

COMPETITION REPORT NOVEMBER 2011

TEAM HEALEY and MSCA NEWS

COMING EVENTS **Events marked with * count towards the Competition Championship. Sprint and Regularity events require a basic CAMS level 2S licence only. (contact Rod Vogt)**

1 **MARQUE SPORTS CAR ASSOCIATION (MSCA)**

CALENDAR FOR 2011

Round 8 (final for 2011) Saturday 5th November *Calder confirmed
Trophy presentations and refreshments will follow the end of the day's events.

CALENDAR FOR 2012

Round 1	Sunday 29 th January	Winton	confirmed
Round 2	Sunday 4 th March	Sandown	confirmed
Round 3	Sunday 25 th March	Haunted Hills (hillclimb)	confirmed
Round 4	Sunday 29 th April	Winton	confirmed
Round 5	Sunday 20 th May	Phillip Island	to be confirmed
Round 6	Sunday 1 st July	Sandown	confirmed
Round 7	Sunday 19 th August	Phillip Island	to be confirmed
Round 8	Sunday 30 th September	Winton	confirmed
Round 9	November????	Phillip Island	to be confirmed

We have applied for the Phillip Island dates but have yet to receive confirmation. Calder may figure in the mix as a fall-back.

ENTRY FORMS for these events will be sent to all on the Team Healey email list and are available on the MSCA website www.msca.net.au . Ring Rod Vogt on 5962 1915 or 0408 395 240 or email competition-MSCA@healeyvic.com.au . Spectators are encouraged. Entry is free and you are welcome in our pit garage. Competition starts at approximately 9.15am

2 **OTHER EVENTS**

5/6th Nov *Historic Sandown
26/27th Nov * HSRCA Historics at Eastern Creek, Sydney

Note that due to our Competition presentations being made at the Dinner Dance on November 26th, The Eastern Creek Historics becomes the first event for our 2012 Championship.

SANDOWN HISTORIC RACES NOVEMBER 5/6th

A fantastic race meeting at the accessible Sandown circuit. This is the weekend after Melbourne Cup Day and no social events are scheduled - no excuses for not supporting our Healeys in Group S Production Sports Car Races and in Post War Regularity. Come and see Peter Jackson, Steve Pike, Brian Duffy, Colin Goldsmith and Laurie Sellers battling it out in their Big Healeys. Rod Vogt (MGB) and Peter Kaiser (Sprite) join them in Group S racing. David Kelly will run his 100/4 in the Regularity event. For full details of what to expect in other classes go to the Victorian Historic Racing Register website www.vhrr.com

COMPETITION REPORTS

1 **MSCA WINTON 25th SEPTEMBER**

Russell Baker was the sole AHOC member at an under subscribed Winton – only 56 entries when we would normally expect 80 plus, resulting in a financial loss for the MSCA. Of concern was the very poor entry of just 4 cars in Regularity. The MSCA committee is hoping this was a temporary hiccup although there are signs that entries are down in all areas of club motorsport at present. The Festival of Sporting Cars event at Wakefield Park in November has been cancelled altogether, although they were trying a one day format for the first time which may not have proven popular. The Winton weekend had football finals etc. but is the current financial instability having a negative effect? A clash with Brian's Brain Buster kept Bill Vaughan and Brian Aitken away, while our other regularity competitors do not like to travel the extra distance to Winton, although I have pointed out that Winton is the same distance as Phillip Island from Melbourne CBD!

More than an hour of track time was lost after a Healey Sprite lost it's sump plug in the first session and dropped oil around the track. There were numerous breakdowns with more than the normal quota of recoveries. **Russell** caught the bug and limped in after the first run with fairly serious mechanical problems which will sideline the Healey until the start of the 2012 season. **Russell** completed just 7 laps but was immediately up to speed and scored very well towards the *Competition Championship* with his 4 fastest laps, despite his breakdown –

Russell Baker (3000) 919 points 1.49.05, 1.49.18, 1.49.76, 1.49.86

2 HSRCA HISTORIC WAKEFIELD PARK, Goulburn, 24/25th SEPTEMBER

Still on a “high” on returning from Wakefield Park, I am going to subject you to a personal account of the joys of Healey (and MG) racing. Perhaps I need to call it “British” in the future.

9 am Sunday 25th September. My I-Phone tells me it is eight degrees with a strong wind and apparent temperature of just three degrees. Pre-dawn rain has stopped but another rain band is threatening to the East of the Wakefield Park race track. The track is wet and will be slippery after the inevitable oil has been dropped the previous day. I am halfway around our slow warm up lap for the Group S Production Sports Car race which is first event on the Sunday program. There will be no heat in the tyres for the mad dash to Turn One after the red lights go out. I am looking for grid position 15 on the main straight start line – the position I finished in the MGB in race one on Saturday afternoon after qualifying 19th of 31 starters. Initially a little disappointed with my fastest lap of 1.15.6 I am heartened to hear that others are two seconds off their best in the dry but very cold conditions on Saturday. I can see Peter Jackson in front, about to slot in to grid position 3, his Race One result after qualifying 6th. The two cars he was unable to pass were the V8 powered TVR Tuscan and a Porsche 911. I know *Peter is thinking positively* – the Healey has a better chance in these conditions. I get a BIG view in my mirrors of Colin Goldsmith in his big Healey looking for grid position 17, just two places behind the B and immediately behind me on the grid. I know what *Colin is thinking* too – he told me over dinner last night and in our shared garage as we changed to wet weather tyres at the last minute this morning. “Watch out, I am coming through at the start”. All good natured sledging but just how can I stop that powerful Healey from beating me to turn one? In race one on Saturday, Colin had stormed through from a disappointing 29th qualifying position, 10 places back, to be right beside me in turn one at the start. I wish I had been trackside to see it! I survived that onslaught and finished 2 places and ten seconds ahead on Saturday but now he is right behind me.

And what else am I thinking? Well I am thinking about something Nick Mason wrote in his column in the Octane classic car magazine. Nick Mason is better known as the drummer for rock band Pink Floyd. He has a fantastic collection of classic race –oriented cars which he races enthusiastically and well at feature European events including Goodwood's Festival and Revival events, Silverstone Classic and Classic Le Mans. Nick was talking about a function he attended at Silverstone where he was able to acknowledge the marshalls who make our events possible but are rarely acknowledged. He wrote –

“ These are the guys (and girls) who are familiar with every mistake every driver has ever made. They've got me out of the gravel, untangled me from catch fencing, and pushed me off the grass. They've also found all the bits that fall off racing cars now and again, and mopped up after the odd disgraceful puddle of oil that has formed on the tarmac. It's a bit like looking after really difficult children, not yet potty-trained and with really unsuitable toys. It's amazing how good-tempered and

enthusiastic the marshalls always are. This was a chance to get across in a diplomatic way the one thing I find most difficult to deal with on the starting line. As I sit there lined up towards the first corner with the two-minute horn blaring, the engine revving and my nerves on the limiter, someone comes up behind me, taps me firmly on the helmet and says, "well have fun then".

Fun? Fun? My entire system is saying things like "what am I doing here? Why on earth did I get up at six this morning to be here now?" It's only the seatbelts that stop me from popping out of the car like a jack-in-the-box and throttling the unsuspecting culprit. On reflection, maybe all I need are better ear plugs."

Well can you believe that as I sat nervously in the cold and wet conditions on dummy grid, a lovely lady came up to check that wrist band, helmet, gloves and seat belts were all OK, put her hand on my arm and said, "have fun". I couldn't believe it, having squirreled away Nick Mason's article in my filing cabinet for future use. As I sat awaiting the start, "engine revving and nerves on the limiter", **I was thinking** that if I survive this one I can now put Nick Mason's anecdote in my next report! So how did **Race Two** unfold? **Peter Jackson** started in third position and finished third, dealing with the TVR V8 but being dealt with by Brian Weston's MG midget (let's call it a Sprite!) which loved the slippery conditions to move from fourth to a comfortable first. The second placed Porsche was slipping and sliding unpredictably and generally baulking the Healey and Peter had to settle for third, less than a second behind, rather than risk a desperate move and possible tears. The **MG** got off the line well and the **Goldsmith Healey** did **not** get past in the first turn. The first three laps were a blur of sliding and sometimes spinning cars all around. I had to go to www.natsoft.com.au website to make sense of it all – From 15th at the start I was 11th for laps one, two and three, passing a several cars on merit and several facing the wrong way! Two of these quicker cars recovered in time to re-pass the B on laps four and five and I held on grimly to finish 13th to a great sigh of relief and a great deal of satisfaction. "To win you first have to finish" is the saying, and the same applies in midfield. Colin battled the greasy conditions in the Healey for 17th place. On the slippery track it was important to drive smoothly, looking well ahead "through the next corner" and relying on peripheral vision to deal with your racing line and the traffic immediately in front of the car. Gentle throttle and brake application is crucial.

It's a pity I forgot those basics in the two hour wait for **Race Three!** Poor start, three places lost at turn one including to **Colin** in the Healey, followed by over-driving trying to make up lost ground on a dry but cold track resulted in **TWO** spins! I got past Colin halfway around the third lap only to spin in turn one as he came back at me down the main straight. Then I spun again coming on to the main straight on the same lap dropping to **LAST** place. I was convinced the MG had jumped out of second gear both times. Colin got out of the Healey with a big grin – he said I was **NEVER** going to get through turn one at that speed. On reflection, he was dead right – I was trying too hard. I recovered somewhat to finish a chastened 17th, **Colin** was 14th and **Peter Jackson 3rd** **AGAIN**, getting on top of the Midget but unable to hold off the V8 TVR on the drier track.

Race Four started late on the gloomy afternoon with rain threatening again – it started just minutes after the finish. We were down to just 14 starters, many strangely deciding they had had enough, but not the tragics from Victoria. We hadn't travelled 700 km's to go home early. **Peter** came in second to the TVR, just 0.3 second in front of Tony Dain's Triumph TR6, holding second place for the full seven laps. **Colin** started 8th in the Healey and finished 10th. I am pleased to report that I got my act together and drove from 13th on the grid to finish 8th, getting my revenge on Colin on lap three without spearing off in to the bushes this time. With a P Plate on the boot signifying a Provisional Race Licence and my licence up in the control tower in the hands of an all-seeing Clerk of Course for approval at meeting's end, I didn't need any more oopsies. By the same token it **is a race** and you only learn by exploring and sometimes finding your limits. Oh, and second gear was just fine!

The camaraderie in Group S Racing adds to the fun enormously – two dinners with various drivers of other cars and plenty of chats with new friends in the field of competitors in the Healey (and MG) triple garage made me realize that after just four race meetings in I do feel part of the group, albeit with a long way to go. Who would have thought that, on the wrong side of sixty, one would find a challenge so satisfying and rewarding – and you can sit down while doing it! Is it better than sex? I didn't know I had to make a choice! For the record, **Peter Jackson** in the 1959 Austin Healey finished as first Group Sa (1940 to 1960) car in all four races and three thirds and a second outright against Group Sb and Sc cars up to 1977. His points (of a possible 1000) toward the **AHOC Competition Championship**, and 4 fastest laps were:

Peter Jackson (3000) 975 points 1.13.26, 1.13.34, 1.13.46, 1.13.51

Three of these laps were set in the seven lap race four!

STOP PRESS - WINTON 6 HOUR RELAY RESULT

Team Healey finished thirteenth of forty one teams at Winton Six Hour Relay . Great weekend on AND off the track with much appreciated support from club members. Full report in the December magazine.

Having quoted Nick Mason earlier, I will finish with my **CLOSING THOUGHT** from the late, great **STEVE McQUEEN** who said in his 1971 opus 'LE MANS'-

“RACING IS LIFE. ANYTHING BEFORE OR AFTER IS JUST WAITING”

Rod Vogt