Hudsonotes

Column of Mechanical Miscellany
by George Schmidt
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IT WAS FUN. The '81 National Meet at Milwaukee was the first I've been able to attend in several years, and it was great to see all those Hudson vehicles and owners. My newly acquired '51 C6 coupe (see following story) was not feeling quite up to the trip, so I came with a friend, Craig Nichols, in his '76 Triumph Spitfire (which, incidentally, he drives about the way I drive a Hudson stepdown, only more so). We were on hand for the Saturday tech sessions and for Hudson talk and explorations far on into the evening.

Bernie Siegfried, formerly with Hudson's engineering department, at National Meet technical session explains details of thermostat housing.

A corollary purpose of the trip was to take notes and gather information, mechanical and otherwise, for possible future use in this column. Numerous items of interest were found both at the tech sessions and in conversations with owners of several unusual older Hudson-built vehicles which were at the meet (one only wishes there had been time for more of them). Your columnist promises to share these items with *WTN* readers in this and coming issues, if he can decipher his handwritten notes.

A LONGER JOURNEY the previous week, July 22-25, brought this writer East (for the first time in his life) to White Plains, New York, the home of Hal Denman. Hal had written in April expressing regret at the burning of my car and the other vandalism here in Mishicot, and offering me a '51 Hudson Commodore coupe as a gift. This car, he said, was rusted and needed other work, but should be drivable back to Wisconsin.

There remained the problem of going out to pick up the car. A younger friend from the village here, Ron Cigler, offered to take me to White Plains in his Chevy van, if the necessary money for gasoline could be found. Plans for the trip were finalized in mid-July, and we left home Wednesday evening at 6 p.m., arriving in New York Thursday night; then started our return trip Friday afternoon, and arrived home Saturday at 6 p.m. Accompanying us were two other young friends, Tom Erickson (who brought his toolbox), and Mike Buda.

The car was stored in an old garage (a former Maxwell dealership) at Peekskill, N.Y., where its stablemates included a '35 Lincoln V-12, a disassembled '32 Terraplane ragtop, a spectacularly restored '15 Dodge, and of course Hal's famous '54 Hudson X-161 Italian-bodied factory prototype. Evidently reluctant to leave such distinguished company, the car protested by blowing one front tire and the timing cover seal within minutes of being started and driven. With those problems corrected, however, it performed faithfully for the next 1000 miles with no serious complaints except a slight engine roughness and the need for occasional extra oil and water. It is now in the process of becoming acclimated to its new home.

Sincere thanks are due Hal Denman for his generosity and help, and to Ron, Tom, and Mike also. It's good to be on Hudson wheels once again.

THE EARLIEST sealed-beam headlamps from G-E and Westinghouse, Hal points out, apparently were all-glass units fairly similar to modern types, according to some early-1940's illustrations which he showed me. The metal-backed composite sealed-beams (see January/February *WTN*, p. 30) were an alternative type produced by the Guide division of GM, very probably for patent reasons. It is possible, however, that they were also used as original equipment on a few Hudsons in some years, judging by pictures such as the Fig. 29 still found in most stepdown owner manuals. Does anyone know for sure?

TECH SESSION for engines was conducted at the National Meet by Bernard Siegfried, who discussed Hudson splash-lubricated engines (the Sixes up through '47, and Eights through '52), and reminded us that unless the oil does splash properly inside these engines, there will be little or no lubrication to essential parts. In addition, some parts are intended to be lubricated more by oil vapors than by liquid.

For these reasons, he cautions against the use of excessively heavy oil in Hudson "splasher" engines, even when they are somewhat worn; and he also has reservations about the use here of STP and similar "viscosity index improvers" which thicken the oil. He does suggest these products as a valuable aid when assembling an engine which is being rebuilt, as they are practically impossible to squeeze completely from between two metal surfaces. Your columnist had had fairly good results with this type of product in the oil of his '49 Eight (one can in an 8-quart capacity crankcase), with reduced oil consumption and noise, and apparently slightly easier starting and revving of engine . . . but perhaps he has just been lucky.

Although these engines were not designed for modern multigrade oils such as #10W-40, Bernie reports that oils of this type can be satisfactorily used here, except that a high-detergent oil cannot safely be run in an old engine which has heavy internal deposits accumulated during the long use of non-detergent oil. On the other hand, he pointed out that an oil filter is of only minor usefulness on a splasher engine, owing to the very low oil pressure on these models.

TORQUE REACTION often causes an engine to try lifting its left front leg under hard acceleration, and an occasional result on many Hudson models is the tearing loose of the left front rubber

engine mount. If a good replacement mount is not at hand, Bernie suggests a repair method which is inconspicuous, and stronger than original. Merely removing the stud from top plate of mount, drilling through the rubber, and substituting a longer steel bolt of the same size, along with nut and a flat washer at bottom large enough not to slip through the center hole in lower plate of mount, will form a safe temporary repair, but one which will not absorb much vibration since it permits only compression of the rubber and not tension or stretching. A better method, he says, is to use a still longer substitute bolt, about 3½ inches, along with the large washer at bottom (about 2½-inch diameter); and add to these a rubber shock-absorber bushing and its cup washer (with center holes enlarged if necessary), and finally the nut plus a locknut (always use both). Result will be a repair which is strong but not excessively rigid.

He also showed how a very similar repair procedure can be used for the rubber mounts supporting center bearing on driveshaft of stepdown models. The original rubber piece, with metal ends removed, can be center-drilled and a bolt run through it which is long enough (about 3 inches) to allow adding a rubber front shock-absorber bushing and its cup washer underneath car, along with two nuts, and flat washers as needed for spacing. Convertible owners may also be able to arrange a miniature version of this for repair of the smaller but similar rubber mounts which are used for the power top motor and pump assembly.

USE BY HUDSON of bypass-type water thermostats on Eights as early as 1936 was a surprise to this writer, when looking underhood at two very handsome convertibles of that year at the meet which belong to Calvin Bailie and Phil Kuhn. Thermostat housing and bypass hose on these cars are slightly different from those on later models, but thermostat is apparently the same. Bernie Siegfried at the tech session, however, noted that replacement bypass thermostats are becoming increasingly hard to find. Running without a thermostat is definitely not recommended, he said, since it permits uncontrolled movement of water through both the main and bypass circuits, and usually also severe cavitation of water at pump. If a standard (non-bypass) thermostat must be used, the bypass opening in elbow should be blocked off or much restricted. This can be done with a suitably fitted wood or metal plug.