

The Preservationist

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The Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica at Elkhart Lake



The classic Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica

The Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica made its' first appearance in Elkhart Lake in the hands of Larry Kulok at the inaugural 1950 road races. Kulok, a friend of Jim Kimberly's, lived in New York and had somehow gotten the impression that the event was open to all regions. On arrival Kulok was not greeted with open arms by the race committee since the races were clearly sanctioned as a Regional Event open only to the Chicago and Milwaukee Regions.

After considerable discussion, it was decided that Kulok could take a separate demonstration lap but would not be allowed to participate in the races themselves. By this means Elkhart Lake race fans were introduced to one of the most unique and storied sports cars of the early post war era.

The Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica had its roots securely tied to the British car tradition but was as much a BMW as it was

a Frazer Nash automobile. (*The firm had no connection to American car companies of the same names.*) Archibald Frazer-Nash built unique multi-chain drive vehicles from 1910 until 1927 when a downturn in the business coincided with a serious illness for Frazer-Nash and the Company went into receivership. The Company was purchased by H. J. ("Aldy") Aldington and emerged as AFN Limited in 1929. AFN continued to produce chain-drive Frazer Nash cars, in a wide variety of models, until production ceased in 1939.

While racing and touring in Europe in 1934, Aldington recognized the merit of BMW's sport/touring cars and arranged for AFN to become the British importer and assembler of BMW cars selling them under the Frazer Nash-BMW marque. Two years later, in 1936, BMW introduced the extremely successful Model 328 that would become famous for its advanced design and performance.

Seeking greater recognition, the BMW Factory Team entered four 328s with special aerodynamic aluminum bodies in the 1940 Mille Miglia. The cars swept the 2.0-liter class and finished an impressive 8th, 10th, 11th and 12th overall but the onset of the WWII soon brought 328 model production to a standstill.

Immediately after the cessation of hostilities, Aldington rescued one of the factory-team BMW "Mille Miglia" sports-racing cars, from the bombed out BMW factory and brought it to England disguised as his personal 328. He then hired Fritz Fiedler, the original 328 designer, to update the 328 design for intended production by

AFN. The design for the inline, 6 cylinder BMW engine, to which AFN held the rights in England, was licensed to Bristol Aeroplane Company. Intending to diversify from airplane manufacturing into automobiles, Bristol tooled up for the production of the engine that was known thereafter as "Bristol". The engine was a rather tall and somewhat heavy inline, 6 cylinder, 12 OHV design fed by triple Solex carburetors that produced approximately 120 bhp at 5000 rpm and had proven to be very reliable in its pre-war applications. Bristol also agreed to supply AFN with other mechanical parts for Aldington's planned line of new Frazer Nash sports cars.



The BMW Factory Team and the special Mille Miglia cars in 1940.

Mean while. AFN set about tooling the chassis and car bodies around the updated BMW chassis intending to blend the iconic style of pre-war sports cars with the newest available technology. The result was little short of breath taking. Flanked on all four corners with beautifully rounded cycle fenders, the car started out with an incredibly narrow and beautifully sculpted nose barely wide enough to house the car's radiator. The chrome grill accented the character and design of the narrow nose that gave access to the entire front suspension for close inspection

The tubular main body and subsidiary framework was welded to the chassis offering superior strength and rigidity. Completed with the 6-cylinder Bristol engine, the car was introduced to the automotive world in 1948. First named the "High Speed", the name was changed to "Competition" in 1949 when the car was entered in the 24 hours of Le Mans race of that year where it finished third overall. To capitalize on the success at Le Mans, AFN again changed the model name to Le Mans Replica. The car was not a replica, small "r", but was a continuation of the same model under a new name. AFN never produced cars in large volume and only 34 models of this type were ever produced.

The Le Mans next appeared in Elkhart Lake in 1951 in the hands of Charles "Ted" Boynton for whom "Ted's Turn" is named.



Charles "Ted" Boynton seated at the wheel of his Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica in 1951.

Ted had abandoned his supercharged MG-TC in which he won the over 1500cc novice race in 1950 for the Le Mans Replica and was hoping for another successful outing. Such was not to be the case however and

Ted finished 8th overall and 2nd in class losing out to Stephen Lansing in a Ferrari 166.

In 1952 Larry Kulok who, sharing the wheel of a J. S. Donaldson owned Le Mans Replica with Harry Grey, had won the 12 Hours of Sebring endurance race in March, returned to Elkhart Lake. He entered his own Replica in both the Sheldon Cup Race and the Elkhart Lake Cup Race as did Ted Boynton, both preparing for a head to head dual of the classic cars. Kulok got the better of the dual in the Sheldon Cup Race but only managed to finish 6th overall and 2nd in class losing out to the Ferrari 212 Export driven by Phil Walters. Boynton finished 8th overall and 3rd in class. During the cool down lap at the end of the race Boynton suffered a momentary lapse in concentration on CTH P near the Hayssen Chapel and ended up in Dickens Ditch bending the front torsion bars on the car preventing him from competing in the next day's Elkhart Lake Cup Race. Kulok also ran out of luck in the Elkhart Lake Cup Race when his car that had been pushed to the limit in the Sheldon Cup Race, broke down on lap five putting him out of the race.

Not nearly as well known as British car makers like MG, Jaguar or Allard, Frazer Nash and the Le Mans Replica played a significant role in the history of open road racing in Elkhart. The cars appeared in all three years and their iconic beauty was admired by everyone who saw them.

According to the Frazer Nash Car Club nearly all of the post war cars still exist and appear in car shows, vintage races and vintage car collections around the world.

Spring Dinner Recalls Memories of Meadowdale – Another Lost Track

On Thursday, May 16th Siebkens once again overflowed with the combined energy of historic racing fans as 80 plus members and friends of HRC gathered on a cool, clear evening for the Spring Dinner/Social.



HRC members enjoying the social hour. Left to right; Jon Rost, Steve Knauf and HRC President John Calhoun with wife Karen.

Following the dinner, the program was presented by the Meadowdale International Raceway Preservation Association (MIRPA). Tom Stephani, a long-time friend of HRC, presided and told the story of the



Tom Stephani

track, its status now as a park and of MIRPA's efforts to preserve its history and legacy. MIRPA President, Linda Daro, and Director, Don Devine, also represented the Association.

Meadowdale was a purpose-built race track in Carpentersville, Illinois built by real

estate developer Leonard Besinger to attract future home buyers. After visiting tracks in America (including Road America) and Europe in 1957, he designed a circuit that he felt combined the best of both worlds. The raceway opened in September 1958 hosted races of all types for eleven years before closing in 1969.

During the Social Hour before dinner those present who had raced at Meadowdale posed for a group photo.



The Meadowdale racers left to right: Jeff Miller, Augie Pabst, Carl Jensen, Don Devine, Bob Birmingham, Dick Eisenman and Bill Wuesthoff

Jim Dentici missed the photo, but made up for it with an entertaining description of what it was like when as a teenager he raced at Meadowdale, including the fast and rough high-banked Monza Wall, in go-carts.

A highlight of the evening was a film from the 1960 US Road Racing Championship race at Meadowdale won by the Meister Brauser Team and the famous Scarab MKII.

I am sure that most of us remember the Meister Brauser Team from the late 50s and early 60s but for three of the attendees at the dinner the film brought back special memories... guest Don Divine and members

Bill Wuesthoff and Augie Pabst (winner of the 1960 Meadowdale race) had each driven Scarabs MKII's for the Meister Brauser Team, at Meadowdale, during their racing careers.

July Dinner Social to Feature Can-Am Program

The July Dinner Social will be held at **Victorian Village** on Wednesday, July 17th preceding the summer vintage race weekend at Road America. Time, menu and program details will be announced shortly but be sure to get your reservation in early, as the event will almost certainly be a sellout.

Dan Davis, publisher of Victory Lane Magazine and the organizer of The Historic Can-Am Association (HCAA) for Victory Lane Historic Can-Am events, is putting together a Can Am based program that is expected to be the highlight of the year.

While the original Can-Am is gone, the cars are back at the track under the auspices of



HCAA for Victory Lane Historic Can-Am events. Formed in 1987, HCAA maintains a registry of cars, crews and drivers that participated in the original and historic Can-Am series and has organized Historic Can-Am Invitational events for period correct cars since 1990.

There was no more exciting racing series than the original Can-Am and the unbridled roar of the huge Can-Am engines as they charged out of Turn 5 and up the hill at Road America still sends shivers up and down our spines.

This program is bound to be one of HRC's most memorable and we look forward to seeing you there.

Please note the change from the usual Thursday July 17th to
Wednesday July 18th