

The Preservationist

The Member Newsletter of the Elkhart Lake Historic Race Circuits Preservation Society

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A Message from the Chairman

2015 was another active year for HRC and I want to thank everyone who made contributions to the Preservation Society and supported preservation of the Historic Race Circuits. Your participation is critical to our success.

On the preservation front, HRC continued to monitor actions and proposed actions by Sheboygan County and the Village of Elkhart Lake and their possible effects on the characteristics of the roads and streets that comprise the historic race circuits. We maintain close relations with the Wisconsin State Historical Society and are working to build a positive and cooperative relationship with the Sheboygan County Highway Department. Each year we meet with Commissioner Greg Schnell to review compliance with the Resource Management Plan and to review plans that may affect the Historic Circuits. Regular liaison is also maintained with the Village of Elkhart Lake. I am glad to report that no problems were encountered during the year.

On the social side, Society members enjoyed three entertaining and educational dinner events. At the May event held at Siebkens, Bob Birmingham presented highlights, of his personal recollections of Wisconsin motorsports during the 1950s and '60s. The July event held at the Victorian Village Resort, featured Gerry Bledsoe, the coordinator for US participants in the modern Carrera, who covered the parallels between the classic 1950s Mexican open road race, La Carrera Panamericana, and the historic open road races held in Elkhart Lake. Herschel McGriff, winner of the first Carrera in 1950 and NASCAR legend was our special guest. The September event at Siebkens honored the 50th Anniversary of the opening of Road America. The event was highlighted by a film featuring George Tilp and his racing team that owned and entered the Ferrari 750 Monza that Phil Hill drove to victory in 1955, in the first-ever feature race at Road America.

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During 2015 we continued to work with the Elkhart Lake Tourism Commission to communicate the important role of the Historic Open Road Races in the history of Elkhart Lake and to educate those too young to have known of their existence. Presentations were made to groups of travel writers from all parts of North America. Over the years these presentations and related tours have resulted in articles promoting Elkhart Lake as a tourist destination and the role of the Historic Race Circuits in Village history that has reached tens of thousands of readers around the world. In addition working in cooperation with Road America, HRC participated in the Sheboygan County Museum's exhibition celebrating road racing history in the County viewed by hundreds of visitors.

Looking ahead to 2016 HRC will continue to promote awareness of the roll the historic circuits played in the Village history and will, of course, continue to monitor any proposed changes in the roads that comprise the Historic Circuits and for compliance with the Resource Management Plan*.

John Calhoun
2016 HRC Chairman

Dinner Events will again be held in conjunction with the vintage race weekends and are currently in the planning stages. Announcements will be mailed for each event when plans are confirmed. In addition, we will continue to evaluate ways to provide greater benefits to our membership.

The Membership program established in 2015 is carried forward to 2016. A brief recap has been included at the end of this newsletter for everyone's information. Dinner Event pricing will continue to be based on actual cost and membership discounts for dinners and HRC logo merchandise will be unchanged.

HRC has become an important community and motorsport preservation organization. Again, we sincerely thank you for your support and if you have comments or suggestions for how HRC can better accomplish its mission or better serve its members, or if you would like to become more involved in HRC matters we will be glad to hear from you. We look forward to seeing you at HRC events in 2016.

**The Plan, signed in March of 2010, defines actions required and prohibited by the Sheboygan County Highway Department that may affect the Historic Circuits. The plan was mandated by the Wisconsin State Historical Society after the highway department by its actions in 2007, was found to have violated Wisconsin state law regulating the preservation of historic properties listed on the National Register.*

10th Anniversary of the Listing on the National Register of Historic Places

February 17th will mark the tenth Anniversary of the listing of the Historic Race Circuits on the National Register of Historic Places, an important milestone in the eight year struggle to preserve the Elkhart Lake Open Road Race Circuits. Lest we forget, the following is a brief recap of the struggle that began in 2002.

In January of 2002 the Highway Department announced plans to reconstruct the CTH A portion of the Historic Race Circuits. Protests of the concerned citizens and the HRC Founders seemed to fall on deaf ears and the balance of power seemed tilted in favor of the Highway Department. Seemingly indifferent to the citizen protests, the Highway Department began tree removal in the right-of-way and prepared to proceed with its plans. More leverage was needed if the circuits were to be preserved.

In the spring of 2004 Road America suggested that since the County was planning to use Federal highway funds to pay for the project, the project would fall under the provisions of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act. Early in 2004, acting for HRC, Road America filed a formal request with the Wisconsin

State Historical Society for a Determination of Eligibility for preservation of the Historic Circuits under the Act. In July 2004, the historic circuits were declared eligible for preservation and the balance of power began to swing in favor of the preservation movement.

To circumvent the provisions of the Act, the Highway Department withdrew its request for Federal Funds. This meant that they could proceed with their plans if they used local County or State funds. However, the Founders knew that if the Circuits could be listed on the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places they would gain a new measure of protection under Wisconsin law.



Phil Hill, John Fitch and Augie Pabst unveil the State Historical marker commemorating the listing of the Historic Circuits on the National Register.

In the spring of 2005 the HRC Founders funded the nomination of the Historic Circuits to the State Historical Register where they were listed on September 23rd, 2005. The State submitted the Circuits for listing on the National Register and on February 17th 2006 the Circuits were added to the National Register of Historic Places, perhaps the most significant event in the struggle to preserve the historic Elkhart Lake Open Road Race Circuits for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

Remembering Donald Healey and His Contributions to the Sports Car History

Donald Healey is probably best known as the designer of the Austin-Healey 100 and 3000 sports cars but he was a designer of great talent and made many contributions to the automotive world prior to his creation of the car for which he is best known.



Donald Mitchell Healey, CBE

Healey was born in 1898 in Cornwall, England. From an early age he was interested in things mechanical, aircraft in particular and in 1914, at the age of 16, was apprenticed to the Sopwith Aviation Company. When WWI began he volunteered for the Royal Flying Corp and flew bombers until he was invalided out in 1917.

Following the war, Healey developed a love for sports car rallying. He entered every rally he could and success soon followed. He won the Bournemouth Rally in 1928, and so encouraged, entered the 1929 Monte Carlo Rally. On his first try, he lost his way on the road from France to Monaco, and was disqualified. He was back for another attempt in 1930 finishing seventh overall. Just one year later, he won the 1931 Monte Carlo, hands-down.

In 1933, Healey got his start in the design and improvement of British cars. He went to work for Victor Riley, owner of the Riley car company, managing his rally teams. The team would go on to

victory in the Alpine Rally of the same year.

Healey eventually joined Triumph as the company's "Experimental Manager". One of his more interesting contributions at Triumph came in 1934 with the development of the Dolomite

Straight 8. Healey convinced the management at Triumph that they needed a big engine racing car, one that could compete with the likes of the Alfa Romeo 8C. Given the green light, the resulting car closely copied the Alfa but on a slightly reduced scale.

Only 3 cars were built but one of the cars was entered in the 1935 Monte Carlo Rally to be driven by Donald Healey himself. Unfortunately, the car was withdrawn after a collision with a railway train on a level crossing in Denmark. Healey was not injured.



The Triumph Dolomite Straight 8.

While the cars themselves did not have a major impact on Triumph racing history, they spawned the Dolomite

name used on many other Triumph models in future years.

While still at Triumph, Healey was making plans to build his own motor cars. His ultimate goal was to build a

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sports car with excellent handling, capable of speeds greater than 100 mph. Following WWII, he managed to scrape up £20,000 and formed the Donald Healey Motor Company.

His first (and Britain's first after the war car) was the Westland roadster, with a 2.4-liter four cylinder overhead twin-cam engine sourced from Riley. Tested



The Westland roadster.

by *Motor* magazine in 1946, the Westland Roadster turned out to be the fastest car they'd ever evaluated, with a top speed of 106.56 mph. Favorable press pushed Healey's little company along, allowing Healey to purchase a larger facility and produce a family of hand built tourers and sedans that included the Elliott and Tickford saloons and the Abbott drophead coupe. Riley provided all the engines, a fact that Healey never forgot later commenting, "I couldn't have built those cars except for my friendship with Victor Riley,"

For a period of time the Elliot saloon was the world's fastest four passenger production sedan. Benefiting from a



The Healey Elliot Saloon.

quite aerodynamic body design for its time, an Elliot reached 110 mph on the Jabbeke Stretch at the Belgium race course making it into a popular rally car of the era.

The Company's first true sports car was the Healey Silverstone named after

Britain's then new Silverstone Grand Prix track.



Artistic multiple views of the Healey Silverstone.

Healey again used Riley's race proven 2.4 liter engine and a welded tub chassis with his own design for the trailing arm independent front suspension. The lightweight body was crafted in aluminum featuring cycle fenders and closely spaced headlamps mounted behind the radiator grill. An unusual feature was the spare wheel protruding from its compartment in the tail that doubled as a rear bumper.

Healey created two generations of the Silverstone. The first generation was known as the D-Type and the second, the E-Type, improving on the D-Type by making the car a bit wider. The lightweight E-Type chassis experienced great success on the race track, especially in club events. The wider E-Type's comfortable interior made driving a pleasure.

As a dual-purpose 'race-and-ride' sports car, the Silverstone was designed to be light, simple, and functional. Because they were assembled mostly by hand, Silverstone's were expensive but in performance they were more than a match for most rivals of the time. Only 105 of these rare sports cars were built.

Elkhart Lake sports car lovers first encountered the Healey Silverstone in the 1950 SCCA open road races. Jim Kimberley acquired one in November of 1949, believed to be either the first or second to be imported to North America. Kimberly, always a generous and accommodating man, brought the car to Elkhart Lake for others to drive as by then he had acquired his Ferrari 166MM.



Sally Chapin on behind the wheel of Kimberly's Healey Silverstone at the start of the 1950 Ladies Race

Sally Chapin drove the Silverstone to first place in the Ladies race and Fred Wacker Jr. drove the car to second place in the main event.

Healey recognize the potential of the American market before his British competitors and came to the United States in 1949 to negotiate the North American distribution rights for the Silverstone. He returned in 1950 hoping to gain access to Cadillac's overhead valve V8 engine used in the famous Cadillac Allards, for use in the Silverstone. General Motors turned him down but on the return trip aboard the *Queen Elizabeth* he met George Mason, president of Nash Kelvinator, and the two formed a close friendship. Healey wanted more access to the American Market and Mason wanted a flagship sports car to sell in his Nash dealerships.

A deal was struck over dinner. Healey would design and build a comfortable sports car aimed squarely at the American market and Nash would supply their 3.8-liter OHV straight-six

engines, gearboxes and final drives for the car. Called the Nash-Healey, the car was introduced in 1957 and sold in Nash dealerships. Being hand built "in place" without the benefit of labor saving assembly line techniques, the car's final price was nearly double that of its competitors and it failed to catch the fancy of American car buyers. Healey developed a light weight version that competed successfully at Le Mans but failure in the American market spelled the end of the Nash Healey by 1954. A total of just 520 were built including the race cars and prototypes.

In the early 1950s, Healey was fortunately working on an alternative lower-cost 100 mph sports car. The design featured a four cylinder engine from the Austin A90 Atlantic and a body crafted by Jensen Motors. It was called the Healey Hundred and was shown at the 1952 London Motor Show.



Austin-Healey 100 introduced in 1952.

More than 3,000 orders were placed at the show, which attracted the attention of BMC's chairman and managing director, Leonard Lord. A deal was quickly struck resulting in the transfer of the rights to the Healey Hundred to BMC and a 20-year contract for Healey to develop new BMC designs and special

products specifically for competition. Before the car even left the show, new "Austin-Healey" badges were minted and installed.

The famed Austin-Healey was manufactured from 1952 to 1967, a run of fifteen years. Over time the four cylinder 100 engine was replaced with BMC's proven straight six cylinder engine and the design underwent a series of upgrades first to the 100-6 and then to the 3000 Mark I, II and III along the way acquiring more power, disc brakes and roll up windows among other improvements. By 1967, over 70,000 "big Healeys" had been sold, mostly to the burgeoning American market.

Note: In 1956, Healey himself drove a streamlined and much modified 100 car with a supercharged six-cylinder engine to a two-way average speed of 203.11 at the Bonneville Salt Flats, becoming only the 24th man to break the 200 mph barrier.

While the big Healey got all the attention, it was the littlest Healey, the Donald Healey designed Austin-Healey



The fabled Austin Healey "bug eyed" Sprite.

Note: Healey felt that later attempts by BMC to upgrade the sprite "simply ruined the whole thing".

Healey's arrangement with BMC ended in 1967 when the Austin-Healey was discontinued. With the demise of the

Austin-Healey, Kjell Qvale, the largest Austin-Healey car dealer in the U.S., needed to find a replacement and encouraged Healey to work with Jensen Motors to build a new sports car that could replace the big Healey's. Healey and Jensen were interested and Qvale agreed to provide the financing. He would become a major shareholder in Jensen make Donald Healey Chairman.

The goal was to design a car that would fit into the sports car market between the Triumph TR3 and the Jaguar E-Type. It would be called the Jensen-Healey and Healey's son, Geoffrey, would lead the design team. The engines were provided by Lotus using the company's new two liter, 16 valve, dual overhead cam, all-alloy engine. The car was introduced in 1972 and by 1976 it had become the best selling Jensen of all times with 10,503 being produced.



In 1974 Jensen began to experience financial difficulties. The 1973 oil crisis greatly damaging the sales of Jensen's big V8 Interceptor and the Jensen-Healey GT was rushed to market too quickly incurring massive labor over expenses. By 1975, faced with striking workers, multiple component shortages and runaway inflation, Jensen Motors was forced to liquidate closing their doors for good in May 1976.

At the age of 78, following the demise of Jensen Motors, Healey retired to a quiet life in his beloved Cornwall countryside. His service to the British automobile industry would forever leave a lasting mark in British history; a service that was recognized when Queen Elizabeth II named Healey a Commander of the

Order of the British Empire (CBE). Donald Healey passed away in 1988 at the age of 89. In 1996 he was posthumously inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in Talladega, Alabama and in 2004 he was inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame in Dearborn, Michigan.

2016 Membership Program Summary

Annual Memberships

Individual Membership

A membership for one person

Available for \$30

Spousal Membership

A membership for an individual and his or her spouse

Available for \$50

Premium Annual Memberships

Supporting Membership

A membership featuring preferred seating at Dinner Events

May include a spouse if listed on the application

Available for \$100

Patron Membership

A membership that includes preferred seating at Dinner Events. First time patrons receive a limited edition print of "The Last Race" autographed by John Fitch and an HRC logo polo shirt.

May include a spouse if listed on the application

Available for \$500

Note: All annual memberships are for a calendar year and include the following year if paid after September 30th.

Lifetime Memberships

A membership exempt from further annual dues.

Includes preferred seating at Dinner Events plus Lifetime Members receive a limited edition print of "The Last Race" autographed by John Fitch and an HRC logo polo shirt embroidered with "Lifetime Member" below the logo.

May include a spouse if listed on the application

Available for \$1,000

Note: A spouse included on a Premium membership or Lifetime membership application is a fully fledged member and entitled to all the benefits of membership.