I hope everybody digs the cover shot of Sharon Tate and big block Cobra circa 1969. It has been almost 50 years since Sharon Tate was murdered at the age of 26 by Charles Manson’s followers. Her best movie was Valley of the Dolls. Dolls being a euphemism for pills - blue pills, yellow pills, green pills, red pills.
Are you still running a stock A-H brake box or clutch master cylinder? Step up with stock car master cylinders by AFCO. They are interchangeable with the original Girling units and bolt right in and at under $60.00 each, they are cheap. They are also rebuildable. Speedway parts number 106-6621000 and 106-20111912. Also order two pedal clevis that match up to the 5/16 fine master cylinder threads, part number 916-31516. The clevises will need an extension. Order two 5/16-24x7/8 hex coupling nuts from Fastenal (ecomm@store.fastenal.com) for $13.33 (including shipping of $9.16!). This will allow you to adjust the distance from the master cylinder to the pedal. The eye hole in the clevis is 3/8 so you will need to shim it to 5/16 to match the hole in the pedal. A competent builder would weld the hold shut and re-drill it but I just pressed in a 5/16 copper coupling. Make sure you lube it up good. The clevis will also need to be ground somewhat for clearance, machined if you know what you are doing.
Russ,
Thought you might want to see what happens when centrifugal force overcomes centripetal force. This is the one I wrecked when I hit gravel. I never put it on a dyno after installing the Paxton and re-jetting the carb but I estimate somewhere around 420 Hp. I hit the trees and bounced back away from them about 10 feet. I really miss that car.
- Joseph Yannone - Joseph.Yannone@rexam.com
Hi Russ,

I attended the Dixon All British show and I spied not one but two V8 Healeys. One Ford and a newly completed Chevy. He purchased it of eBay and is just about done. I'm passing along a Wheelspinner to them. Can I include your email address incase they want to join the list?

Thanks, Janelle - jansahr@me.com
Whether you think their owners have trashed a perfectly good Healey or built a masterpiece, Nasty Boy Healeys are an integral part of the Healey marque. Here are some of their stories.

The History of the Nasty Boy

By Rick Neville, a.k.a. “Madman in a death machine”

Two things sell sports cars ... looks and performance. When it comes to looks, there’s not much to be done to improve upon the lines penned by Gerry Coker. Sure, some have tried. Most have failed. But performance? That’s different. Suffice to say there’s always been room for upgrading a Healey’s ability to go, turn and stop.

When Healeys were new, additional performance was available from the factory in the 100M, or, if pockets were deep, the 100S. Donald Healey Motor Company was always a good source for speed parts, offering the LeMans kit for the 100s and parts like triple HD8’s for the sixes. The BMC Comps Department had rally spares for the big Healeys and Special Tuning parts for the Sprite.

But to those who believe too much is never enough, hopping up an Austin four or six still disappoints. After spending all the time, effort and expense on hot cams, ported heads, bigger carbs and tubular exhaust manifolds, the performance doesn’t deliver what the looks of the Healey promise. And so we turn to the dark edges of Healey ... the “Nasty Boy.”

Before going any further, who made up the term, Nasty Boy? The story goes a spectator at a UK race meeting heard a V8-powered Healey rumbling through the pits and remarked, “Isn’t that a nasty boy?” Whether it’s a true story or not, it would seem fitting the nickname originated in England, because that’s where the idea of dropping an American V8 into a British roadster began. But the concept was pure American hot rodding. Stick the biggest V8 in a light car and go fast.

Perhaps we owe it all to Sydney Allard, who in 1935 built his first car using a Ford flathead V8 in a Bugatti race car. Following WWII, Allard powered his British-made “J” roadsters with V8 Ford flathead, Cadillac and Chrysler motors. The cars were a competition success and significantly, driven by up-and-comers like Carroll Shelby.
Then Geoffrey Healey got a good look at the potential of the Ford flatly when he and Donald toured the U.S. in 1948 with the Healey Roadster. So impressed with what hot rodders were doing with the motor in the States, Geoff built his own V8 powered special upon returning to England and helped found the British Hot Rod Association. Meanwhile, back in the U.S., Briggs Cunningham had Frick-Tappett Motors install a Cadillac V8 into a Healey Silverstone chassis which took second place in the 1950 Palm Beach Shores race. According to Geoffrey, this was the first American engine to be fitted in a Healey.

Cunningham’s success prompted Healey to ask him to secure some Cadillac motors and Roger Menadue, Healey’s Chief Engineer, built a Cadillac-Silverstone known as the X4. The Caddy motor was backed by a Ford transmission and rear axle and with double the torque and fifty percent more horsepower, the car was able to spin the tires in all gears. Further development of the Cad-Healey ended when Healey could not secure additional motors from Cadillac.

In America, hot rodders and sports car guys never much got along and made little secret of their disdain for one another. The hot rodders felt those driving their “funny furin’ cars” were a bunch of effete snobs while the sporty guys looked upon the rodders as a bunch of grease monkeys who could only drive in a straight line. Somehow, though, a few from each side overlooked their traditional differences and began producing more combinations of European cars with American motors and found out, in a “You got chocolate in my peanut butter. You got peanut butter on my chocolate.” moment, it made a tasty treat.

Who better to lead the charge than Max Balchowsky, whose “Ol’ Yeller” cars were mutts, featuring Nailhead Buick V8s in a light chassis and named “Ol’ Yeller” after the eponymous Disney movie whose mongrel dog displayed big cubic inches of love and courage. (Excuse me, while I tear up a bit.) But racing success doesn’t pay the bills, so Max ran a repair shop known as “Hollywood Motors” located on Hollywood Boulevard in LA where he repaired the high-end vehicles of the Hollywood elite. Some wanted a little more power in their sports cars and Max obliged with engine swaps. His motto: “We can replace anything with anything.”

The compact small-block Chevrolet motor introduced in 1955 opened up new worlds for engine swappers and it didn’t take long for Max to shoehorn one into a BN1 owned by Dr. Yo-sef Tiber. The 283 cubic inch motor was fitted with triple carbs and a Ford Thunderbird hood scoop was grafted onto the bonnet for clearance. The small block propelled the Healey to 103.6 mph in the quarter, cutting about five seconds from the stock car’s elapsed time. Featured in the June, 1956 issue of Hot Rod Magazine, it’s believed to be the first V8 Austin-Healey. The car later passed to Dr. Owen Wheeler whose son, Gary, recounted running it to 108 mph in the quarter at Paradise Mesa Drag Strip ... two weeks before receiving his learner’s permit! Different times, indeed.

Ford introduced its own small block with the “thin-walled” casting 221 cubic inch Fairlane motor in July, 1961. It didn’t take long for Larry Zirbes, the General Superintendent of Ford’s Cleveland Engine Plant, where the motor was manufactured, to eye it for a Healey engine swap. Zirbes used the later 260 cubic inch motor in his BN7. It was a good choice, as noted in the August, 1963 Hot Rod piece “Healey with a V8 Punch.” The Ford motor was 63 pounds lighter than the Healey six and was narrower than the small block Chevy, minimizing the amount of modifications needed to slip the V8 into the engine compartment.
Nasty Boys - Their History

yanked the four cylinder from his BN1 and shoehorned a 1949 303cid (bored to 348cid and later 418cid) big-block Oldsmobile engine in its place. In order to retain the Healey’s 50/50 weight distribution, the added 120 pounds of Olds motor and LaSalle transmission required an increased engine setback of 11 inches. This meant half the engine would be under the hood opening! This required a heroic amount of internal body structure rip out and replacement. Using some unique pie-shaped steel reinforcements welded to the back of the wire wheels, Tom managed to keep the 100 looking stock and surprised quite a few contestants in the streetlight drags. Tough beating all that big block torque in a 2,486 pound car from a dig. The car has run 118mph in 12.5sec quarters and measured a 3.8sec 0 to 60mph timed. Fittingly, Tom carries the nickname “Tom Tork” and nearly 60 years after the “Olds Healey” conversion he’s still driving his street beast.

Not to be outdone, the Sprite guys were doing their own engine swaps. Imagine this … a Corvette motor in a bug-eye! Now imagine a dual quad carburetor ‘vette motor in a bug-eye!! That’s what Bob Knapp did to his, shown in the “Sprite + Chevy = Wow!” piece in the August, 1961 issue of Hot Rod. As if stuffing a V8, backed by a Powerglide automatic transmission, into a bug-eye wasn’t hilarious enough, Bob kept the stock rear end and tires on the car. For those of us that have broken a stock bug-eye rear axle with a 42.5 horsepower motor, the sight of this car smoking the right rear tire is unbelievable. He admitted, though, that after 1300 miles the driveline had begun to “loosen up a little.”

Meanwhile, always the businessman as well as a race car driver, Carrol Shelby saw an opportunity to earn a few dollars by making a production version of a British sports car mated with an American V8. So you think you know that story? Shelby put a Ford motor in an AC and gave birth to the Cobra. Everybody knows that, right? Not quite. Before the Cobra, Ol’ Shel wanted to produce a Chevrolet-engined Austin-Healey. Chevrolet turned him down as an engine supplier, probably worried that a Chevy in the lighter Healey would make the Corvette look bad. And regrettably, despite Shelby being a former team driver for Donald Healey, DMH demurred on the request for rolling chassis Healeys for the new venture. The reason was said to be Donald’s desire to keep his cars all-British, but that doesn’t ring true considering the Cadillac motors installed in the Silverstone. More likely it had something to do with BMC taking a dim view of the whole idea.

Turned down by Chevy and Healey, Shelby next went to Ford and AC and the Cobra was born. It’s interesting to note the personnel involved in building Cobras. The first Cobra was built at Dean Moon’s shop. Anyone who’s ever seen a pair of Moon-eyes, knows Dean as a hot rodder extraordinaire. The painter for that first Cobra was hot rodder Dean Jeffries. And Shelby’s Chief Engineer was Phil Remington, a master fabricator and, you guessed it, a hot rodder. And into this mix enters Ted Sutton, a kid from an Indiana farm town working as a welder in Southern California. He was swapping a new Ford HiPo 289 into a friend’s Healey 3000 and turned to Shelby’s shop looking for parts. Remington liked what he saw and offered the young man a job and when it came time to up the Cobra ante by the old hot rodder’s trick of increasing cubic inches, Sutton was given the job of installing the 427 cubic inch Ford mill based on his experience with the Healey swap. The process was pretty similar, said Sutton, who surmised he might have been given the task to make up for Shelby’s unkept promise to produce 289 engine swap kits for the Healey. When the 427 install was completed, Shelby invited Sutton along for his first high speed test drive of the New Cobra through the local SoCal subdivisions, an experience Sutton claimed was “the most frightening times in an automobile I have ever experienced.”

By the time the Cobra was introduced, the supply of used Healeys available to potential engine swappers for little money was plentiful and V8 powered Healeys soon became known as “the poor man’s Cobra.” In fact, in an August, 1968 article entitled “Heaveolet” giving step-by-step instructions of a Chevrolet swap, the editors of Hot Rod called it one of the all-time most popular swaps, remarking “Just about everyone’s uncle on the West Coast has, at one time or another, helped someone make the swap.” Many of these home-built swaps were quite well done and the number of factory muscle cars that fell prey to street-raced Nasty Boys is difficult to tally. But to be truthful, some of the backyard engine conversions were done on some pretty clapped-out cars with crude engineering and cruder workmanship and were certainly responsible for some of the bad reputation the cars are sometimes saddled with.
The Cobra influence also dictated the Nasty Boys appearance for quite some time, as evidenced by super-wide tires shrouded in heavily flared fenders. Some even fitted Cobra-like grille openings, which in addition to aping the Cobra look also aided in combatting the bane of V8 Healeys, engine overheating.

Through the years, “more power” enthusiasts have continued to modify their Healeys, sometimes to the chagrin of their more traditionally oriented brethren. Not surprisingly, Nasty Boy owners sought to band together with those of similar interests and the 1986 Cincinnati Conclave, where Donald Healey praised Ted Young’s modified V8 Healey, led to Ted founding the Modified Austin-Healey Registry. When Ted passed away, his place was taken by Leroy Joppa and his wife, Sue. A Registry newsletter, appropriately called “The Wheelspinner,” along with an online newsgroup modifiedhealeys-subscribe@yahooogroups.com allows members to share build secrets and lie about their racing successes. A group website shows off the talents of modified builders: modifiedhealeys.org. Leroy and Sue were the acknowledged leaders of the organization until their passing in 2015 and their duties have been carried on by Russ Keep, the longtime “Propaganda Minister” of the club.

There’s little doubt that modifying a Healey with an engine swap will decrease its monetary value over a stock vehicle and one might suspect the Nasty Boy would be on the wane. Doesn’t appear to be the case, though. Builders have been taking advantage of modern technology to outfit their cars with fuel injection, GPS speedometers and lightweight aluminum engines. The Jensen-Healey, with its wide engine compartment and low price in the used car market has proven fertile ground for those wanting a more modern Nasty. We’ll see some of those newer builds later in this issue.

As Lord Acton said: “Power corrupts and absolute power tens to corrupt absolutely.” Must have been a Nasty Boy.
Purists, now would be a good time to sit down and pour yourself a large tumbler of single malt ... neat. You don’t want to water it down for this bit of information. Kent Lacy’s Nasty Boy is built on a genuine factory 100M!

Admittedly, it wasn’t much of an “M” when Kent found it in 1993 in an old building in Moncks Corner, S.C. In fact, it wasn’t much of a Healey, either, sitting there with its body panels removed and with no engine and interior. But Kent jumped in and hauled the whole mess back to his home in Virginia.

It was almost serendipitous when a friend with a 100M and a spare 100M engine sent their Heritage certificates to Kent and he recognized the “spare” engine was the one that originally filled the empty hole under the bonnet of Kent’s engineless “M”. “Almost” serendipitous because the friend wasn’t interested in buying Kent’s car or selling the motor to him in order for the M to be returned to its original specification. A lesser man might question the definition of “friend”. Having owned a Healey in college and having owned a total of eight of them, Kent wasn’t much for changing them from original. He had even served as a concours judge. But he had an engine compartment to fill and a 289 Ford sitting in a corner of his garage that his NASCAR uncle built for his boat before, as Kent says, “His heart attacked him.” Inspired by Cobras and Sunbeam Tigers, Kent wondered if a V8 Healey could be built as the factory might have built it in the sixties using what was available then and without changing anything that wasn’t absolutely necessary.

And by “absolutely necessary,” Kent wasn’t kidding. He even mated the Healey transmission to the Ford motor using an adapter as a go-by that Smith Brody of Smitty’s 5 Speed fame had fashioned twenty-five years earlier. The motor was set back 2 inches and a shortened driveshaft hooked everything up to the stock rear end running 3.54 gears. The pilot bearing was bored out to .750 to fit the Healey shaft and a later Ford pressure plate was used with a Chevrolet clutch disc. This disc fits the Healey spline. Mechanical clutch operation was retained. A later Healey vertical transmission bulkhead cover was used to solve the 2” engine setback problem and keep the interior looking original. An early 3 row Mustang radiator and shroud was mounted in the original location. A 2” shorter water pump left enough room for a large flex fan.

The exhaust manifolds became the first time consuming problem because the Healey motor mounts needed to remain intact. There just didn’t seem to be anything available that would fit. Until, one day while admiring a friend’s Sunbeam Tiger, there they were, tight little stock manifolds with a center drop. Two pair were found on Ebay. These were connected to stock 100 exhaust systems with a little modification at the manifolds and the right side moved to the left in the rear. This made the two pipes less obvious and similar to the later Healeys.

The motor mounts are a saddle arrangement that fit over the frame so that no welding is necessary. To fit the wider Ford engine there were a few changes made to the body. The left toebox has an 8 1/2” X 8 1/2” X 1 1/2” notch cut from the top inside and the right toebox moved to the right ¾” at the front. In addition the right outrigger was notched for the exhaust and the spare tire opening enlarged ¾” to accommodate a larger tire. There are a few extra holes drilled here...
and there, but that’s all. Disc brakes were added to the front and tubular shocks fitted to the front with the original lever arms at the rear.

Finished in Old English White over Spruce Green and with the bonnet closed, it would be hard to tell this wasn’t a concours “M”. It even sports a “100M Registry” grille badge. (Purists, now would be the time to pour that second scotch.) Kent says performance with the additional 100hp is just what you’d expect, strong and impressive. With an aluminum intake and bell housing on the Ford engine, it is actually five pounds lighter than the original unit. There are no driveline vibrations, the exhaust is quiet and nothing seems to be interfering with anything else. It’s just a pleasant ride like a Healey should be.

Like most Nasty Boy owners, Kent admits an occasional over exuberant ride in his car, like when he took on two Corvettes and beat them, at the expense of a $600 bill to replace two pushrods. “I won’t be doing that again,” he resolves.

Asked the obvious question whether he’s ever thought about converting it back to “M” spec using a LeMans optioned motor, Kent says he’s built a spare M engine and transmission for it and could change it back in about two weeks, but since he has no plans on selling the Nasty Boy, he doesn’t see any reason to lose the extra power. Of course, his decision might be influenced by the fact he also owns a Concours Gold Level “M”.

And Kent’s story is not unusual amongst modified owners. Most seem to own a stock Healey or two as well and Kent points out that despite criticism of modifiers “butchering” old Healeys, many basket cases seen as too far gone to restore have been saved by Nasty Boy builders. Just take a look at the “as found” picture of his car on the previous page and you’ll see what he means.

Janelle Sahr - Alameda, Calif.

Think all Nasty Boy owners are old guys with grease under their fingernails? Think again. Meet Janelle Sahr, a consultant from Alameda, CA.

Janelle’s love of machines of all sizes came from her Dad, a heavy diesel mechanic whom she says could fix anything. He was German so he was of course a big Mercedes fan. And while Janelle had a Barbie doll like other girls her age, Janelle’s Barbie drove a Caterpillar front end loader instead of a Barbie car.

She bought her first car for $500 in 1990, a 1979 Peugeot 504 diesel she loved. Despite being painfully slow, she maintains it was one of the best handling cars she’s ever driven. Keeping with her German heritage, she’s also owned a great 1985 E30 BMW 3 series.

Constant readers of the Jalopnik website will immediately recognize Janelle’s hometown as the setting of the series “Down on the Street,” featuring cars of the “Island that Rust Forgot: Alameda, California.” So she didn’t have to look far in 2015 when looking for a neat car as almost everyone in town has a jewel hidden away in their garage. She had almost settled on a Porsche 914 project (there’s that German thing again) when a buddy of hers that used to build hot rods showed her the Healey.

The BN2 had been built by her friend Gary White for a retired police officer in the late 1980s. The owner, then in his 70s, loved fast cars. His past cars included a 1967 Barracuda, a 1969 Camaro, 1970 Challenger, 1970 Charger, a Hemi Superbird, and his personal favorite a hotrod Vega station wagon with a monster 560hp V-8. The drivetrain combination chosen for the Healey was perfect for the job ... a 400 cubic inch Chevy small block and a Turbo 400 hydraulic automatic transmission, backed by a narrowed Ford 9” rear end with Strange axles. While not the highest horse-power producing small block, the 400 is a torque monster and an automatic transmission is a good choice for a street/strip car. Plus that Ford 9” is just about unbreakable.

After a year, the car was sold on and used sporadically over the next 25 years, logging only 3,400 miles. When the owner decided to sell his collection, the car ended up at the builder’s shop who, knowing Janelle was in the market for a classic car, suggested she take a look. Janelle was smitten at first sight. Even with the dust and debris it was just gorgeous. Originally an Old English White and Black duotone car with red trim, it had been repainted a Ford white with oxblood interior. Having been in heated storage, the restoration had
held up well over the years. It was basically stock looking, except for custom headers dumping into a big honking pair of sidepipes. The 1980s Pioneer tape deck startled everyone when it cranked up with the installation of a new battery, but has since been dispatched in favor of the heady tunes coming from that exhaust. The car responded well to a service, firing right up on the first try.

Janelle says the car is a pleasure to drive with the V8. Fast but very well behaved if respected. The faster the car goes the happier it is. V8s make light cars scary fast. Disk brakes in front and a dual master make scary a little less so. She does admit that parallel parking is a bit of a chore. “That takes some upper body strength,” she says.

The car is perfect for Bay Area driving and Janelle has relegated the rare aftermarket hardtop to the rafters, although maybe the fact a nicely alight mouse nest blowing out of the sidepipes set the headliner on fire had something to do with it.

Janelle has enjoyed the new friends she’s met driving a Healey: “Surprise! My neighbor has a steel nose Bug Eye Sprite racecar in his garage that he’s had since 1963. I never knew. Current and former Healey owners in the family and friends show up everywhere... usually with photos of them back in the day and with stories of daring and regrets about selling the cars. One even had plans to drop a V8 in his factory 100M back in 1966 but he sold the car before he was sent to Viet Nam. He now owns classic and modern Porsches but he covets my car. It’s the car he dreamed of building when he was 20 years old. Actually, frequently the drivers of performance autos give me a smile or a nod and then I (safely) pass them. Children and Seniors Citizens love to wave at the Healey (usually while looking down from a small SUV)... wearing a bright orange cap makes it easier for people in much larger cars, like a Prius, to see you.”

Janelle has taken the Healey to a few shows and was amused to see she had a bigger motor than the Camaro next to her. And some show goers really got infatuated...

Janelle Sahr

Tom Schnerk - California

Tom Schnerk, aka “Tom Tork,” owns what must be the oldest Nasty Boy still running the streets. Consider that Tom approached Max Balchowsky for advice on a big block Olds swap in 1957 and it’s clear why this car is an icon of Nasty Boy history. There’s certainly no one better to tell the story of the Olds Healey than Tom himself:

“I bought this ‘54 model in January 1957 for $1600. Nice little car but gutless. Within a month I started work on the transplant of the big block 1949 303/348ci original Rocket Olds from my 1949 Plymouth fastback coupe street-sleeper. I rented a stall at a commercial garage in Inglewood, California that was leased by some local hot rodders.”
“So why did I do this? Because nobody would sell me a small block Chevy (SBC) like the other rare V8 Healeys were running. They were scarce at the junk yards therefore ridiculously priced and my hotrod friends wanted to keep theirs for themselves. Besides, at that time I considered a SBC convesion a simple drop in, no challenge there. Max Balchowsky of “Old Yeller” fame would do one for $500! When I asked Max how far back I would have to place the big block Olds to retain 50/50 weight distribution he replied without hesitation ... “You could put that #%@# Olds in the trunk and the car would still be nose heavy!” His smartass remark was the motivation I required to get my project moving, thanks Max. In retrospect, being forced into a big block transplant in 1957 was pure serendipity. I never regretted that decision for an instant: “Horsepower Sells Cars. Torque wins races” Carroll Shelby.”

“I was 22 and worked as an electronic engineer at RCA, West Los Angeles. Typical of that age, nothing was impossible and I considered this, my second Olds swap, was going to be no big deal. Big engine in little car, as exemplified by my Olds Plymouth, was the no brainer way to performance. 348cid in a 2450lb Healey should hold off most everything on the street in 1957.”

In order to get the weight distribution he wanted, Tom moved the big Olds motor 11 inches back from the stock Healey location. This involved cutting the Healey’s firewall, horizontal box structure, toe boxes and transmission cover sheetmetal out of the car and exposing the frame crossmember. When Tom was finally satisfied with the motor location, half the motor was located aft of the bonnet opening and he had achieved a 47/53 F/R weight distribution, better than a ’65 427 Cobra!

Naturally, Tom has a few stories to tell about his early days with his new creation:

“The first night on the street a Triumph bike with rider pulls up at a signal. This was the hot bike in ’57, good for a 100+ in the quarter. All he sees beside him is one of them little Brit sport cars that don’t go. When the signal goes green, he eases out with indifference. I give him about two lengths before I get on the Healey. He sees me coming up, goes WOT and I nail by him easily and shut off. I watch him behind me pull over, kick his rider off and come up at the next signal. He sits there revving his big bike up waiting for the green, while I sat there at idle. We get off head to head with me in 1st while he goes thru at least three gears while falling back. I go for 2nd at about 60mph got rubber and leapt ahead another couple car lengths and immediately shut down. He barrels by and keeps going flat out. I went back to the garage so I don’t know if he ever went back for his rider.”

“A few months later I was driving alone on a balmy, moonless night along the coast by Camp Pendleton CA. It was near midnight with practically no traffic. The road was two lanes each way and divided but no freeway, it was gently undulating up and down. I decided to let the Healey out to see how fast it would go. I had no speedometer but with 3.36 RE and 27in tires, high gear worked out to 25mph per 1000rpm. The fastest the Healey had gone before was maybe 100mph while street racing and it was well behaved. I went thru 120mph at 4800 and the road was rising and falling smoothly as the speed went thru 130, but I noticed a slight hesitation and loss of steering sensitivity. There was absolutely no traffic ahead so I kept on accelerating since the rpm was only 5200 and the engine seemed to have more to go. I could now crank the wheel left and right a quarter turn and the car barely wobbled.”

“As I rose on a slight hill I noticed the tach at 5600 or 140mph then suddenly my headlights lit up the back of an 18wheeler that was coming up out of a dip dead ahead in my lane. He seemed less than a football field ahead and I got off the gas and started cranking the wheel left with no response from the car. No use hitting the brakes at this speed. Then ever so slowly it started drifting left as the distance closed to a couple hundred then a hundred feet and continue to slowly move left until I went by the truck so close I could clearly make out the lettering in his left mudflap as I went by. Probably missed going under his axle at 80mph differential by less than 20ft. I drove the rest of the way home at less than 60mph. I concluded the stock bodied Healey 100-4 becomes very front light at speeds over 120mph and actually lifts off the road at over 130mph. After this near death...
experience, I discovered I didn’t really like super high speed
driving nearly as much as the brutal acceleration of driving
on the street."

In 1964, Tom got “wined up” one night and crunched the
Healey’s delicate front end into the rear of a big American
sedan. Although Tom was looking at the 427 Cobra as a
replacement, he couldn’t afford the $8,000 admission fee.
Working with what he had, Tom “Cobraized” the Healey with
a wider grille opening, front fender vents and a ’59 394 Olds
motor, bored out to 419 cubic inches with an estimated 400
horsepower. Tom says it had very little competition on the
streets, except for some of the new Japanese super bikes.

After retiring in 1999, Tom treated the Olds Healey to a ’64
period restoration, repainting it from a rather unfortunate
’64 Mustang burgundy to its stunning ’74 Corvette Targa
Blue Metallic. At 81 years of age, Tom hasn’t lost that hot
rod spirit, still enjoying an occasional timed 0 to 60 mph
launch in a car he’s owned for almost sixty years.

For those wanting a closer look at this legend, take a look
at Larry Varley’s site:
Ron Weingart - California

Some think that Nasty Boys are created by gathering a bunch of buddies together over a weekend, adding a few cases of beer and unlimited pizza (or vice versa) and “dropping a small block in it.” It’s an absurdly simplistic view of engine swapping. And it’s certainly not the approach that Ron Weingart, an Agoura, California attorney and real estate developer, took in designing and building the radically modified BJ7 known as “Evil.”

Installing the engine and transmission is probably the easiest part of the task and the time and effort getting all the other systems to play well together is the part that makes swappers tear their hair out. Now take a look at “Evil’s” specification sheet. Nothing about this Healey remains untouched; engine, transmission, front suspension, rear suspension, brakes, cooling system, body, windscreen, interior, etc., etc., etc. They’ve all been worked on, fabricated, beaten and massaged until the result is this wild two-seat roadster. You can imagine the number of weekends consumed in that build.

Ron was no stranger to Healeys, having moved out to California from Milwaukee in 1964 driving his ’63 BJ7 cross-country. His degree in mechanical engineering from UMass and work in the aerospace industry, including the Lockheed “Skunk Works” served as backdrop in 1970 when he bought another BJ7 and did his first V8 swap with a 283 Chevy. In the ensuing decade he built and installed bigger and more powerful small blocks going up to a 327 leading to more issues and he eventually replaced the Healey rear end with a 9” Ford all the while refining the installation. In 1983, Ron decided to up the ante and undertook the first major rebuild. His friend Jim Shewbert of Shewbert Racing Engines, a top fuel engine builder, built a really hi-po 350 small block with 4 bolt mains and they went through the engine compartment to accommodate the engine and custom tube headers replacing the cast iron old ram’s head exhaust manifolds.

Eventually even the 350 was too tame and Ron wanted to do a truly proper job with the car. He and Jim built a new engine, a really trick destroked 400 small block with 386 cubes churning out 450 HP, and another friend, Jimmy Glenn of Shady Glen Racing, a top fuel funny car builder, did the chassis/suspension fabrication work including the splayed coil-over push rod front suspension, four bar rear suspension with Watts linkage, Wilwood 6 piston disc brakes all around, and replacing the Muncie with a Richmond 5 speed. Along the way Ron removed the wind wings and roll up windows...
Ron wanted Dale Pulde, a top funny car racer, to drive the car and give his impressions. While the car was in the Shady Glen Racing shop, Jimmy decided to take it over to Pulde's house, unbeknownst to Ron. The Healey had always scared Jimmy who had given it the nickname, "The Hot Rod From Hell." That name was soon to change. Dale renamed it "Evil!"

Although the car sported a splitter and diffusers for aerodynamics, rare at the time on a street car, it was still an old school hot rod. No fuel injection, no turbos, no computer programming, just a single cam push rod engine with a single four barrel Holly carburetor that gets one and half horse power per cube in the day when street engines didn’t produce anything near that. How better to show off a newly completed old school hot rod Healey than entering it into rodding’s premier event, the Grand National Roadster Show where V8 Healeys had appeared since 1959 when it was known as the Oakland Roadster Show. "Evil" won a best in class award. And as if that wasn’t enough modified Healey tradition, Ron’s car earned a coveted feature spot in Hot Rod Magazine in 2007.

"Evil" at home with its Ferrari GT and a Daytona Coupe stablemates.

The damage was quite extensive, but gave Ron the opportunity to remake the car into what he had always envisioned. The rear shroud was replaced with one from a 100. The 3000 front end was kept, but the rear of the shroud was modified with one from a 100 so the 100’s lay-down windscreen could be used. 3000 roadster doors were modified to mate with the 100-4 shrouds and the door handles filled in to complete the roadster look. An all-aluminum Donovan block with 406 cubic inches was built and with tuning dynoed at 607 horsepower with a redline of 9000 rpm. Evil indeed!

Nasty Boy owners are often asked how their cars compare to other sports cars and Ron is in a great position to give them some answers for his stable also includes a Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona Spyder and a new Shelby Daytona Coupe, both halo cars in the world of sporting machines. How does the Healey stack up? In Ron’s words:

"The Shelby is a race car for the street - or track and handles like a race car, responsive steering, great brakes, and with 427 small block putting out 580 HP, crazy acceleration running into the 6300 rpm rev limiter before you know it. It has a wonderful big block low base rumble and sound great. My coupe pulled 1.16 gs when Road and Track tested it on old tries, you could imagine what it would have done with new tires and a clean skid pad. Pete Brock was there and marveled at how good it handles and gripped. With power steering, power brakes, and power windows, it’s easy to drive on the streets as well."

"The Ferrari is a GT, not a sports car, and is much more sophisticated than the Shelby - as much as a vintage Ferrari can be sophisticated. It doesn’t have the grunt of the Shelby but is wonderfully smooth going through the gears and revs well into the 7000s with that melodious V12 exhaust sound. Being a valuable vintage Ferrari, fully restored and primo, I don’t push it other than getting on the freeway going through the lower gears up to 120 - 140 or so before letting up and then slowing down and shifting into a fourth or fifth and then laid back cruising. Honestly, I had more fun with it before it went up in value and before I restored it, when I would really get on it and drive it more like a sports car than a GT. There’s nothing like the sound of a front engine Ferrari V12 pushing Rs through a tunnel."

My Healey is a death wish waiting to happen. You get power by moving air through an engine, in a normally aspirated engine you typically use large heads and runners get the high air flow. Trouble with that is that with the large heads and runners and their large cross sections, the velocity drops which is why many of these engine bag down when you step on the throttle until the flow builds up and the engine
smooths out. I aerodynamically ported, port matched, polished my heads and runners and am able to get a lot of airflow through smaller cross sections but at higher velocity so when you step on the throttle, the response is instantaneous and explosive. I get 609 hp out of a 406 CID normally aspirated engine with a single Holley. You simply cannot floor it in first and have to wait until you’re up on the revs before you floor it in second or she’ll break away even with tubs and wide tires. I have a bar going across above your right foot and rest my toes on it. I roll my foot pressing the throttle with the restrained ball of my foot when I give it gas. If I forget to restrain my toes and press down on the throttle with my foot unrestrained it’s like someone let a pissed off tiger out of a sack and you’re holding on for dear life. You can’t lift or she’ll rotate on you and 180 so you’re committed to keeping your foot on the throttle and driving through it. While just cruising along and you hit the throttle, the sensation is like the rear axle is trying to pass you from underneath you. You can see from the photos how low my Healey is and with the ground effects it is incredibly stable at speed. Handling is very responsive. The car was designed for the track and 6 piston Wilwoods are really not for the street as they require a lot of pedal force, great for the track, not so much for the street. I’ve thought of power assist or smaller calipers for the street but then I don’t want to dilute what the car is and leave it alone. Truth be told, the Healey is not all that removed from a full out race car and drives and handles like such. The engine sound is awesome and loud beyond belief from what I’ve been told. Everyone can hear me coming from miles away. The Healey roars. It is definitely not the melodic sound of the Ferrari and it is not the big block thumping sound of the Shelby. It is the roar of an untamed banshee telling the world “I’m mean, I’m evil - don’t mess with me!” I remember that when I drove it into the Grand National Roadster Show to get to my spot that everyone looked up to see the monster hot rod making that sound and all they saw was this little Healey growling at them. It is an eye brow raiser. She looks so sweet and tiny with the engine off - and then I start it up. And that’s just at normal rpms, the Healey will rev to 9000 although I set the rev limited at 8000 or so - and even then, I’ll hit the rev limiter she revs so fast. I once backed the Healey into a parking spot in front of the glass front of my gym and rev’d it to the limiter shaking the windows and rattling everyone inside. I can’t describe what it sounds like at those higher revs. I’m told it’s incredible, loud of course, and reeking of power. I’ve been stopped by three different law enforcement agencies, thankfully not to ticket me but to ask if they could look at it. She is an earful and an eye catcher.

Rick Neville, Rowley. MA and Paul Dunnell, Rowe, MA

Old School and New Old School

One of the perks of writing a feature article on Nasty Boys is getting to write about my own. I’ve been a Healey guy since 1967 when I bought my first car from my cousin, a well-used ’59 Bugeye Sprite. I’d loved all kinds of cars since I was a kid, hot rods, customs, muscle cars and sports cars. I devoured all the buff books and felt I was truly non-denominational. I could find something to like in just about any motorized vehicle.

But in the ’60s horsepower was king and when my bugeye’s 948cc motor began having problems I started to think about an engine change. I loaded

No indication of nastiness here.
up on the Petersen Complete Guide to Engine Swapping that contained a how-to for a Corvette motor in a bug-"e"ye and decided to have at it. I didn’t get very far. Rather than taking useful courses in high school like auto shop, I was taking Latin and Advanced Algebra so my desires soon outpaced my fabricating abilities and limited funds, much to the bugeye’s relief.

Anyway, I still loved Healeys and was more than a little intrigued when a local guy put a Ford 289 2-barrel and automatic transmission in his Healey and started dusting off some of the big horsepower muscle cars in the street races that were hatched in the back row of my town’s drive-in restaurant. Knowing I’d never afford a Cobra or a Cheetah, I thought I might be able to swing a big Healey for an engine transfer and collected all the Hot Rod articles I could find on Healey engine swaps. But the need to have a somewhat practical car for college and work soon took over and the V8 Healey dream was put on the shelf.

After I graduated from law school and found gainful employment, my new bride noticed a bugeye in a local shopper and uttered the fateful words, “Didn’t you used to have one of those?” That led to a 10-year restoration to concours standards that included just about every Special Tuning part left in the NOS bins to turn it into a pretty good replica of the ’59 factory Sebring Sprites.

One Healey is never enough, though, and I happened upon a barn fresh 1963 BJ7 that had been turned into an SCCA racer in 1965 then relegated to the local autocross circuit. It was not the prettiest of cars with a turquoise exterior and reddish-orange wire wheels and roll bar (maybe it was sponsored by Howard Johnson’s?) but it was solid and rust free, a big plus in New England. Another long restoration ensued to convert the car back to street use while keeping the engine with its triple HD8s and Isky cam. But like most Nasty Boy owners, I didn’t think it had enough power.

I thought about building a Factory Five Daytona Coupe, but I had some serious reservations over whether I could even get it titled and registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. So the idea of finally doing the V8 swap into the Healey came to the forefront.

I had a theme in mind. I wanted it to be like some young guy in 1965 got lucky in the junkyard and found a wrecked Shelby GT-350 Mustang and decided to up the power of his Healey. I wanted the exterior and interior to look stock with no clue of what was under the bonnet. Since I knew Kent Lacy and Bill McMahon had done Ford swaps, I turned to them for their help and guidance.

The 306 horsepower HiPo 289 Ford that came in the GT-350 is a rare bird and prices start at about $10k for an original, so a substitute had to be found. A 5.0L Ford roller cam motor was built with a Trick Flow Stage 1 cam for a nice lopey idle. Heads were Ford GT40Ps and a Holley 570 cfm Street Avenger carb sits atop an Edelbrock RPM Airgap manifold. It dyno’ed at its aluminum flywheel at 345 hp and although it doesn’t sound quite as nice as a solid lifter HiPo motor, it still sounds nice and healthy. Correct Cobra open letter valve covers and air filter were added to keep everything in the ’60s spirit. Transmission is a Ford T5Z five-speed with a Steeda Tri-Ax short throw shifter. An early Cobra lift-lever reverse lock out shift lever was chosen to complete the Shelby theme and is really the only easily noticeable change to the otherwise stock interior. The location of the motor and transmission was determined by aligning the shift lever in the center hole of the BJ7 transmission cover so everything falls to hand as original. In order to avoid the jarring look of modern gauges in the Healey dash, the ivory-faced Smith’s gauges were adapted to function properly with their American cousin’s outputs.

Modifications to the Healey structure were kept to a minimum with narrowing of the footboxes, a cutout in the right outrigger for the dual exhaust and a welded in transmission crossmember mount being all that were changed and could be readily repaired if the urge to go back to stock ever struck (Not in my lifetime, though!)

Exhaust is routed through a set of cast iron Sunbeam Tiger manifolds, through 2 ¼” stainless pipes and Spintech mufflers that are 2 ⅛” deep and slot nicely in the original location of the Healey muffler. A little subterfuge was used to bring the passenger side exhaust pipe under the rear shroud to the driver’s side to form a set of twin pipes like the stock BJ7. A set of stainless angled exhaust tips and vintage ANSA exhaust decals give the appearance that an enthusiast hung a big bore exhaust system, although a keen eye would note the outlets are a bit larger than a standard Healey ANSA.

The front spring pans were lowered with spacers to bring ride height back to standard after the lighter weight Ford motor and transmission were installed. Stiffer valved shocks from the car’s racing days were retained and a 5/8” anti-sway bar was fitted. Rear springs are stock with an extra half-leaf added outside each spring pack to serve as stealthy slapper traction bars. Brakes...
are standard Healey with Hawk pads in front and metallic lined shoes in back and adequately stop the much lighter Healey without the use of a servo.

As even standard Healeys are notorious hot boxes, thought went into insulating this car as much as possible. A homemade type of insulating paint using micro balloons of glass spheres was used on the floorboards and footboxes. Aluminum bubble insulation is used under the carpets and behind engine-turned stainless panels in the engine compartment. Special reflective panels are located between the mufflers and floorboards and the car stays surprisingly cool on hot days.

The underbonnet was a bit tatty, so the Neville coat of arms, a white cross on a red shield, was duly applied. History buffs will recognize that Richard Neville (absolutely no relation to me) was the 16th Earl of Warwick and whose ancestral home, Warwick Castle, is depicted on the Healey badge. Because of the power he wielded in deposing two kings in the War of the Roses, he was commonly known as “The Kingmaker”, which I’ve grandiosely decided to name my Nasty Boy.

All that remained was the final touch, a genuine bonnet strap obtained from the 100M LeMans Registry. To paraphrase Burt Levy’s description in The Last Open Road of the Cad Allard’s leather bonnet straps ... each one (was) hefty enough to harness a prize bull. Whatever monstrous kind of motor was in there, they weren’t taking any chances on it breaking out.

With its aging custom metallic dark red paint, silver painted wire wheels, hardtop and fender vents Paul’s car is like a time capsule of 60’s hot rodding. The big draw, of course is that genuine HiPo Ford motor that needed a rebuild. When all was said and done, it produced 341 horsepower at the flywheel. Paul added a 5 speed transmission with 3.54 gears filling the stock rear end (same as in my car.) A set of custom tube headers was fabricated transmission from a wrecked Mustang GT 350 were “installed” in the Healey by a Ford garage (sound familiar?) Although the seller told Paul, “If this car was put together by a Ford garage it was after hours with a case of beer.”

As I was completing my build I learned that long-time Healey friend Paul Dunnell had bought an old Nasty Boy that I was finally able to check out at the 2014 British Invasion in Stowe, VT. Turns out, Paul had bought an in period version of the car I was trying to mimic.

Paul’s been involved with Healeys since 1965 and has owned eight of them. The most recognizable of which was his brown over tan “Hershey Bar” BJ8, which was often in the top spot at Healey autocrosses. Yet he had an urge to find out what a V8 in a Healey would do when he found this Mk I 3000 on eBay.

The story that went with the car was that in 1966, the engine and top loader...
that pass the exhaust through a pair of glasspacks. Otherwise the car looks bone stock except for a pair of pipes exiting out the back on either side of the license plate.

At shows, its “nice driver” condition don’t always garner immediate glances, but Paul enjoys the surprised look on peoples’ faces when the bonnet comes up. With an engine and tranny combo 316 pounds lighter than original, Paul likens its handling to a “Bugeye on steroids.” And he doesn’t want to change much on the car, even to repainting it, as then he’d “have to be careful with it.”

Although both our cars appear stock, the cat is out of the bag for both of them once the engines are fired up. The combination of a solid lifter cam and glasspacks in Paul’s car are a time machine to ’60s fast car sounds while my car is just a little to the left of “obnoxious.” Nothing like lighting them off in front of late-comers to a car show that failed to notice the V8s in these little British cars.

Paul and I swapped driving impressions of our Nasty Boys when I rather conspiratorially asked him which he liked better, stock or modified? His reply? “I think it’s the way Healeys should have been built,”

The comments on the many internet chat sites are wide and ranging about putting big engines in Healeys. Here are a few ...

• What a pity, and a waste of a good little car & a good big motor! Couldn’t you have just made a dedicated dragster frame and stuck a plastic replica Sprite body on it? Maybe that is what you did!!

• This is for those of you that complain about what was done to this car. First of all Mr. Smith bought the car from someone else. Second is that there is no mention of what the original condition of the car was. It could be that whoever built this started with a rusted out hulk that wouldn’t have been restored in the first place so they decided it was easier to modify what they had and it ended up as a really nice looking Bugeye that happens to have a big V8 motor. Also, a 383 doesn’t seem to be a highly prized motor any longer, unlike a hemi. If it bothers you so much put your money where your mouth is and buy it and restore it back to original. Personally, it’s not something that I would do, but I still like it.

Richard

• I saw that on E-Bay, and I wish I could have afforded it. Looks like a great buy. Please post photos of it when you can.

Paul

• The weight should make it handle funny, unlike a Sprite. Don’t hurt yourself or anyone else.

• Congratulations. One of the finest machines I have ever seen. Enjoy .. and happy holidays to you and yours.

• Brings back memories of my 1965 Plymouth Sport Fury with a 383 2 BBL which I bought new back in May of 1965. A beautiful car in and out and…. it would run even with the two barrel. Also of my 1959 Bugeye Sprite that I owned 62/64.

• I know your going to love it, but I hate seeing these little classics modified. I hope it’s not serial #8894.

• Brings to mind the many V8 VW Beetles out there .. such as this one: 500 HP Bi Turbo V8 VW Beetle

• Awesome machines some people build. Amazing.
Bill McMahon - Massachusetts

If one were looking for a name for Bill McMahon’s Nasty Boy, Steve Austin (Healey) might come to mind. On Father’s Day 2004, Bill was driving his 365 horsepower Ford powered BJ8 in the Mount Okemo Hillclimb in Vermont when it crossed the finish line at 95 miles per hour and turned left head on into the ledge at the summit. It stood up on its nose, spun, and hit a tree and landed back on its wheels. Because of the 6 point roll cage, 5 point harness, etc., Bill was not hurt. But the Healey sure was.

Racers are funny though. They get hooked on the adrenaline and rather than write off the Healey, in true Six Million Dollar Man style, Bill decided he had the capability to rebuild it better than it was before. Better... stronger... faster.

Bill might disagree with the Steve Austin (Healey) name, however, as he believes the car is female and calls the car “Nasty Girl.” Maybe she’d like Jamie Sommers better.

Bill’s plan was to strip off the Healey’s body panels and install them on a custom built tube chassis, modeled on the Factory Five Cobra chassis ... an easy choice as his son, Patrick, was also racing one of those.

This was the first time I’ve built a chassis, I've got to be honest with you. I’ve got a lot of bent tubing in the garage if you need it. That was the stuff that didn’t fit. I’d build one side and couldn’t replicate it on the other side. I borrowed a set of I beams and I set them up in my garage, welded them together, parallel and even, and I welded the box frame based on those, using that as a platform to build the car on.

Eventually, it all came together. Bill added a 450 hp Ford 347 cubic inch Windsor stroker motor along with a Tremec 5-speed transmission. The front suspension consists of dual wishbones with coil-overs and Koni shocks while a Ford 8.8 rear with 3.27 gears is anchored by coil-overs and Konis out back. Wilwood brakes with Hawk pads, six pots in front and four in the rear provide stopping power for the track.

Weight of the car without driver is 2100 pounds which gives it a power to weight ratio of 4.7 lbs per horsepower ... Bugatti Veyron territory. And Bill’s not hesitant to use that power. He competes regularly in hillclimbs and track events across the Northeast, including Pocono, Lime Rock, Watkin’s Glen and NHMS. Did I mention Bill is 76 years old?

Nasty Girl isn’t just a track queen. She’s fully street legal and Bill often takes her out to local shows with a sign that reads: “Yes” you may touch. Kids may sit in for photos. At one show, Bill noticed a little boy using sign language with his Dad. In no time, Bill had him behind the wheel having his picture taken. Dad asked if Nasty Girl could be started, explaining that although his son couldn’t hear he could feel the engine vibrations. No Problem! The 347 stroker with 3 inch pipes was duly fired. The father showed his son the tach indicating 5 grand and that little boy’s eyes got so big he was jumping out of his skin. When he got out he gave Bill a huge hug ... one that was as rewarding as all the trophies Nasty Girl has taken home.
Pete Farmer and Ian Osborne otherwise known as the British Boys.

Lest one think the days of putting V8s in Healeys ended in the UK with the Healey Silverstone, witness Pete Farmer and Ian Osborne, two sons of the mother country that have built highly developed Nasty Boys that are constantly improved on track.

Many American (well, technically “North American”) Healey folks were introduced to Pete when he was invited to oversee, prepare and support the British Austin Healey team entry of ten cars for the 1990 North American Team Healey Challenge … that rolling party fueled by alcohol and racing lies that incidentally included the best racing Healeys from Europe and North America battling it out on various circuits in the U.S.

Pete started in racing in the late ’60’s by preparing a Ford Anglia for rallying, hill climbing and sprinting. It was fitted with a 1650cc over-bored Ford Cortina engine coupled to a Bullit close-ratio gearbox. The car had many chassis and suspension modifications incorporated which enabled Pete to collect numerous wins and establish a number of records along the way. He moved on to circuit racing a Buick V8 powered Mk I. Ford Escort. The growing UK hot rod and custom scene then led him into developing a replica ’32 Ford Model B chassis for sale. Eventually, he came back to circuit racing again and now operates Pete Farmer Performance Racing where he devotes most of his time to restoring and race preparing Austin-Healeys.

Ian was imprinted by classic automobiles at the age of four when he had his first car journey in a blower Bentley. His introduction to Healey ownership came during his “first mid-life crisis” when he purchased a Mk III, Phase 2 BJ8 which led him to the conclusion that “standard Healeys are gutless.” (a sentiment shared by many Nasty Boy owners, but not often expressed so candidly). Inspired by the 7 litre “Beastie” owned by British Nasty Boy stalwart Charles Matthews,
Ian went in search of his own modified and found a BN1 in the US, where it had been converted to V8 power by Greg Greathouse in 1965 and carried the California personalized plate UNCOBRA. Once it cleared UK customs, however, Ian discovered UNCOBRA needed a full rebuild and so it was off to Pete Farmer’s where a friendship developed between the builder and his self-confessed “idiot customer”.

With an eye toward track work, the first order of business was to fabricate and fit a new half rollcage designed to squeeze under a hardtop. As befitting a proper British motorcar, Pete converted the car to right-hand drive while fitting rack and pinion steering using a rack from a Ford Escort Mk. 2. Further stiffening was added by capping the chassis full length. Adjustable suspension top mounts were fitted and the suspension towers were triangulated to reduce flex. Race 10 leaf springs with vertical turreted Koni telescopic shocks were used in the rear with a Panhard rod and custom anti-tramp bars. Up-rated lever arms were kept at the front with race springs.

The 383 cubic inch Chevy motor was fully built, sporting a 10.5:1 compression ratio, four bolt mains, forged rods, Pro Comp aluminum heads and a Custom hydraulic flat tappet cam with duration of 244 degrees at 0.505” lift (both intake and exhaust). The combination dynoed at 426 bhp & 469 ft lbs with a single four barrel carb. Ian later changed to quad Weber 48DCOE’s on a Webcon X-Ram manifold which he reckons added another 40 horsepower in addition to upping the WOW factor by 100%.

Power is transmitted through a 15 lb. lightened steel flywheel with a Tremec TKO600RR 600 ft lbs 5-speed with 0.82 top gear to a narrowed Chevrolet 10-bolt with posi-traction diff 3.55:1 and Summers Brother’s billet half-shafts. A Tilton brake pedal set, featuring twin master cylinders with bias bar, Healey 3000 front discs with Wilwood 4-pot calipers and Chevrolet 11” rear drums handle the braking.

The body is painted Ford Radiant Red, with a Pete Farmer hardtop colored in Titanium to match the Minilite wheels; 15 x 6J fronts, 15 x 7J rears. Dubbed “Frankenhealey,” Ian added P-51 Mustang shark teeth graphics along the side in keeping with the subtle nature of the car.

Ian regularly drives the car in anger and has done some overseas events such as the Bahama Speed Weeks and the Mdina Grand Prix on Malta. But it makes its most memorable...
impression when being hauled to UK events atop “The Goddess”, a Bedford fire engine converted to a race transporter. No one can accuse Ian of doing things half-arsed.

By now, one might wonder if this is the kind of car Pete built for a customer, what does his own Nasty Boy look like? Pretty special indeed. “EVO2” started out as a Mk I Healey 3000, but just about everything is custom built by Pete. At first glance, it looks like a Mk I, except maybe a bit wider. That’s because the body is to Pete’s design, hand-built, all alloy and 9” wider than standard fabricated by Trevor Hurst.

Motivation is provided by a 4.6ltr alloy Coscast Rover V8 with stage 3 heads, race cam, dry sump, hi-rise inlet and 4-barrel Weber dynoed at 360 horsepower. Front suspension is custom made chrome/moly tubular, fully adjustable with coil overs and vane type sway bar, Ford Mustang 2 uprights. Rear is custom made 4-link tubular fully adjustable with watts linkage and coil overs. Transmission is a Chevy 5 speed World Class.

Braking is Tilton master cylinder dual-adjustable from dash- with (front) 13.5” vented disc with Dynalite 4-pot alloy calipers. And (rear) large drum brake with competition linings. Rolling stock is 7”X18” Dynamic alloy front. 9.5”X18” Dynamic alloy rear with Continental tyres.

Pete chose a modern take on the classic Healey duotone by selecting Lotus New Silver over Titanium Silver metallic.
What else would one expect from an old-time hot rodder than an old school Healey hot rod? With its three-deuce equipped small block Chevy motor, triple Buick fender portholes, Borrani 5 ½'' x 16'' center laced wire wheels and hood scoop, Ralph Scarfogliero’s 100 looks like it stepped from the pages of one of those “little book” hot rodding magazines so popular in the ’50s.

That’s not to say Ralph is all about hot rods and doesn’t have some serious Healey chops. His first car at the age of 18 was a Healey 100 and he later owned a 100S — AHS 3504. “S” historians will immediately recognize the chassis number as being the Spruce Green car raced by actor Jackie Cooper and sold at auction for just over $1 million at Amelia Island in 2015.

Without much prompting, Ralph will recount in an accent still heavily tinged with the streets of his native Brooklyn how he bought 3504 from the guy who bought it from Cooper. It was being drag raced at the time and bathed in primer. The original motor was long gone. Ralph put bumpers on it, painted it BRG and after using it on the street for two years sold it on in 1976 to 100S collector Bill Wood for considerably less than $1 million... $1,500 to be exact. The funds went to purchase a British motorcycle. Ralph’s taken the sale in good stride and at a reunion in 2016, he and Bill (who in one of those serendipitous incidents that seem to happen in the old car world located the original S motor) spent a few moments to good naturedly cry in their beers over how much more they could have realized if they just held onto the S for a few more years.

Ralph Scarfogliero- New Jersey

Ralph doing his best Snoopy and the Red Baron impression

Faux ostrich and engine-turned dash fit for an upscale rod.

The side ports are reminiscent of an old 50s Buick.

Ralph’s hot rods have all been traditional. He’s had a 37 Ford sedan delivery, 33 Dodge pick-up, and a ’50 Olds custom. They’ve all displayed that perfect ‘50s-60s vibe shown in the Healey. Note the Healey’s machine-turned firewall, louvered cowl and an engine compartment that boasts Offenhauser valve covers, a generator and an original Healey radiator … the kind of details that distinguish a period hot rod from a modern creation.
Ralph Scarfogliero

Asked why he wanted a Nasty Boy, Ralph’s response was simple and direct: “Go fast.” But his car draws plenty of looks with its Lemans Red exterior and faux ostrich interior. Some magazine features and numerous 1st place awards at British car shows speak to its popularity.

Lots of cars try to ape a period of time when hot rod sports cars ruled the streets and local drive-ins. Few get it right. But if you have an urge to cruise the local car hop, Ralph’s car would be perfect.

Ralph’s other ride a beautiful ’33 Dodge pick-up

Three deuces, Offy valve covers and a gennie - That's traditional, baby!

Now that's one beautiful custom dash!

**Some Nasty Boy Projects in Progress**

Healey values have steadily increased, original cars are highly prized, surely no one can be “butchering” these classics anymore to make Nasty Boys? Well, modified Healeys are still being built, but the days of every car trying to be a 427 S/C Cobra with huge flares and sidepipes seem to be over with the latest builds concentrating on preserving the classic Healey lines while using modern underpinnings. Let’s look at a few.

Larry Ingram of Easley, SC has been modifying Healeys for some time ... ever since he put a 289 Ford and three speed manual transmission into a ’59 100/6 two-seater while stationed at Fort Sill, OK in 1968. And he’s still at it, working on not one, but two Nasty Boys.

From the other cars in his stable, a ’78 Porsche 930 with a 700 hp Chevy LS7 V8 and a 71 911 with a 500 hp all-aluminum 434 cubic inch Chevy smallblock, it’s clear Larry has a need for speed. Years after his days at Ft. Sill, Larry located his old Healey on the Modified Healey Registry but couldn’t convince the owner to sell it back to him. So a search for a new V8 powered car began.

Eventually, Larry landed a ’63 BJ7 with a 383 Chevy stroker motor and two-speed Powerglide automatic transmission. He exchanged the Powerglide for a 2004R automatic overdrive and converted to bolt on minilite style wheels, redid all

Larry Ingram’s BJ7

John Reynolds’ BN1
the upholstery, added a new dash and gauges and generally tidied up the car which looks basically stock from the outside, except for its deep maroon color.

But Larry has always preferred the two-seater car over the four and he eventually found himself a ’59 100/6 two-seater like he had at Fort Sill. Originally built in the late ’60s with a 68 fuel injected corvette engine and four speed, the motor was changed to a Chevy zz4 crate motor in 2008. The car had received the full Cobra treatment with huge fender flares with 10/11 by 15 inch wheels and 245/295 Goodrich TA radials. Larry has been dialing back the car’s appearance, purchasing new aluminum fenders to replace the flared ones while he plans on keeping some small flares in the rear. The four-speed has been swapped for a 2004R AOD as well as the wooden dash with a Healey dash with custom Speedhut gauges. Larry plans on ending up with a stock appearing 400 horsepower Healey that he can “… just press the accelerator and zip on off!!”

Chris Scholz had a problem that befell many soon-to-be Nasty Boy owners back in the day … the 2.7 liter six in his ’59 100-6 BN4 needed replacement. Since Chris tracks a 2007 C6 Z06 Corvette and wanted a lighter fuel injected motor than the Healey lump, the solution was pretty obvious … an aluminum 2000 LS1 5.7L V8 from the Corvette/Camaro.

The LS Chevrolet motors have become increasingly popular in the hot rod world. They’re light, cheap, and make great power. Even better, they’re available in salvage yards all over the country in everything from Corvettes to pick-up trucks. Chris also swapped in a 4L60E 4-speed automatic. Note the “E” in the transmission labelling, it stands for “electronic”. And that’s the key to the fairly unique nature of Chris’s build. It’s all computer controlled from the transmission to the fuel injection. It makes for a more driveable car than old school carburation, but it complicates the build with all the additional sensors, electronic control modules and additional wiring needed to run everything. Chris, an optometrist from Muscatine, Iowa was looking for a daily driver with these mods, but it’s not a road a lot of swappers have been willing to go down. Chris believes he has one of three LS powered Healeys in the world.

Besides the mechanical work, Chris took the car down to bare metal and farmed out the bodywork and paint. It presently wears Carmine Red over Old English White and has a stock red leather interior with white piping that Chris did himself.

With the success of Chris’s car, look for more LS Healey builds in the future.

John Reynolds, on the other hand, is pursuing the “vintage race car” look with his BN1. John’s a lawyer from Lexington, KY and apparently not afraid to roll the dice. He saw the car on Craiglist a couple of years ago, located 800 miles away and bought it sight unseen.

He removed the bumpers, added an Aston filler cap and fitted Dayton Jaguar spoke black wire wheels that set off perfectly the Guards Red paint. The driveline is completely vintage, a date-coded 1968 Chevy 327, M20 Muncie 4 speed and GM 12 bolt rear end. And what will really set this car off is the quad Weber IDF 44 setup currently being rebult by Weber induction wizard Jim Inglese.

John calls his car “gorgeous and brutally fast. An authentic sports car that is truly a visceral experience to drive.”
B N1 Nasty Boy owned by John Reynolds. It sports a Chevrolet 350 with 4 Webers, Muncie 4-speed, Chevrolet 12-bolt rear end, 72-spoke wires, 4-wheel disc brakes, Aston roller cap, dual side-exit exhaust, and a few other bits and bobs I can’t recall. Thought it was very tastefully done...almost understated and the black wire wheels gave it a nice menacing look.

• Illustration by David Townsend, limited edition fine art prints of British Sports and Racing Cars, www.sportscarart.com •
Back in the '60s Ed “Big Daddy” Roth, radical hot rod builder and airbrush artist, did a T-shirt design featuring a bright red bugeye with huge racing slicks and a blown Hemi sticking out of the bonnet with the caption, “It’s only a Sprite.” Lots of impressionable teenagers wore that shirt and by the looks of Clay Smith’s 383 cubic inch Chevy powered Sprite when he bought it off eBay, the builder was probably one of them. If not a dead ringer for the Big Daddy car, it was certainly a homage.

Although outwardly appearing in good shape, Clay’s been replacing and repairing items that weren’t to his taste or in some cases, just plain scary. For instance, the stock front suspension with stock front springs and tiny Spridget disc brakes were the first to be binned. Clay installed a Frontline tube shock conversion with Spitfire discs and MGB calipers along with uprated springs to support the extra 200 pound weight of the Chevy engine and transmission. A Wilwood dual master cylinder with proportioning valve was spec’ed as well as a 7/8” sway bar to control roll.

Added to the list of horrors Clay found was a steering column not bolted to the rack. Clay installed a new rack along with an upgraded steering column with additional supports added. The old exhaust manifolds were replaced with a coated set of Corvette ram horns and a larger exhaust system was fabricated to flow through a set of Borla mufflers, exiting in front of the rear wheels.

A new transmission tunnel was built to hold the Lokar shifter controlling the TH350 automatic that Clay kept because “my wife can’t drive stick.” The car has a tube frame holding the Ford 9” rear end connected to the tranny by the world’s shortest driveshaft. New Kirkey classic roadster buckets were installed with racing belts to keep everyone secure in the cockpit.

A new Finishline fiberglass bonnet was purchased to replace the steel one that had been opened up for a blower. It was installed with a forward tilt kit, rather than the usual rear opening bugeye unit. Despite Clay’s desire to fit everything under an unmodified hood, he found it just wasn’t possible and added a small scoop to clear the carburetor.

The car is still a work in progress although it’s been street driven. Clay reports it’s a smooth driver and its estimated 400 hp allows the tires to be spun at will. Probably needs one of those “Sit Down, Strap In, Shut Up and Hold On” dash plaques to top it off.
A few words of advice, and caution for those with Nasty Boy Healeys and those who may be considering building one.

1) I enjoyed the early part with history of Geoff and others very interesting.

2) I think that given Geoff’s interest in upping power in Healeys puts what the Nasty Boys have done in better perspective than people have probably considered in the past, though some of them seem to have taken the issue of power to pretty high extremes.

3) As an engineer and metallurgist, I’m always concerned with driving vintage cars in ways that put their components under stress – even at maximum levels that they were designed to handle some 60-odd years ago. The quality of forgings, and metal alloys used back then in critically-stressed components (drive train, suspension, and steering) isn’t what it is in today’s new cars, and thus makes me more conservative when driving my “standard” BN1. We see many instances of frames developing cracks, not just in welds, but also in clean metal adjacent to welds because of poor welding practice and techniques back in the ’50s. This is just one indication of the level of quality in the cars produced in the ’50s & ’60s, when speeds on the roads were generally a lot lower than they have been for years.

4) So when you consider putting a much more powerful engine into a Healey, one prudent aspect of the process must include assessing whether the rest of the drive train, suspension, and handling hardware/components will be up to the greater stresses that will result. Of course, the manner in which the car is driven is critical to the stress levels created, but with a lot of new horses under the bonnet, it is all too tempting to see “how she goes now”, so we can’t expect these cars to be driven the way their as-new versions were.

5) When rebuilding Healeys, there are non-destructive tests that are commonly used to check for nascent, and growing cracks in heads and cranks, and careful inspection of frames is also becoming more of “standard operating procedure” of good restoration shops. However, such testing becomes even more important when upgrades that greatly increase power and torque capabilities enter the picture.

6) And finally, when creating these much more powerful machines, the quality and craftsmanship of the work needs to be the highest highest – this should not be a time for cutting corners to save a few cents here and there. And as the driver you need to understand even more factors that affect handling and how to deal with emergency situations that you may never have experienced with less-powerful machines. Your life, and that of others, depends on it!

Roger Moment
Technical Advisor to Austin-Healey Magazine
Modified Healeys in Competition

By Rick Neville, a.k.a. “Madman in a death machine”

Road Racing

Racers don’t care much about what modifications are made to their car as long as it goes faster and is within the rules (or at least won’t get caught if they stray a bit). And if that involves sticking a Chevy V8 in a 100S, so be it.

Many purists are probably shaking their heads and wondering what defiler could possibly do such a thing to the most iconic Healey. Guess what? A review of Ken Freese’s 100S Registry data shows seven of the fifty cars had V8s in them at one time or another. Stands to reason, really, that when the original motors wore out, racers turned to something with more power. How successful any of these cars were on track is difficult to tell, with the few reported finishes being related to club races and hillclimbs.

Nevertheless, V8s in Healeys seemed to be quite a thing in amateur racing in the ’50s, before classifications by later day sanctioning bodies would have taken them out of serious contention. Not surprisingly, California seemed to be home for most of these early Nasty Boys.

Pat Patrick was racing his Chevy powered 100 at Santa Barbara in 1956-7. Looking at the Maserati styled grille opening and fender vents, it seems cooling with a V8 Healey was as much a problem then as it is today. The car was heavily crashed at Santa Barbara in 1957 and pictures of the rear of the car clearly show the dual exhausts running underneath.

John Armanino piloted his Corvette-powered 100 in many races on the West Coast, taking a first place at Stockton in March, 1958 with the Stockton Record reporting: ...the major surprise of the races was the standout performance of Linden, CA, driver John Armanino. Armanino drove his Chevrolet-engined Austin Healey to victory in the Saturday race...
for novice drivers in modified cars. The full-race Corvette engine pushed the little British bomb into both overall and Class C wins, beating all type of machinery. This win qualified Armanino to drive in the main race with senior drivers yesterday. In the Sunday feature, the Linden leadfoot again roared home to a win in class C and took second overall behind Eldon Beagle’s Porsche 550 Spyder. Armanino’s Healey, like Patrick’s, also sported a widened grille opening and fender vents.

Also racing V8 Healeys on the West Coast at this time were Dan Parkinson, with one of the aforementioned 100S, Stan Peterson with a flamed 100 that is probably better known for appearing in the 1962 remake of the movie State Fair with teeth painted around its grille opening and, on the East Coast, Richard Mathews drove a V8 Healey with a Maserati like nose that was featured in Hot Rod.

Perhaps the one V8 Healey owner that really lived a racer’s dream was Forrest “Bud” Dana. Born in West Palm Beach, FL, Bud raced his Corvette-powered Healey in the Bahama Speed Weeks and Cuban Grand Prix. The field of the Nassau Trophy at the 7th International Bahamas Speed Weeks in 1960 was made up of some of the most legendary cars and drivers of the Golden Age of sports car racing: Gurney in a Lotus 19; the Rodriguez brothers sharing a Ferrari 250 TR; Gus Andrey and Jim Hall in Maserati Tipo 61s; and Bonnier, Penske and Holbert in a squadron of Porsche 718s. And there was Bud, gridded for the LeMans start between a Corvette C1 and Bill Sadler driving his own Sadler Mk III. Bud got off to a great start, leaving many of the racers still strapping in and won his C Modified class, finishing 23rd overall, 20 laps behind winner Gurney. (As a Sprite guy, too, I’d be remiss in failing to mention that John Colgate finished 20th overall in the Falcon-bodied Sprite, three places in front of Bud). Ian Osborne, whose “Frankenhealey” is featured elsewhere in this issue calls Bud “his hero” and, not surprisingly, followed in his tiretracks to become the first overseas entrant in the 2012 Bahama Speed Weeks Revival. What must have been a true bucket list event, Ian enjoyed a week of sun, racing, concours and an evening at Government House with the cream of Bahamian society while hanging with Stirling Moss and six-times LeMans winner Derek Bell who remarked that Frankenhealey was a bit faster than the 100 he’d owned as a young man. This was after Ian came close to totalling a few cars after entering the top paddock of the Bahamas hillclimb sideways.

V8 Healeys weren’t limited to the Western Hemisphere, though. A really wild Olds-powered car showed up on the Jalopy Journal website a few years ago with a picture and the following story: The car, originally owned and developed by two brothers, is a very early ‘53 BN1 Healey 100 raced around 1956-1963 with a number of engine set ups. First, it ran the standard Healey engine, then the Healey engine with a 3-71 supercharger that protruded up and out of the bonnet, and finally it ran an Olds 324 bored out to “about 365” with a six Stromberg 97 carb set up. The alloy nose was custom rebuilt in the late ’50’s after a paddock “ding” to the original nose. In period the car held a number of local sprint and track records, and with its Rocket engine was written up in the Australian press as “...probably the fastest accelerating car in South Australia” and “the most powerful sports car yet seen in Australia....” (It’s original owner told me it would lift its front wheels a few feet in the air when under full acceleration. Unfortunately, the present owner from Adelaide never posted again.

Healeys found their way to other British outposts as well. In Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) the Hickman Brothers converted four Healeys to Chevy power, one of which has recently been racing in South Africa. And one of the quickest Healeys in the former colonies was that of Neville Austin in Pretoria, South Africa which, in a story suited only to a Nasty Boy, unselfishly underwent a heart transplant to help an ailing Maserati: “At the beginning of 1959, Neville decided that his Healey 6 was never going to have enough power to satisfy. To rectify this situation, he bought a V8 Chevrolet engine from a scrap yard. He stripped and rebuilt it with a 1956 high torque cam and solid valve lifters. He topped the motor off
with a three carburettor inlet manifold from the United States. An adapter plate was made to fit the four speed Healey gearbox to the motor. Unfortunately, he now ran out of money and had to settle for three ex-army Ford carbs. After the Chevy motor went in and was sorted, the Healey was a flier but lacked road holding and handling.

While I was fettling the Ferrari (Scuderia Lupini Ferrari MM entered at 1960 SA Grand Prix in East London and Cape Town), Neville towed Jake [as Louis was called] to Bulawayo to race the Maser, with the Healey-Chev. The tow rope started being about four metres long. By the time they got to Bulawayo, it was half a metre long! Unfortunately, during the race, the Maser stripped the oil pump drive and ran the bearings. The team fashioned an “A” bracket at Johnny Love’s workshop and towed the Maser back in some style.

During the weekend, the plot was hatched to transplant the Chev motor from the Healey into the Maserati. Once the change-over was done, they would race it at the coming races at East London and Cape Town. In the short time available, this was not seen as a daunting task by the great Austin and his buddy, Jake. When they returned to Pretoria, they submitted entries to the two venues. Before either had turned a spanner. That the Maserati Chev was ready in time and that the car got to East London and Cape Town in time, is a saga on its own. Never mind that it started and finished strongly in both events.

Drag Racing

If you’re going to put a big motor in a little car, the place where you want to take it is the dragstrip. And that’s where Nasty Boys shine. None of those tricky curves to worry about, just step on the gas and the quickest one to the finish is the winner.

In 1958, The National Hot Rod Association established its new “Sp” class for sports cars, requiring full street equipment and engine in the normal location. Don Simmons, from Tuscon, AZ in his 100 with a 437 cubic inch ’57 Buick motor set the record in B/Sp (2701 cc and up) for the first year running at 108.95 mph.

By the ‘60s the big dogs were running in AA/MSp. AA for “supercharged” and MSp for “modified sports.” They were allowed a 25% engine setback and with huge drag slicks, mega power and light front ends their wheelie shows delighted the crowds.

Californian Norm Cowdrey’s Superstition 13 has some of the most amazing photos of drag racing at the time with smoke billowing off the tires and wheels high in the air. And as if going for the unlucky number 13 wasn’t enough, Cowdrey painted it green (metallic lime to be exact) a color notoriously feared by racers for bad luck. Didn’t seem to stop Norm, though, as the car turned an 8.575 second ET with a top end of 161.87 mph at the Smokers Fuel and Gas Championships in Bakersfield in 1965, which is pretty impressive considering Don Garlits won the meet in his Double A Fuel Altered dragster at 8.10 and 205 mph.

Superstition 13, a ’55 100, was built on a 92-inch wheelbase with a B&M hydrostick transmission. The front fenders, hood and doors were fiberglass with the remaining shell in steel. Plugging the Bakersfield numbers into the drag racing computer show it must have been turning out about 500 horsepower. Following a successful drag racing career, Norm turned to racing in vintage Can-Am, piloting the ex-Paul Newman “Winning” movie McKee Mk. 10.

On the East Coast, Bob Ida of Morganville, NJ was running his Supercharged Gas 354 Chrysler ’56 Healey known as The Hemi Healy. Why no second “e” in “Healy”? Every time anyone asks Bob, there’s a different answer, like: “We were paying the sign painter by the letter,” “We were trying to make the front end as light as possible,” or “Misspelling Healey was just a way of me signifying that we follow our own path, here.” So who knows?

The car ran a Roto-Faze intake manifold with a Detroit Diesel 6-71 supercharger bolted on top, with an overturned wheelbarrow from the local hardware store fashioned as a scoop to cover the blower. A B&M hydrostick transmission routed power back to the 57 Ford rearend. The car was painted a deep purple, but a 540-degree spin at Englishtown Dragway following a transmission fluid spill called for a quick color change as Bob decided purple was “too close to death for me.” That night he repainted the car in a signature copper tone that it wore for its racing career.

Running in B/GS (B Gas Supercharged) the car was quite successful, running a best of 9.20 @ 151 mph, the English-
The Hemi Healey met its end in August, 1969 at Englishtown when Bob launched particularly hard. The car rose to the sky as always, but this time kept climbing until it was dancing on its back bumper. When it eventually came back down, the car had buckled so badly it was scrapped, hauled off to a nearby salvage yard never to be seen again. Or so everyone thought. But sometimes fate intervenes and when Bob and his son, Rob, were looking for a Healey to do a tribute when they were tipped to the location of a potential car. Sure enough, Bob was able to identify it as the old Hemi Healey and it was brought back to Ida’s shop where Bob and Rob, a custom vehicle builder in his own right, did a complete rebuild identical to its appearance in its glory days culminating in a cover feature in the May, 2016 issue of Hot Rod Magazine. And it still makes regular appearances at Englishtown for those looking for nostalgia drag racing action.

What’s the best name for a car that throws its front wheels in the air like it just doesn’t care? What else but Wheelie Healey? That was Neil Mahr’s purple ’55 100 that held the national record in B/MSp in 1961. One look at the grainy snapshot demonstrates it deserved its name. Running a gas supercharged 327 Chevy and a 4-speed its best pass is listed as 10.7@ 132.7 mph. Mahr, from Pottstown, PA, went on in drag racing right to the Top Fuel dragster class where he made a 5 second run at the Gatornationals. Whereabouts of the Wheelie Healey are unknown and Neil’s son Scott was trying to locate it as a tribute to his dad, who passed in 2011.

The longest running Healey drag car must be Ted Seipel’s who bought a 100 in 1958 after a two-year hitch in the service. The motor expired soon afterward and Ted put in a 283 Chevy motor. It’s been drag racing continuously ever since. Ted estimates he’s made between 7,000 and 8,000 passes in the Austin Healey during its tenure on the race track running in the mid-10s as a bracket racer.

For the longest time, I ran the car with a Doug Nash 4-Speed,” Seipel explained. “Then I went to the powerglide transmission in the late ’70s. The car has always had a small block Chevrolet of some variety in it. It’s still the stock Austin Healey frame, believe it or not. We back-halved the car and put a ladder bar suspension under it. Dan DiVita put a rack and pinion on it for me. But for the most part, it’s had very few modifications.

Ted still drives the car in competition today, as it’s currently outfitted with a Chevrolet 377 that pushes it to low 11-second E.T.’s.

Not to be left out, Sprites have been known to get in on the wheelstanding action as well. It’s tough not to giggle at cars like British driver Philip Herrick’s Rover V8 Muscle Sprout and Australian Darren Veal’s 462 ci big block Chevy Frrite as they begin their trip down the quarter, but each is a formidable weapon with Muscle Sprout running at 11.6 @ 125 mph and the 700 hp Frrite turning a best of 8.8 @ 155 mph.

Bonneville
Donald’s efforts to break 200 mph on the Bonneville Salt Flats with the streamliner are legendary and other amateur record seekers took their modified Healeys to the Salt as well. For example, a very good performance was turned in by David Babler of Santa Monica, who had installed a Hilborn injected, 301-cubic-inch Chev engine in his ’56 100. His best speed of 167.59 mph still was no match for the unforgettable 191.136 set by Joe Carboni in C Sports Racing class with a Chev-engined Devin special in 1959, obviously showing the advantage of streamlining.

And I think Donald may have smiled a bit when he was joined in the “200 Mile an Hour Club” in 1999 when Gail Watson Phillips pushed her single carb small block Chevy streamlined Sprite to 202 mph on the Salt. That drive earned her the honor of being the 7th woman to be inducted into the “200 Club”. Two years later, with a 383 ci motor installed, she upped her record to 220 mph at Lake Gairdner, Australia.

Conclusion
Viewed from today’s perspective, when a stock Healey has trouble keeping pace with a modern economy sedan, the accomplishments mentioned here might not seem that impressive. But take a second to think about them in context and imagine what it would be like to drive a Healey that can accelerate with modern supercars or reach speeds of 175 mph in the 50s and 60s and that might provide a little insight into what drove the early Healey modifiers.