



# ***Nash Healey***

***December 2013***

***Newsletter***

## **racing the Nash-Healey**



The works Nash-Healeys before the 1952 Le Mans race. Number 10 on the right was driven into a splendid third place overall by Leslie Johnson and Tom Wisdom. Number 11, again bearing the registration KWD 947, was driven by Pierre Veyron and Yves Giraud-Cabantous, but retired early in the race because of engine problems

The prototype consisted of little more than a Healey Silverstone with the Nash engine, gearbox and back axle and a shortened torque tube. Building started in mid-February, the car was first tested at the beginning of April and the team left for Italy on the 16th April. On the way to Brescia, they had a new exhaust manifold made in France and had the head planed in Italy to take advantage of better local petrol. Donald, partnered by his son Geoff, drove it in the 1950 Mille Miglia and finished 177th overall, ninth in class. With a maximum speed only a little over 100mph and a problem with rising oil temperature if this was sustained, it was an adequate result. More work was needed to give it a chance of any success at the forthcoming Le Mans 24-hour race. An increase in power to 126bhp at 4600rpm came from new piston rings, decreasing blow-by to reduce oil temperatures, and a new camshaft. As Le Mans had banned cycle wings, the gap between the existing ones was filled and joined to the bodywork, taking in the headlights at the same time. Local testing showed the maximum speed had increased to a more promising 124mph. At Le Mans the car was entered for Duncan Hamilton and Tony Rolt - the start of a long partnership that was to be continued with works Jaguars. Despite an off-course excursion when the Healey was rammed by a French car and damaged its rear suspension, they covered 2103.262 miles at 87.635 mph. They finished fourth overall behind the first and second-place Talbot-Lagos and the Cadillac powered Allard of Sydney Allard and Tom Cole. In 1951 the Donald Healey Motor Company entered a right-hand-drive standard-bodied car in a number of events. In the

**Mille Miglia Donald Healey, again partnered by son Geoff, finished 30th overall and fourth in their class. Tony Rolt drove this car into sixth place in the over two-litre division of the one hour Production Sports Car race at Silverstone behind *five* XK120s. In the British Empire Trophy on the Douglas circuit in the Isle of Man Reg Parnell was at the wheel, but he retired with gearbox trouble. In June, Rolt and Hamilton drove the 1950 prototype, rebuilt as a coupe, at Le Mans and finished an impressive sixth overall at 89.289 mph, achieving 130 mph on the Mulsanne Straight. The coupe was then given its own chassis as the bodies were quickly detachable. Both the original prototype and the coupe were entered in the 1952 Mille Miglia, by which time they had been fitted with the 4138 cc engine now installed in the production cars. Donald and Geoff crashed with the coupe, but Leslie Johnson partnered by McKenzie finished seventh overall and fourth in their class of the International Sports category, a very creditable result.**

**After the Italian road race the coupe was rebuilt in open form. Both cars ran at Le Mans and Leslie Johnson, now partnered by Tom Wisdom at the wheel of the former coupe, drove an exceptionally good race to take third place at 91.497 mph behind the leading Mercedes-Benz 300SLs. The 1950 prototype, fitted with a new cross-pushrod hemi-head, was driven by Pierre Veyron and Yves Giraud-Cabantous, but a broken rocker shaft eliminated it during the third hour. For the Alpine Rally the works lent a production car to Edgar Wadsworth, but he crashed on the *Stelvio* Pass. At the end of the season the two works cars were sent to Nash Motors.**

**In 1953 Healey built two new competition versions with extended nose and tail. No poweroutput figures were made available for these cars, which were fitted with Laycock-de-Normanville *overdrive*. The long, sleek aluminium-alloy body was mounted on a lightweight steel frame welded to the chassis. The spare wheel was mounted in an opening in the tail and there was almost full undershielding. The front wings were cut away and between the front and rear wheels the sides of the body curved inwards, in both cases to improve air-flow to the brakes. These cars, which were painted in American white and blue racing colours, were prepared at the Warwick factory, but entered in the name of the Nash Corporation. A single car was entered in the Mille Miglia for American driver John Fitch, but he retired with a broken axle. Both cars ran at Le Mans. But these basically production cars were outpaced in one of the strongest fields ever seen in the 24 hours race Leslie Johnson and Bert Hadley drove their car to 11th place, while Pierre Veyron and Yves Giraud-Cabantous retired in the second hour because of loss of oil pressure. It was the last time that Nash-Healeys were raced by the Warwick factory.**



**Top: Tony Rolt at the wheel of the works production Nash-Healey in the over two-litre Production Sports Car race at Silverstone in May, 1952. He finished sixth overall. Note the registration KWD 947 which appeared on a number of different works cars (*Guy Griffilhs*)**

**Above: Two new competition Nash-Healeys were built for 1953. At Le Mans this car, once again with the registration KWD 947, was driven into 11 th place by Leslie Johnson and Bert Hadley**

**Reprinted from The Automobile April 2004**

## *Nash Healey, Vintage Racing*



## A smile a mile wide!

It may be hidden by my helmet, but it is there! I have raced a lot of different cars in a lot of different venues including the 24 Hours of Daytona and the 12 Hours of Sebring, but I've never had as much fun as I have racing my Nash Healey.

I decided as I grew "vintage", I would start racing vintage cars. I had driven a Jaguar 120 in college and thought another one would make a great vintage race car. When I attended a couple of races, I saw that Jaguars were common on the race grid. I wanted something unique. That is how I found myself in St. Louis looking over a derelict Nash Healey in desperate need of restoration. It had one redeeming characteristic as noted by my hobby shop manager; its floors were intact. Not much else was, as you can see by the photos before restoration. Six months later, we unloaded the only Nash Healey currently racing on the planet at the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix. It was the first time the tires touched the ground and the first time I was to drive the car in anger. We finished middle of the pack, but I knew we had a winning combination in the design of the racing engine and suspension. A few tweaks to the overdrive (not working), to the brakes (inadequate for a 3000 lb. race car), we would be ready for the next race. We have now raced a dozen times from Sebring to Limerock and each race has been a blast plus a learning experience. We learned a hard right turn would flood the ignominious carter carburetors. An ingenious fix has solved that problem. We learned extremely aggressive brake pads will actually slow the big girl down. We also learned the Nash Healey is the most popular car on the race grid. There must be a thousand photos out there. Anyone who knows Nash Healeys wants to talk about it and anyone who has never heard of one wants to talk about the car. After a race, I am deluged with fans wanting to say how much they enjoyed watching our dicing with the Aston Martins and Ferraris during the race. It may not be the fastest car out there (though soon it will be), but it is certainly the most popular.

When restoring the car, we opted to build it as a race car with a roll bar and fuel cell. But, we also wanted the car to easily be returned to its previous glory. Our restoration as a race car included not altering the original car body. Though, we built the Nash Healey as a race car, the racing seats and the fuel cell are mounted in the same manner as the original seats and gas tank. Also, all original equipment was restored. When not racing, it is equipped for touring with a complete factory specifications interior and is shod with wire wheels and whitewall tires. It is a well-mannered street car though adorned with many prerace inspection stickers. It is a pleasure to drive on the street, but only brings out that mile wide smile on the race track!

Leonard McCue





**Vintage Racing** takes many forms and from all reports it is both challenging and exhilarating. Not only does the car have to be in top shape to withstand the rigors of the racecourse, but so does the driver. To my knowledge , along with Leonard McCue on the track, we also have Jim Walton competing in the California Mille two years in a row with his 1953 Roadster and Rudolph Hug of Switzerland competing in the 2012 Mille Miglia with his 1951 Roadster. If there are more of you racing your Nash Healeys, please share your stories with us by sending them to [nashhealeyregistry@gmail.com](mailto:nashhealeyregistry@gmail.com).





Verlin Boes of Kansas City, Missouri owns this 1953 Roadster



John Hunt of Santa Maria, CA owns this 1953 coupe



## *Winners Gallery*



Gary Kanawyer of Nipomo, Ca owns this 1954 Coupe



Pete Jankovic of Elgin, Il recently purchased this Archie Moore's 1953 Roadster



Wayne and Dana Redding of Portland, Oregon own this 1954 Coupe



## ***Registry Update***

The Nash Healey Registry is now 4 years old and stands at 141 registered vehicles. . Our list of those believed to exist is at 376. Amazing out of the original 506. We look forward to continuing to identify and qualify more Nash Healeys in 2014. Thank you to all who sent me items for the newsletter over the past year. Your contributions are appreciated by all of us. The next newsletter will not appear in your inbox until late in April of 2013. Please send anything you have to contribute to [nashhealeyregistry@gmail.com](mailto:nashhealeyregistry@gmail.com)

## ***Where Did 2013 GO ???***

As amazing as it is to think that 2014 is rapidly coming to a close, we are looking forward to a wonderful 2014 enjoying these lovely cars and meeting more of the great folks who own them. The willingness of this group to assist their fellow Nash Healey Owners with source and technical information is exceptional. **Special Holiday Wishes for a wonderful Christmas and a Happy and prosperous 2014**

## ***Mark Your Calendar 2014 Events***

### **2014 AHCA Rendezvous**

Bend, Oregon June 23-27, 2014

### **2014 AHCA Conclave**

Hot Springs, Virginia June 15-20, 2014

### **2014 Grand Nashional**

Oxford, Ohio September 17-20, 2014

## ***Items for sale***

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  
 Contact Jim Walton [nshjw@yahoo.com](mailto:nshjw@yahoo.com) or

### ***Items for sale***

**Nash Healey Torque Tube Drive Stabilizer Trunion.** Restore safe driving. Prevent sloppy steering, wandering and certain drive line noises. A bad one causes the rear wheels to steer the car due to torque tube flex at the transmission. Exact factory replacement for all 51-54. Carry a spare. Nash never made them. \$219 Heavy Duty, lifetime warranty. Order by email from **Bob Walker** [ambo49@gmail.com](mailto:ambo49@gmail.com) or call **714 991 6260**. See full description on our website [www.NashRamblerRubber.com](http://www.NashRamblerRubber.com)

## ***Items for sale***

### ***Nash Healey Deck Lid Script***



Dennis Collins, Wylie, TX. Phone number **972.442.6189**. This script looks like the original. The attaching studs are in the same original location. The thickness of the lettering is as original as is the size and font of the lettering. Their price is \$150.00 for the two pieces plus shipping

## ***The Nash Healey Newsletter***

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Contact Information

Judy Brookes

PO Box 6452

Hinton, Alberta Canada T7V 1X7

Telephone 780-865-7066

Or email [nashhealeyregistry@gmail.com](mailto:nashhealeyregistry@gmail.com)