

470 So. Hudson
Pasadena, California
March 9, 1958

Mr. Frederic Celler
P. O. Box 413
Cortland, New York

Dear Mr. Celler:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Nash-Healey owners association. We who are interested certainly appreciate your initiative in this matter.

I have never belonged to an auto club except for one years membership in a sports car club in Denver, Colorado. I found these people to be interested in racing and wrecking--racing the cars and wrecking them in the process either by abuse or by collision. Besides I was not well accepted since I had a car noone else had.

I am immediately concerned with maintaining my Nash-Healey in excellent condition and I'm afraid that most of my suggestions for club activities revolve around these problems.

I noted that you included Mr. Chakmakian, Chief Engineer, American Motors Corporation, in your mailing list. If Mr. Chakmakian is at all interested, I believe that he can be of great help to all of us. I know that I have earned a great respect for the Nash engine(my car has a 6) and will certainly buy a Nash car when I get a second car.

My particular interests are as follows:

1. Could we obtain maintenance manuals from American Motors? I have a 1952 convertible and do not have a manual. Most of the Nash dealers, while they maintain excellent repair facilities, do not know the Nash-Healey and are really not much help in repair and maintenance. I have had my work in California done at a private garage where one of the mechanics knows the Healey; His father-in-law owns one. He happens to have a service manual and is personally interested in my car. When I leave Pasadena next year I shudder to think of the agony of finding another man who I can trust to work on the car. A 1952 Manual would help me.

2. Repainting is one of the problems I will face in the next year or so. Following a small rear end collision which damaged the stern of my car I had it repainted at a Nash dealer in Denver. I am getting some blistering and find that the paint scratches thru to the undercoating easily. Some of the body is aluminum, exactly which parts I do not know, and requires special paint treatment. Should I have all the paint removed to the metal and start over? If so should the aluminum parts be specially treated to hold the paint on?

3. My windshield frame has started to rust in Denver. In California, (noted for brown chrome) the rusting has been speeded. What should I do? Remove the windshield frame and take it to a plating shop or try to replace it?

4. I do not have the original hubs on my car and would like to have them. Can I buy a set thru American Motors?

5. How should that stress rod beneath the transmission be adjusted and does it have any effect on the clutch action?

6. My top will need replacement in about a year. Should I have a new top made at a custom top shop or can I get one thru American Motors?

7. Could American Motors provide us with a history of the Nash-Healey, how it was developed, how many were made, what were its racing achievements, construction details, etc.?

As you can see many of my questions can be answered by other owners or by Mr. Chakmakian. I believe that initially a question sheet can be published followed by an answer sheet with answers provided by members and American Motors. The question sheet would be a listing of inquiries made by the members.

The suggestion that we exchange information about modifications was made. I do not want to modify my car intending to keep it as much in original condition as possible. However, I would be interested in the work others have done on their cars. Perhaps then I would want to modify.

I have two suggestions for improving the car and both concern the accelerator. My car has a cable control from pedal to the lever between the SU carbs. The cable was stiff and did not allow for accuracy in speed control. I greased the cable and this did not help much. In desperation I purchased a new cable and housing from American Motors, had the housing cut in the middle and sweated a grease fitting in the cut out space. Now I can have it easily greased at regular lube times and have an adequate control. I understand others have replaced the cable with rods. I would like to know the details of this conversion.

The other difficulty I had was with the two pins that held the accelerator pedal rod in the casting that pulls the cable. These pins bent and wore and the resulting play was annoying. I took them out and after a bit of fitting found that 3/32 inch drill rod mated the holes perfectly. Of course the holes in my accelerator may have been worn oversize. Drill rod is available in many sizes and surely one of the sizes will fit in any car. Drill rod is tough and my current set

has lasted over two years. I cut a length (about 1½ inch) of rod and bend a short head on it before inserting. This keeps it from dropping thru and makes it easy to remove.

Thanks again for your interest. If I can be of any help, please let me know. Surely we should pay a little dues and I am certainly willing to do so.

Very truly yours,

J. Murray Smith
J. Murray Smith

Alums, hood & near desk