

Dear Mr. Cellers:

I have made arrangements for a N.H.A. club meeting at Road America during the five hundred mile race weekend. Here is what will appear in the Sports Car News section of the Chicago Sunday Tribune soon:

Sept. 7 - Nash Healey Association (now being organized) will hold the first midwest meeting in the lower paddock parking area at Road America, Elkhart Lake Wisconsin, at 8:00 A.M. A cordial invitation to attend is extended to all those Nash Healey owners whom Mr. Celler hasn't reached yet.

The last sentence refers to those who don't know about the club or your newsletters.

There probably won't be time to include this in the newsletter, so possibly you could notify all members by card. Probably, few or none from the east or west parts of the country will attend, but the invitation is offered anyway. You might warn them that overnight accommodations are very hard to get anywhere near Elkhart Lake, without reservations. I can see about reservations, if needed, as I haven't sent for my own yet.

I think you might be wrong about the N.H.A. members, if that's what it's going to be called. I, for one, would like to see a National club set up similar to the Corvette Club of America, with a badge for the badge bar or grill, a regular publication, (your newsletter is just fine) annual meetings, etc. The N.H.A. being as exclusive as it is, is all the more reason for our having a regular closely knit club. I don't mean to sound snobbish by saying "exclusive." I am using the term in its "number of units produced," form. Probably after the club really gets going, there won't be more than forty of us for the whole country.

Here are some more prospective members:

Robert E. Clark, 202 Rosedale Ave., Aurora, Ill.,
Home built, Nash Pontiac Healey Racing Special

William W. Squier, 739 East Ave., Park Ridge, Ill.,
Farina Roadster

James Ward, 603 Iroquois St., Aurora, Ill.,
Farina Hardtop

Donald ~~Robert~~ Lain, Lindscott St., Downers Grove, Ill.,
1951 Convertible (small one)

I'd like to make a request, if I may, and it is; could the type of car be listed with each owners name? For instance, 1951 Convertible, Farina

Roadster, Farina Coupe, Farina Hardtop, (large three piece rear window) Competition Special based on -----, Le Mans or Mille Miglia, car number -----. Incidentally, there were three, (that I knew of), and possibly four, (a coupe, I think) special racing Nash Healeys built by Donald Healey in England. Numbers 10 (somewhere here in the states now) and 11 were the Le Mans cars. No. 10 had the almost stock Ambassador six and was the winner that caused all the publicity by placing third behind the two 300SL's and winning its class in 1952. A Nash Healey placed fourth in 1950, but I don't know anything about the car. No. 11 was the Silverstone bodied car, with slab sides replacing the motorcycle fenders to meet F.I.A. rules. It was much faster than No. 10, but it went out with engine trouble in the '52 Le Mans. It had the experimental cylinder head started by Mr. A. C. Sampietro and designed and built by Thompson and Taylor Automotive Engineering Firm at Brooklands in England. This head produced 139 b.h.p. with the 3 1/2 inch bore and 171 with the 3 3/8 inch bore. Three of these special cylinder heads were produced by Thompson and Taylor, and where they are now is anyone's guess. One is possibly still on the old No. 11 (whereabouts unknown) and one was laying around the Nash factory at Kenosha for years and is now lost. I would certainly have liked to had one of these heads, as I am now running the 3 1/2 inch bore engine in my 1951 Convertible. Engineering and production costs of the three heads were \$7,000.

Andy Rosenberger's car was neither the No. 10 or No. 11 Le Mans car. I have reason to believe that his car, the third factory built special, was built for the Mille Miglia. It was driven by John Fitch, to what place and in what year I don't know. The experimental No. 11 was also driven in a Mille Miglia to a seventh over-all and a class fourth by Leslie Johnson. Johnson and Tommy Wisdom were the Nash Healey team drivers when Nash Healeys were winning. Andy Rosenberger's car evidently ran in the 1953 Mille Miglia, as it is evidently titled as a '53. It may also have run in the Le Mans of that year. I know nothing of the special Le Mans coupe, if it existed. Please return the picture of the No. 10 car.

It certainly would be nice if someone could get in touch with the owner of the famous old No. 10. I would like to get a color picture of it to add to my 8 x 10, framed, Nash Healey family tree. I doubt if No. 11 is in the states. Pictures of it at some event would have appeared in some automotive magazine over the years.

In the newsletter, I will try to answer some of the questions that I have knowledge of. I will confine my answers to the 1951 convertible, as it is the only kind I know well.

About production figures, that 506 total units produced seems awfully small to me. I'm more than a little skeptical. I wrote to Donald Healey last year asking what coachworks designed and built the beautiful aluminum body of the 1951 convertible and how many were produced. The styling is so similar to that of the 1951 2.3 litre competition Ferrari that I wondered if some Italian firm (Touring, possibly) had designed it. Mr. Healey

was in the states at the time that my letter arrived, (at Bonneville, breaking records) so Mr. G. R. L. Price answered it. He said that the 1951 car was designed and built there by them and that approximately two hundred were built. Now, he may have unknowingly included the Alvis Healeys that were basically identical to the later large 1951 Nash Healeys. They had a different grill, wheels, Lucas headlights, no weather-eye or hood air scoop and were right hand drive, but otherwise identical. The gap in production from March of 1951 to January of 1952 in Mr. Chackmakian's production figures seems odd. I think Mr. Price's claim of two hundred is more believable. In the August 1957 issue of Sports Cars Illustrated, there is a story about Donald Healey by Dennis May. In this story, "Sixty Fast Years," Mr. May claims that there were about 1,200 Nash Healeys built.

I think someone ought to write to Mr. Healey in the name of the Nash Healey Association, asking to know once and for all what the real production is. At the same time, the writer could ask for a history of the Nash Healey, including the first specials and prototypes and their individual accomplishments.

On maintenance manuals for the 1951, as Mr. Chackmakian said, there are none available. However, if you have to do any serious work on your '51, you'll have to have one. I bought my '51 in the fall of 1956, and tore it down immediately to restore it. It was really a cobbled-up mess, with cheap fabrications all over and in it. Almost nothing had been left untouched with these stupid modifications and attempted repairs. If I had known how bad the situation was, I never would have bought it. I spent a year, until the fall of '57, restoring it, and I never could have done it without my 1951 manual and my parts book number F-2404. Recently, however, I have taken to having parts fabricated for me, (at some cost) but only for this reason: I like always to use stock components, where possible, but I'm just fed up with waiting for as long as two months for a part that I could run up to Milwaukee and get myself if it were allowed. Also, half the time, after a very long wait, the wrong part is sent. And to make matters much worse, I've been told by the dealer who sends for my parts, that the parts warehouse at Milwaukee refuses to take back Nash Healey parts. So, either the dealer or myself are stuck with them. Because of incomplete description and general confusion in the parts book F-2404 (there are a few mistakes in it) and my never having had the needed part to know what it looked like, or what goes with it, I've had to send for a part just to see what it is like and whether I can use it. In these instances, again, no returns on Healey parts were allowed. In my year of restoration, I ordered more than a few hundred dollars worth of parts from Dewey Nash in Aurora and Bantel Nash in Joliet, after Dewey sold out. With the kind of policy the warehouse uses, a restoration of a bushel basket case car could become more expensive than it normally would be, and needlessly so. Speaking of prices, some parts seem to be priced much too high, and, seemingly, just because it's a Nash Healey part. Often times, the comparable part for a sedan or Rambler is quite reasonable.

But back to the need of a 1951 manual, the only way to obtain one is to talk an old dealer out of his copy. This can take a lot of searching and a lot of persuading. Actually, if the dealer who has one (and a few have) is a good fellow, he'll let you have it or sell it to you when he realizes that the chances of his ever needing it are almost nil. Of course, you'll have to make this fact known to him. Showing him the production figures in the Newsletter should help. And if by chance a '61 should ever drive into his shop for service, he'll be free to call you and ask to borrow the manual.

I have a problem for Mr. Chakmakian. I would like to switch my overdrive kickdown control to my dimmer switch on the floor. The reason is, I want both hands on the steering wheel while accelerating the car through a hard corner by use of the passing gear. When you've used up all of your manually shifted gears while coming down into a corner (finally double clutching down into first gear overdrive) and you still need some more power to get through the corner, you hate to take a hand off the wheel at a moment like that in order to hit the kickdown button. I don't want the horn ring for this use because I want that for a headlight dimmer switch, European style and very handy. Besides, it is too easily bumped accidentally. The wiring diagram in the '52 and '53 manual (there is none in the '51) is not color charted, so how does a person go about opening up the harness and finding the correct wires? On my car, the dimmer switch is almost inaccessible and is not visible. But most important of all, will the three switches interchange? That is, dimmer switch to overdrive kickdown, horn ring to headlight dimmer switch, overdrive kickdown to horn button.

If it is of any interest, I have found that there were two kinds of 1951 convertibles made. They are what I call the big and the small ones. The small one came first. It can be recognized by its doors. The small one, which is pictured in the manual, had a notch cut out of the forward upper corner of the doors, as if for a wrap around windshield. It also had a more beautiful and graceful tail section, that unfortunately left a large portion of the fuel tank exposed to view. On this model there was no pan protruding below the front bumper. Also, the dashboard was an inch or so smaller than on the later big car. As an example from the parts books:

22.058 BOX, Glove

PANAL, Glove Box (Wood Only) (19" x 6" x $\frac{1}{8}$ ") 25160 3115763

PANAL, Glove Box (Wood Only) (20" x 7" x $\frac{1}{2}$ ") 25160 3116509

Incidentally, there is a glove box door available for the smaller car. Anyway, its parts number implies that it is for the smaller car. It is 311 5448.

The larger car, which mine is, (chassis No. X 2054) had square cut doors with no notch out of the forward upper corner, a fat rear end which at least covers the fuel tank while almost looking like the rear of a Lister

Jag in the process, a pan extending below the front bumper, a wider interior, better firewall dashboard arrangement, and, I think, a taller windshield. My windshield and quarter windows have been sectioned to the size of the smaller cars. At what chassis number they switched to the larger car, I don't know, but the reason seems to have been something about the tires rubbing the tops of the wheel wells over choppy surfaces. I personally much prefer the smaller prototype car, as it was much better looking.

I have a Nash Healey aluminum cylinder head complete with thermostat housing, valves, pushrods, (they aren't the same length as in a normal Ambassador engine, I understand) S. U. carbs, air cleaners and linkage, for sale. I will sell it reasonably, as I have a type D engine with the side draft Carters in my car now.

Here is an ad out of the August 3rd Chicago Sunday Tribune. I think I know of this car. If it is the one I think it is, it is very nice and a beautiful bright red with whitewalls and a black top.

I have put together a Nash Healey album-scrapbook, devoted to the 1951 model and the racing specials. If anyone has any literature of any kind, or pictures of either the 1951 convertible or the racing specials that they are willing to part with or sell, I'd certainly like to have it to expand my album.

Please know that we all appreciate the job you're doing very much, and I, for one, already have begun to look forward with expectation to the arrival of each newsletter, as I do my sports car magazines.

Sincerely,

Kent C. Martin

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