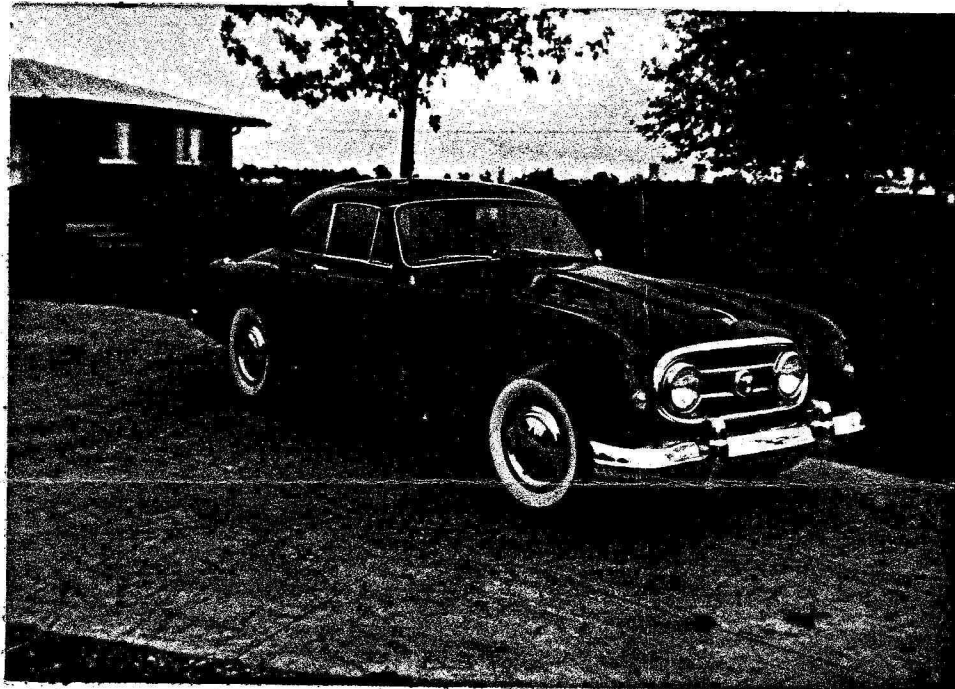




NASH  
HEALEY  
NEWS

August 1983  
Issue No.17

## Car club



### COMMENTS ON MY 1953 NASH-HEALEY by Kenneth Havekost

I would like to comment on my 1953 Nash-Healey coupe. This car came originally equipped with the English knock off wire wheels. The brake drum adapters are color coded yellow for one side and red for the other so they would not be mounted on the wrong side. The knock off caps would loosen accidentally if on backwards.

One wheel, the spare, has the original diamond tread "Goodyear" wide white.

The wheels are not presently on the car as they could stand replating which I'm told is very expensive. They need to be torn down and every spoke plated separately. The wheels and spokes after reassembly then need to be tuned for balance.

I've only heard of one other car through the years with this option. Am wondering if there are any members in the Club who have a Nash-Healey with wires. I'd appreciate any comments or advice on replating.

# Nash-Healey at Le Mans

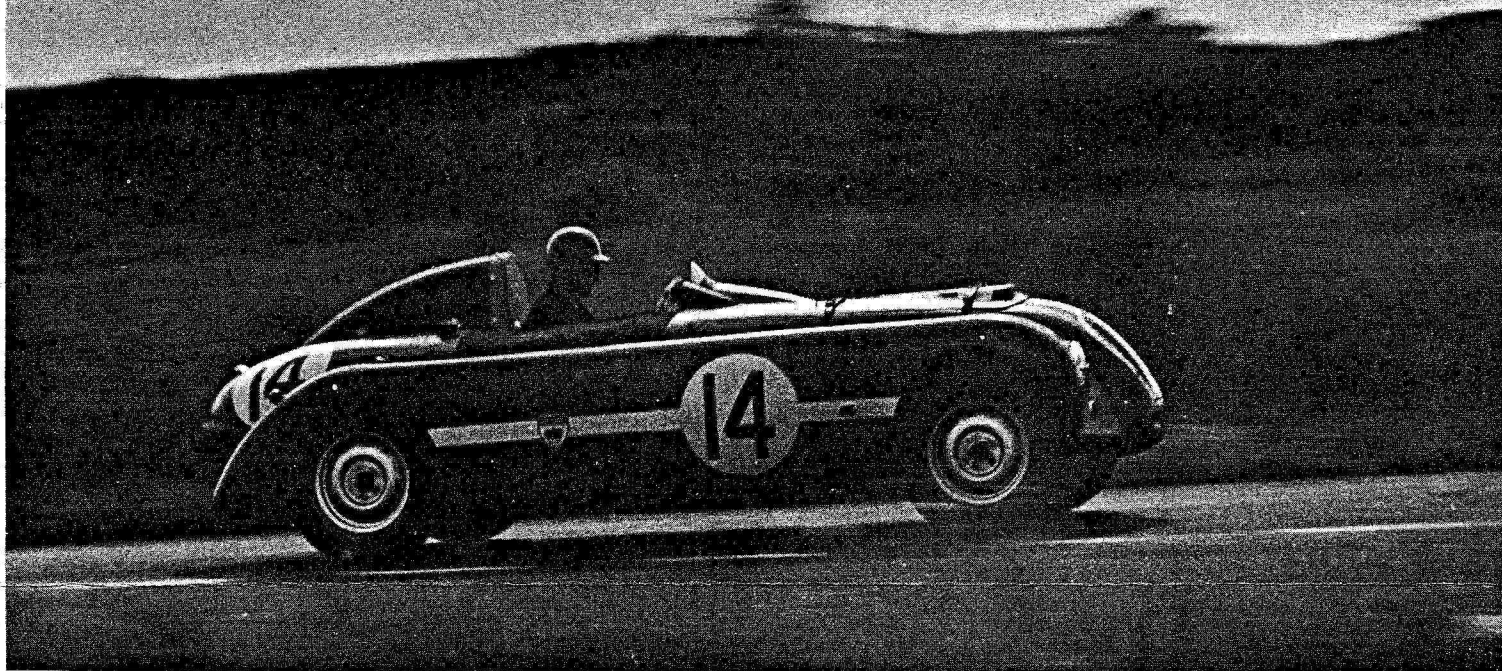


PHOTO: AMERICAN MOTORS CORP.

*Not until Ford took 1-2-3 in 1966 has any U.S. marque done quite so well in the great French endurance classic*

by Richard M. Kauffman

**I**T SHOULD COME as no large surprise that the Nash-Healey was *not* the world's greatest racing car. In fact, Nash Motors clearly stated in their 1952 technical service manual: "The Nash-Healey is truly a fine sports car and is designed as such, but it should not be considered a competition car to be used for racing purposes. It is suggested that the factory be contacted for information pertaining to modifications for racing."

Nevertheless, Nash-Healey did manage an unbelievable string of racing triumphs at Le Mans—the great 24-hour international gruel. While most sports car buffs don't even remember it, Nash-Healey took fourth overall at Le Mans in 1950, sixth in 1951, third in 1952, and 11th in 1953. It's a fantastic record and one no other American car has been able to rival, either before or since.

Much of the credit goes to one man, Donald

Healey. Healey gained his first fame as a race driver and rallyist. In 1931, he won the Monte Carlo Rallye outright in a 4.5-liter Invicta. But later, and especially after WW-II, Healey became known as a race-car designer, engineer, and builder. From 1948 through 1953, any number of automobiles shared his name, among them the Healey-Elliott, Healey-Abbott, Healey-Silverstone, Alvis-Healey, Riley-Healey, Nash-Healey, and Austin-Healey.

Until 1951, his most famous car was the cycle-fendered Silverstone model. And while Nash-Healey sports cars did achieve miraculous successes at Le Mans, it was the Austin-Healey that brought Donald Healey to international fame.

Yet it was the 1952 Le Mans race and the success of Nash-Healey entries that impressed Sir Leonard Lord of Austin Motor Co. Ltd., to enter the Austin-Healey arrangement. Healey's contract with BMC expires in 1971. He now occupies the chairmanship of Jensen Motors, Ltd. [see p. 16].

At any rate, by late 1949, Nash Motors was seriously considering bringing out a racy, quality, 2-seater sportster as a 1951 model. They needed something like this to increase showroom traffic for their dealers—to jazz up the Nash image, as it were.

The Nash-Healey came about through a chance meeting aboard ship between George W. Mason, then president of Nash-Kelvinator, and Donald Healey. Both were passengers on an ocean liner. The discussion naturally turned to the Nash sportster, and Mason agreed to let Healey set up a Silverstone chassis with the 3.8-liter Nash 6 and transmission. In honor of both co-creators, they decided to call the new car "Nash-Healey."

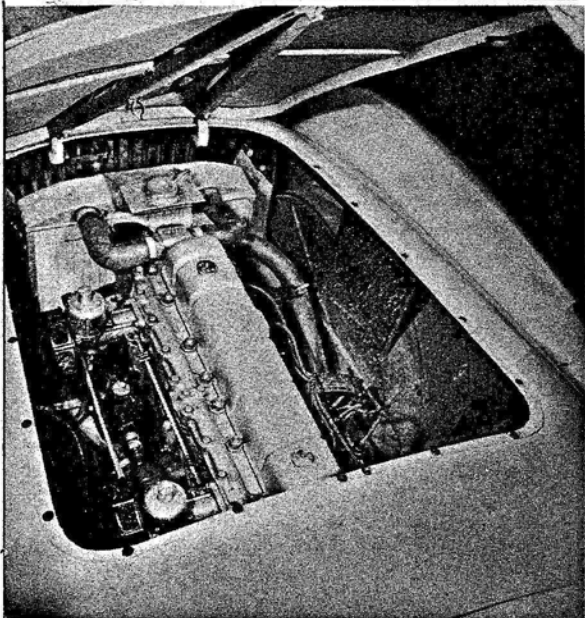
Mason and Healey agreed that the best test and the best publicity would come at the Le Mans Grand Prix of Endurance in France. Back in England, Donald Healey set about arranging the 234.8-cu.-in. Nash pushrod engine in his open-bodied Healey Silverstone. The powerplant remained essentially stock 1950 Ambassador except for a special aluminum head, special manifold, and twin S.U. carbs. Healey worked in their Warwick shops with typical perfectionism.

The 1950 Le Mans race began on June 24. Healey had one Nash-engined car ready in time and had also supervised the building of a Riley-engined Healey. The race started with 66 cars and finished with 29.

A 2.3-liter Ferrari took an early lead but soon fell out with a broken generator. The battery went dead and the engine couldn't be re-

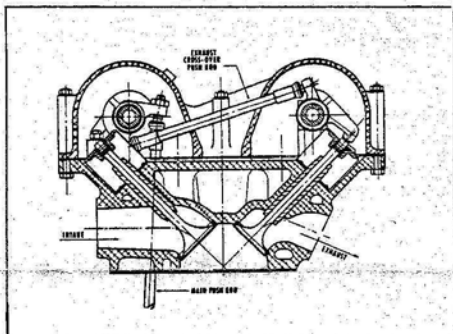
Mr. Kauffman is president of the Nash-Healey Car Club, RFD 2, Boyertown, Pa. 19512.





Nash-Healeys, both stock and race-prepared, used 7-main pushrod 6 with twin carburetors.

PHOTO: ROAD AND TRACK



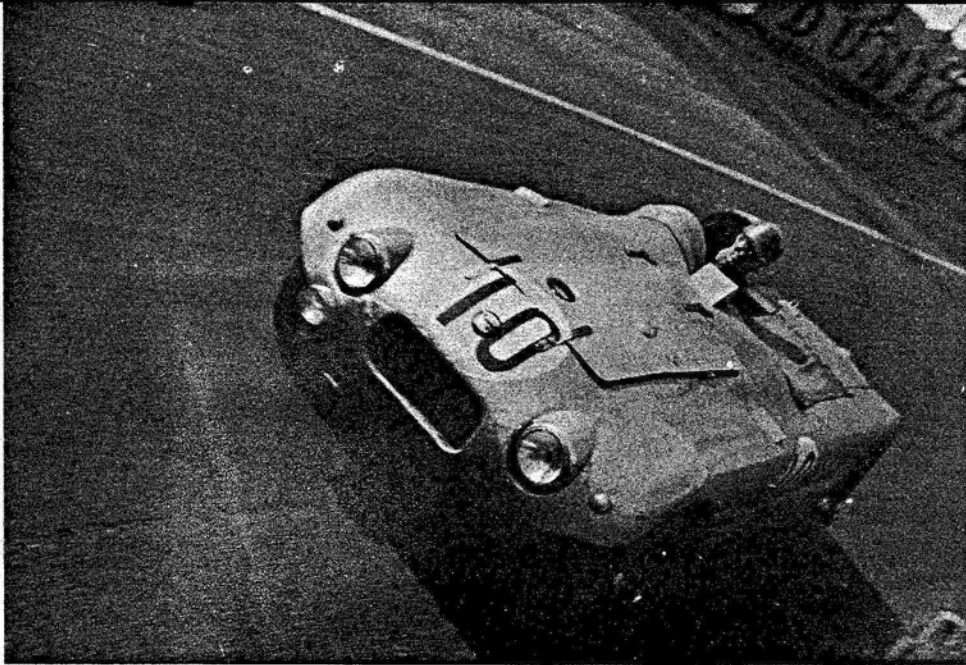
Since the Nash engine had such a restricted manifold-in-head system, Sampietro, the engineer, designed this beautiful hemi setup for racing, inconclusively tested it in 1953.

started. Rosier of France then led and eventually won in a French Talbot. Another Talbot stood second. A British Allard, despite losing all gears but high, was running third. The lonely Nash-Healey, with Tony Rolt and Duncan Hamilton driving, breezed along steadily in fourth spot, nipping hard at the heels of the crippled Allard. At one point, the Nash-Healey overtook the Allard, but holding third put too great a strain on the Nash drum brakes, and with less than 30 minutes left to go, the Allard recaptured third.

Yet in its first outing, the first Nash-Healey ever built finished Le Mans in fourth position. Not bad for a Yank-powered novice. This fine showing prompted Nash Motors to go ahead with introduction of the Nash-Healey road car.

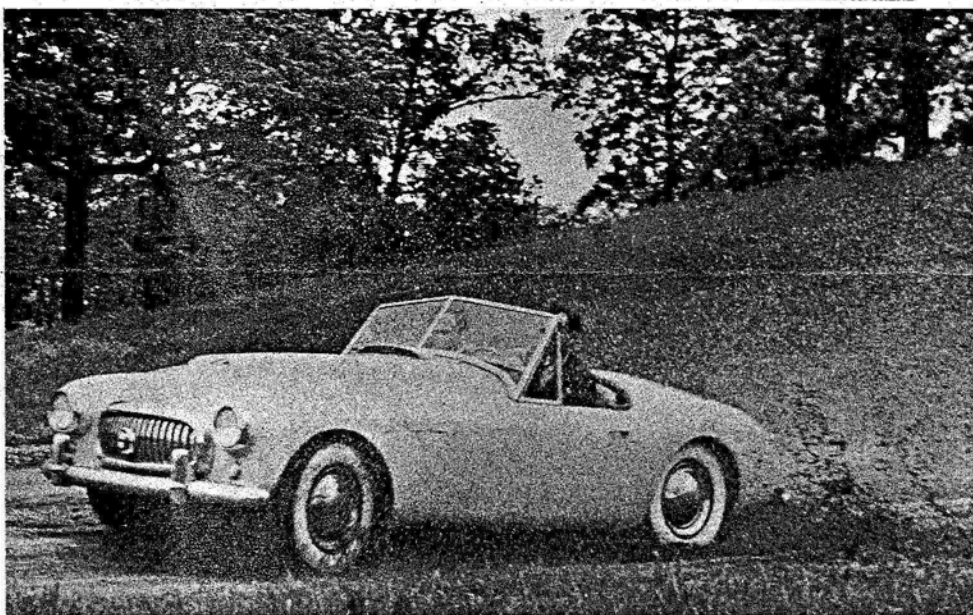
The production 1951 Nash-Healey made its debut in fall, 1950, at the Paris Auto Show. Only 36 cars were assembled and sold that year. The street-version Nash-Healey looked very little like the Le Mans race car. The body was made in England of *aluminum*, styled jointly by Nash and Healey. There was only one body style available—the roadster—and it was not (repeat, not) the Pinin Farina design. Farina's affiliation came later.

The 1951 Nash-Healey continued virtually



Faithful old #10, the most successful of the 4 Healey-managed race cars, placed 4th in 1950 and 3rd in 1952. That year it averaged 91.5 mph at over 16 mpg, giving a great pitstop advantage.

PHOTO: MOTOR TREND



Stock '51 N-H looked unlike Le Mans cars, was styled jointly by Nash and Donald Healey. Aluminum body was almost seamless, dinged easily, made repairs expensive, but looked gorgeous new.

PHOTO: BRITISH MOTOR



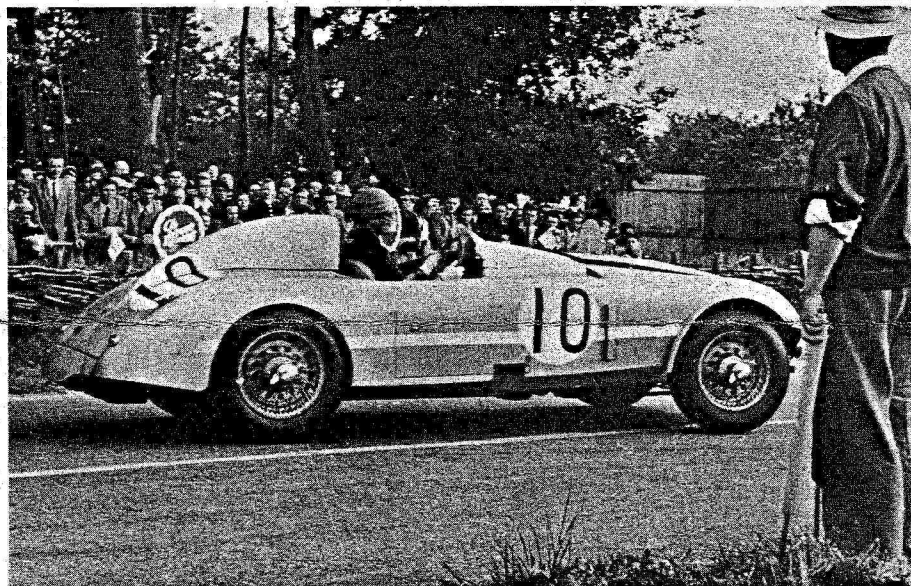
Nash-Healey #11 was probably fastest on team, but minor mechanical ills always seemed to beset it. Body and chassis were essentially modified Silverstone, an ungainly but successful design.





Gassing up—this car was driven by Veyron and Giraud-Cabantous in 1953, fitted with the Sampietro head. Output stood around 200 bhp, but car konked out early; another N-H placed 11th.

PHOTO: BRITISH MOTOR



The Rolt-Hamilton car that took 3rd place in 1952 also captured 1st in classification and won the Rudge Whitworth Biennial cup. From 1950-1952, 8 of top 10 finishers had 6-cylinder engines.

PHOTO: MOTOR TREND/MARSHALL SIMONSEN/IMAGE INTERNATIONAL



Streetable 1951 N-H used coil springs all around, trailing links up front, carried 16-gal. tank. Wheelbase was 102 in., and overdrive was standard.

## Nash-Healey at Le Mans

*continued*

unchanged until production was temporarily suspended in April. Outboard headlights, an oval Airflyte grille, split windshield with flat glass and, of course, the aluminum body distinguished that initial Nash-Healey (N-H). During the 1951 model year, a total of 104 N-H roadsters were built. Cost was \$4063 p.o.e.

Assembly proceeded like this: Nash sent the engine, transmission, and other essentials to the Healey works in England, where they were mated to the Healey chassis and body. Thus assembled, the car was shipped back to the States for final testing and sale.

Vital statistics for the 1951 model are these: 125-bhp; 7-main engine with the same goodies as used in Le Mans, 3-speed manual trans with overdrive, Healey trailing-link front suspension with coil springs all around. Standard equipment included leather interior, side curtains, adjustable steering column, full wheel covers, whitewalls, and the usual more minor items.

Nash Motors took surprisingly little advantage of the 1950 Le Mans publicity. Two possible reasons: 1) Very few Americans knew or cared about this European classic; 2) A fourth-place finish isn't first, and anything short of first isn't that much to brag about. Which isn't so, but it's how the average person sees it. Actually, even to finish is a real feat.

Along came the 1951 Le Mans and Nash-Healey again entered one car. The same drivers drove—Rolt and Hamilton—but this time Donald Healey decided to use a coupe body instead of the previous roadster.

For some unknown reason, the N-H wasn't on hand for practice trials the day before the race. There must have been some sort of last-minute hassling, because AUTOCAR reported that the N-H appeared only late that evening to let Hamilton have his first and only practice run.

After the traditional sprint start, two new C-Type Jaguars leaped to an early lead, with only a Cunningham and a Talbot really challenging. Stirling Moss' Jag was ahead when it tossed a rod. This put the Walker/Whitehead





Pinin Farina styled 1953-54 models, which many judge grosser than '51 N-H. 1953 car, though, won Italian International Concours d'Elegance.



Le Mans aftermath: Drivers Tony Rolt (bottle) and J.D. Hamilton, Paris Healey Agent Tom Kenny, and Boss Donald Healey relax together.



Car #10 was brought to U.S., put on display. Kauffman owns one Le Mans racer but can't be sure which because body is now too chewed up to tell.

### NASH-HEALEY COMPARATOR

Year	Bhp	Whb, ins.	O'all length	Tread fr/rear	Curb Wgt.	Production
1951	125	102	170.00	53/53	2400	104
1952	135	102	175.75	53/55	2500	150
1953*	140	108	180.50	53/55	2970	162
1954	140	108	180.00	53/55	2990	90

\*coupe; convertible same as 1952

Jaguar up front, but the action centered around the Nash-Healey and one of the Aston Martins. As the race neared completion, the question became, "Can Nash-Healey take Aston Martin?" The Aston led, but the Healey was gaining steadily, closing the gap going into the last lap, and for a minute there it looked like the Healey might catch up. But as the huge crowd got to its feet for the finish, the Nash-Healey's effort fell short by a mere eight seconds. This put the Jag in first, Talbots second and fourth, Astons third and fifth, and the Nash-Healey sixth overall. Two Ferraris came in eighth and ninth.

Both Nash and Healey were well pleased with both the 1950 and 1951 showings, and they planned bigger and better things for 1952. This planning paid off.

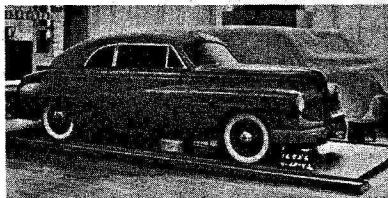
In 1952, the factory entered two cars at Le Mans—Car #10 driven by Tommy Wisdom and Leslie Johnson; Car #11 driven by two

*continued on page 52*

## NEXT ISSUE IN Special-Interest AutoS

### FORD FINDS

What the 1943-44-45 would have looked like if there were no WW-II. Actual photos!



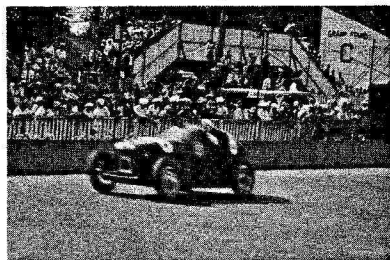
### DRIVERREPORTS:

- Supercharged Kaiser-Darrin.
- 1932 Chevy rdstr. & phaeton.
- Eldorado Brougham & Mark II.
- 1940 Hudson 8.



### STUDE AT INDY

They mopped up the brickyard during those early 1930s.



### EDSEL FORD'S SPEEDSTERS

Exclusive photos of factory hot rods that Edsel built for his own amusement.



For special subscription info, see the back cover.

## Nash-Healey at Le Mans

*continued from page 47*

Frenchmen, Veyron and Giraud-Cabantous. Healey also had a third car on hand for practice. Wisdom and Johnson were both experienced drivers, both having taken good finishes at previous Le Mans.

Some reports say Car #11 was actually the faster, but it went out relatively early with engine trouble. Briggs Cunningham was among those favored to win, as were the Mercedes, which eventually did. And although the Talbot, N-H, and Cunninghams put on good shows,



at the end it was 300-SL in first and second. At the end of the race, Donald Healey had this to say:

"This car (#10) had a trouble-free run throughout the race with the exception of a fractured exhaust pipe which cost us a little time to wire up in place. The car ran to a steady average as scheduled, its petrol consumption was approximately 16 mpg, and what amazed everyone was that it did not use one drop of oil or water. It is also interesting that both drivers reported they could easily overtake all other cars through corners, although such cars as Mercedes, Cunningham and Aston Martin were fitted with most elaborate and expensive independent rear ends."

Nash-Healey finished *third*, then, right behind the two Mercedes. Unbelievable? Yes indeed, especially considering that here was a car with a heavy American pushrod 6, almost stock, vying with the most exotic and costly machinery Europe could offer. A Chrysler-engined Cunningham finished fourth, some 80 miles behind the Nash-Healey.

In all, 1952 at Le Mans turned out to be the high point of the N-H's career. Not only did it finish third overall, it averaged 91.5 mph for the 24 hours, hitting 140 on the straights, garnering First in Classification (3001-5000cc), second in Rudge-Whitworth Biennial Cup for the best performance over two consecutive years, and winning the Motor Gold Challenge Cup. Never had such an underdog become so fashionable so quickly.

On this side of the Atlantic, though, Nash Motors continued with fairly ho-hum sales and publicity. For 1952, they did perform some radical changes in styling and production. Nash had entered an agreement with Pinin Farina to restyle their entire line, including the Nash-Healey. The car remained a roadster (no roll-up windows) but with a steel body this time, (aluminum hood and trunk lid, though). Headlights stood inside the grille, and the windshield was 1-piece, curved.

There were no Nash-Healeys built from April, 1951, to January, 1952. But for 1952, Nash engines and drivetrains were sent to England, where Healey added the frame and suspension; that done, he forwarded everything to Turin, Italy, where Farina added the body, then Far-

ina shipped the car back to the States. Thus it became a truly international effort and, if nothing else, darned confusing.

Sometime during 1952, Nash changed the N-H engine. Early in the model year, it was the same S.U.-carburetted 125-bhp mill as before. But later they switched to twin sidedraft Carter carbs and slightly more bore (252.6 cid as against the previous 234.8). This gave 135 bhp instead of 125, offsetting the slight increase in weight.

The first Farina-designed N-H was displayed at the Chicago Auto Show in February, 1952, and that year a total of 150 cars were built. The 1952 roadster sold for around \$5000, depending on location, but it's rumored that the Farina-bodied car cost Nash nearer \$9000 to produce. If true, that might be one reason Nash didn't plug the roadster harder.

In 1953, a new Farina styled Nash-Healey Le Mans hardtop took first prize in the Italian International Concours d'Elegance. The N-H was awarded a silver cup in the Foreign Cars Custom body class. Second prize went to a Rolls and third to a Cunningham.

By 1953, Donald Healey wanted out. He'd signed a contract with Austin, so while still temporarily bound to Nash, Healey spent most of his time on the new Austin-Healey, breaking 47 speed records at Bonneville with that car (among other things) and getting it off to a ripping start. At the 1953 Le Mans, too, Healey managed two Nash-Healey entries and two Austin-Healeys.

John Fitch was scheduled to drive one N-H at Le Mans for 1953, but he went over to Cunningham instead. That left Leslie Johnson and H.L. Hadley for Nash. As the gun popped, Johnson's N-H started in 27th position, with the second N-H entry starting 58th. The latter soon dropped out. The first car ran fine, though, moving up steadily, reaching 14th by the 12-hour mark. Actually, the Healey driven by Johnson and Hadley was running faster than #10 of 1952.

But this was Jaguar's and Cunningham's year. The Nash entry managed to finish 11th, a neither-here-nor-there position.

Even to finish the race, though, is recognized in automotive circles as a major accomplishment. Average speed for the 1953 Nash-Healey was 92.45 mph. The grueling strain of Le Mans—the pace that keeps both car and drivers going for 24 merciless hours—proved the rugged construction and stamina of the Nash engine for four years in a row. In 1953, only 25 of the 60 starters finished.

[*Editor's note:* In proofreading this article, Geoffrey Healey, Donald Healey's son, made the following marginal note at this point—"These Nash engines certainly were rugged. We always drove the cars from Warwick to Le Mans and, after the race, I used to drive to Italy for a holiday in the car. Very different at Le Mans today."]

There were no factory-backed Nash racing cars for 1954. The only major change in the line was to add a hardtop coupe in 1953. Otherwise, N-H styling and engineering remained constant. In all, a total of 506 Nash-Healeys were built from December, 1950, through August, 1954.

As a postscript, I feel I should add a few "ifs," useless as they might be. If Donald Healey hadn't gone to Austin in 1953, N-H might have done much better at Le Mans—perhaps even won that year. And if Rolt and Hamilton hadn't switched rides, the 1953 Le Mans overall win might have been for Nash instead of for Jaguar. Ah well. □



NASH-HEALEY CAR CLUB

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 7, 1983

BALANCE - CHECKING - May 15, 1982 \$ 340.59

RECEIPTS:

Membership Dues	\$1306.25	
Sale of Back Issues of Newsletters	35.25	
T-Shirt Sales	87.50	
4" Jacket Patch Sales	76.00	
Contribution to Club from non-member	25.00	
1982 Butler Eastern Meet	8.00	
1983 National Meet	<u>129.00</u>	<u>1667.00</u>

TOTAL RECEIPTS AND BALANCE \$2007.59

DISBURSEMENTS:

Postage	\$ 308.96	
Stationery & Envelopes	27.56	
Typewriter Ribbons & Address Labels	<u>18.61</u>	
T-Shirt Purchases	25.50	
4" Embroidered Jacket Patch Purchases	304.38	
Printing of Newsletters #8 thru 13 & #16 (Donated by Ray & Joanne Soles)	0.00	
Printing of #15 Newsletter	59.63	
N.H.C.C. 1983 National Meet paid to N.C.C.A.	109.00	
N.H.C.C. 11/82 California Meet	25.00	
Placques for Donald Healey & Paul Shaw (for 1983 National Meet)	<u>67.84</u>	<u>946.48</u>

BALANCE - CHECKING - July 7, 1983 \$1061.11

BALANCE - SAVINGS - May 15, 1982 \$ 253.42

INTEREST 13.63

BALANCE - SAVINGS - July 7, 1983 \$ 267.05

Mary A. Soles  
Secretary/Treasurer

#### TECHNICAL TIP - CHASSIS CARE

Article taken from Vol. 6 No. 2 Issue of  
old Nash-Healey Car Club Magazine 3/77

Check your car! The front suspension puts a streaking stress in the chassis rails. Cracks develop behind the front suspension. Worst yet is that dirt and grease tend to hide them. Take some time and scrape away the dirt. Check the outside of the frame rail up to 6" behind the suspension attaching points; check the radiator mounting holes - sometimes the cracks run from them. I had this problem and several other Club members have found the same trouble. You may have, and not know it. Check your car.

#### CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE: Rare Nash-Healey Parts Catalog (F-2404 Rev. 54-2). Quality duplicate of original, 59 pages. Covers model #'s 25160, 25260, 25360. (Original face cover was not perfect but does not effect any vital information!) \$10 a copy includes shipping. David Simon - 19641 Victory Blvd. - Reseda, CA 91335.

WANT: to replace all rubber gaskets around doors and windshield; new chrome for front windshield & back windows; new handle for trunk; would like to have new steering wheel all for 1954 coupe. Car is all original so would like to have all original parts. If you can help would appreciate any information Eugene W. Bourne - Rt 5 Box 27 - Deerfield Acres - Bristol, TN 37620 (615)878-5926.

FOR SALE: by Edward Moore - P.O. Box 357 Bellingham, MASS 02019 (617)966-1433 home or (617)966-9731 business:

- (1) Heavy Duty Blue Streak Points - \$8.70
- (2) Heavy Duty Blue Streak Condenser - \$3.35
- (3) Distributor Cap - \$8.45
- (4) Distributor Rotor - \$2.85
- (5) Carburetor Kits for Carter "YH" Sidedraft \$15.00 each
- (6) Set of six spark Plug cover boots - \$6.50
- (7) Front Air Deflector, bolts to bumper on Farina model - \$15.00
- (8) Aluminum Jack Hole Plugs for Farina model, unpolished - \$3.00 each

NOTE: Please add 10% for shipping.

#### 4" NASH-HEALEY CAR CLUB JACKET PATCH

Support your Club and buy a 4" Nash-Healey Car Club Embroidered Jacket patch. The emblem is outlined in red and set on a white background. The border is also red. The background behind Nash-Healey is dark brown and the words Car Club are also dark brown. The price is \$3.00 for one or if you buy two or more the price is only \$2.50 each. Order today from Joanne M. Soles, Editor - Nash-Healey News - 530 Edgewood Ave. - Trafford, PA 15085. Make check or money order payable to the NASH-HEALEY CAR CLUB.

#### EDITORS' COMMENTS ON TRIP TO KENOSHA, WI

On Wednesday, July 13, we left our home in Trafford, PA to start the long trip to the 1983 National Meet in Kenosha, WI. We drove our 1954 Nash-Healey coupe. Ray & Mary Soles also left with us in their 1953 roadster. We stopped in Auburn, Ind. on the first day of the trip to tour the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Car Museum. Talk about beautiful cars! I'm sorry to say there wasn't a Nash-Healey or a Nash in the museum. What a shame!!

The next day we got in our car to leave the motel and it wouldn't start, bad starter switch. Well, this is always the fun part of the trip, anticipating breaking down, running out of gas, overheating, etc., etc., etc..... Ray Soles, Sr. and I were the push-starters and GUESS who was the driver! Ray said once the car started we weren't going to stop until we arrived in Kenosha but after driving on Route 294 on the outskirts of Chicago we either had to stop to regroup or collapse of frustration due to the Chicago drivers. We arrived in Kenosha about 1:30 P.M. in fairly good condition.

The next day, Friday July 15, I stayed at the Midway Lodge most of the day to register the members of our Club arriving early. Ray went on the AMC tour and found it very interesting. I was going to go on the tour also but when I found out it was going to be 110-126° in the plant I graciously gave my ticket to my father-in-law.

After the AMC tour we had a brief membership meeting. I will give a thorough report on who attended the meet, minutes of the meeting, the banquet & awards in the next issue of the newsletter. By the way, after "stealing" a starter switch we were able to make the needed repair to our Nash-Healey.



AMH-69-640  
NASH-HEALEY FINISHED  
3RD AT LE MANS 1952

## THE NASH HEALEY

COURTESY NASH KELVINATOR CORPORATION

CLASS WINNER IN THE  
GRAND PRIX D'ENDURANCE  
LE MANS FRANCE

SPEED 91.5 MPH FOR  
2190 MILES IN 24 HOURS.  
TOP SPEED 140 MPH

