nash Ambassador be utilized in this export only model. They eventually came to an agreement described by Donald Healey as wonderful whereby Nash supplied the parts and paid off the debts of the Donald Healey Motor Company and would be paid back in finished cars.

It was planned for the car to be built on Healey's chassis, but with a 3.8–litre Nash 6–cylinder engine and drive train from the Nash Ambassador. Transmission would be three speed manual fitted with overdrive. The car was to be given an all aluminium body, to be produced by the British company, Panelcraft Sheet Metal Company Ltd. of Birmingham. The chassis and suspension would be produced by the Donald Healey Motor Company. Nash shipped the engines and transmissions to the UK where the cars were assembled by Donald Healey's factory before being shipped back to the US for sale. To aspirate the engine he used twin 1¾ inch SU carburettors in preference to the American Carter Carbs.

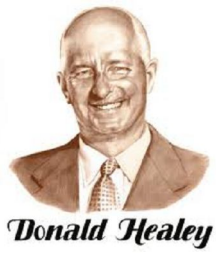
The all aluminium Panalcraft body was originally designed by Donald Healey himself and the prototype car was revealed at the 1950 Paris motor show.

The Nash Healey received mostly positive reviews. It was actually somewhat slower than the Silverstone—mostly because it was significantly heavier — it was still capable of 0-60 mph in about 12 seconds and a top speed of around 104 mph very quick for 1951. Its biggest weaknesses were the standard bench seat, which provided no lateral support, and the 10 in. (254 mm) Bendix drum brakes, which were inadequate for fast driving..

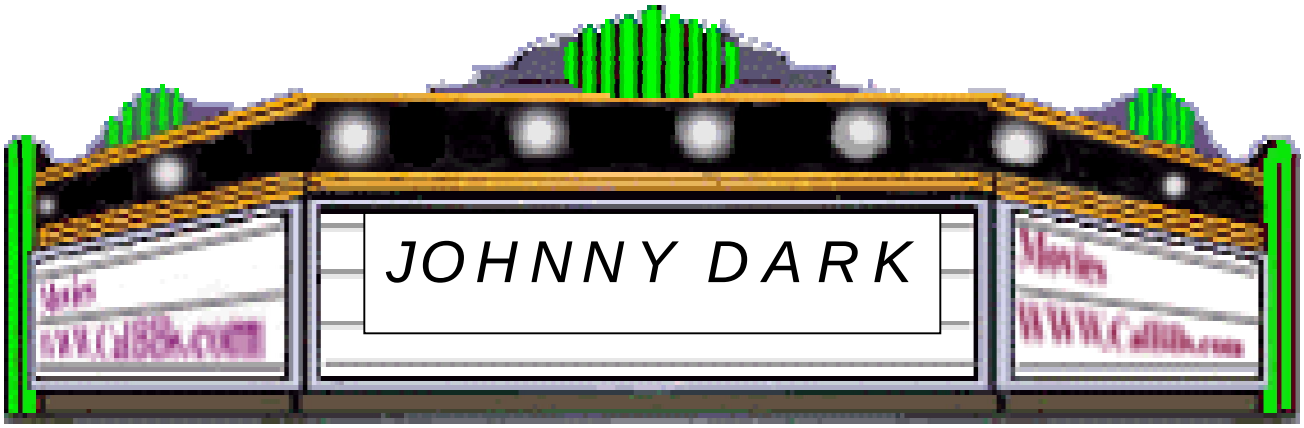
The first Nash Healey being unloaded in the US

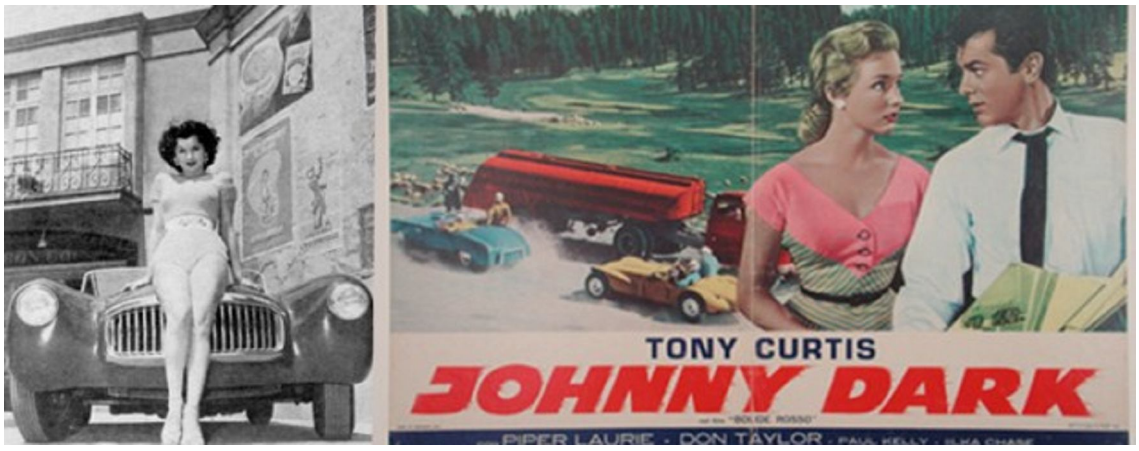
The Nash-Healey was sold only in the U.S., but its racing exploits had created considerable interest in the U.K. In the fall of 1951, Healey commissioned Panelcraft to build a similar looking sports car with no Nash components. This Healey sports convertible was the forerunner to the Austin Healey introduced in October 1952. Various models, including Sprites, were produced until a total ran of nearly 200,000 of which most were exported to America.

Donald M. Healey died in Perranporth on January 15, 1988, but his automobiles are still being raced, driven, collected, and enjoyed today.



Donald Healey was inducted into the International Motorsport Hall of Fame in 1996





RIGHTLY assuming that a good many auto passengers also are driving addicts, Universal Studios put together a mild but rather pleasant little picture called “Johnny Dark.” in 1953. Featuring Tony Curtis, Piper Laurie and Don Taylor. *Better still, the goings-on at the Fielding Motor Company, where all six work, hold some tastily authentic shots behind the automobile assembly line. The excellent Technicolor of William Alland’s production is even more enhancing to the climactic race, a full-throttle but standard one. Credit the photographer, nevertheless, for some extremely effective hairbreadth coverage from a helicopter, judging by the shadow.*

The plot, in a nutshell, has a bright young engineer, Mr. Curtis, launching his own speed model, winning a Canada-to-Mexico race and the granddaughter of the boss. Not for a minute will anybody doubt his success on all three counts, abetted and opposed, in turn, by the smitten Miss Laurie and his pal, Mr. Taylor.

I have taken a little leeway in this movie posting. One of the cars featured in this film looked very much like and was often mistaken for a Nash Healey. It is , however, a Glasspar 2 fitted with a 51 Nash Healey Grill and various other Nash Healey parts. Apparently there were numerous of these fiberglass beauties made in the image of a Nash Healey. More info on this at forgottenfiberglass.com

“ Often Imitated, Never Duplicated”

On Racing Nash-Healeys

Back in those Days

Submitted by Kent Martin

Your request for early Nash Healey Racing stories made me think of and decide to commemorate the most successful race car driver of the times, by far, Bob Louden of Aurora, Illinois, my friend and mentor.

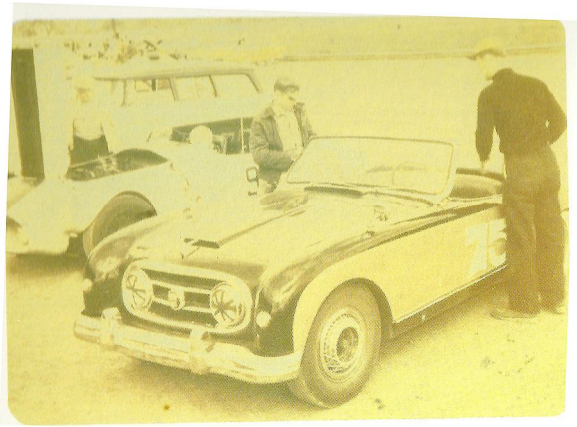
Robert Louden far exceeded any and all racing done by Nash Healey owners back in the day. He built quite a reputation in the northeastern Illinois and southern Wisconsin areas and represented the Nash Healey brand very well.

Bob worked at the time as a " Nash Zone Representative", which involved him going to visit Nash Dealerships and help them solve customer problems their mechanics were unable to resolve. He had a reputation for discovering and fixing the problem himself and was eventually transferred to a better position in the Nash Corporation.

He had a two toned 1952 Nash Healey black and gold roadster and easily beat all the gentleman racers competing in and around the Chicago area. As better, faster cars began appearing on the racing scene, it became increasingly difficult to continue his winning ways. Bob responded by putting V-8's in his Nash Healey. They were expertly designed and executed installations, which needed little alteration. His first attempt was with a Pontiac V-8 but he eventually settled on a Nash Ambassador V-8 partly as they were readily available as a Nash employee and partly because he liked the idea of keeping the car Nash as intended by Nash and Donald Healey. The way they might have done had they continued production. He really enjoyed racing and winning against the famous sports cars of the day. Corvettes, Allards, Jaguars, etc.

When Bob could no longer defeat dedicated Racing Type Sports Cars with his "Boulevard Type" Farina Nash Healey he eventually switched to a C-type Jaguar. A small book could be written on Bob's racing successes and what it took to continue these wins. Extensive modifications were required for him to turn his "Boulevard Tourer" into a wildly fast and great handling successful racer. Although Bob has passed away , I believe his winning black roadster still belongs to the Louden family

.



This is me helping Bob prepare his 1952 racer for a race at the Milwaukee State Fairgrounds in 1957 or 1958. This photo is from Bill Emerson's book. Bob won this race. In the background is one of the special racers built by Donald Healey for the Le Mans and the Mille Miglia.

Note: Kent Martin submitted this at my request. He is a 79 year old Nash Healey enthusiast who previously owned and raced Nash Healey s back in the 1950's

This is a photo of the late Bob Louden's 1952 Nash Healey. This photo is from the NCCA website.

Operating and Troubleshooting the Warner R-10 Electric Overdrive

By Jim Walton from NCCA Tips

While most Nash Owners understand the basic operation of the overdrive, I continue to get questions regarding certain aspects of the r-10 overdrives. I have worked on many of these units over the past 40 years and will relate some of the experiences I have had.

QUESTION: Do I have to stop the vehicle to lock the overdrive out of engagement in order to obtain engine braking at low speeds while descending steep grades ?
ANSWER: NO: You do not have to stop the vehicle in order to pull out the overdrive lock but the overdrive must not be engaged, the engine must be pulling the vehicle while you pull the cable out to lock the unit in direct drive. This can be accomplished by using the kick down if the overdrive is engaged and pulling out the lock out cable while accelerating. Recommended speed for this action to not exceed 50 mph. DO NOT EVER pull out the overdrive lock out cable if the vehicle is free wheeling(coasting) as this will most likely damage the planetary gear set in the overdrive. Any time that the overdrive is engaged in second or third gear the engine will provide braking until the overdrive disengages at 20-30 mph then it will freewheel.

QUESTION: When can I push in the cable to engage the overdrive ?
ANSWER: You can do this at any speed but the unit should not be freewheeling at the time.

QUESTION: Can the engagement and disengagement speed of the overdrive be raised?
ANSWER: This is controlled by the governor and is difficult to alter. Other vehicles like Ford pickups used a governor that provided a higher engagement/disengagement speed or a professional can alter the centrifugal weights inside the governor to accomplish this.

QUESTION: What oil should I use in the overdrive?
ANSWER: The original factory recommendation was for mineral oil and there has been much discussion on this subject. The transmission and overdrive mix the lubricant as it is driven and therefore should be the same in both. I use a very high quality lubricant made by Red Line and highly recommend it for both the transmission and overdrive. It is their MT-90.

QUESTION: Why does my overdrive " clunk " loudly when engaging, It never used to do that?
ANSWER: The most probable cause is a worn balk ring in the overdrive which serves as a synchronizer for the shifting mechanism.

QUESTION: Can the overdrive system keep my engine from starting and/or running?
ANSWER: Yes, it can. The solenoid has a set of points in it that is designed to interrupt the ignition while the unit is shifting. This can be caused by the overdrive relay and/or solenoid or their wiring. Try disconnecting the wire, at the ignition coil, from the relay and/or the kick-down switch to the ignition coil. If this fixes the problem, go looking into the above items.

QUESTION: What does the little shift rail do and is it necessary?
ANSWER: The shift rail switch is open when the unit is locked out of overdrive or the transmission is in reverse. It's most important function is to block overdrive engagement if some nut is backing up at high speeds and lets up on the accelerator. This would destroy the planetary gear.

QUESTION: Why won't my overdrive engage when I let up on the accelerator?
ANSWER: This can be caused by many different things and I will try to make it brief by relating only the most common I have experienced. First, check the fuse in the wire from the voltage regulator or ignition switch to the overdrive relay. Solenoid: ground the wire from the relay to the governor with the ignition on and you should hear the solenoid click. If nothing is heard, remove the solenoid and check it on a battery. If the solenoid "clicks" then remove the governor and check it. It should provide a path to ground when spun at high speed, also check the reverse lock out switch. It should be closed unless the transmission is in reverse or the lock out cable is pulled out, then it should be open. Try it both ways. Relay failure, remove the wire from the relay to the solenoid and see if it gets hot when you ground the governor terminal, again with the key on. Kick-down switch: This should be open at all times and closed when depressed. Again these are a few of the many things that can keep the overdrive from engaging, but experience has demonstrated that this will cover most of the failures to engage

QUESTION: Why can't I go into reverse without pulling out the lock out cable?
ANSWER: The overdrive is sticking in the engaged position and it can be a mechanical problem or an electrical problem holding the solenoid in the engaged position.

QUESTION: Why does my engine die on deceleration until the overdrive disengages at low speeds?
ANSWER:: This is probably caused by a solenoid malfunction.

Nash Motors

Division of Nash-Kelvinator Corporation-14250 Plymouth Road, Detroit 32, Michigan

April 2, 1953

All US Nash Dealers:

SUBJECT: Past Model Allowance & Sales Incentive for Nash Healey.

This bulletin supersedes and cancels all previous verbal and written interpretations of the above subject matter.

All 1952 Nash Healey units remaining in Dealer stock as of this date will be credited with a 5% past model allowance which will be credited to your parts account. This special allowance does not apply to any other year or Nash vehicle models.

In addition to the above all 1952 and 1953 Nash Healey units in dealer stock will qualify for an engine compartment dress up kit that includes the below listed items.

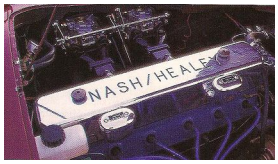
Chrome Valve Cover and knurled retaining nuts, chrome voltage regulator cover, chrome air cleaner housings & chrome overdrive relay cover.

These items will be handled by your District Sales Manager and will be offered on an exchange basis only. None of the above items will be issued without the proper exchange. No labor allowance will be considered.

This program is being instituted due to the recommendation of the Nash Dealer Council in hopes that these items would help to separate the Nash Healey engine from the Ambassador Car line and thus promote additional sales activity for the Nash Healey.

Yours very truly,

This copy of a 1953 bulletin from Nash Motors to their dealers sheds some light on the extra chrome packages found on later 1952 Nash Healeys.
Thanks to Jim Walton for sharing this with us.



Coming Events

The summer is upon us and by the time this is finished, the Louisville Conclave will be complete. If anyone is in attendance, please send me photos. We are off to the Healey Rendezvous in Parksville, BC. and hope to see some of you there. We will also be at the Grand Nashional in Post Falls, Idaho July 25 – 29. I am hoping there will be a lot of Nash Healeys at this event. If you haven't registered yet, try to fit it in as it promises to be a great meet. We hope to see you there.
Also don't forget the Orphan Car " Meet in the Mountains" August 18 in Leavenworth, WA.
Have a Great Summer

Items for sale

Billet steel machined lower front spring seats molded in urethane and many times stronger than the original. A serious safety item. $695.00
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 stabalizer 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 or Dennis McAllister denmca@comcast.net

The Nash Healey Newsletter

is produced quarterly and distributed free of charge to Registered owners. If you are not registered please contact me in order continue receiving your copy. There are no fees associated with The Registry and strict privacy levels are maintained. I have not included a registration form, but please contact me to receive one or if you know of someone who is not registered that I should contact. Please contribute to the Newsletter by sending me your photos and stories. We appreciate all contributions and suggestions.
Contact Information
Judy Brookes
PO Box 6452
Hinton, Alberta Canada T7V 1X7
Telephone 780-865-7066
Or email jbrookes@moradnet.ca