

BONNEVILLE DIARY

SPEED merchants and power fans who really want to keep up with every turn of the wheels that seared the salt of the Bonneville flats last month will find HOP UP & MOTOR LIFE's "Bonneville Diary" the next best thing to being on the spot with a photographic memory.

This accurate, day by day account of races and results also contains a wealth of inside scoop on the speeds, times, trials and tribulations that either boosted or beset many of the entrants. Realizing the valuable tips that can be obtained by future salt blasters from the running of this year's races, HOP UP presents the story as it unfolded, with a searching eye for the little things going on in the pits that are often responsible for the success of a run.

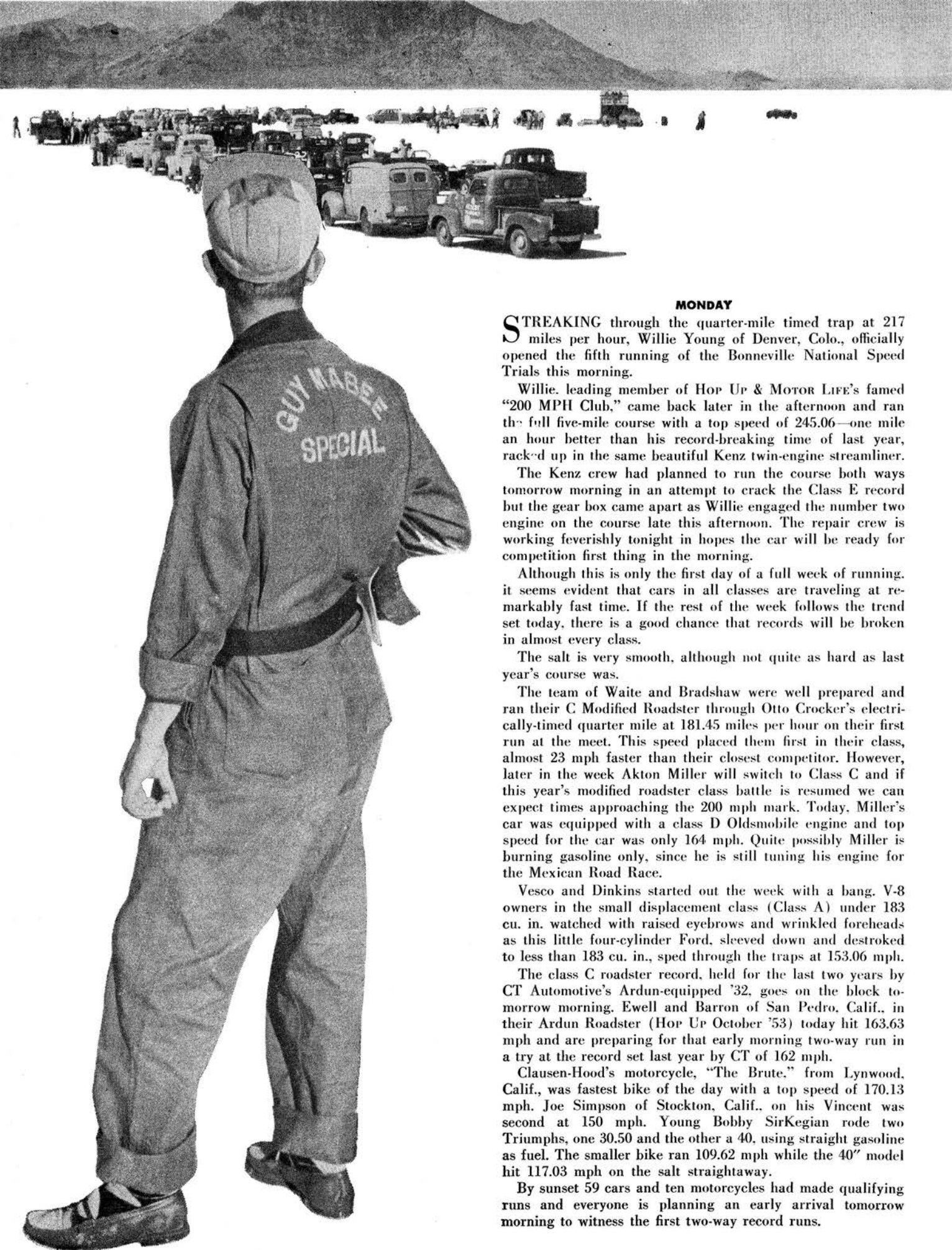
We'll try to give you some background on the people that attended. Don't think for a moment that cars and owners arrived in Wendover, Utah, as a last minute solution for the proverbial problem of "What shall we do next?" Behind each car is a story that includes long hours spent in the garage laboring over preparation, money spent for tools and equipment and a multitude of details such as arrangements for trailers to carry the cars and trucks to pull the trailers.

Many enthusiasts saved their vacations until the first week in September so they could be present at the time trials. Others made special promises to sympathetic bosses to make up the lost time if they could just get off for this year's meet. But regardless of how they got there, speed was the common subject, and we want to talk about it and the factors affecting it.

There's talk about the weather—headwinds, tailwinds, and crosswinds—about fuels; about long-standing records, and the new cars that finally broke them. With something like 400 bombs milling about the sun-baked flats this year, that's a lot of talk, and a lot of hints are dropped. "Bonneville Diary" has picked up as many as it could, and they're right here in your lap.

So if you couldn't make it this year, here's the story. And if you were on the scene yourself, here are many of those events and circumstances you wanted to be sure to remember, relived for you in this "blown by blown" account. Either way, the flag is down, so let's go to the races . . .





MONDAY

STREAKING through the quarter-mile timed trap at 217 miles per hour, Willie Young of Denver, Colo., officially opened the fifth running of the Bonneville National Speed Trials this morning.

Willie, leading member of HOP UP & MOTOR LIFE's famed "200 MPH Club," came back later in the afternoon and ran the full five-mile course with a top speed of 245.06—one mile an hour better than his record-breaking time of last year, racked up in the same beautiful Kenz twin-engine streamliner.

The Kenz crew had planned to run the course both ways tomorrow morning in an attempt to crack the Class E record but the gear box came apart as Willie engaged the number two engine on the course late this afternoon. The repair crew is working feverishly tonight in hopes the car will be ready for competition first thing in the morning.

Although this is only the first day of a full week of running, it seems evident that cars in all classes are traveling at remarkably fast time. If the rest of the week follows the trend set today, there is a good chance that records will be broken in almost every class.

The salt is very smooth, although not quite as hard as last year's course was.

The team of Waite and Bradshaw were well prepared and ran their C Modified Roadster through Otto Crocker's electrically-timed quarter mile at 181.45 miles per hour on their first run at the meet. This speed placed them first in their class, almost 23 mph faster than their closest competitor. However, later in the week Akton Miller will switch to Class C and if this year's modified roadster class battle is resumed we can expect times approaching the 200 mph mark. Today, Miller's car was equipped with a class D Oldsmobile engine and top speed for the car was only 164 mph. Quite possibly Miller is burning gasoline only, since he is still tuning his engine for the Mexican Road Race.

Vesco and Dinkins started out the week with a bang. V-8 owners in the small displacement class (Class A) under 183 cu. in. watched with raised eyebrows and wrinkled foreheads as this little four-cylinder Ford, sleeved down and destroyed to less than 183 cu. in., sped through the traps at 153.06 mph.

The class C roadster record, held for the last two years by CT Automotive's Ardun-equipped '32, goes on the block tomorrow morning. Ewell and Barron of San Pedro, Calif., in their Ardun Roadster (Hop Up October '53) today hit 163.63 mph and are preparing for that early morning two-way run in a try at the record set last year by CT of 162 mph.

Clausen-Hood's motorcycle, "The Brute," from Lynwood, Calif., was fastest bike of the day with a top speed of 170.13 mph. Joe Simpson of Stockton, Calif., on his Vincent was second at 150 mph. Young Bobby SirKegian rode two Triumphs, one 30.50 and the other a 40, using straight gasoline as fuel. The smaller bike ran 109.62 mph while the 40" model hit 117.03 mph on the salt straightaway.

By sunset 59 cars and ten motorcycles had made qualifying runs and everyone is planning an early arrival tomorrow morning to witness the first two-way record runs.

TUESDAY

Three of the cars qualifying for record runs yesterday were on the line at 7 a.m. They were Vesco and Dinkins with their class A lakester; Ewell and Barron in their class C roadster; and the Quinton-Joehneck Merc-powered '32 class C coupe. Bill Kenz was unable to complete repairs in the streamliner for the record runs.

First car to make the attempt into the gusty 15 mph headwind was the class A car and the down run was a rather disappointing speed of 135.542 mph. However, on the return run, with the wind helping, the throaty little four-barrel buzzed the timed mile at 157.205 mph. The average of the two runs netted a cool 146.373 mph and a new class record.

Second car to run was the class C roadster and the run into the wind was made at a speed of 159.786 mph. The car was unable to make the return run in the allotted time and must wait until tomorrow morning before trying again.

Third attempt of the morning was made by the Quinton-Joehneck class C coupe and they managed to break last year's record by a narrow margin with a two-way average of 136.158 mph. The down run into the wind was only 129.403 mph, but the return trip was made at a speed of 142.913.

While the record runs were being completed, cars in all classes were lining up at the starting point for qualifying runs. Vesco and Dinkins, before the day was over, had posted a time of 160.71 mph and will attempt to break their own, new record tomorrow morning.

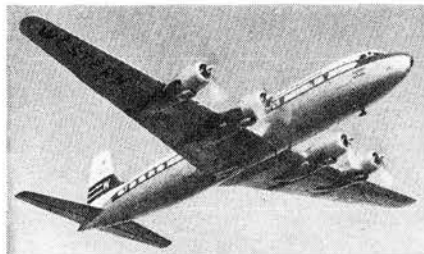
Qualifying times today were much faster than yesterday's. Everyone seems to be finding better fuel and gear combinations and, if speeds continue to increase each successive day, record runs will become a time-consuming project.

The class B lakester entered by Scotty's Muffler Service jumped from 136.98 mph yesterday to 186.43 mph today. Quite an improvement!

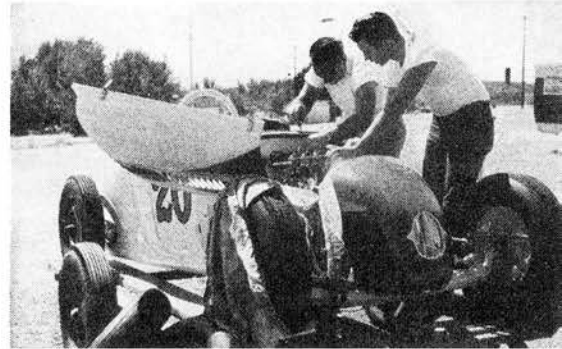
Fastest time of the day was turned in by the Hill-Davis streamliner (class B) at 230.80 mph. Otto Ryssman will make the two-way run early Wednesday morning in this car. Otto has taken over the helm in the absence of Hill, who is preparing to drive the twin-engine streamliner entered by LeBlanc of San Jose, Calif.

Sports car drivers were rudely awakened today when a hot rodder with many years' dry lake experience flashed his home-built Fiberglass-bodied coupe through the timer at 167.91 mph. This is the fastest sports car time to be posted so far and Bill Burke is confident his car will exceed the 170 mph mark tomorrow. His closest competitor, Bob Cardwell of Fresno, Calif., driving a sports car with a roadster body, hit 137.61 mph today.

Motorcycle rider Joe Simpson raised his speed of yesterday to 152.02 mph.



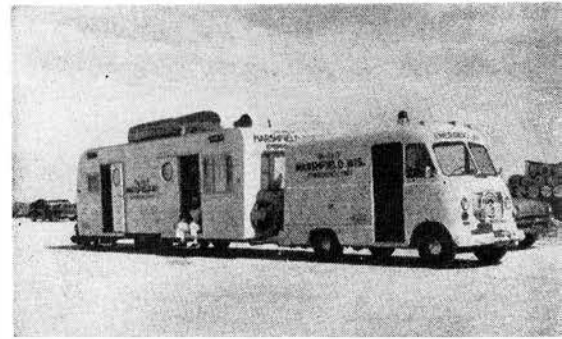
IN ORDER for the Bonneville Diary to reach HOP UP and MOTOR LIFE's Los Angeles offices in time for the deadline, Western Airlines DC-6's daily brought the information from Salt Lake City in the reasonably short time of three hours



ALTERATIONS are made in Wendover early in morning before trip to salt

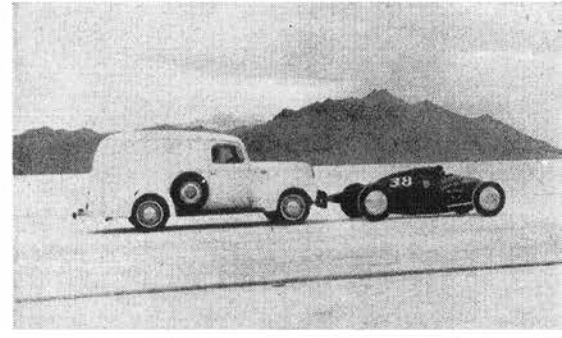


COMPLETE speed shops are set up on the salt to supply replacement parts



MOBILE Hospital stationed near course is prepared to handle any emergency

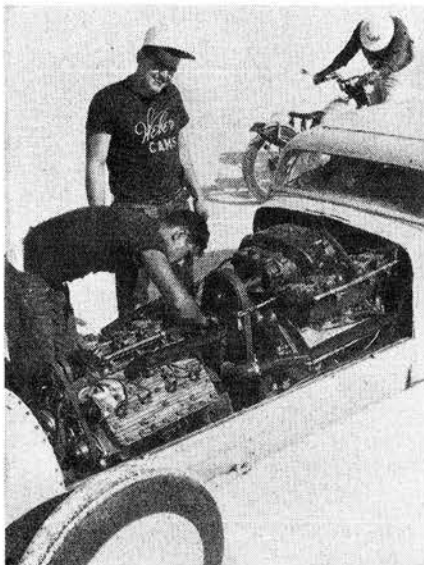
A FAMILIAR sight at the speed trials. Johnny Moore of Firestone checks tires



SCOTTY'S class B lakester pushed for start of fast run, netted over 186 mph

MICKEY THOMPSON had ill fortune of blowing up the rear engine of his coupe

STARTER Bob Higby discusses course with driver of Husting-Adams lakester





WEDNESDAY

Eight record runs this morning indicate that the amateur speed enthusiasts are beginning to find the right combination to smash the marks.

Atmospheric conditions and the slick salt had been holding back the drivers up to now, but this morning's results made it crystal clear to the rapidly-growing group of spectators that the hot-rodders are going about their record-breaking in a scientific manner.

Most heartbreaking of the eight runs this morning was that of Joe Simpson. On his motorcycle across the two-way course, he failed to crack the American Motorcycle Association record by less than a half-mile per hour. He turned in a two-way average of 155.350 mph.

Car No. 594, an Allard with a Chrysler engine, buzzed through the timed mile at an average speed of 137.254 mph to set a new sports car roadster class record.

The A lakester record was raised ten miles per hour today by the Vesco-Dinkins entry.

The Hill-Davis class B streamliner failed to make the return run after a down run of 228.136 mph. The fuel pump feeding the injectors failed in the timed mile

and the car was forced to coast through the traps.

Willie Young in the Kenz streamliner failed to exceed his previous time of 248 mph but has qualified for an attempt on the class E record and we expect to see him on the line at 7 a.m. Thursday.

Bill Burke set a new sports car coupe record at 149.878 mph. Fuel pump failure on this car also prevented it from making a faster two-way average through the timed mile.

Scotty's Muffler tank set a new class B record at 185.974 mph. This Ardun-equipped Ford engine seems to be running faster each day and we are wondering when these stock Ford crankshafts will cease to take the punishment forced on them by the inclined overhead valve conversions with their extremely high compression ratios.

Art Chrisman, in his new modified coupe, turned a speed of 163.63 mph and thereby qualifies for a record run tomorrow morning. This is one of the most beautifully constructed coupes seen on the salt flats and while this is only the first day's results, he is sure to set a high mark for his competitors to aim at.

Wednesday, middle of the week for these amateur speed enthusiasts, saw the

Line-up early Wednesday morning finds roadster, coupe and a lakester at start

arrival of two streamliners that are expected to set new international marks. Mal Hooper of Burbank, Calif., and Gene LeBlanc pulled into Wendover late in the evening and we hope to see both of these cars on the salt early tomorrow morning.

The most exclusive racing club of the world had its first meeting tonight and Capt. G. E. Eyston was elected president for the coming year. Present were representatives from almost every racing publication in the U.S. Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. was represented by Johnny Moore and Henry Richards.

The most astonishing qualifying time of the day was the one turned in by the D competition coupe entered by Don Bishop of Torrance, Calif., at 161.29. This car is equipped with a Mercury engine using a 180 degree crankshaft and a converted GMC supercharger. The stock '32 Ford coupe body on this chassis presents so much frontal area we feel that the engine must be putting out at least 400 horsepower on straight methanol.

It will be interesting to see how this fast car makes the two-way average at tomorrow's trials.

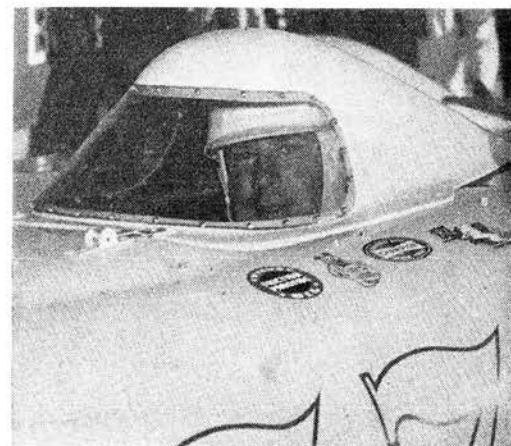
WATCHER at the five-mile mark listens to instructions from official at the start



CLUTCH disc taken from the Meredith-Barton B coupe after four hard days



STREAMLINED canopy over Willie Young's head raised top speed to 254



THURSDAY

Four new class records were posted this morning, although eight cars and one motorcycle made two-way runs.

First to make the run both ways was Bob Cardwell in his 331 cu. in. Chrysler-powered sports car. He succeeded in raising his own record to a new high of 137.254 mph.

Scotty's class B lakester made another record run this morning and raised his own record set yesterday to 185.974 mph. This car is using only straight alky for fuel and the owner plans to use nitro before the end of the week in an attempt to break the 200 mph barrier. Today he hit a qualifying speed in excess of 190 mph.

Bill Burke again boosted the sports car coupe class record when he averaged 149.878 mph in his Ardun-powered Fiberglass car.

Entry No. 202, the little four-cylinder lakester, broke its record set just yesterday by traveling at an average of 156.350.

Many new cars arrived here today and all afternoon entries were lined up before the pit area entrance undergoing the rigid safety and classification inspection.

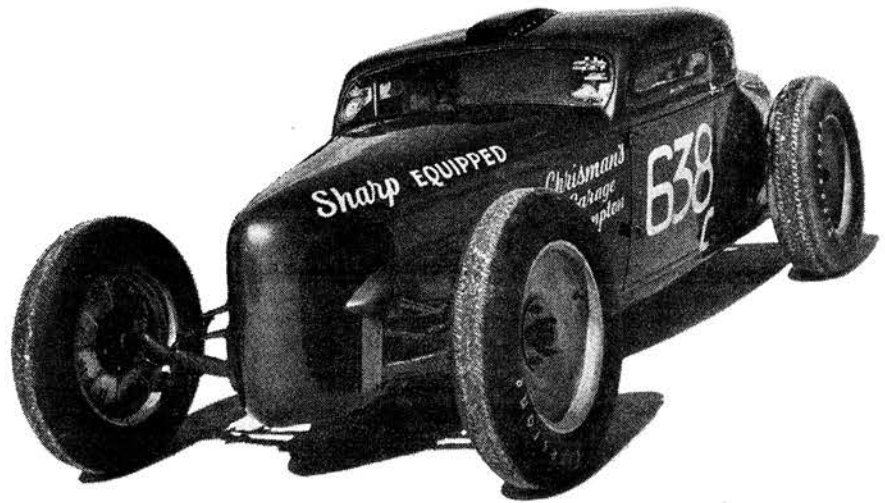
Among these was the Hooper-Brown class C streamliner and the Lee Chapel class C streamliner. Hooper experienced some difficulty with the engine but Chapel's car, with "200 MPH Club" member Sonny Rogers at the wheel, made a few runs down the nine-mile course reaching a top speed of 211.88 mph on one lap. This car is equipped this year with very small wheels and the tires are similar to those used by experimental rocket aircraft that land at speeds over 250 mph.

Major repair operations under way in the pit area today showed that wear and tear of chassis parts after four days' running over the long salt straightaway was beginning to take its toll. Complete rear end assemblies were overhauled, transmissions were replaced and engines were lifted out of all types of chassis.

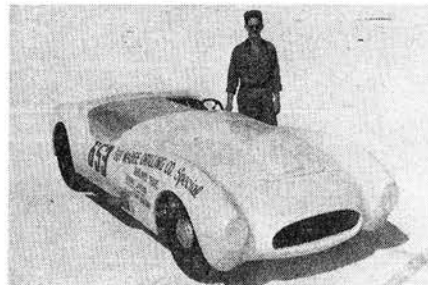
The Hill-Davis streamliner threw a rod out the side of the engine and damage was had enough to sideline this engine until after the meet. However, a new engine will be installed tomorrow and the car will run in class C in the Nationals for the first time.

Fastest time of the day and the meet was turned in by another 200 MPH Club member, Willie Young, when he sped through the timed mile at better than 254 mph. His Kenz car was equipped with a fully-enclosed canopy for the first time and this no doubt contributed to this time.

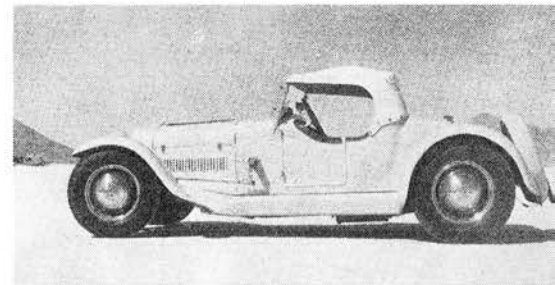
Everyone seems to be traveling a little faster each day with the exception of the streamliner classes and we will hazard a guess that more new class records will be set during the '53 Nationals than at any previous meet.



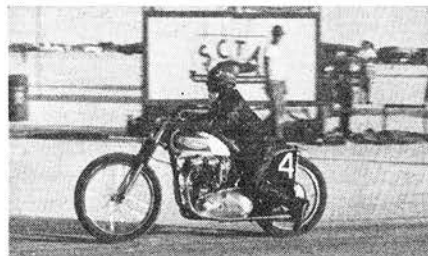
ART CHRISMAN'S beautifully constructed competition cpe. at start line before run



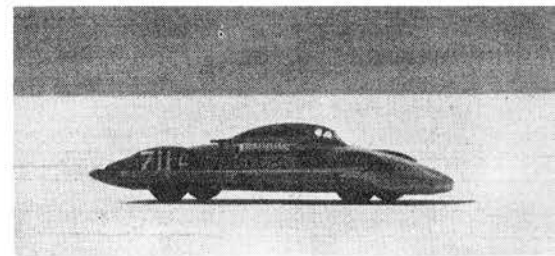
DRIVER Joe Mabee stands by his sports car after a record run of over 200 mph



CROSSCOUNTRY trip was made in this '27 T to compete at the 1953 Nationals

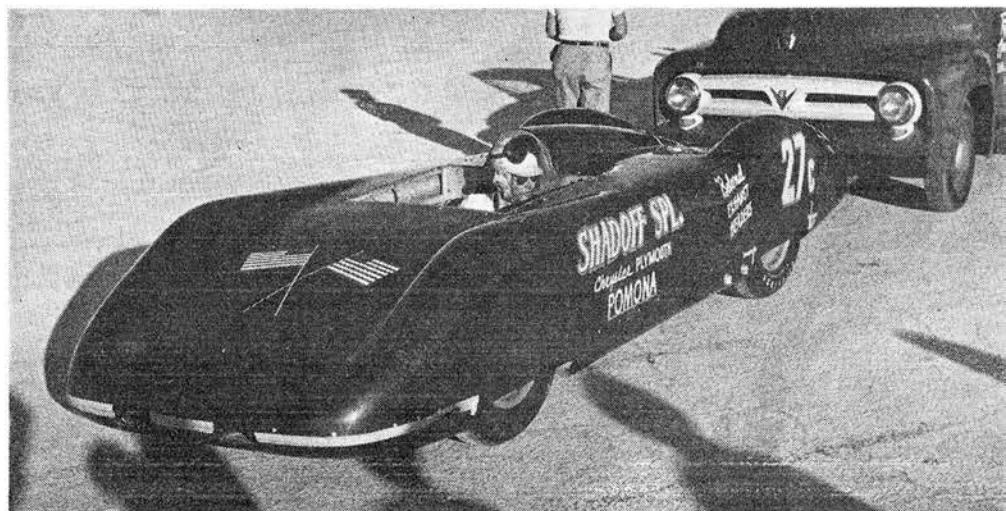


YOUNGEST participant of the meet is 13-year-old Bobby SirKegian on bike



TORNADO, entered by Lee Chapel of Oakland, Calif., made 211 qualifying run

OWNER-DRIVER Mal Hooper gets set for test run in Shadoff Special Streamliner. Former Hop Up-Motor Life Editor Dean Bachelor designed the Fiberglas body

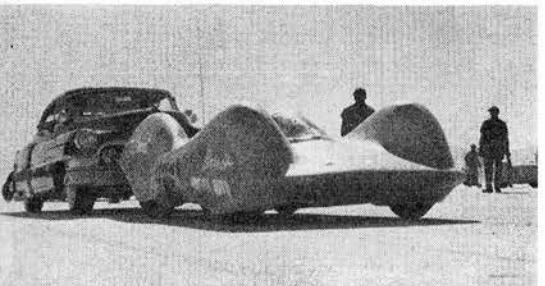




Capt. Eyston, only living man to top 300 mph, chats with Ray Brown in car



Roy Rogers, without Trigger, gets set for run in own Chrysler of over 107 mph

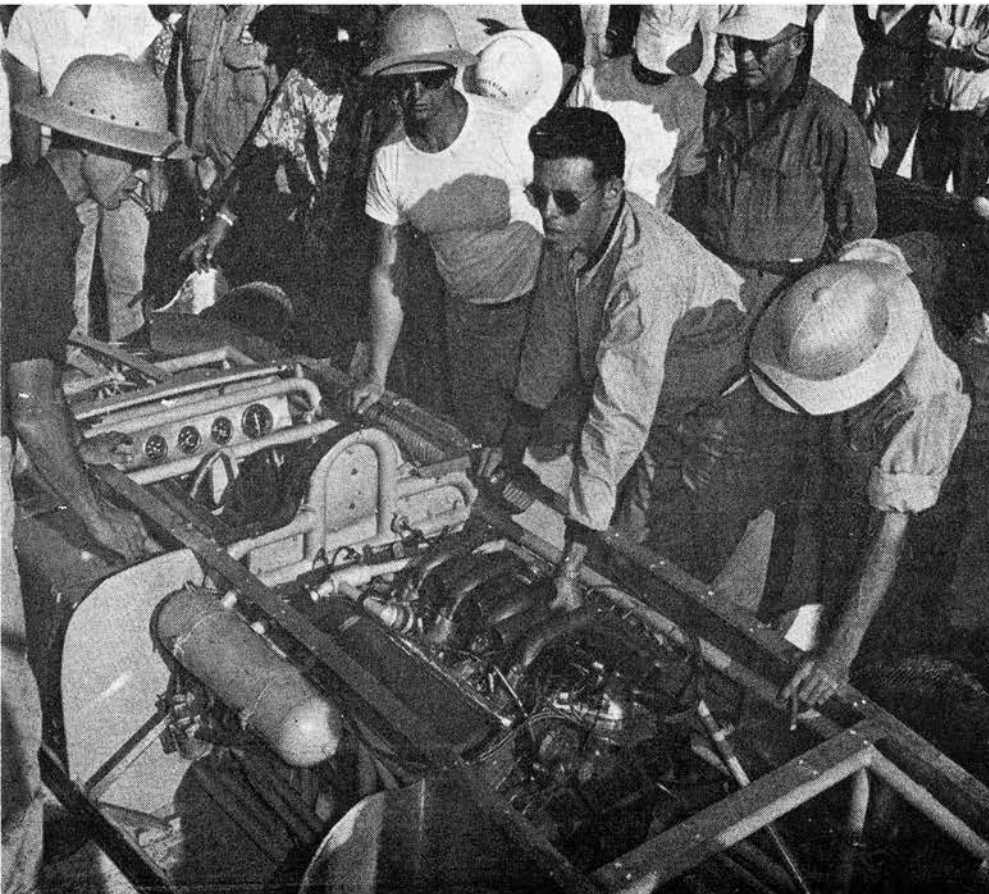


Closely resembling his last year's car, Chet Herbert's "Beast" gets pushed off



TORNADO driver, Sonny Rogers, prepares for a run that netted 230 mph

RAY BROWN and crew check over the Hooper car prior to its first run on Salt Flats



This morning we saw the first 1953 Bonneville Nationals driver qualify for membership in the 200 MPH Club. He is LeRoy Holmes of San Bernardino, Calif. While driving the Scotty's Muffler Service class B lakester, LeRoy set a two way average of 201.015 mph. The down run was made at 9:02 a.m. at 202.133 mph and the return run made 37 minutes later at 199.888 mph was enough to set an average above the 200 mark and a new all time high for lakesters running in B engine class.

Seven other records were set this morning, three of which were made by motorcycles in successful attempts on American records. Joe Simpson finally broke the American class A motorcycle record this morning after trying for four days to beat the mark set by Roland Free in 1950. Joe made the two-way run at an average of 160.697 mph.

One of the most outstanding records set this week was the 160.859 mph average turned in by Don Bishop in his stock-bodied 1932 five-window Ford coupe. Don's car is powered by a 352 cu. in. Chrysler engine and the chassis is not equipped with a quick change rear end center section. Stock Ford gears with a ratio of 3.27:1 give a final rpm reading in excess of 5200, way over the top horsepower output range of this engine. With a center section in this car I feel it would show the quick way home to even more of the special-bodied entries.

Willie Young guided the Kenz car two ways through the measured mile this morning to raise the all time high speed of any American built car to an average of 255.411 mph.

The Fibreglas-bodied car built by Mal Hooper of Burbank, Calif., made its shakedown cruise through the course today at 186 mph. Mal's plans for tomorrow call for several full speed runs through the mile to qualify for a two-way record run.

Today in the pit area we noticed that many engines were "field stripped" and that valves were being lapped in and compression chambers polished. The potent fuels used in these modified engines burn much hotter than ordinary gasoline and valves and valve seats need to be checked and retouched in order to have the engines in tip-top shape for the final two days of competition.

On our return to the little town of Wendover this evening we found that the B class streamliner entered by Chet Herbert had arrived and would be ready for an early morning run. This is a new car and not to be confused with the Fibreglas-bodied car entered by the same man at the 1952 meet.

(Continued on page 44)

Beautiful trophy signifying Engineering Achievement Award was presented by Kathleen Hughes to best constructed car





Captain G. E. T. Eyston at 200 MPH Club dinner describes his experiences on the Bonneville Salt Flats years ago. Eyston was made President of the Club



Otto Ryssman gets checked out prior to his initial test run in Hill-Davis, Bob Estes Mercury Special Streamliner

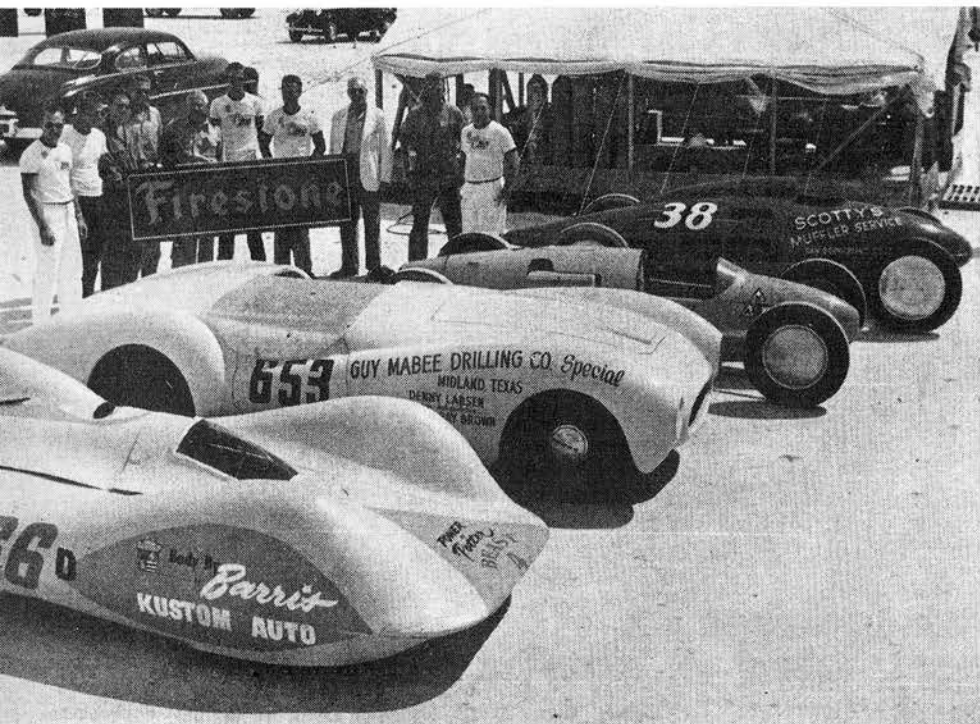


A bit of chemistry demands attention on the Salt Flats as fuel is carefully concocted for one of the competitors. Ordinary gas was seldom used for runs



Mal Meredith smiles after being given trophy for the fastest car in his class

Four of the cars that topped 200 mph during the 7 day SCTA meet. L to R: Herbert's "Beast 4" driven by Leroy Nummayer; Joe Mabee's sports car; Harvey Haller's Lakester; and Scotty's Muffler Service Lakester driven by L. Holmes



The 200 MPH Club this morning gained two new members bringing the total membership to eight Americans, two English and one Swiss. The foreign members are the new President of the club, Capt. G. E. Eyston, Colonel "Goldie" Gardner and Rudy Carraciola.

The two new members qualifying today were Joe Mabee in his streamlined sports car with a two-way average of 203.105 mph and Harvey Haller in his hand-built lakester which toured the measured mile in both directions at an average speed of 206.778 mph.

The Mabee car is a Fibreglas-bodied creation built in Midland, Texas, with a 360 cu. in. Chrysler engine developed and tuned by Ray Brown. This car very closely resembles the streamlined hot rods running at this meet with the exception that the wheel base and tread were designed and built in so that the car will have good handling characteristics when driven in the road races for which it was originally planned.

The other new addition to this most exclusive club is Harvey Haller, just returned from extensive service with the U.S. Navy in Hawaii, in the car he built in his spare time hours away from his native land and the sport he loved so much. This car is similar to most of the aircraft wing tank bodied cars with the exception that the body was shaped with the plan of running very close to the ground surface rather than like the wing tanks that were designed by aircraft engineers who, naturally, did not take into consideration the flat surface of the salt beds.

Today we saw again where safety in construction and engineering paid off. This afternoon the sun was quite hot and the water was drawn to the surface of the salt making the straightaway running course rather slick. The class C streamliner entered by Lee Chapel of Oakland, Calif. and driven by John (Sonny) Rogers of Salinas, Calif. lost traction on the wet surface and went into a long slide. The car turned over a number of times, bounced and skidded for three tenths of a mile before coming to rest upside down. I was nearest to the final resting spot of the car and consequently first to arrive. The car was almost completely demolished yet the driver's compartment was hardly damaged. I called out to John and he answered, "I'm OK, turn this thing over and let me out."

Once again the safety belt and roll bar had saved the life of a driver.

As we turned the car over John slid out and found that the only injury incurred was a scratch on the little finger of the left hand. The car was removed from the course and qualifying runs were resumed.

SUNDAY

Early this morning record runs were begun and it seems as though some of the

boys needed all week to get their cars tuned up for this one last assault on the standing records.

Harvey Haller drove his class D lake-ster both ways through the measured mile for an average of over 209 mph and a new record.

Chet Herbert's class D streamliner set a new record at over 216 mph. This class had been left wide open when the 1953 rules put all twin engine cars in E class.

The driver of this car, LeRoy Numayer of Los Angeles, Calif., was the fourth man to qualify for membership in the 200 MPH Club this year at the Bonneville National Speed Trials.

Results of the streamliners this year were rather disappointing. The Hill-Davis-Bob Estes class B car has had engine trouble all week and will be unable to use the class C engine until sometime next week. Hooper and Brown arrived late and engine accessory trouble has deprived them also of the privilege of making a two-way run through the measured mile in the center of the nine mile long salt flat straightaway.

Chet Herbert arrived barely in time to make a qualifying run yesterday and the D class engine was definitely not ready for an attempt on any record. Next week at the NHRA-AAA Speed Week this car will make attempts on some of the international class B distance and time records. By that time the engine will no doubt be tuned much better and we can expect some exciting results from this Chrysler powered entry.

Willie Young tells me that the Kenz twin engine car has reached its top speed and next year we can expect to see a new design in body shape and drive lines. Quite possibly the 1954 Kenz entry will be a four wheel drive chassis with the tail extended back a bit more to take advantage of the downward working wind pressures on the tail so necessary for good traction and stability.

Immediately after the conclusion of the record runs the charter members of the 200 MPH Club, Capt. G. E. Eyston presiding, welcomed the four new members into the fraternity and the club awarded prizes to owners of cars running in classes other than the streamliner competition classes. The prizes donated by Halibrand Engineering Co. of Culver City, Calif., were awarded as follows: Don Bishop was given a complete quick change center section to use in his 160 mph coupe that ran without one this year; Don Waite received a pair of 7" by 16" magnesium wheels for entering the fastest modified roadster of the week-long meet. Don's class B '27 T-bodied car hit a speed of over 191 mph; and one set of quick change gears was given the owners of the fastest qualifying lakesters in each of the five engine size classes. Membership in this exclusive club is a goal many hot rodders will attempt to reach in future years and will in this way further

encourage the construction of faster and better engineered straightaway cars.

The '53 Nationals ended with a lot of new records being posted and some of these cars will stay over to run next week for the AAA timed attempts on international records.

Watch next month's issue of Hop Up & MOTOR LIFE Magazine for complete results of the international record runs.

TROPHY WINNERS

	Qualifying Speed
O LAKESTER	
Jerauld & Barber	123.11
A MOD. ROADSTER	
Johnny Junkin	135.74
A LAKESTER	
Vesco & Dinkens	161.00
B ROADSTER	
Joe Vargas	142.63
Don Sarmento	141.95
B MOD. ROADSTER	
Waite & Bradshaw	191.59
S & S Equipment Special	188.08
Salt Shaker Spl.	150.25
B COUPE & SEDAN	
Meredith & Barton	132.15
Quinton & Joehnck	131.96
Curran & Walkington	129.12
D COMP. COUPE & SEDAN	
Don Bishop	161.57
Belmont San Chez	152.02
E COMP. COUPE	
Mickey Thompson	164.53
B COMP. COUPE & SEDAN	
Chrisman Bros. & Duncan	156.52
Price Brothers	149.25
Rudy & Keshing	144.46
B LAKESTER	
Scotty's Muffler Spl.	196.50
Sturdy & Xydias	181.17
C LAKESTER	
Buck & Yoshiea	196.39
Sturdy & Xydias	195.97

C ROADSTER	
Barlow & Hadley	165.13
"The Flying Eye"	163.63
Ralph's Bar & Grille Spl.	160.14
C MOD. ROADSTER	
Cagle & Fugatt	190.57
Waite & Bradshaw	185.18
Schieffer & Bean Bandits	180.36
C COUPE & SEDAN	
D'Amato-Quinn-Wietel	145.16
Quinton & Joehnck	141.28
W. Hyton	139.31
C COMP. COUPE & SEDAN	
Fox & Cobb	173.07
Chrisman Bros.	163.63
Belond Equa-Flow Spl.	158.17
D MOD. ROADSTER	
Ak Miller	174.08
D ROADSTER	
Howard Cams Spl.	163.63
D COUPE & SEDAN	
Hylton	147.78
Glenn Overmeyer	138.88
C. J. Hart	134.93
D LAKESTER	
Breen-Haller	212.51
Nicholson Bros.	195.65
C STREAMLINER	
Shadoff Chrysler Spl.	231.66
D STREAMLINER	
Chet Herbert	211.39
E STREAMLINER	
Clymer Motor Book Special	255.31
OPEN SPORTS CAR	
Guy Mabee	194.07
Strassberger	140.18
Robert Cardwell	137.61
CLOSED SPORTS CAR	
Sonny's Muffler Spl.	167.91
B STREAMLINER	
Bob Estes Mercury Spl.	231.80

ATTENTION is directed toward latest addition to 200 MPH Club by members

