

April 2021

Gazette



SL DECISIONS

CLASSIC DAYS 2008

A W201 190 THAT WOULD NOT DIE

R107 280SL IGNITION REPAIR



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Gazette

Published by **The Mercedes-Benz Club**

Gazette copy dates

June: April 17 July: May 15

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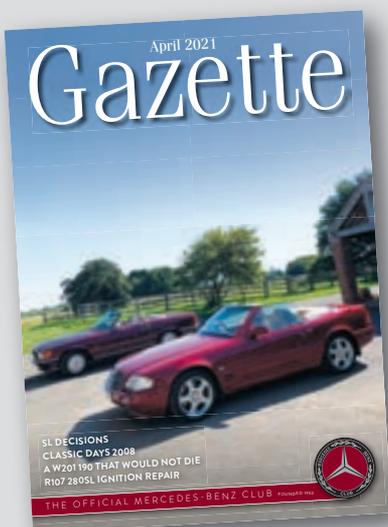
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Cover photo – by Alan Field of his 420SL and SL500.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Company Secretary **Phil Greaves**
Regional Development Director **Trevor Mitchell**
Membership Services Director **Geoff D'Cruze**
National Events Director **Red Mackinnon**
Marketing Director **Stephen Beresford**

Correspondence for Club Directors should be sent to:

The Mercedes-Benz Club,
30 Scotgate, Stamford PE9 2YQ

Honorary President: Rob Holloway

Honorary Life Vice-Presidents

Tina Bellamy, Erika Gupwell, Jacqueline White, Roger King, Vic Harris, Chris Cloke, Nicky Porter, Michael Chapman, Ian Keers OBE, Tony De Frates and Jeremy Stevens

Founder R H Johnson

Past Presidents G C Monkhouse (1952-1971), Interregnum, Roger King (1989-1992), Tina Bellamy (1992-1995), Interregnum, John Surtees CBE (2001-2017)

Past Chairmen C W E Kerr (1955-1963), A J Ray Whiteaway (1963-1970), John Barley (1970-1975), Gerald Coward (1975-1982), Dr Herbert Ochs (1982), Roger King (1982-1989), Jacqueline White (1989-1996), Mike Powell (1996-2003), Ian Keers OBE (2003-2018)

Mercedes-Benz Silver Star Winners

Ron Cushway (deceased), Tina Bellamy, Roger King, Gordon Hoey (deceased), Jacqueline White, Maurice Stapleton (deceased), Vic Harris, Mike Powell (deceased), Steve Emery and Ian Keers OBE. *This is a rarely made award from the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart to club officers who have made a particularly long and distinguished contribution to their club.*



**Member of the Federation
of British Historic Vehicle Clubs**



**The RNLI is the Mercedes-Benz
Club's adopted charity**

The 'Good Garage Guide' and contact details for all Club Officials can be found in the Club Directory distributed with the June Gazette.

Advice and recommendations in the Gazette are given in good faith by the authors concerned, but neither they nor The Mercedes-Benz Club Ltd will accept responsibility for any direct or consequential loss or damage resulting from persons acting on such advice or recommendations.

The views and opinions expressed in the Gazette are those of the contributors concerned and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Club.

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Currently all Club pub meetings are suspended because of the coronavirus. As soon as possible the following meetings will be resumed.

ANGLIA – NORTH

NORWICH – PARK FARM HOTEL

First Wednesday of the month. 6.00pm onwards.
No meeting in December and January. Hethersett, Norwich NR9 3DL.
Contact Richard Lee-Warder (07979 771377)

ANGLIA – SOUTH

BILLERICAY – THE WHITE HORSE

First Thursday of the month. Heath Road, Ramsden Heath, Essex CM11 1NA. Nearby roads are A129 and B1007, follow signs for Ramsden Heath.
Contact Monica and Gerry Blood (01268 756998)

KELVEDON – THE GEORGE (FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE HALFWAY)

Second Wednesday of the month from 6.30pm.
Postcode CO5 9PL.
Contact David Page (01206 382247)

HINTLESHAM – THE GEORGE

Third Wednesday of the month from 6.30pm. No meeting in December. Postcode IP8 3NH.
Contact Malcolm Russell-King (07786 333261)

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

WATERBEACH – BRIDGE HOTEL

Third Monday of the month. No meeting in December.
Claythite Road, just outside the village on the road towards Homingsea, near the A10 and A14 (junction 34).
Contact Graham Black (07968 978677)

IRELAND

CORK – VIADUCT INN

First Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm.
Bandon Road, on the left just after the viaduct if travelling from Cork City. Food available.
Contact Michael Daly (086 243 6095).

DUBLIN – UNION CAFÉ

First Wednesday of the month. No meetings December to March, recommencing in April. From 8.00pm. Mount Merrion. Contact Turlough Mullen (087 8146542)

ISLE OF WIGHT

CHALE – THE WIGHT MOUSE

Second Thursday of the month, from 6.30pm.
Contact Nick and Judy Ballanger (01983 854328)

KENT

LENHAM – THE DOG AND BEAR HOTEL

Third Thursday of the month.
The Square, ME17 2PG.
Contact John Woolls (07711 327852)

LANCASHIRE

Last Tuesday of the month. Venues vary.
Contact Paul Kelly (01772 736571)

MIDLANDS – EAST

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE – THE FOX INN

Second Wednesday of the month from 7.00pm. No meeting in December. Thorpe Waterville, Kettering.
Contact Dave Beardsley (07490 281633)

LEICESTERSHIRE – THE PACKE ARMS, HOTON

Last Wednesday of the month from March to October, from 6.30pm. On the A60 north of Barrow-upon-Soar, postcode LE12 5SJ, telephone 01509 889106.
Contact Dave Beardsley (07490 281633)

MIDLANDS – NORTH

NORTON CANES – THE TURF TOBY CARVERY

First Thursday of the month, 6.30pm if eating, 7.30pm for meeting only. A5 near Norton Canes, WS11 9ND.
Contact Keith J Williams (07703 591648)

MIDLANDS – NORTH EAST

RADCLIFFE-ON-TRENT – THE SHEPHERDS

Third Sunday of the month at 10.00am for breakfast.
Stragglethorpe Road NG12 2JZ, telephone 01159 333337.
Contact Dave Beardsley (07490 281633)

MIDLANDS – WEST

THE HADLEY BOWLING GREEN INN – HADLEY HEATH

Last Wednesday of the month. Hadley Heath, Worcestershire WR9 0AR. Contact Brian Hollett (07980 486091) No meeting in December.

THE STAG – ALCESTER

Second Wednesday of the month. Redhill, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6NQ. Contact Brian Hollett (07980 486091)

WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN – THE CHEQUERS

First Tuesday of the month, from 7.00pm. Postcode OX25 3QH.
Contact Mac Warner (07789 516151)

NORTH EAST

DARLINGTON – THE BURTREE INN

First Thursday of the month, 7.30pm. On the A68 half a mile west of junction 58 of the A1(M), next to the caravan showroom, post code DL2 2XZ.
Contact Neville Wright (07789 152909)

NORTH WEST

WOODFORD – THE DEANWATER HOTEL

Third Monday of the month, 7.00pm. Postcode SK7 1RH, telephone 01625 522906, www.thedeanwaterhotel.co.uk A523 from Poynton and then Chester Road leading into Wilmslow Road, the A5102. Or via the A34 and Manchester Airport Link Road towards Poynton and Woodford. At the end of Link Road turn right towards Poynton then after about half a mile turn right at a mini-roundabout towards Woodford, the Deanwater is on the right in a dip in the road. Car park at rear.
Contact Gordon Stewart (07974 221735)

LIVERPOOL – THE CHILDE OF HALE

Fourth Monday of the month from 7.30pm. 6 Church End, Hale Village, Liverpool L24 4AX, telephone 01514 252954.
Contact Gordon Stewart (07974 221735)

SURREY

REDHILL – THE BLETCHINGLEY ARMS

Second Monday of the month, 2 High Street Bletchingley RH1 4PE, 01883 740142.
Contact Pat Curran (07831 281151)

WALES – NORTH AND BORDERS

NORTHOP HALL – THE CHEQUERS

First Wednesday of the month, no meeting in January and February. Northop Hall Country House Hotel, Chester Road CH7 6HJ, 01244 816181.
Contact Clive Henderson (01352 752325)

YORKSHIRE – SOUTH

DONCASTER – HICKLETON GOLF CLUB

Last Tuesday of the month, Lidget Lane, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN5 7BE. No meetings in December, January or February.
Contact Dave Bambury (01709 365620)

YORKSHIRE – WEST

SOUTH MILFORD – THE CHEQUERS INN

First Tuesday of the month from 8.00pm March to October, Ledsham, South Milford, West Yorkshire LS25 5LT
Contact Phil Emmett (0113 255 5272) or Richard Lee (07880 940517)



Currently all Club events are cancelled because of the coronavirus, but we have continued to list them in the hope that at least some might go ahead when the restrictions are lifted.

National events are shown in bold type.

APRIL

- 18 Caffeine & Machine, Warwickshire
Keith Williams (07703 591648)
- 25 Drive It Day, North East
Nicky Porter (01388 772976)
- 25 Agatha Christie's Greenway, Devon
Dennis Parker (01237 421776)
- 25 Drive It Day, Rockingham Castle
Graham Black (07968 978677)
- 25 Drive It Day to Chatsworth House,
Derbyshire
Gordon Stewart (07974 221735)

MAY

- 1 Magnificent Motors, Eastbourne,
East Sussex
Kerry Dickson (07799 500092)
- 2 Middleton Motors, Staffordshire
Keith Williams (07703 591648)

JUNE

- 3-6 Ponton Rally, Jever, Germany
Red Mackinnon (07754 054287)
- 13 Bromley Pageant, Kent
Paul and Emma Ventham
(07821 924271)
- 27 Mercedes on the Prom, North Wales
Clive Henderson (01352 752325)
- 27 Lymm Transport Festival, Cheshire
Gordon Stewart (07974 221735)

JULY

- 3 Great North Classic Car Show, Co
Durham
Nicky Porter (01388 772976)
- 3-4 Cars in the Park Lichfield,
Staffordshire
Keith Williams (07703 591648)
- 4 Baston Car and Bike Show,
Grimsthorpe Castle, Lincolnshire
Richard Lee-Warder
(07979 771337)
- 10-11 Powderham Castle Historic Vehicle
Gathering, Devon
Dennis Parker (01237 421776)
- 11 Witton Castle Classic Car Show,
County Durham
Nicky Porter (01388 772976)
- 18 Blackrock Sands, Wales road run
Keith Williams (07703 591648)
- 21-23 Mid-Wales Drive and Stay
Clive Henderson (01352 752325)
- 30- **Silverstone Classic**
Aug 1 Catherine Barlow
(01780 482111)
- 31- Rosemoor Garden Vintage and
Aug 1 Classic Weekend, Devon
Dennis Parker (01237 421776)

AUGUST

- 1 Middleton Motors, Staffordshire
Keith Williams (07703 591648)
- 7 Surfleet Day, Lincolnshire
Graham Black (07968 978677)
- 13 -15 Pagoda Rally, Bonn, Germany
David and Michael Smith
(01670 813605)
- 21-22 Tatton Park Passion for Power,
Cheshire
Gordon Stewart (07974 221735)
- 22 Simply Mercedes, Beaulieu,
Hampshire
Naser Sharifi (01202 552586)
- 30 Durham City Classic Car Show
Nicky Porter (01388 772976)

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Curborough Show, Staffordshire
Keith Williams (07703 591648)
- 5 **W124 Event, Lincolnshire**
Mel Sharpe (01780 482111)
- 19 Peaks Run, Derbyshire
Keith Williams (07703 591648)

OCTOBER

- 2 Caffeine & Machine, Warwickshire
Keith Williams (07703 591648)
- 22-31 **R230 SL Anniversary Drive,**
England, Scotland and Wales
Mic Bennett (07802 752259)

FORTHCOMINGEVENTS

NATIONAL WEEKEND AND CLASSIC CAR AND RESTORATION SHOW – CANCELLED FOR 2021

It is with much regret that we find ourselves in a position again where we have no choice but to cancel our National Weekend event for this year, together with the club's attendance at the Classic Car and Restoration Show at the NEC which has been postponed until 2022 by its organisers.

This is all due to the ongoing covid-19 regulations laid down by the UK government and despite their gradual easing as we move towards June 21 restrictions would still remain during the period we were due to hold our event.

This National Weekend 2021 event is not lost however and we are

moving it on to a date in the future where we really hope that we can finally enjoy it. Further details of this will be in a later Gazette.

Please keep an eye out in future Gazettes or on the Club's forum or website for details of events as the restrictions open up as there are things waiting in the wings, especially for 2022 and all we need is the official 'go-ahead' to let loose.

In the meantime, stay safe, remain patient and we will get through this together and get back into our cars once again. I am sorry that we will not see each other at this year's National Weekend.



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The indicated values were determined according to the prescribed measurement method – WLTP. Figures shown may include options which are not available in the UK. For Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) figures determined with battery fully charged. These models require mains electricity for charging. Figures shown should only be compared with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. Figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the starting charge of the battery, factory-fitted options, accessories fitted (post registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Further information about the test used can be found at [mercedes-benz.co.uk/WLTP](https://www.mercedes-benz.co.uk/WLTP). Correct as of print 04/2021.

SILVERSTONE CLASSIC – STILL ON



Does your Mercedes have an anniversary this year? Come and celebrate it at Silverstone.

The Silverstone Classic is still scheduled to run at the end of July at present, as it is after the hoped-for release of all the covid restrictions on June 21 and so we are still planning on attending this event.

Tickets are available at present from the Silverstone website with a club discount code that can be used until the end of March. This code is available from the Club Office. I have

been informed that any tickets carried over from last year are still eligible for this year, and any new ticket purchases are covered should the event be cancelled for a second time – they can be carried over or refunded.

For 2021 there are many Mercedes-Benz models that are due to celebrate anniversaries, from 20 to 50 years, and we are still hopeful of enjoying a parade lap together on this famous

track. If you have a Mercedes-Benz that is one of those celebrating a significant point in its life why not join us on the Friday for our hoped for lap, or perhaps simply come for the whole weekend as this will be one of the first Club events that we can all enjoy together over a weekend for a long time.

Red Mackinnon National Events Director

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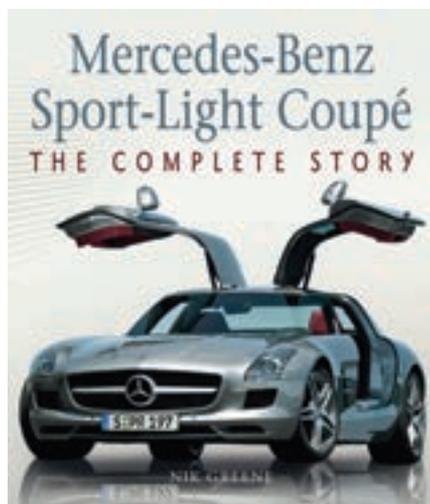


These badges come with provision for mounting on a grille.

CAR BADGES

Car badges are available from the Club Shop (www.mercede-benz-club-shop.co.uk or 01278 652340). They are approximately three inches (76mm) wide and come with fittings enabling them to be mounted on most radiator grilles. The cost is £23 excluding post and packing.

NEW BOOK FROM CROWOOD



The Crowood Press had published a new book that sets out to 'address the journey from what was a functional sports car design to what has become the incomparable Mercedes-Benz 'Sports Coupé'; its timeless body design has remained, even today both a dream car and a dream coupé'. Written by Nik Greene it is priced at £25 and there will be a review of it in the next Gazette.

2020 AGM

The Club's postponed 2020 Annual General Meeting took place on-line on March 7. Details of the meeting can be seen on page 77.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD FOR 2021

It has been a long standing tradition of the Club's Board of Directors to elect their Chairman for the calendar year at the first meeting of that year. This year matters were somewhat different in that for the first time in the Club's history the Board meeting when this took place was held on-line and the votes were cast by a show of hands on the video conference screen in use for all Board meetings since March of 2020.

Rosemarie Maslin was elected unopposed for the third year in a row.

Rosemarie commented, "Once again I thank my colleagues on the Board for their support in voting me Chairman for 2021. When I was elected in 2020 I had no idea that this would be the most unusual and challenging year in the Club's history. Sadly events have proved impossible under the circumstances but I am greatly encouraged by the ingenuity of Club Officials in organising virtual events and maintaining Members' interest through newsletters and fascinating articles in their Regional reports in the Gazette. Clearly we are not out of the woods yet but, with luck, we might get to meet again this summer."

There were no candidates seeking election to the post of Vice-Chairman.

Phil Greaves, Director and Company Secretary

TECHNICAL SERVICES MANAGER VACANCY

Following the retirement of Jeremy Stevens from the Board of Directors, the Club now wishes to appoint a Technical Services Manager.

The role involves the management and development of the Technical Services Team, whose role is to assist Members by offering technical guidance, deal with DVLA enquiries, liaise with Mercedes-Benz UK and Daimler AG in Germany and review technical articles prior to their publication in the Club Gazette. Jeremy will be staying on as part of the Technical Team to offer his support.

The position is best suited to someone with a strong mechanical and electrical knowledge base, ideally an industry professional who is able to call upon a wide range of experience with Mercedes-Benz vehicles of all ages and types. Of course, ideas on how to move this service forward with new models and in the internet age would be most welcome.

If you would like to be considered for this voluntary role then please, in the first instance, e-mail me (rosemarie.maslin@mercede-benz-club.co.uk) for a job description.

Rosemarie Maslin, Chairman

MERCEDES F1 SCHOOLS INITIATIVE



The Mulberry STEM Academy is part of Mercedes F1's commitment to diversity and inclusivity.

In November 2020, Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix Ltd announced a partnership with the Mulberry Schools Trust and the creation of the Mulberry STEM Academy as part of its 'vision and commitment to become a more diverse and inclusive team'. Launched by Lewis Hamilton and Toto Wolff through a virtual event from the team's headquarters to the three Mulberry schools in London, the Mulberry STEM Academy provides 'a specialised programme for young people who have talent, passion and aptitude in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) subjects, providing them with extracurricular learning and inspirational experiences through vocational training, study and masterclasses'.

The majority of students at the Mulberry Schools Trust are from black, Asian and minority ethnic and disadvantaged backgrounds, groups which are very under-represented in skilled areas of STEM. Mercedes F1 and Mulberry hope that the establishment of the Mulberry STEM Academy will give students the knowledge, skills, experiences and confidence to move forward into careers in engineering, design and science-based industries, and in turn become the role models of the future for their peers and younger students at the Mulberry Schools Trust.

AUCTION NEWS



£7,830 for this 190E at Anglia Car Auctions' on-line sale.



At the same auction this SLK sold for £6,210.

So far this year we have only seen 'live on-line' sales and already a few auction houses have put back some of their March sales in the hope they can return to events with live audiences. One major casualty is the auction planned by *Historics* for the end of April in Monaco to coincide with the Grand Prix Historique. This was to have been their first overseas venture so is a great shame for them. At the time of writing it is not clear whether the race meeting itself will take place.

Anglia Car Auctions sold all 11 of the Mercedes in its first sale of 2021, with some good prices. A tidy 1992 190E in anthracite metallic with grey cloth, ex-Japan and with only 42,000 miles covered went well over estimate at £7,830 and a 2004 SLK200, in silver with black trim and only 34,000 miles, was also well over estimate at £6,210. The remaining results were:

- 1985 280SL Brazil brown/beige trim, 134,000 miles £13,230
- 1990 190E silver grey/grey cloth, 71,000 miles £4,320
- 1992 190E almandine red/mushroom leather, 122,000 miles £960
- 1993 200TE white/blue cloth, 119,000 miles £2,160
- 1994 E300D white/charcoal cloth, 168,000 miles £3,000
- 1998 SLK230 silver/black, 88,000 miles £2,700
- 2000 S500 malachite green/mushroom leather, 92,000 miles £1,660
- 2002 SL55 AMG deep blue/dark grey trim, 49,000 miles £15,390
- 2004 S350 light blue metallic/black, 57,000 miles £5,130

Brightwells held a timed on-line auction with 12 Mercedes up for grabs. Two did not sell, sadly one of these was the lovely 1964



This SL55 AMG made £15,390...



...and this S350 £5,130.

0319D 13-seat mini-bus which fell some way short of its reserve. The successful sales were:

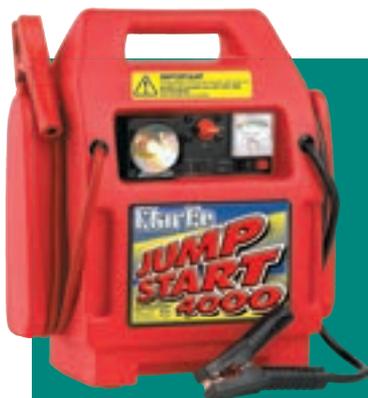
- 1972 350SL silver/tan, 81,000 miles, for full refurbishment £5,320
- 1980 380SLC teal blue/beige velour, 146,000 miles £6,440
- 1983 380SL silver blue/grey leather, USA import, needing work £7,280
- 1992 190E red/grey cloth, 101,000 miles £2,078
- 1993 SL320 black/mushroom leather, 60,000 miles, 17 service book stamps £7,281
- 1999 E240 limousine, obsidian black/tan leather, 50,000 miles £2,800
- 1999 SLK230 silver/black, 106,000 miles £2,296
- 2000 SL280 azurite blue/mushroom leather, only 43,000 miles £8,609
- 2002 SL55 AMG obsidian black/light grey, 57,000 only £15,786
- 2004 ML270 obsidian black/half leather, only 8,400 miles from new £10,422

Mathewsons on-line was less successful only selling four of the nine Mercedes in its catalogue:

- 1994 E220 white/grey cloth, 88,000 miles, shabby £2,420
- 1997 SL320 silver/black £4,837
- 1997 C250TD silver/black tartan cloth, 101,000 miles £1,750
- 2000 CLK230 cabriolet, blue/grey trim £1,650

Easter will be a busy time, with several auctions arranged for then with some interesting lots, including the ex-Blake Edwards/Peter Sellers refurbished SLC mentioned in last month's Gazette.

Malcolm Franks



Additional items on Machine Mart Xtra include this jump starter and charger.

ON-LINE ADDITIONS FROM MACHINE MART

With people unable to visit its stores as freely as normal due to the coronavirus, Machine Mart has introduced an additional section to its website – Machine Mart Xtra, which offers over 15,000 specialist products only available on-line. These include power tools, hand tools, garage equipment, water pumps, wood and metal working equipment plus even football and pool tables. For more information see www.machinemart.co.uk



There are also additional power tools.



NEWS FROM PIRELLI

**Are you ready to get on the track?**

The Club's tyre partner Pirelli invites Members to 'join us at Silverstone circuit on May 11 and 12 to share our passion for super-cars, taking to the track for a unique event complete with five-star hospitality. Experience the home of the British Grand Prix like never before with the opportunity to drive the full GP circuit from the Heritage Pits. In addition to driving your own super-car on track, all participants have the chance to test drive the high-performing models from the best car manufacturers for whom Pirelli designs and develops custom-made tyres.

Silverstone joins a series of world-renowned circuits that have played host to the P Zero Experience, including Italy's Mugello circuit, the Yas Marina track in Abu Dhabi and the Hockenheimring in Germany. We continue to monitor the situation and update our safety and hygiene measures for the prevention of covid-19 so that you can be assured the entire event will be safe. One-day VIP passes cost £795 per person, with companion passes also available for £150. Don't miss out on an incredible track experience, secure your place and register today at pzeroexperience.pirelli.com

Cinturato All Season SF2

Pirelli has announced the Cinturato All Season SF2, a tyre that complies with all winter legislation and which it says delivers a safe driving experience in any weather condition. It is available with Pirelli's Seal Inside and Run Flat technologies – both of which allow drivers to continue driving even with a puncture – as well as in Elect versions for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. For more information see www.pirelli.com



Compliant with winter tyre legislation but designed for year-round use.

Fuel card offer for Club Members

Mercedes-Benz Club Members can benefit from an exclusive offer of a Pirelli fuel gift card. Available when purchasing Pirelli tyres from a Pirelli Performance Centre or official Mercedes-Benz dealer, the card's value depends on the size and quantity of tyres purchased.

For sizes of 16 inches and below buying two tyres brings you a £10 card, four tyres £30. For 17-inch tyres you get £30 for two, £70 for four. For 18 and 19-inch tyres it's £50 and £100. And for 20-inch tyres and above it's £60 for two and £120 for four. Visit pirelli.co.uk/mercedesbenzclub to find the nearest participating dealers. Terms and conditions apply.

For owners of older cars Pirelli recommends Longstone Tyres. Members should contact them directly. Please call 01302 711123 or see www.longstonetyres.co.uk Club Members receive a five per cent discount at Longstone on all Pirelli tyres if they quote their Club membership number and can still claim their fuel card.

E10 PETROL STANDARD FROM SEPTEMBER 1

95-octane 'E5' is to disappear.

The Department for Transport has announced that it will legislate to introduce E10 petrol as the standard 95-octane grade by September 1. It will also require the higher-octane 97-plus 'Super' grades to remain E5 to provide protection for older vehicles. This product will be designated as the 'Protection' grade.

E10 and E5 refer to the percentage of

ethanol, synthetic content produced from sustainable sources, used in petrol. This has been shown to be hygroscopic and likely to erode certain metal and rubber components used in the fuel systems of older cars.

The introduction of the 95-octane E10 grade and the maintenance of the Super E5 protection grade will be reviewed by the government after five years to ensure they remain 'appropriate to the needs of the market'. In relation to the E5 protection grade, such a review will examine market developments over the period. The Federation of British Historical Vehicle Clubs has said that the government has reassured it that, without a suitable alternative becoming available, it is highly likely the Super E5 protection grade would continue to be available.

The FBHVC went on to say: 'Filling stations that stock two grades of petrol and supply at least one million litres of fuel in total each year will need to ensure one product is the Super E5 protection grade. While not all filling stations meet these criteria, almost all towns across the UK will have a filling station that supplies the 'Super' grade and currently one major retailer, a national supermarket group, has committed to offer the product. The main exception to this is in certain parts of the Highlands of Scotland, which will be covered by an exemption process and allowed to continue to market the 95-octane E5 grade.'

The Federation therefore recommends that all vehicles produced before 2000 and some vehicles from the early 2000s that are considered non-compatible with E10 should use the Super E5 Protection grade. To check compatibility of vehicles produced since 2000 the FBHVC recommends using www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-e10-petrol

Regarding Mercedes-Benz this says: 'E10 petrol is cleared for use in the vast majority of all Mercedes-Benz vehicles with petrol engines, except first generation direct injection C200 CGI (W203), CLK200 CGI series (C209) of the years 2002 to 2005 plus models not equipped with three-way catalysts, models retro-fitted with three-way catalysts or produced with a carburettor. These are mainly vehicles older than 25 years.'

The FBHVC goes on to say: 'It should be noted that some Super E5 Protection grade products do not contain ethanol as the E5 designation is for fuels containing up to five per cent ethanol. Product availability varies by manufacturer and geographical location and enthusiasts should check the situation in their location.'

No advice is offered for how this check can be made but at least one other car club has suggested that only Texaco's super premium 97-octane has zero ethanol, while BP's (which used to be zero) is now five per cent and Esso's and Shell's has always had ethanol.

Chris Bass

INSURANCE MATTERS

Values of the 190SL

One of the things that makes Hagerty different to other insurers is our Automotive Intelligence section that publishes, amongst other things, the on-line UK and USA Hagerty Price Guides. We track a huge number of values, watching on-line sales, dealer prices and auction results in addition to our own insured values. Over the next few columns, we'll be using this information to highlight the values of some popular Mercedes-Benz models, and this month the spotlight has fallen on the 190SL.

The 190SL has a wonderful combination of the very best of 1950s design and usable practicality. The straight-four 1,897cc engine wasn't the fastest of its era, but it wasn't too bad either. Set up properly on the original Solex PHH 44 carburettors, a nought to 60mph time of 13.3 seconds was the same as contemporary rivals the MGA Twin-Cam and the Morgan Plus 4.

Over the last few years values had tended to increase steadily. In 2016 the Hagerty Price Guide listed a range between £49,100 ('fair')



This 190SL was sold at an Historics auction in 2020 for £112,000.



to £129,800 ('concours'). This kept rising until February 2020, when prices peaked at between £68,000 to £142,000. Then, in line with many other cars, prices fell during the first lockdown, dipping to a range between £53,800 and £127,000.

Auction results were a mixed bag in 2020, with just seven of 15 cars selling at the sales we tracked. These tended to be the more

reasonably-priced cars – the average high estimate for the cars that sold was £97,285 against £103,750 for the cars that did not. But when buyers decided to purchase, they were happy to pay top prices – six out of seven of the cars that sold exceeded their top pre-sale estimate.

The very best cars have also been selling well. In October at Goodwood, Bonhams sold one example with rare hard-top for £155,250, and a dealer currently has a concours-winning example advertised for a stunning £265,000.

So, where now for the model? Hagerty forecasts that values will once again increase beyond where they were pre-covid, and our next update will list them as between £54,100 and £159,000.

NEW C-CLASS



New saloon...

It might have now been overtaken by the A-Class, but until recently the C-Class was the best-selling Mercedes-Benz model in the UK – and in many other markets around the world. So the introduction of a new model is of great importance to the company. The latest has just been announced, although UK specifications and pricing are not yet available.

The new model is slightly bigger than the outgoing C-Class, with the additional space being used for increased elbow, head and leg room, particularly in the rear. Much emphasis is being put on the introduction of much of the latest technology seen in the S-Class. This includes the 'Hey Mercedes' voice assistant of MBUX which, with a 'Smart Home' function, can be used to control domestic equipment and household appliances.

'Digital Light' headlamps use 1.3 million micro-mirrors to help generate a resolution of more than 2.6 million pixels and have a projection function available as an option that can project guide lines, symbols and animations onto the road ahead.

The new cars' dashboards and central displays are slightly tilted towards the driver to aid their ergonomics and the turning circle is reduced by over 40 centimetres (16 inches) with rear-axle steering.

A plug-in hybrid version of the new model will have an electric-only range of



...and estate.

'around 100km' (62 miles). The additional output is rated at 95kW and the battery (developed and produced by Mercedes-Benz) can be charged to 100 per cent capacity in 30 minutes. The battery capacity is 25.4kWh, but the luggage compartment floor is level and offers more space than in the preceding model. The plug-in hybrid will have two additional driving modes – Battery Hold gives priority to maintaining the charge state of the battery for when you are intending to drive in a city centre or green zone later in a journey and Electric offers electric driving up to 140kph (88mph) with an adjustable energy recovery rate in overrun mode and activation of the combustion engine using a pressure point of the accelerator pedal (kick-down).

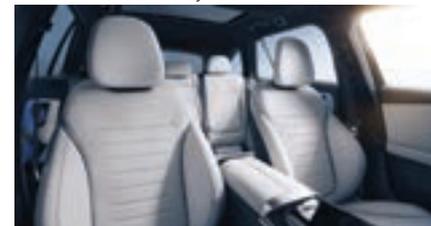
All models will have some element of electric power from hybrid power-trains using the now familiar 48-volt system with a combined starter/generator.

The styling of the new models is intended to emphasise their 'sportiness' – with a longer bonnet, wide track and 17 to 19-inch wheels. All models will have a grille with a central star but the details of the grille will vary according to the trim level. Inside there are new seat and head-rest designs.

The engines offered will include four-cylinder diesel and petrol units, all with increased power and lowered emissions



All-new dashboard layout.



Revised seat and head-rest design.



For the first time C-Class saloons will have split rear light units – partly housed in the boot-lid.

compared to those in the outgoing C-Class. Updated versions of the nine-speed automatic transmission and 4-Matic four-wheel-drive will also be available.





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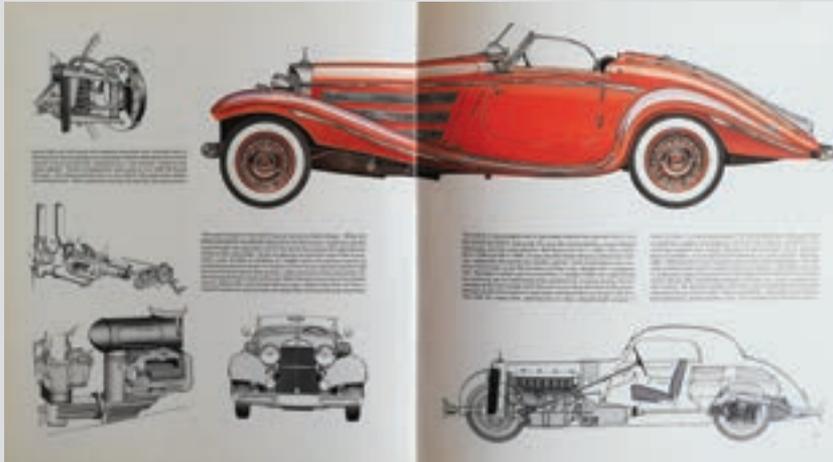




Letter of the Month

As a thank you (and as an incentive for even greater efforts) we like to choose a letter of the month and the Member whose letter is selected receives a gift from the Club Shop.

THE BUTCHER'S CAR



Details of the 500K and 540K from *The Supercharged Mercedes (1919 – 1939)*.

Dear Chris,

On turning the pages of the March Gazette my eye was immediately caught by the picture of the car shown in the article 'The Butcher's car', as it is exactly how I remember it when looking around it way back in 1988. At that time I was working for the Mercedes-Benz dealership in Bromley and somehow I had heard about the car being 'released' from its home in Walsall having been owned by a butcher there for some 30-odd years. I found out about the car's forthcoming entry in the mid-week Christie's auction and arranged to take the day off so that I could drive to Beaulieu and join my friend, the Mercedes-Benz specialist Stuart Rieman, at the auction. In those days such auctions did not have the razzmatazz and pre-sale hype that accompanies classic car auctions of the global internet age and I remember that both Stuart and I were a little disappointed to find all the cars for auction were parked on grass inside an unimpressive marquee erected on the lawn in front of the stately home. There was no artificial lighting in the marquee, only the natural light coming through polythene panels in the canvas walls, so it all appeared rather gloomy and felt slightly humid due to the damp grass. The benefit of this 'informality' was that we were able to walk around all the cars, including this 'star entry', and have a very close inspection. When it came to the turn of the 500K to be auctioned the atmosphere soon turned 'electric' as the bidding cruised past the auctioneer's half-million pound estimated price. At the final fall of the hammer at over £1.5 million there was a brief moment of stunned disbelief followed by a typically British mild ripple of applause and then a buzz of discussion and conjecture as to who the anonymous telephone bidder might be. It wasn't until reading Keith Williams' article today that I learnt of the successful purchaser's identity, the Swedish car collector, Hans Thulin.

I have dusted-down one of my Mercedes-Benz books, *The Supercharged Mercedes (1919 – 1939)*, published in 1979, and have attached a couple of pages which relate to the 500K/540K models and have some superb drawings of the Roots supercharger.

It's good to see the photos in the Gazette of the car in such superb 'as-new' condition on display in the Louwman Museum which prompts the tempting, happy thought that, post-pandemic, a long weekend spent in The Hague should be given serious consideration!

Very best wishes,
Derek Singleton, via e-mail

THE BUTCHER'S CAR – TWO

Dear Chris,

I just wanted to let you know that I received my March Gazette this morning and the work that you have done on illustrating and presenting the article I had written is fantastic. It's great to see the car on the cover of the magazine as well.

Many thanks and great job!
Keith Williams, via e-mail

Editor's note: Thank you for your e-mail, I am pleased you are happy with the article.

Keith didn't have any photos of the car after its restoration, but when I read his text mentioning the car's appearance at Villa d'Este in 2013 I immediately thought of Peter Brown, who has been going there (and submitting articles about the event for the Gazette) for years.

When I looked it up I discovered that David Greenshield had been there that year as well. I contacted them and they both had more photos than we had used in the Gazette at the time, so thanks are due to Peter and David.

A REMOVAL FROM THE DIRECTORY

Dear Chris,

On two previous occasions I have recommended AutoTechnic of Chedgrave, Norfolk, (Anglia – North) for servicing and repairs to be included in the Club Directory. Unfortunately they closed last November, so they now need to be removed.

It was a surprise to receive a letter from the founders, Mark Walklin-Smith and Simon Knights, after their 20 years in business, to say they were closing, and in their words, "Now we both feel the time is right, and we are ready to move on to new adventures." There was no clue as to what they might be.

This must have been a blow to many of their loyal customers in Norfolk, Suffolk, and beyond. Both Mark and Simon had decades of Mercedes experience and in addition to their expertise they gave good old fashioned service where customers were treated like friends.

For 18 years they looked after my trusty W202 C180, and although it was running beautifully I'd decided to get a later C-Class, probably a W204, so I put it up for sale. I accepted a generous offer just a week before receiving Mark and Simon's letter, so instantly my plan had to be revised.

Much of my pleasure in owning a Mercedes was the reassurance of knowing that AutoTechnic was there when needed, and it was also at a convenient distance from my home. It now appears that the only independent that can match its reputation is too far away, so for practical reasons my days of owning a Mercedes are now over.

Finally, thanks to the editorial team and all the Members who have contributed to the Gazette during these difficult months. There has been some very interesting reading.

John E Lewis, via e-mail

Editor's note: I have been trying to find another specialist near John to help him. If you know of a good one in the Anglia – North region that is not yet in the 'Good Garage Guide' please let me know.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Dear Chris,

A couple of updates needed please.

Air Conditioning on page 21 – Mirage Air are no longer in business. Shut last September a victim of covid.

Used Parts page 33 – MP Classic Parts Ltd has moved, although the phone number is the same. The new address is Unit 2 Craven Business Park, Bentinck Street, Birkenhead CH41 4HH.

Regards,
Richard Mason, via e-mail

Editor's note: My thanks to Richard – the effectiveness of the 'Good Garage Guide' depends on Members keeping its contents up to date.



RADIO RECOMMENDATION

Dear Chris,
ChromeLondon, Studio 2626, 405 Kings Road, London SW10 0BB, telephone 02037 939090 or 07799 242626, www.chromelondon.com is a company that repairs and refurbishes classic car radios, amongst other things. I think its details should go into our Directory for Club Members' benefit.

Many thanks,
Poolin Vadgama, via e-mail

BAD TASTE

Dear Chris,
I feel strongly about a couple of letters written over the past two Gazettes from Mr Vadgama who seems to think that Rosemarie Maslin (the Club Chairman) is having a go at him personally when she has had problems of her own to deal with without him being downright rude about the way the Club is run. It would appear that he is upset about certain people leaving their positions when at the end of the day they have done all this in their own time and voluntarily. It must be difficult enough for Rosemarie and her team at this time, with the virus and everything connected with it, to carry on as well as they have, so a bit more praise and less bellyaching from this guy please. Rosemarie has tried to explain things to him but he has not had the courtesy to pick up the phone and does not seem to accept the explanations he has been given. I have also been a Member for a long time and if I were not happy about things then I would have gone long ago.

Cheers,
Derek Wellman, via e-mail

EXCELLENT HEADLIGHT CLEANING

Dear Chris
I am a typical proud Mercedes-Benz owner. I have had my current car, an E320 CDI estate since new in 2007, when I brought it home from the factory in Stuttgart. It is always kept well maintained and clean. However, I have been increasingly concerned with the foggy appearance of the nearside front headlight lens, which is an unfortunate issue that affects all our cars after a time. My concern was increased to alarm when, following the recent annual service by MB Brooklands, I was informed the lens should be replaced and it would cost £1,275.72 for this part. I thought this was an outrageous cost and immediately declined and began to search for a high quality, professional solution at an acceptable price.

I first consulted the Club Directory, but there is nobody listed for this service. I telephoned my Regional Officers, but they did not have any recommendations or suggestions, other than to look on the internet. This was always going to be my last resort.



Before...



...and after.

After carefully examining the internet list of organisations who offer these services, I selected SuperGlass. They provide a nationwide service from local offices or, in my case, an excellent mobile service so the work could be carried out at my home. This was crucial in this covid-19 world. SuperGlass has a USA pedigree, which helped me make my selection as I am aware of the high quality demands of American car owners. You can judge for yourselves, the quality of this work from these before and after pictures. The work on my car was carried out by Chris Vagg from SuperGlass London, which is located in Epsom, Surrey (SuperGlass UK, 4 Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey KT18 5AX, telephone 03333 446606 or 07722 556028).

So if you ever need your headlights expertly cleaned and restored, I recommend you use SuperGlass.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Garry E Hunt, via e-mail

Editor's note: This recommendation will be in the next Directory, which will go out with the June Gazette.

BRINGING DEMOCRACY TO THE CLUB

Dear Chris,
Clearly, there is more to recent departures of good people from our Club's Board than meets the eye. I have long been concerned at the opaqueness of the Board's composition; there is no call for volunteers, no competition, and apart from a handful of Members who turn up to the AGM, no chance for Members to have a vote. In this unique year when Members have been sent postal voting forms we were presented with two names for two Board positions, with no information except their names. We are a car club. Surely, it is time for a more open approach and to bring democracy to the Club.

Andrew Bray, via e-mail

Chairman Rosemarie Maslin responds: Unfortunately I need to correct most of the

content of Mr Bray's letter. Directors, as all Officials, are volunteers and are allowed to retire or resign as personal circumstances dictate. This has always been the case and should not be seen as part of a conspiracy.

There have been two senior positions recruited in the last two years, Marketing Manager and IT Manager. Both positions were advertised to all Members via the Gazette and both attracted two applications for interview. Fortunately both positions were filled by excellent candidates, but it must be said that the Board was disappointed at such a low level of response from the membership.

With regard to the Directors' positions being voted on at the 2020 AGM, the appointment of the promoted Marketing Manager to Director was accompanied by an explanatory piece in the May 2020 Gazette, page nine, and the work of the Finance Director is explained in considerable detail on pages 79 to 81 of the February 2021 Gazette.

I agree with Mr Bray that we need an open approach to the Club and hope the above will assure him that we have one.

ELECTRIC CARS

Dear Chris,
I wholeheartedly agree with the letter from Simon V Smedley on electric cars etc (March). Furthermore I would like to add that it is more often than not politicians and the media pushing for electric cars, not actually so much car makers. Yes, a few are claiming to be EV-only by a certain date, although none of this has materialised. Mercedes-Benz and the rest of the German car industry seems to be hedging their bets, if not still pushing for the combustion engine to continue. The continuing development of hybridisation only furthers the cause of the petrol car. With a plug-in hybrid, use the electric motor for the shops and use the combined combustion engine and electric motor for proper roads. And no, there are not enough resources for everyone to have EVs. The number of charging points you would need would be insane. May I also point out that the new 'electric' London taxis actually have a petrol generator/range extender.

As for the stop/start on our 2011 E-class, we turn it off immediately. We don't do any city driving anyway, so it always gets a smooth run. However Simon and other Members might be interested to know that our main car is actually my 1989 190E, the modern E-Class is essentially a 'spare'. Classics are far easier to fix than modern cars, a huge incentive to keep the E-Class's mileage low, and although the 190's engine is in good health, I would rather pay for an engine rebuild should the car ever need it and carry on looking after it and maintaining it properly, rather than treat the car as a disposable good, which I think is so wrong, especially with prestige marques, and the complexity and resources required to build a car. Despite the 190 being more polluting than a modern equivalent, I would argue that my arrangement and being committed

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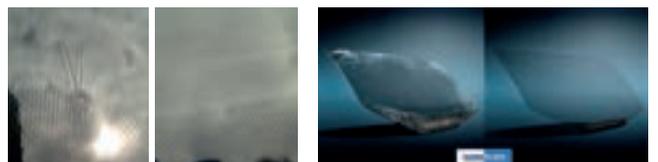
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to classics is far more environmentally friendly, as this means I have no need to put in an order for a new car. I am aware that this only really works due to the fact I don't commute with the car or use it for work, however it is food for thought.

It's about *how* we use resources, not so much *which* resources.

Kind regards,
William Terrington, Surrey

CORKER



Andrew A C Clark's CLK320 CDI.

Dear Chris,
Great magazine, thanks.

I loved seeing Edward Winiarski's CLK320 CDI (March 'Cars of the month') – what a late and low mileage corker!

He was right to replace the air filters as they make a real difference in performance and I insist on all being replaced every service they are due. Unlike his car though, I continue to run up 10,000 miles per annum, so get through a few more rear Michelin Pilot tyres with all that glorious power, but can vouch for the car as mine, at 140,000 miles on a 2007 plate does not miss a beat.

Happy safe and motoring all.

With kind regards and thanks,
Andrew A C Clark, via e-mail

'DIESELGATE'

Dear Chris,
I keep getting bombarded with information regarding making a claim against Mercedes-Benz for 'dieselgate'. Does the Club know anything about this? Has Mercedes-Benz agreed to pay out on it? Or are the companies contacting me just ambulance chasing? If we as Mercedes owners and Club Members can claim please let us know. If not can you report on this in the magazine and dispel any miss information please.

Steve Richardson, via e-mail

Mercedes-Benz UK responds: We believe that the claims made by the UK law firms are without merit and will vigorously defend ourselves against them and any group legal action.

MY 500SL

Dear Chris,
As always, the March edition of the Gazette is a first rate publication with plenty of great articles and information, which I am thoroughly enjoying reading – thank you so much!

I have just read Mark Stephens article 'Mercedes little and large' on pages 46 and

47. 'Since joining the Club I have developed a real interest in older cars and really would like to find a nice R107 V8 SL...'

Maybe I can help. You kindly published my letter 'Original or restored' in the March Gazette so will know that I possess a 500SL! Sadly, and owing to a situation beyond my control, I am no longer able to enjoy all that this truly magnificent motor car brings – open air motoring especially – as I am suffering from a significant melanoma problem, which prevents me from being in the sun. Therefore I am seeking a new custodian who will love and cherish my treasured Mercedes, which during the past 33 years I have thoroughly enjoyed the privilege of owning.

Unmarked and in silver over grey with grey tartan interior, the car is used only between March and October and lives in a dry and secure garage. Serviced by a main dealer annually and kept absolutely up to scratch (including being filled up with only the top grade Shell or BP petrol), driven only on long journeys, just one set of discs and pads and a new radiator fitted in recent times, the Mercedes is otherwise totally original and drives like a new car.

Should Mark Stephens be interested in my SL then he would be very welcome to view it.

All best wishes,
David Lees-Jones, via e-mail

Editor's note: I am very sorry to hear of David's health problem and wish him the best. I have forwarded his e-mail to Mark Stephens.

OPTIONS RETRO-FIT RECOMMENDATION

Dear Chris,
Following recent discussions in the Gazette on the subject of Mercedes-Benz selling cars equipped with 'packages' rather than individual options, it is worth remembering that it is often possible to upgrade by retro-fitting options.

I recently acquired a CLA Shooting Brake with a package that I considered to be missing two important features – a reversing camera and folding mirrors. However, I was able to have these retro-fitted by Neil Braybrook of Braybrooks In Car Enhancements, Unit 3 The Smithy, Tewin Hill Farm, Tewin Hill, Tewin, Hertfordshire AL6 0LL www.braybrooks.co.uk telephone 08000 520292.

This work was completed within a day in a very professional and courteous manner. Neil has been providing upgrades to Mercedes owners for many years, using genuine Mercedes parts correctly programmed with Star Diagnostics, so that any warranty is unaffected.

I can recommend Braybrooks and apparently this endorsement is supported by a number of Mercedes-Benz dealerships who also use its services.

Kind regards,
Peter Mayes, via e-mail

AN INSURANCE RESULT

Dear Chris,

Having recently had my car featured within the magazine (December 2020 'Car of the decade') a Member got in touch with me directly as he had recently acquired a similar W202 C-Class and was discussing the various features of the model. One of the topics that arose was the cost of the classic car insurance. I had been using for many years RH Specialist Insurance (03330 433911), probably for as long as I can remember, and they have always been really simple and straightforward to deal with, their pricing typically remaining static year on year and without the addition of admin fees either.

Our fellow Member (Bob Cotton) has since got back in touch with me and was delighted to state he had gone with RH, having halved the annual premium of his existing insurer, not forgetting this still includes his UK recovery.

I thought this may be worthy of a mention as not only saving Members' money but highlighting further benefits of the Club's community.

Paul Spring, via e-mail

THE CLUB'S ARCHIVE

Dear Chris,
I was sad to read that the Club's Archive at Brooklands has had to close, it is understandable but nevertheless a pity that this wonderful facility will no longer be there to house the knowledgeable Archive Team or be available to Members wanting to conduct searches in person.

The Club owns a wealth of material concerning the Club and the marque going back more than 120 years. Many old photographs and documents chart the very earliest days of motoring and give a fascinating insight into the history of the people, their cars and the Club itself.

It was in 2012 that the Club's Board made the decision to make the archive material more accessible to Members. As Director of Club Services at the time I was tasked with the job of finding suitable premises and recruiting a team of volunteers to run the facility.

The material was being kept in a self-storage unit in the North West where it was carefully inventoried and beautifully maintained by the late Mike Powell. However, this form of storage did not make it easily accessible to the Membership so once Chris Bass alerted me to some suitable rooms at the Brooklands Control Tower I negotiated a lease and wasted no time in moving the racking and well over 200 boxes with 30,000 documents down south. It was quite a task getting it out of the self-storage unit and down to Surrey, but Mike was meticulous and organised everything. It arrived in superb order and he even sent a team to erect the racking and place the boxes on the shelves that he specified.

It soon became apparent that all the effort was worthwhile. By having our own space we could examine properly what we had. As

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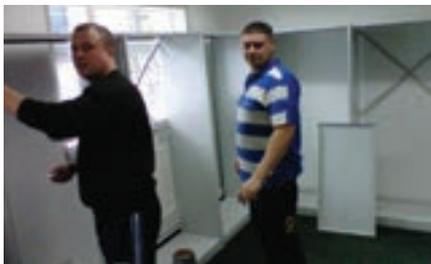
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POWER IS NOTHING WITHOUT CONTROL



The removal team from the North West assembling the racking...



...and the finished job – the original boxes in place ready for their contents to be inspected.

you would expect, the bulk of the material was about Mercedes-Benz and their cars as well as Club related events from the earliest days, but there was also a very significant photographic collection created at the turn of the 19th and early part of the 20th century, as well as brochures, historic maintenance books, price lists etc.

Four archive volunteers were recruited initially, they quickly formed a close-knit team and rose to the challenge with vigour, despite the task being something entirely new to all of them. After just a year the result of their work could be seen – our Club's Archive, both in paper and digital forms, was something to be proud of and matched the standards of many a professional offering, far better, than most other car clubs could manage. I would like to pay tribute and thank the Archive Team, including Jon and Lynne Bell, Phil Reed, Mike Venables and all of those who followed after them for their unstinting work. At one Club Officials' Study Day Lynne gave a presentation about the Archive and was asked afterwards by one of the Officials in all seriousness if she was a professional archivist, such was the standard they set. Phil also deserves a mention for his Gazette articles each month, for dealing with the many donations of material by Club Members and for selling the duplicate and unwanted material at the National Concours each year. It's tragic that with the collection moving to Lincolnshire the wealth of their knowledge and experience will no longer be available. *[I understand that not all of it could be accommodated in the Club Office in Stamford, some is in storage elsewhere – Ed.]*

Of course this is not the end, far from it. We have a wonderful digital archive and a very well preserved collection but the Club Archive is a living, growing thing and there are many photos, documents and bits of correspondence still to be catalogued, scanned and uploaded to the archive website. In the future the donations of material will continue to arrive regularly and detailed research using the original material will still need to be carried out. With this in mind I was very pleased to

read that once life gets back to normal the Chairman Rosemarie Maslin is determined that a new Club Archive, presumably with a new Archive Team, will open for the benefit of Members. Roll on the day.

Regards,
Tony De Frates,
Honorary Vice-President

SL63 AMG TRANSMISSION PROBLEM

Dear Chris,
Sitting in a deserted car park with locked-up transmission and low temperatures is never funny.

Happily I was near Autoclassico of Henfield Bristol Park, Bristol (telephone 01179 569115) who collected the car. A diagnosis of solenoid failure in the gearbox was made and a swift rebuild was carried out. I would recommend this garage to other Members. They have looked after the SL63 and my much beloved old SL600 for many years. They offer a good personal service and Mike Mercer the proprietor is always a fund of information.

N F Dowdney, via e-mail

W211 E-CLASS SBC

Dear Chris,
In the March Gazette (Letters) Kathy Atherton was warning us about Sensotronic Brake Control (SBC) problems on a W211 E-class (of which I am an owner – a 2004 E270 CDI). She had also spotted discussion of the subject in the Cambridgeshire regional report in February, where John Street and Graham Black were wondering how to find out whether the Traction Hydraulic Unit is original. I'm not clear whether they mean more than the SBC pump, but on the W211 E-Class Forum under the heading 'SBC question our friend '12703' helpfully explains how to find the date of manufacture from the date code stamped on it, and provides a look-up table to identify the date from the code. As I recall I worked out mine was a 2010 pump on a 2004 car, at which time it would have done about 70,000 miles. I hope this helps.

While writing, I agree with pretty much everything Simon Smedley (March Letters 'Electric cars') says on the environment, but in rather fewer words – drive your car sparingly and get a bicycle. My German bike would fetch twice what my German car would.

Regards,
Simon Pearson, via e-mail

ELECTRIC CARS

Dear Chris,
Having read Simon V Smedley's letter on this headlong rush to go all-electric I felt compelled to write in support. I heartily agree with all of his comments.

Has our government not looked to the use of autogas (Liquid Petroleum Gas or

LPG) as a viable alternative to petrol, as the by-products of its combustion are little more than water.

Electricity needs to be generated to charge electric vehicles and this in turn will produce a certain amount of pollution at the point of generation, as I doubt solar and wind power will be able to produce sufficient power. What then will be the answer?

More wind-farms, both on and off-shore; more hazards to migratory birds from on-shore wind farms, while those off-shore may prove to be a hazard to navigation for vessels operating in our in-shore waters, particularly in stormy seas.

A thought has come to mind as I compile this missive – is there any correlation between the increase in whale and dolphin strandings and the increased number of off-shore wind-farms? Has any organisation thought to investigate this, and if so have their findings been published or quietly suppressed? I wonder?

It has been announced recently that a new, more eco-friendly petrol will soon be available on our forecourts. At present the environmentally friendly petrol on offer contains five per cent ethanol, which can cause expensive damage to vehicles produced pre-2005. This latest offering contains 10 per cent ethanol. Please would our Technical Team give some guidance here as my vehicle is a W126 420SE built in 1988.

Thanks to the team for a truly great magazine.

Yours sincerely,
G Terry, Sunderland

Editor's note: Technical Adviser Jeremy Stevens adds, 'LPG is a mixture of three hydrocarbons, propane (C₃H₈), butane (C₄H₁₀) and pentane (C₅H₁₂), so burning it will still produce CO₂ and water just like petrol. LPG contains less energy than petrol and so fuel consumption is higher'.

The Technical Team are looking into the implications of E10 petrol for older models and we will have the findings of this in a future Gazette.

ON-LINE DEBATE

Dear Chris,
I'm astounded by the amount of debate being generated [on the Club's internet forum] by the subject of Club membership. The debate centres on getting free membership for 2021 because of covid stopping events, and if Members' estates can get a refund if someone dies.

It's less than 50 quid a year! (Not even a tank of petrol.) Grow up and give it a rest. If you can't afford it and it bothers you that much, move on!

To paraphrase a well known ad, 'It's less than a cup of coffee a week'.

Regards,
Craig McCarthy

Editor's note: It is explained in the questions and answers following the AGM, as reported elsewhere in this Gazette, that every effort is made to refund membership subscriptions when a Member dies if this is known.



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More detailed clothing descriptions, sizes and colours shown on the website.

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Sorry, but due to bank charges, we have had to introduce a minimum order value of £5.00.





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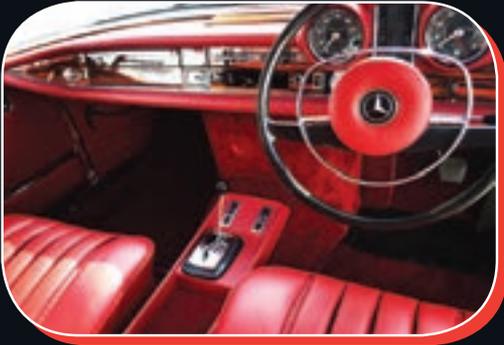
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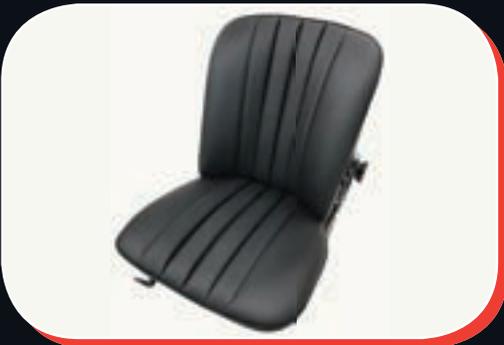
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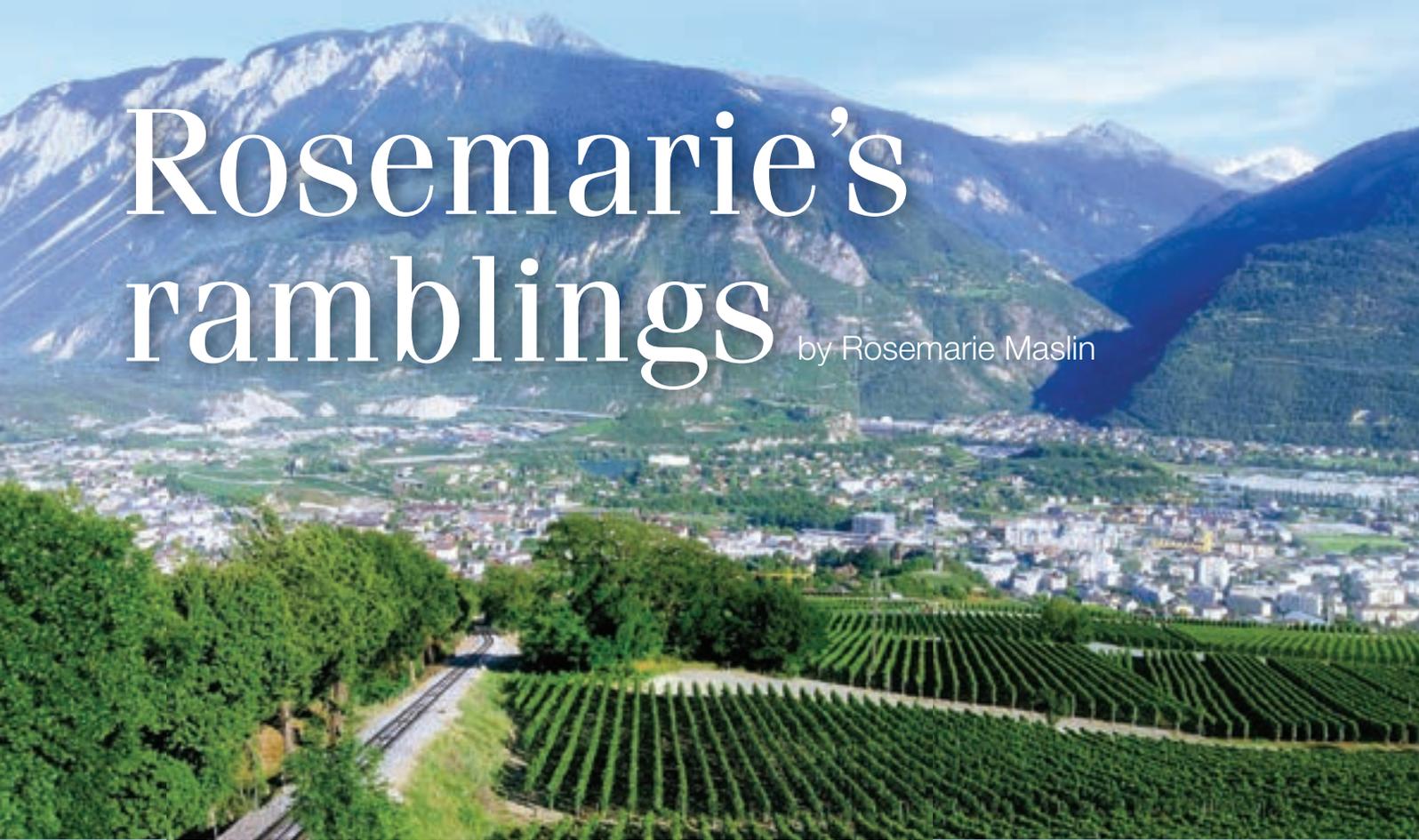
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■ **When calling, please mention the M-B Club Gazette**

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Rosemarie's ramblings

by Rosemarie Maslin



An on-line wine tasting brought memories of sunnier times.



The coupé in its garage.



Getting it out doesn't look so easy from here.

Another month has gone by and another 'ramblings' is due for you. I have been very busy over the past month getting ready for the Annual General Meeting, which always seems so simple on paper. By the time you are reading this the meeting will have taken place and I am hoping will have been enjoyed by those who attended. A Zoom meeting seems so easy but the preparation is the same, if not more, than it would be if we were holding a normal AGM.

After the Government's recent road map announcement I am looking forward with anticipation to what we might be able to do over the summer, so let's all hope that after a slow start we are able to go out later in the year.

I spent a very enjoyable evening the other week when I attended the wine tasting that Vivienne and Malcolm Franks hosted. I have been to many wine tastings but not on-line, which put a different edge on it. I admit I did not have all the wines but it was very interesting tasting the two I had with the cheeses (the wines had screw tops so I was able to save some for later in the week!) Hopefully this will be an event that will be done again as it was enjoyed by all.

Next month I am going to continue with the saga of Peter's coupé and then it will be time for me to start using it. Unfortunately I never took the opportunity to drive the car when Peter was here, he would often suggest I had a go but true to form it was always easier just to be the passenger and enjoy the trip! Still I am sure it will all be OK – once I have reversed it out of the garage that is!

As always keep well and safe and I look forward to seeing you at an event over the summer.





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BRUCE GREETHAM
Director



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Rob writes... by Rob Halloway

A real W154 at the Nürburgring in 1939, Seaman at the wheel.

What it's like to win a race in a pre-war Silver Arrow* *on an Xbox

The moment I realised I was never going to be a grand prix driver is burned into my memory. It's as clear and as painful in 2021 as it was in 1988. I was a naïve schoolboy, attending a careers/technology fair in Crawley, marvelling at Edwards Vacuum-formed plastics, when I saw it. Gleaming, in the corner of a nearby stand, resplendent in black and gold, was a JPS Lotus. No no – even better. It was *Nigel Mansell's* JPS Lotus. Goodness me. The plastic display was done. Beeline.

Nigel Mansell has a singular position of iconic importance to me. Whilst growing up I idolised his exploits in F1 races and worshipped his heroic, against-all-odds achievements. Brands 86! Silverstone 87! *Blow-out* – Adelaide 86! He's the only famous person I've been around that I've been too shy to say hello to, even relatively recently. Pathetic. Mr Mansell is such an icon (to young Halloway), I've found myself unable to approach him, even on

several occasions when we've been within a few feet of each other. More memorable for me than him, I'm sure.

Here's an example. At a noughties Goodwood Ball, I was sitting in an historic room, on adjacent tables to my hero. Half an arm's length away. Even when Mr Mansell looked over at us whilst in the middle of deftly performing a magic trick to his friends, and smiled and nodded, I was rooted to my seat. Wide-eyed, like a deer picked out in headlights. Even an encouragingly sharp elbow in my ribs from my wife Nicky failed to move me one millimetre. I couldn't bring myself to say hello and strike up a casual conversation, as I have with many other people in the public eye. Well, every one I've ever met except him.

I know plenty of people who know or have worked with Nigel, and I'm told he's a friendly and approachable, normal down-to-earth bloke – but to me he is *NIGEL MANSELL* (the block caps are intentional). I realise it's silly, and have mentioned this self-imposed barrier to a few trusted people, some of them also world famous

F1 drivers and world champions. And they all laughed at me. Quite right, but it's something I've not yet managed to overcome. Digression over.

Zippering back 30-or-so years, in my school uniform at that local Sussex fair, I excitedly queued up and then plonked myself in the Mansell Lotus, keen on following in my idol's wheel-tracks. It fitted like a glove. Heaven. It even had a space to rest my elbows on the outside of the car. Which is when reality gradually crept into my conscience. Oh, *hell!* They weren't elbow pads at all, they were to protect the driver's upper body. Where Mansell's shoulders fitted, my forearms were resting. And that thing digging into my shoulder blades was the roll-over hoop, not a backrest. My bespectacled befuddled bonce was about a foot clear above the car. I knew then that I'd never be the next Nigel. I was gutted. Still am.

From that devastating moment until some 20 years later my life took a few twists and turns, as lives often do, and we rejoin this sorry tale in a green room at an event with two of the most legendary grand prix drivers of all time, all chatting happily.

Sir Stirling Moss, John Surtees CBE and I were sitting around a table, talking about this and that. I was about to interview them both in front of an audience of a few hundred guests, and they were gamely working themselves up into a talkative mood and good spirits. I was asking them what it was like to drive the 1930s and 1950s Silver Arrows grand prix cars, which they then did at events and exhibitions all over the world. Stirling joked that he left all the 'pre-war' stuff to John, because Stirling didn't get on with the centre throttle pedals of the earlier machinery.

It transpires that the 1930s Silver Arrows, at their zenith fitted with phenomenal 650hp-plus supercharged engines, monstrous torque and narrow



At the Circuit of the Americas, in Texas – almost.



treaded tyres, had the brake on the right; the gas in the middle and the clutch on the left.

Apparently at one un-named event some years before, Stirling had – on approach to a corner – stamped on the ‘brake’ only to accelerate violently towards the turn. Fortunately he was still very much *Stirling Moss*, so of course he handled it with aplomb (and a drift) – that incredible driving talent being used once again... But it was enough – he was doing it for fun, for entertainment – and didn’t want to damage anything mechanical, or himself.

John was chuckling at the memory of it. Having raced for many years on motorcycles and in cars (he was ‘so old’, he said, that the first time he raced at Brands Hatch it was anti-clockwise and still grass) the throttle’s location didn’t really bother him. But it was clear that these early machines were a handful.

Being six foot six tall and bereft of racing talent, I didn’t think I’d ever experience driving one of these priceless beasts – until, that is, I turned on my *Xbox* during an idle afternoon in the most recent national lock-down.

I don’t use my games console very often, but I do like racing and driving games. Up until a few consoles ago, these things were pretty false experiences – although late 90s *TOCA Touring Car Racing* and *Grand Prix 97* on the first *PlayStation* felt hyper-real at the time.

My most recent game is not even the latest release – *Forza Motorsport 7* came out in 2017, but it’s enough for me (and was on sale in the *Xbox* store). In this game you can race virtually in, well, virtually anything.

All kinds of tracks and layouts are diligently and accurately recorded and synthesised, as are hundreds of different types of cars. The range is enormous. I’ve raced Clio Williams hatches at night around Yas Marinas in Abu Dhabi, and they feel very different to a Le Mans car at a virtual La Sarthe in the damp dawn drizzle. The level of realism and dynamic difference between the models is incredible.

Of course, there are no repair bills, no risk of danger when banging wheels with a virtual competitor round the outside of *Peraltada* (like Nigel Mansell did in real life in Mexico in 1990) but it’s the closest I’ve come to the real thing.

Successful progression through the game awards credits, with bonuses and cars awarded for wins, championships and other things. I use this entirely as relaxing entertainment, to unwind, so have the computer opponents set to ‘novice’, with damage off and fun dialled up. I love it.

After a few sessions of occasional playing, I’d earned enough money and progressed through the levels enough to race in the ‘The Birth of Grand Prix’ series, and I had a choice of qualifying cars to buy. The little blue Bugatti Type 35C caught my eye, until I saw that – for the same price – I could download a 1939 Mercedes-Benz W154. Oof. Easy decision. A pixel-perfect pastiche of the car in which Rudolf Caracciola and Dick Seaman raced, sadly with deadly consequences for the latter.

Even on the console, John’s words



Chasing down the pesky Bugattis.

floated back into my mind as I lined up on the grid for my first race, at the Circuit of the Americas, near Austin, Texas. Whilst my throttle was a trigger on a control pad, and not the ‘wrong pedal’ the virtual W154 was indeed a screaming handful, even if only on our telly.

It tore away from the line in a blaze of tyre smoke and bore down on the hapless cyber-drivers with absolute untamed ferocity. Up the hill towards the tight left turn and back down towards a sweeping right. I thundered up to the first corner and smashed the thing through the run-off and into the barrier. Every other car passed me. So I used the next few laps to feel my way into the race, and, when I felt ready, I paused things and reset the game. Can’t do that in real life. Ha!

Once I got used to the snap-power delivery, I spent a few happy hours hunting down the little Bugattis, four-wheel-drifting around corners like in the old *Pathé* reels, and I even won a race at the Nürburgring. Thanks to the magic of *Microsoft* and the clever folks at *Xbox Game Studios*, I became, for an afternoon, the *undisputed world champion* of my own living room. It was magic.

In these months of national restrictions and lock-downs my own horizons have narrowed to, well, the house, really, as indeed horizons have for most of us. But the escapism of a no-consequences thrash in some priceless synthesised racing cars is incredibly liberating. I recommend it.

Stirling and John’s advice is true even on a games console of course – the *Xbox* versions of the 50s cars are easier to drive than the 30s, and the modern machinery is a doddle.

My next vicarious purchase will be the current F1 game, I think. I love playing on the racing rigs in the Sim Zone at Mercedes-Benz World, but it’s currently closed and I need my fix quick. I think the latest release has a ‘classic F1 cars’ download pack, so I’ll finally be able to get behind the wheel of one of Mr Mansell’s legendary winners. And maybe that’ll give me the gumption to finally say hello to him should our paths cross again sometime down the road. Wish me luck!



Seconds later Halloway punted the Bugatti into the barriers.



Paul Plant with his beloved SL55 AMG Black Series replica.

Tribute to Paul Plant

by Keith Williams

Over the second weekend of January Paul Plant, one of the Midlands – North Regional Officers sadly passed away. For several years, as many of you know, Paul had suffered from heart problems. Paul’s specialist had suggested he undergo a major heart operation to improve and lengthen the quality of his life. It took place and was deemed a success. Paul was

recovering well, with the right side of his heart operating on its own. He had been taken off his ventilator, fighting as only Paul could. Sadly, soon after, he lost his battle with an infection that his body wasn’t strong enough to overcome. Surviving Paul is his loving wife Julie and their two sons Tom and James. Paul was thrilled to learn before being admitted into hospital that both



Paul and his wife Julie beneath the Eiffel Tower in June 2013 – in front of their Aston Martin, he wasn’t always a Mercedes-Benz driver!



Beside his Sealine F43 *Damn the Expense*, also referred to as the ‘Toy boat’ in September 2007.

his daughters-in-law were pregnant. Each is expecting their first baby in July.

Those of you that have attended Midlands – North pub meetings and events over the last few years will no doubt have been greeted by Paul’s wonderfully warm welcome. It’s hard to believe it was only about four or five years ago that he joined the Club. Steve Beresford was on the Club stand at Cars in the Park, Lichfield when he met Paul’s wife. Julie said to Steve, “Come and meet my husband Paul.” He was there with the Supercar Club stand showing his SL55 AMG Black replica, J60 PDP, and the three of them started chatting. Paul then joined the Club and the rest is history.





Paul with Julie and their two sons in May 2016.

Before we knew it both Paul and Julie were coming to all manner of events and pub meetings. It became apparent quickly that Paul (with Julie's help) had a real talent for putting on driving events. Soon after I became aware of his skill set I asked him if he would become a Regional Officer, running our different driving events. Paul was delighted. These events have become so popular that before his passing he had been providing input to the National Events Team for a Cotswolds based tour. People from all over the country have been to Paul's events, be it Blackrock Sands, the Peak District or the Cotswolds. Paul and Julie made Members feel welcome. No one was left out. Their warmth and generosity to others can't

be described – you had to experience it.

Along the way there were many antics too – from almost writing his car off in a pothole on a Blackrock Sands trip, to leading an unknowing me astray, driving the wrong way up a one-way street. There were the prosecco stop-offs for the non-drivers, the embarrassingly funny beach games and then there was the barbecue... It was a private Club event although members of the public were encouraged to look at the cars on display and sign up for Club membership. As we were setting up Paul and Julie arrived with an industrial type barbecue. I won't say any more about it than that – if you were there you will remember, despite the challenges of the

day, it was perhaps the best event we have ever run as a region.

Another memory I have of Paul involved a trip to Santa Pod. Only a few Members came, but it was a brilliant idea of his to get Members to look at some different types of motor sport. When we arrived it started to rain. You can't race dragsters down a wet dragstrip. The more the day went on the wetter it became. Despite seeing no cars go down the dragstrip everyone enjoyed what Paul referred to as the 'fellowship' of the Club, with Members from several different regions meeting and enjoying each other's company.

Paul's funeral was held on Friday February 12. Julie expressed how she and Paul would have loved it if we could have all been there. Sadly due to the covid-19 restrictions that was not possible. Instead, local Members stopped for a quiet moment and thought of Paul, raising a toast to him at 11.30am that morning. Paul's passion for Mercedes-Benz and AMG was represented by his son Tom who, with his wife, drove Paul's SL55 AMG to the funeral. As Members in the local region we sent a floral tribute featuring the Club emblem and colours. On behalf of the Club we have donated £245 to Paul's charity of choice – the British Heart Foundation.

Julie has asked me to say how much she appreciates their tributes to Paul and the kindness that various Club Members continue to show towards her. Our thoughts and wishes go to Julie, Tom and James at this very sad time.

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Alan Field's 420SL and SL500.

Decisions, decisions

by Alan Field



R129 'svelte charmer to butch bruiser'.

Like quite a few Members I have two lovely SLs. The question I'm usually asked is 'Why!' With an eight-year-old Range Rover as my daily driver the pair have barely covered 4,000 miles in three years.

Until this year's extraordinary spring, top-off days seemed to be getting fewer and fewer. The possibility of lock-downs continued to lurk and I don't do shows. I'm mechanically hopeless so there is no pleasure to be gained under the car. Meantime 'Those Who Know These Things' insist these cars' well-being is entirely dependent on regular exercise. Sell one? No chance.

If ever I think of it, what motivational experts in the 1960s called 'justification factors' kick in... They found car buyers in particular often rationalised a heart-not-head buying decision to themselves and others with nonsensical reasoning – even when there was no need to do so. For example, 'Now there's just the two of us why do we need four doors when we can have that coupé'. Does it apply to me? Shamefully yes.

In the case of the R107 420SL, my first classic, the porky I fed myself was, 'I'm having it because I'm fed up with cars that just depreciate'. When someone flagged the 1999 R129 SL500 up on the Club Forum a year or so later I reasoned it would be a totally defensible purchase on account of the roof being quicker to raise than the

R107's. Sheer lust had nothing to do with it. Honest. Even now my limp response to an admiring comment on the prodigious power of the SL500 is likely to be on the lines of, 'I don't use it of course, but it's nice to know it's there'.

So having admitted pure indulgence, what do I think of the cars after three or four years of ownership?

I bought the R107 from Northern Ireland from its private owner without seeing it. After weeks of e-mailed exchanges we set the date for me to fly over and do the deal. On the day I couldn't thanks to an incorrectly diagnosed medical condition which required an overnighter in hospital. Feeling thoroughly sorry for myself I threw caution to the wind and said I'd have the car if it was driven over to me in the UK after a (useless) local Mercedes-Benz dealer appraisal – if only I had been aware of the Club resources at that time! A couple of weeks later the car was mine and, rapidly sorted by Nick Winter's Nottingham MB Centre, turned out to be all I'd hoped for, and not the impulsive disaster it could have been.

Buying the R129 in London was far less nervous-making. One owner, condition like new, full Mercedes-Benz service history. The only leap of faith I had to make concerned the failure of the roof hydraulics as the sales guy and I cruised embarrassedly topless around Wimbledon in a down-pour.

For me the different generations of development separating the two V8s make



R107 'picks up her skirts and screeches away'.

handling and performance comparisons less informative than impressions. Unlike some classic owners I never refer to either car in gender terms, but if I did I'd say when you hammer the 420SL down she picks up her skirts and screeches away. Kick down the SL500 and you go instantly from great svelte charmer to butch bruiser. Unsurprisingly the R107 is the character car of the pair. Nimble steering, nose lifting under hard acceleration, firm seats, limited legroom and shoulder space. Bigger to get into. Beautiful but... At the back of my mind there's always fear of the 'Big C'. Someone on the Forum said, 'There's no

such thing as a corrosion-free R107. Either they haven't looked or they don't know where to look'. A definite period feature.

In contrast my 20-year plus R129 is supremely comfortable and confidence inspiring. Although far from bland, to drive it concedes little in modernity to the BMW 530 which preceded it.

But I'm still not sure which SL I'd miss most. Running costs of the two are roughly similar. As for future values I have no idea. So what's next for me? Maybe sell both and put the proceeds towards a Pagoda SL... MoT test exempt. Now there's a proper justification factor for you!

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Cars of the month

If you would like your car to be a Car of the month, please send a good photo (conventional or digital) and a few details to the Gazette Editorial Office: Chris Bass, C/O 30 Scotgate, Stamford PE9 2YQ or chris.bass@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk



Callum Simpson's CLKs

Callum writes: 'After being an avid Member for over a year I thought it would be nice if I could share my pride and joy with you, in fact I have two CLKs, although one I have gifted to a family member now, but still get the joy of driving it.'

I purchased the first one in July 2019, an obsidian black CLK220 with only two former keepers. I love the pillarless design and, most importantly, the seat-belt 'butlers', which hark back to the design of the SEC coupé, another model which I adore. After experiencing the joy for almost a year I decided to purchase another one, which I

could use myself all the time.

This is a CLK270 CDI finished in tanzanite blue. It was purchased new by a director of Specsavers. He ordered a glass sunroof, which I think is a really nice touch, although to my disappointment he didn't choose to have either heated seats or electric adjustment of the seats, both of which my 220 has. Either he didn't see the specification sheet properly that day or maybe it's a case that he should have gone to Specsavers.

I think I got my love affair with Mercedes-Benz from my dad. Despite only being 23 I have owned around seven

Mercedes now. These have included an A210 Evolution, an earlier 2000 W208 CLK200 and even an E320 CDI estate. My dad owned an impressive amount over the years, including an R107 450SL in Bahama yellow, a 380SEC and a now very rare manual 190E 2.6, all cars which I wish I owned now. Sadly he passed away a couple of years ago but the CLK was one of his all time favourite models so I thought I would carry on his legacy by purchasing the 220, and I'm sure he would be proud now there's two amongst the family and hopefully a third in the future.'



F1 NEWS

by Will Gardner



The new W12 E

SHAKE-DOWN

Late February saw the first of the challengers break cover and undertake shake-down testing. Red Bull was indeed 'bullish' after its drivers first got behind the wheel of the RB16B, with new driver Sergio Perez confident that he could make things harder for Mercedes and expecting to be challenging for wins. Like Williams, which ran its car earlier in the month, security was high with only very limited imagery being released and tight security around the test venues. Mercedes powered Williams however were even tighter lipped about their new car, the first developed since the Williams family sold the team and coming directly on the heels of the team's worst season ever in the sport. New owners Dorilton Capital are unlikely to see the decline reversed quickly and are said to be operating on a 10-year timetable to overhaul the team and return to life as title challengers. New CEO Jost Capito, former CEO of McLaren, took the helm of the team from February 1. Capito is seen as a major capture for Williams and a statement of intent on behalf of the owners, bringing a wealth of experience both in F1 and across motor sport.

McLaren though released footage of its car on its shake-down test, showing some of the evolution from last year's car, now Mercedes powered of course. Most noticeable was the floor, designed to meet the new regulations reducing down-force, whilst the car also ran a new front wing, side-pod and barge-board cluster, some of which will be seen when the car runs in full race trim.

Mercedes launched the AMG F1 W12 E on March 2, with the team adopting the 'E Performance' designation, which will be used on all upcoming AMG hybrid road vehicles. Carrying over the 2020 chassis, the team was at pains to point out the huge amount of development that has gone into the new car to stay ahead of the pack, with the need to keep within the new cost-cap



The launch was held at the team's headquarters with live on-line streaming.

whilst still constantly pushing what's possible being a particular challenge.

HAMILTON

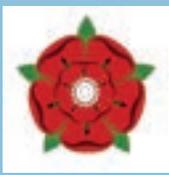
The announcement that Lewis Hamilton has signed only a single year deal to remain at Mercedes has sparked an early start to the rumour mill as pundits seized the chance to predict who'll be driving the Silver Arrows next year. Whilst Mercedes protégé and Williams driver George Russell is seen as a contender for Bottas's seat, early rumours suggest that 36-year-old Hamilton may at least take a break after 15 straight years in F1, especially if he secures an unprecedented eighth title this year. Max Verstappen, currently riding high with Red Bull, refused to rule-out a move to Mercedes (who would?) The winner of 10 GPs is regarded by many as the second fastest driver on the grid, and even his own team principal, Christian Horner, admitted that Verstappen is likely to be top of Mercedes' list should Hamilton not agree further terms. In contrast, Aston Martin team owner Lance Stroll, whilst heralding the relaunch of his Mercedes powered former Racing Point team as one of the most significant F1 events in recent times, said it would be tempting to try to bring Hamilton to the team and something

of a pipe-dream for him as he bullishly told of his expectations for the team to finish better than last season's fourth place in the constructors' championship.

FUTURE

Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff is supporting the merger of Formula E and F1 race weekends. Formula E is seen by many as the future of the sport and more relevant to manufacturers as internal combustion engines disappear in favour of ever-improving electric drive-trains. Wolff is promoting FE as the feeder championship for F1, seeing electric power as the inevitable next step for F1, thus leaving less space for two competing series. Currently FE enjoys far less prestige than F1, with far lower turnover and teams operating on much lower budgets. Mercedes has been part of FE since 2018. With both platforms belonging to Liberty Media, Wolff believes that the challenge is how to bring the two series together as separate brands, but in a way that supports rather than challenges growth, something Wolff believes hasn't been properly considered. Such a move though would require shareholder support across both platforms and teams – something that is notoriously tricky in motor sport.





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2019 C300 Convertible
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2014 E250 Cdi Coupe
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1998 SL320
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2002 SLK32 AMG
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2014 E220 Cdi AMG Sport
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1996 E280 Estate Auto
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2014 B220 Cdi Sport
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A great admirer of the beautiful R170 SLK

by Martyn Lennon

Roadsters have always been an important and popular product for Mercedes-Benz. Open any Mercedes book and it will be filled with 500Ks, 300SLs and Pagodas. Once a product fit purely for royalty, roof down motoring in a Mercedes soon became affordable for thousands. The W121 190SL of 1955 was introduced as a cheaper alternative to the race-bred 300SL roadsters and Gullwings, with the underpinnings of the humble 190 Ponton. This was succeeded by the W113 SL Pagoda of 1963 which sold over 48,000 units in its lifetime, followed by the even more popular R107 SL of 1971. It was clear by this point that the SL roadsters had

an important place in Mercedes' line up, taking proud owners on continental trips in great comfort and style. With the SL models becoming increasingly luxurious and packed with the latest technology and a price tag to match, Daimler-Benz decided to go back to basics and design a more compact roadster. This would be a true successor to the 190SL of the 1950s.

The first designs for this new generation of sports car were completed in 1993, with one feature which would put it in front of other roadsters of the time – the Vario roof. This electro-hydraulic roof was patented in late 1993, a powered unit which would open or close in 25 seconds,

a feature which is still used on Mercedes-Benz products today. This new concept was named SLK, Sportlich Leicht Kurz (Sporty Light Short in English), with the internal designation R170. Based on the W202 C-Class, it was officially launched at the Turin Motor Show in 1996, using the W202's M111 engines in naturally aspirated and Kompressor (supercharged) formats, sold as the SLK200, 200 Kompressor and 230 Kompressor. The M112 V6 engined SLK320 was introduced in 2000 for the face-lift model, with ESP (Electronic Stability Programme) becoming a standard feature, before being replaced by the R171 SLK in 2004.



Gus Simpson's SLK230 Kompressor at Dougarie Lodge during a trip to the Isle of Arran.





An early SLK design concept before the official launch in 1996.



A graphic showing the operation of the Vario roof.

Love at first sight

In 1997 Mercedes-Benz owner Gus Simpson was attending a launch event at John R Weir's in Grangemouth, his local Mercedes-Benz dealership, and it was there that he first caught a glimpse of the new SLK. It was love at first sight, with

a design which blew him away and made him wish he could just trade in his current W202 C-Class straight away. After being handed a brochure which had written on the front 'Every Day is a Gift', Gus knew he had to have one, but sadly it wasn't to be. Fast forward to 2003 and Gus found

himself back in the same dealership, this time looking at a very unique SLK200 Kompressor with Designo yellow-gold paintwork. Circumstances were different this time around and Gus and his wife decided it was time that they bought a car they had been dreaming about. It certainly did not disappoint. With a mere 7,000 miles on the clock it was essentially a new car and, despite it having no air-conditioning and a manual gearbox, it suited Gus perfectly. This lower specification made the car feel light, nimble and very economical, returning 34mpg. Exactly as Mercedes-Benz intended. With full leather and a walnut interior, it was a very comfortable place to be and he felt right at home in the car, it was certainly worth the six-year wait. As it was a joint dream, Gus's wife used the SLK on a day-to-day basis, but they both enjoyed the car on holiday road trips. Despite it being a fantastic car to drive, Gus's wife did feel a little bit conspicuous due to the colour choice and it was decided that the car would be replaced in 2007.

They were offered a BMW Z3 but despite it being a very quick car, it did not suit them and it was clear that only another SLK would do. Whilst searching through the Mercedes-Benz approved used list on-line they came across a very late 2004 R170 SLK230 Kompressor for sale at Mercedes-Benz Blackpool. With all of the discussions done on-line and over the phone, a deal was struck and the facelift SLK would be trailered up to Gus's home. Panic hit Gus soon after whilst waiting on the delivery, what if the car was damaged, what if it wasn't as described or had issues. Luckily the car was immaculate, with untouched brilliant silver paintwork and only 4,000 miles on the clock. Much like the previous SLK, Gus's wife put this one into daily service and with the 722.6 automatic gearbox and power increase, this felt like a much more relaxed drive than their SLK200, although there was a clear



Gus's rare SLK200 Kompressor with Designo paintwork.

decline in mpg. With air-conditioning, electric leather seats and birds-eye maple wood it was also a far more modern cockpit than what they had been used to.

A day to remember

As well as daily commutes, Gus and his wife took the SLK230 on various road trips which the car was designed for, including a drive to France and a visit to the Goodwood Festival of Speed. They also had a family friend who worked for *Mercedes Enthusiast* magazine and was driving to Scotland to do an article on a Mercedes-Benz SLS. They were very kindly invited to join in with their silver SLK and they met the SLS at Stirling before taking a scenic route to Perth, a day that Gus won't ever forget. They continued to have their SLK serviced at John R Weir's and had no major issues with it, nor did they have any with their previous model. However, when the dealership changed to Arnold Clark, Gus decided to switch servicing to Klasse Series Automotive at East Calder, where owner Colin Nicol gave the SLK230 a full inspection. After servicing it for many years, Colin created a list of areas which needed attention on the well used SLK in order to get it back to tip-top condition. Despite Gus and his wife's love for the car, they made the very sad decision to sell the car and move onto a younger Mercedes which needed less work to keep it reliable. A friend was selling his more modern C-Class cabriolet which was bought as a replacement and unfortunately due to having trouble moving the SLK onto a new owner, it was sold to *We Buy Any Car*.

Gus loves his C-Class, it provides him with comfortable and reliable motoring, but



The interior, complete with six-speed manual gearbox and wood trim.

he does miss both of his SLKs dearly. With its sophisticated Vario roof, the SLK was a car they could enjoy all year round. It took them on various memorable trips, handled beautifully and most importantly was cheap to run and maintain. Gus describes the R170 as 'a beautiful modern classic, which Mercedes-Benz over-engineered and got just right with the design'.

The R170 is a fast appreciating, elegant design and has been a major success for Mercedes-Benz with over 310,000 units produced. I would like to thank Gus for taking the time to talk about his experience with these brilliant cars.



'Light, nimble and very economical.'



The SLS and Gus's SLK230 Kompressor posed for the *Mercedes Enthusiast* photo shoot.





The very purposeful looking competition prepared 300SL Gullwing of Hans Kleisel.

Mercedes-Benz Classic Days, Brooklands – 2008

by Clive Henderson, Model Register Captain Co-ordinator

When I became aware of this event, early in 2008, I realised that it would be a unique opportunity to see a sizeable number of pre and post-war classic Mercedes-Benz cars away from their usual habitat of show halls and museums, so a trip to Weybridge from North Wales in early September was written firmly in the diary.

The event was organised by the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart with technical support for the participants provided by the Mercedes-Benz Classic Centre. It took place from Saturday August 30 to Saturday September 6 utilising Mercedes-Benz World at Brooklands as its base. Classic Days had been held in Austria during the previous eight years. As you may be aware, Mercedes-Benz World is situated within what was once the Brooklands circuit, famous for its banked bends. Mercedes-Benz, and before that Daimler, Mercedes and Benz, has been associated with Brooklands since the original circuit's inception. The inaugural meeting on July 6 1907 included the Gottlieb Daimler Memorial Plate with four Daimlers competing and in the First

Montagu Cup the first and second places were taken by Mercedes 120hp cars, with a third also taking part.

Programme and timetable

Saturday August 20 12.00pm participants arrive at Mercedes-Benz World.

Sunday August 31 8.00am drive to Brands Hatch, complete lap of honour

on the DTM (German touring car championship) race day. 1.00pm attend DTM race.

Monday September 1 9.00am to 5.00pm regularity runs on the Brands Hatch circuit.

Wednesday September 3 10.00am sightseeing in London. 12.00pm return to MB World.



W198 300SLs of Michael Bock (of Mercedes-Benz Classic in Stuttgart) and Michael Rapp.





The 1928 630 of Antonio Turroba from Spain. Note the V-shaped radiator and cooling fan.

Thursday September 4 8.00am tour to Goodwood. 12.00pm lunch at Goodwood. 3.00pm return to MB World.

Friday September 5 9.00am visit Windsor Castle. 3.30pm attend polo match at the Guards Polo Club.

Saturday September 6 10.00am Concours d'Elegance at MB World.

Classic Days 2008 attracted 171 registered crews who attended in a broad range of Mercedes-Benz models from the 1920s through to the late 80s. I was quite in awe of the range of W198 300SL



The 1960 300d cabriolet of Belgian owners Peter and Nel van Eekert.



Nearest the camera the 1937 540K of Hermann Siebold. The grey car is a 1941 540K cabriolet A owned by Walter Lechler.



1928 SSK owned by Alfred Richter.



Willi Schmitz on the MB World track in his 1958 Ponton 220S coupé.





The 1953 300S cabriolet of Horst and Doris Joppe.



From Belgium the 1954 220A cabriolet of Ivo and Winny van Dooren.



A brief dry period saw Patrice von Werra with the hood lowered on his 1959 190SL, behind is the 1950 170S cabriolet B of Carolin and Ebner Heinz.



The wonderfully original 1955 300SL Gullwing of Bart and Cathy Valkenburg from the Netherlands.



Dr Klaus Lehr awaits his track time in his 1955 300SLs.

Gullwings and roadsters at Brooklands, together with the many other classic models. The event was also attended by UK Mercedes-Benz Club Members who, like myself, had come to view the fascinating group of classic models. Many had driven to Brooklands in their own Mercedes which provided a separate show of cars in the visitors' car park.

The vast majority of the participants were from Germany but a group of Members from the UK represented our Club: Brian Finch and Daphne Phillips with a 1936 170V cabriolet, Jeremy and Jane Stevens 1952 170V saloon, Roy and Mary Shakeshaft 1965 220SE coupé, Jill



Rheinhold Seipp's 1935 290 lang cabriolet...



...the standard version – the 1934 290 cabriolet A of Ursula and Dirk Buddes.



The 1958 300d Adenauer of Hermann Evers.



The bad weather couldn't keep spirits down.

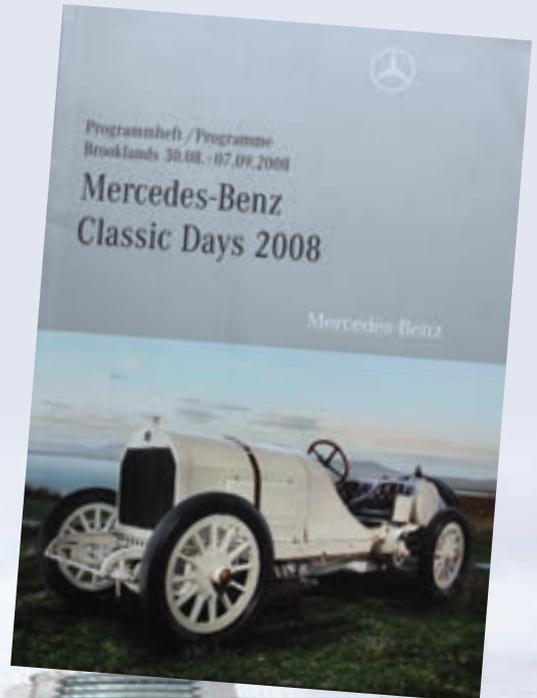


Heading for home – a number of the cars were transported to the Brooklands.

Francis 1965 Pagoda 230SL, Geoffrey and Rosalind Hunter 1965 600 limousine, Nicholas and Riona Mitchell 1968 Pagoda 280SL, Najmudin Jesani 1968 Pagoda 280SL, Brian and Christine Bourne 1969 Pagoda 280SL, Ian and Pat Keers 1969 300SEL 6.3, David and Michael Smith 1970 Pagoda 280SL, Malcolm and Patricia Sinclair 1970 Pagoda 280SL, James and Patricia Hyland 1981 230E.

Wilfried Steffen, Mercedes-Benz UK CEO, took part in a 1968 Pagoda 280SL and Peter O'Halloran, then Director of MB World, in a 1988 300SL. Members of the UK press were allocated the use of a 1958 Ponton 220S cabriolet and a 1968 280SE cabriolet.

Unfortunately the weather forecast for the Weybridge area for the weekend of this event was not very promising, with the expected overcast conditions with frequent showers being correctly predicted, however I did manage to capture these images between the showers before the event drew to its conclusion in late afternoon.



The event programme.



A 300SL traffic jam.



Destined to be famous

– the story of 420SL E22 OWX

by Barry R Walker

From birthday present to Supreme Master Class winner

A friend of mine attended the Retro Classics Stuttgart show in March 2019 where he was made to feel very welcome by members of the Mercedes-Benz R/C107 SL Club Deutschland. During coffee and cake they discussed how the UK Club operates in comparison with those in Germany. My friend described his recent involvement in helping to prepare a car for the 2018 UK National Concours event held at Mercedes-Benz headquarters at Milton Keynes and it was suggested to him that it would make an interesting article for the '107 Klassik' magazine of the German club. We hope readers of the Gazette will also find it interesting.

A brief history

Built in 1987 as production number 7708598, the car was shipped to the UK from the Mercedes-Benz factory in Sindelfingen on June 8 1987. She received a UK Pre-Delivery Inspection (PDI) at the Charles Sydney Mercedes-Benz

dealership in Yorkshire on June 29 and was registered on August 1 as E22 OWX. Little did I know at the time how relevant the registration would prove to be in the coming years. I purchased the car two years later in 1989 from Charles Sydney and it has been lovingly cared for ever since – always kept in an immaculate, dehumidified environment with no expense spared, retaining her originality throughout. She has been exhibited at various 'high end' car shows throughout her 30 years of my ownership, winning many prizes and awards along the way, including the Club's prestigious National Concours Master Class and Best in Show June 2018.

My R107 story begins in the late 1980s when I intended to surprise my wife with a birthday present of a brand new signal red 420SL, which I ordered through Charles Sydney, the main dealer in Bradford, Yorkshire. However, a few months later circumstances changed and my wife had decided to leave our

marriage. Understandably I had forgotten all about the SL. Then, in 1989, I received a telephone call from the dealership informing me that they had a second-hand, one owner 420SL which had just come in the showroom with the same specification as the one I previously ordered. As I was going through a stressful divorce at the time I decided to cheer myself up by viewing the vehicle. The following day I went to the dealership with my brother Paul. Between us we gave the car a thorough examination, with Paul inspecting the paintwork and me inspecting everything else. After consideration I decided to purchase the car and, being a thrifty Yorkshireman, asked the salesman for some discount but was told, "No chance," as they had offered me first refusal due to the fact I had ordered a new SL originally and that they had a long list of clients waiting to view the vehicle. Needless to say I accepted the asking price and shook hands with the salesman.



Barry Walker with his 420SL and the trophies he won at the Club's 2018 National concours.



Club Members at their hotel preparing their cars for the 2018 National Concours in Milton Keynes.



Barry receiving one of his National Concours awards from Richard Tague of Peter Best Insurance Services (which helps support the event) at Mercedes-Benz UK in 2018.

The concours path

I enjoyed the SL for the next four years, then decided to join the Club in June 1993. Shortly afterwards, whilst attending a regional show at Harewood House in Yorkshire, I met a fellow Member Neville Wright, who had an exceptionally good W123 saloon that he was exhibiting and I complimented him about his car. Neville took the time to take a look at my 420SL and what he said was sufficient to set me on my concours path. He said that the car had the potential to be made a concours winner. I had not really thought my car worthy of such status but was encouraged by kind words coming from someone who appeared to really understand the intricacies involved exhibiting a motor vehicle at this level.

This insight was later confirmed by John Haynes, then the Club's Chief Concours Judge – who also took me to one side, at a national event at Battle, a town near Hastings. I was definitely on the concours way, but little did I know how much work and effort was ahead of me to reach and maintain the standard required.

On returning home later that day I thought 'Right, how can I improve this car?' And decided the best way forward would be in stages and I started with the boot area. Then I progressed to the interior – cleaning everything, including the carpets, seats, dashboard etc. In the weeks and months that followed I turned my attention to the engine bay and finally the undersides. New tyres were fitted and I

discovered, via Neville, that there was even a correct procedure to be followed when fitting these to satisfy the concours judges – namely that one had to align the three-pointed wheel centre star with the valve and also the 'Max pressure/Load' information area on the tyre itself. Just one example of the many fine details I discovered that are required.

I continued to improve the car, taking it to local shows, gatherings and Club meetings, until I felt sufficiently confident to present it at larger prestigious events. In July 1996 I entered the Yorkshire regions' event which happened to be held at my local village pub – the Square and Compass near Harrogate, and much to my amazement it won 'Car of the Month'. This was just the encouragement I needed – all my hard work was paying off and, most importantly, I was enjoying the experience.

I went home and into the garage once again, improving things here and there. In 2002 I entered an event celebrating the 50th year of the Mercedes-Benz Club that was being held at Grimsthorpe Castle in Lincolnshire. I won the Concours d'Elegance and my award was presented by the late John Surtees CBE, then the Club's Honorary President. I was informed of a competition organised by *Autoglym* that I should consider entering. This involves a series of regional events culminating in the grand final to be held at the Classic Motor Show at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) in Birmingham. On entering my first



Barry with his car in a Meguiar's advertisement.

regional event I am pleased to say that I was a runner up, thus allowing me to enter the grand final. Subsequently I entered numerous *Autoglym* competitions, leading to my winning the Grand Final that was held at Alexandra Palace, London in 2007.

At the same time I continued to enter the Club's national competitions that were held annually at Milton Keynes. Competitors were initially required to achieve a win at Concours d'Elegance level to enable them to progress to the Master Class. Following this, and having won the club Master Class, I was invited to attend the inaugural *Meguiar's* Show Case event at the NEC in 2006.

I continue to support the Club's national events. I have been lucky enough to have met and made good friends with a lot of people along the way who are like-minded and passionate about these wonderful cars.

Over the years I have won numerous competitions, resulting in winning both Master Class and Best in Show at the 2018 National Concours in Milton Keynes.

Having won these awards I was asked to 'retire' my car for a two-year period, to which I gladly agreed, this now allows me the time to help and encourage others, young and old alike, to become involved.

Personally I can recommend the whole experience and the camaraderie that entering these concours events can offer, as you will meet great people and have some wonderful times.

Having owned the SL for 30 years I still enjoy driving, cleaning and taking care of the vehicle and it still puts a smile on my face whenever I remove the car cover. You may be wondering about the early reference to the registration – OWX. Well some wise gentleman pointed out to me that it could refer to 'Old Walkers Ex' – after all it was supposed to be her birthday present.

OWX will doubtless appear in regional and national events from time to time and maybe some people from the R/C 107 SL Club Deutschland will attend, either as spectators or as competitors – coffee and cake will be provided of course!





Longstone

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Christopher Balfour's 190 in its current form.

Will not scrap

by Christopher Balfour

Part one

Since passing the driving test in 1950 (driving a Morgan three-wheeler), and experiencing my first Bristol in the 1960s, which showed what was achievable, I have always fussed about ride and handling balance in cars. Our first Mercedes-Benz, a 250 in the late 1970s, was too soft. It was a Crayford estate conversion. We fiddled but never got the rear suspension as we wanted. In recent years it has seemed to us that Mercedes suspension was more set up for autobahn use than these awful English surfaces. Air-matic has been a partial saviour.

In 1992 I noticed a left-hand-drive carburettor 190, 106,788kms recorded, on offer at £4,000 at Rose and Young in Caterham. As we were going to spend some time in Europe this might suit. We were told this was a car from early in production and had started its life in Norway. On our first trip to the Pyrenees we were surprised and delighted by the combination of comfortable ride, sharp handling and driver appeal. It was as good in the mountains as the Bristol 400, and at a much lower price. It was some years later that I read Mercedes own publication about the car: 'The principle of the multi-link independent



The much-loved red car after its crash.

rear suspension; five flexibly-mounted links on each rear wheel to neutralise any self-steering effect – what-ever the driving conditions.' And, in a later advertisement: 'They began by testing 70 variations of eight traditional rear suspension systems.

When nothing could measure up, they created a completely new system for the 190s.'

The car ran well on the autoroutes and we were well pleased. But then on the return trip there were nasty noises coming





Attempts to pull the 190 back to shape were unsuccessful.

from the engine. Had we made another mistake to add to previous bad purchases? Rose and Young were understanding and, at the beginning of 1993, stripped down the engine. They replaced all the connecting rods, de-coked, fitted new piston rings and engine mounts. All went well, with routine service checks, till 1998 when we took the 190 to Pentagon at Eastleigh for a major service and check-over at 220,030 kilometres. They queried the exhaust manifold gasket and ended up taking off

the cylinder head. Subsequently the engine did not run well, a shadow of what it had been. I happened to be spending some time in the West Midlands where a friend with an efficient small garage had done good work on Bristols and other older pre-war cars. He restored the engine to its previous satisfactory running and had a look at the rest of the car. Bill saw that the propeller shaft joints and the gearbox mounting needed to be replaced. He sourced and fitted these bits.

Returning to the south I marvelled at how well the car was running. Would I ever want anything else? Everything was right about the car. Despite the compact size the seats were so comfortable for my six feet, four inches, the driving position and the vision just superb. On a very cold winter trip to southern Ireland in 1999 that superb heater (with its provision for completely separate fresh air) developed leaks. By good fortune the Waterford Mercedes people had a new heater in stock and this was soon fitted.

It was towards the end of 2000. I continued with monthly visits to the Isle of Wight, where we were involved with another workshop, taking my usual route along the deserted roads north of the Downs. Round a corner with a high bank on the left side came a white Vauxhall in the middle of the road. I could not escape up the bank. It was fortunate my car was left-hand-drive. The right hand side folded in against the strong beam in front of the screen as designed – ‘an offset frontal collision being the most common form of accident’. No air bags. I shot forward, only later finding that the first owner had pegged the safety belt 18 years before so that it did not exert so much pressure. My head hit and broke the windscreen. My thigh hit the steering wheel then, belatedly, the belt restrained me. Big bruises. I was taken to hospital but nothing was broken. The car was taken to the breaker’s.



The replacement bodyshell.



All components, including the doors, were painstakingly transferred from the red car to the yellow one at Ryde on the Isle of Wight.

Salvage and rebuild

When I was back from hospital after a check-up, the rescue people were soon in touch. ‘If I would sign and return the enclosed, they would salvage and sell what bits they could.’ This was distressing, the only car I had not been able to fault, with a now lovely engine, balanced prop-shaft, etc. Instead of our returning their form, would they return the carcass? There was much huffing and puffing, ‘This is most unusual’ etc, but eventually the remains were returned to sit on the road outside our house. What to do? We consulted with our neighbours in the Isle of Wight workshops who are adept at all bodywork repairs and much else. They encouraged us to bring

the wreck over. Fortunately we still had the trailer from days past when restoring a 1930s Hotchkiss. Hitched to our motor caravan we managed to get the car onto the ferry and so to the workshops.

The first thing was to connect the car with chains to what I think is called a 'puller' to bring the metal back to its pre-collision shape. Not a bit of it. Once Mercedes structures have protected occupants, they seem to be designed to stay that way. So was it to be scrapped after all? Then I remembered that there had, some months back, been a left-hand-drive 190 shell at Mercman in Southampton. So off we went with the trailer. The yellow shell was still there and it had a log-book with chassis numbers for re-registration. So it went on to the trailer and across to Ryde to join the crashed car. We never discovered the history of the yellow shell but the chassis numbers show that the car had been built the same year as our red one. We reckoned this should mean that most of the tiny details would be similar. Pete Jarvie, one of our neighbours in Ryde, is never put off by a fresh challenge. He reckoned, though he had little Mercedes experience, that with the red remains and the yellow shell side by side, and labelling every wire and connection, it could be done. Some months later we had a running car and all traces of rust, including round the jacking points, removed. It remains yellow on the outside with the original crashed car doors still painted red inside. The combination was running just as smoothly as before the disaster and then had to be re-registered in Portsmouth with a new registration. We will have to wait longer for acceptance as a classic car.

During this process we had bought a used mid-1990s E-Class. This meant that the LHD yellow 190 could be taken out to live in the garages of our flat in Andorra. For six years, the battery having been disconnected, the 190 started first time on our twice yearly visits. There were occasional trips to France and Spain and up and down the mountain passes in the



Club Member Christopher Balfour is a journalist and author. His work includes *Roads to Oblivion* about the British motor industry from 1946 to 1956 and a major contribution to Gerald Palmer's biography *Auto-Architect*. Palmer was also a Member of this Club and designer of the Jowett Javelin and the MG Magnette amongst other cars. Christopher Balfour was for a time archivist for Haymarket publishing and is an aficionado of Bristol cars. He is with one of his examples of that marque in this photo.



Once ready for the road and re-registered the 190 resumed its duties...

principality. The whole response of the car, the suspension and the tactile feel, continued to delight. One year there were groans from the front end. The efficient Automobiles Pyrenees at St Julia renewed the front suspension joints and all was well again. We were disappointed by the E-Class's suspension's lack of suppleness compared with the 190. But that car served for 100,000 miles until one day we realised we had no floor in the right front footwell. Rust had done its work. There were then serious engine problems and it was that car which was scrapped. It did not have the quality of the 190.

It was necessary to retrieve the 190, but how to get it into UK without an MoT certificate? In 2017 we discovered ITS Serveis, the test station for Andorra. All

we had to do was turn up with the car and, if it was satisfactory, they would give us a certificate which would be acceptable throughout France. All was 'favourable' and, after an oil change, we sped back to England. Then came the process of re-registering the car in the UK. I filled in all the forms but no response. Eventually I realised that it had to be done on-line but there had to be a paper valuation. I went to Winchester Mercedes-Benz, who had looked after the E-Class. Yes, said the sales manager and gave me a written valuation of £100.

Now with three UK MoT tests passed and a small annual mileage – we are old – we wonder whether we shall get to 300,000kms (186,000 miles). The car continues to delight.

...a new life which continues today nearly 40 years after leaving the assembly lines.





Philip Brown's CLK.

Audio 20 repair

by Philip Brown

After much wailing and gnashing of teeth, I finally, with advice from a friend, got down to sorting out the damage to the front of the Audio 20 in my CLK. Harmon, in their infinite wisdom, have put a clear polarising film over the front of the transparent screen, which can, in some circumstances, come off or get nicked. Once this has happened the only realistic remedy is either to change the unit like-for-like or replace it with something else. For me replacement with new was not an option, so this is what I did.

As you can see the damage was

extensive. After a bit of a search I found another Audio 20 from a CLK to buy and in due course it arrived. Now you would think it would be a straight swap between units; oh no dear friend! Mercedes-Benz codes the radios to the car, so unless you want a visit to your garage, or worse a Mercedes dealer, then the replacement units won't work. This is not an issue, you can just change the front and here's how.

I won't go into removing the head unit as this has been covered many times, just watch the upper switch panel. It can be a bit of a trial to get it to spring out. A rather

more polite way of saying what I wanted to say!

Once you have removed the Audio 20 and brought it indoors, as it's warmer, this is what you need to do. Firstly remove the two screws marked with arrows in the photos on the bottom and top of the front panel, the one next to the 'laser' warning label and the two at the rear. After freeing up the top, carefully lever it off, it's a tight, interference fit but will pop off easily. Here you will find the hidden screw just by the power supply for the display. Whip this one out.

Moving on to the sides, they are both the same, remove the screws arrowed in the photo and then push in the locking tabs. By now the entire front should be able to be gently levered away from the body of the radio, taking care to pull it in a straight line, you don't want to bend any of the connecting pins – see the photo!

As the units are modular, this allows many different styles of centre console to be accommodated whilst using one design of unit. Clever these Germans!

Reassembly is much the same, but in reverse. In my case this was easy, stuff always goes back quicker than it comes apart (why?) and just a quick retune of the radio was all that was required.

I hope this may be of some help to others, at least you get to see inside the gubbins. I suspect the Comand units are much the same, just with different electronics and even more gubbins!



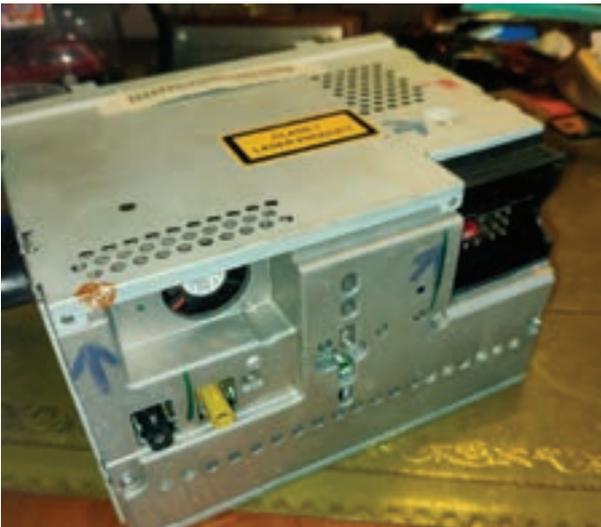
The damaged front of its Audio 20.



Remove the screws arrowed on the bottom...



...and top of the front panel and the one next to the laser warning label.



Then remove the screws at the rear.



Next, remove this 'hidden' screw by the display's power supply.



Remove the screws on both sides, as arrowed here.



The inside of the unit - be careful not to bend any of the connecting pins.



The Audio 20 back in the CLK.



FOR SALE

Breaking W123 280 coupé; 1998 C250 CDI estate; 2000 W208 CLK cabriolet; W124 300D multi-valve estate, good vented wing; W126 420SEL, good engine and box; W108 280SE. Parts off the shelf for W111 coupés and Fintails, W108, W123, W201 190 series, W124, W126, W202 C-Class and W210 E-Class. Please phone or text on 07710 672986 or e-mail retrodave111@aol.com Dave West Yorkshire.

Workshop manuals, parts catalogues, special tools, owners' handbooks and sales literature too numerous to list. These are all original (not reproductions), factory-printed books for all post-war models up to 1984. Contact me with your requirements. Geoff Marshall 07414 538004 marshall.geoffrey@gmail.com

Sales brochures R107 SL 1985-89 £50. R129 SL (hardback) £40. Limited Edition covering Atlantic, Almandine and Silver Arrows £10. R230 SL (hardback) £30. R170 SLK (face-lift edition) £30. W201 190E £10. W202 C-Class £5. All prices include post (within UK) and packing. Michael 01932 245711.

Four winter tyres Continental Contact 205/55 R16 91H MO, from W208 CLK, tread 5mm fronts, 7mm rears, buyer collects £130. Alan 07770 484977, Hampshire.

W210 New old stock set of four brake discs, part numbers 210 421 2512 and 210 423 0512 £50 plus post and packing or collect. Check the part numbers on EPC. robertcoxshall@outlook.com 01992 302238 Hertford.

W124 off-side front wing with correct hole for UK indicator repeater, unused pattern part, rust-free, prepared and primed in grey for fitting and painting £65. Geoffrey Hunter 07766 953084 geoffrey_hunter@btinternet.com

W113 Pagoda SL Chrome fresh air grille £250. Left-hand door window £150. Four chrome wheel trims £150. Four hub caps (blue), good condition £200. Steering wheel, black centre £100. Sun visor (beige) £100. Horn ring (new) £50. Assortment of rubber seals for door handles, instruments etc, unused £50. Pat (00) 353 872401819 Ireland.

W123 Nearside headlamp and left and right-hand front indicator lamps (orange). Two chrome hub caps (white). £40 for all. W124 set of four hub caps, plastic silver and chrome £35. Paul 01086 801629.

W113 Pagoda SL Pair of headlamp lenses, right-hand-drive, unused, and a headlamp assembly. Air louvre chrome grille. Front grille barrel and star (star unused). Various mouldings including hard-top chrome. Tonneau cover assembly. Fuel gauge (unused). Outer door handles. M127 camshaft. Speedo head. Plus more. Roger 01773 835462.

W202 New old stock set of four brake discs, part numbers 202 421 0912 and 202 421 0212 £50 plus post and packing or collect. Check part numbers on EPC. robertcoxshall@outlook.com 01992 302238 Hertford.

CLK Pair of halogen headlamp assembly, part numbers A2098202761 and 2861 with bulbs, used but good £200. Collect from Newton Abbot. Robert M Grainger 07747 526983 robertmgrainger@btinternet.com

CLK Set of four AMG 111 18-inch five-spoke refurbished CLK wheels with Pirelli tyres, approximately 4-5mm tread. Part numbers B66031442 and 443 £750. Collect from Newton Abbot. Robert M Grainger 07747 526983 robertmgrainger@btinternet.com

W113 Pagoda SL Soft-top frames for 230SL and 280SL, bonnets, boot, set of doors, fuel injection pump part number PES6K170/120R11, inlet manifold, manual gearbox part number 1112610504, front bumper, rear bumpers, cylinder head, indicator stalk, headlight, tail light (red), used exhaust, new unused stainless steel exhaust, steering rack, flywheel, starter motor, glove-box, full set of instruments, various other parts. 07538 807864 no texts.

New old stock items In original packaging. Boot badges – 190SL £125, 350SL (early one with pins) £55, 230SL £85, 300TE £30. W124 pre-facelift (pre-1990) front grille with badge £225 kevin.okeeffe198@gmail.com 01883 626721 (daytime).

Hamilton Cair-O-Port Storage system, 4.4m x 2.0m x 1.9m, three air filter fans, fits Pagoda SL or similar. To pieces of frame bent, can be purchased from Hamilton at £10 each. Cost £435 will accept £125. Bob 07966 526606 bobandkass@hotmail.co.uk Staffordshire

W124 inboard wiring harness New old stock, loom for automatic and air conditioning, part number A124 543 2133 607, fits chassis 124 09, 022, 029, 032, 042, 052, 079, 082, 092 £400 ono. Phil 07718 516300 sundial.miller@gmail.com

1999 W210 E280 CDI Three cabin filters, large, odd shape (MB part number 202 830 00 18) £30. Three sets, two per box, oblong cabin filters (210 830 10 18) £30. Two track-rod-end ball joints (A210 330 00 35) £40. Four engine oil filters (Hengst Germany E17211 D35) £20. Two diesel fuel filters (Hengst H35WK02 D87) £10. Set of front brake pads GDB1215) £25. Set of rear parking brake shoes (Lucas/Girling GS 8595) £30 Front offside fog lamp, good condition with new glass £25. Front shock absorber (Delphi DG 3845 /1) £50. Front offside pattern wing, new in primer £75. Warning triangle in case £5. All except fog lamp brand new, boxed. Set of second-hand glow-plugs, all work OK £20 (they cost that each). tonyrichardson@ntlworld.com 07874 797879.

Five tyres 195/70R14 91H Uniroyal Rain Expert. One new (spare), four with 6mm tread. Suit R107 SL. Collect from Oxfordshire £150. John 07899 996912 john@sonningcommon.com

R107 SL Two rear driver's side bumper ends. From cars that had 44,000 and 51,000 miles. Good condition, just very slight marks £180 each or nearest offer. Les 07818 222574 stewart4430@gmail.com

W208 CLK wind deflector In great condition, complete with bag which is faded but useable. Collection or can post £150. Simon Shaw-Batchford 07980 311106 sbatchford@gmail.com

1980s W123 first-aid kit Inserts into rear window shelf. Complete and unused. Offers invited. Mark 07904 160937 alisondunand@btinternet.com Weybridge.

100s of assorted Club Gazettes and classic magazines Offers around £60 and buyer to collect, by appointment. Bob bob.choda@btinternet.com 07956 994323.

Snow socks and chains Set of Bottari Safety Grip snow socks and a set of Top Tech snow chains, both unused and free to a good home in exchange for a donation to a charity of your choice! They were for my previous car, an E320 which was fitted with 215/55516 tyres. Can be collected from Hampshire. jtisdall@btinternet.com 07747 800533.

SLC/SLK wheels Reconditioned, with tyres. Derek Wellman 07808 688483 brendaandderek@yahoo.co.uk

1975 R107 350SL steering box Simon Edwards 07957 123451 simon.gcedwards@hotmail.co.uk North West.

1990 W124 230E Starter motor, alternator, front grille, window regulator/motor, centre console and switches, ash tray, as-new 15-hole road wheel, various other small items £50. Manchester area dave_colton@tiscali.co.uk

W113 Pagoda SL Hard-top, bare and rusty £200. Genuine headlamp bowls, pair £150. Pair of genuine jacking points £90 each. 190SL hard-top, bare but good condition £1,200. kevin.okeeffe198@gmail.com

1985 W123 240D Diesel saloon for spares or repair, MoT failure (offside chassis leg split plus much welding needed to floor). Good engine, five-speed gearbox, full new exhaust system, velour interior and five Fuchs alloys £600. Eric 01516 390149 Wirral.

R230 SL Four original Mercedes-Benz alloy wheels fitted with nearly new (500 miles) Kumho 225 x 45 ZR17 tyres, offers please. Terry 01566 773844 Cornwall.

WANTED

Club Gazettes (pale blue) Most issues from 1957, 1958 and 1959. Geoffrey 07766 953084.

W124 estate Driver's seat or front passenger seat in black MB-Tex (or MB-Tex material for sale). Please help. Eric 01516 390149 Wirral.

Five-spoke alloy wheel For 2017 W213 E-Class estate, to fit tyre size 225-55 x 17 V97. R Price price-r3@sky.com

2004 (or near) E320 estate Vehicle handbook. Mark 07904 160937 markalisondunand@btinternet.com

1971 W111 280SE 3.5 coupé New or used parts. Also a pair of front wings for a W108 280SE 3.5 saloon. Costas Petrou 07850 103357 0208 5299246 koopetrou@hotmail.co.uk

1976 W115 200 windscreen Or help in sourcing. Have been unable to find in the UK. John 07980 743586.

W114 coupé Tan or cream full interior either in leather or MB-Tex, must include rear bench seat, two front seats and all door cards with no rips or tears. Ideally prefer seat covers. Possible part-exchange with my flawless black MB-Tex interior. clive.ricketts@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk

1994 R129 SL Wood rimmed steering wheel. 01566 773844 maureenparker1943@maol.com

All Spares Register entries should be limited to 40 words maximum and sent to Bob Coxshall (bob.coxshall@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk or 55 The Avenue, Bengoe, Hertfordshire SG14 3DS) **to arrive by the 26th of the month preceding publication.** All correspondence should be by e-mail or post. In emergencies only telephone 01992 302238.





Peter Hampson's 280SL.

280SL ignition control box fault

by Peter Hampson

I have had my 1985 R107 280SL for almost 20 years and it has covered many miles in that time, taking my wife and I twice to the south of France plus many more local holidays. The body has been looked after by Gratt Motors, with several doses of *Waxoyl*, and it has proved to be a most reliable car. So when it developed an intermittent electrical fault I thought it would be fairly easy to correct. Wrong!

With assistance from Gratt's very competent electrical specialist, Dave Cunliffe, we checked everything, but the problem with intermittent faults is like when you go to the dentist – when the dentist looms the pain disappears. Thus, when I arranged to meet Dave there was no fault to see. The fault seemed to be that, occasionally, the car simply would not start. Not when it was cold, but if it was mid-way between cold and hot. This caused some embarrassment. Having gone to the local filling station and topped up the fuel



The ignition control unit (a silver coloured box) is located at the top of the nearside inner wing just ahead of the battery.





It is held in place by three bolts.

it stubbornly would not start – with a queue waiting for the pump! We pushed it away a few yards and then, hey presto! It started. We had similar experiences several times.

On only one occasion was Dave present, when the fault occurred, and he checked that there was no spark, but two minutes later it was fine. It did seem to be connected to the engine temperature. If the engine was fully warm, no problem. And the lack of spark seemed to confirm that it was basically an ignition fault. So, in turn, we replaced the plugs, HT leads, distributor cap and rotor – all well worth doing but it did not solve the problem.

Call in the ‘A Team’

Finally I did what I should have done in the beginning and contacted Jeremy Stevens, the Club’s Technical Director. I have known him for many years and he has always been very helpful, plus he likes to see technical problems aired in the Gazette, so one of his requests was that I should write a report about the problem.

His immediate suspicion was the ignition control box. He said that the solder in these units deteriorates with age and there was evidence that they could then be temperature sensitive. On his suggestion I made contact with Dave Collins, who is well known in the Club and who breaks old Mercedes. Dave confirmed that he had an ignition control box (they were common across the range in that period) so I bought it and, as arranged, he posted it to Jeremy. Jeremy ‘fettled’ the inside, re-soldering where needed and sent it on to me, with instructions to send back the original box for investigation and possible repair.

Fitting the box

The ignition control box, sometimes called an amplifier, is bolted to a small framework on the inner wing. Three bolts secure it and the nuts for these bolts are captive, secured to the small frame work, so there is no chance to drop them. The bolts are one on top and one each side, the only difficulty is that they are recessed slightly in their

fitting so a fairly narrow-walled socket is the best to use. Below the box are two electrical connectors. These are both push fit; so don’t try to unscrew them! Prior to getting the replacement box from Jeremy I gave the fittings several dousings with *WD40* and after that they came loose easily. Once the box was free it was fairly easy to detach the electrical connections, again the *WD40* probably helped. A word of warning – the bolt nearest to the radiator had a small bracket attached to it, which I only realised when I pulled the bolt out. When it came to refitting I found the bracket difficult to relocate and as it did not seem to do anything I left it off. I later sent Jeremy a photo and he suggested it might have been to secure a cable tie, but anyway the engine starts and runs without any problem.

What about the old box?

When Jeremy received the old box he put it on his test rig and it seemed to be completely OK. This caused some consternation when he told me and he started to suggest other possible causes for the starting problem, such as the warm up regulator which adjusts the K-Jetronic fuel injection control pressure. When I looked into replacing the warm up unit I got a shock. It seemed that if one got Bosch to rebuild it, it could be around £1,500. Then there were refurbished ones on Ebay – all around £500 to £600. Another phone call from Jeremy revealed that, once he stripped the control box he found “the PCB was riddled with solder fatigue (cracks in joints)”. He re-soldered them.

As he had originally made the point that it was likely to be a problem with old solder, it seemed most likely that this was in fact the cause of the fault.

Warm up regulator

In the meantime I had made contact with an old friend, Steve Pollard, who had looked after the SL years before. He used to be lead mechanic for the Ciceley of Preston rally team, who competed with W201 190s, and had stripped this unit for me once

before, when I had problems with the car running too rich. He agreed to take it off and check it. He did this and declared it perfect

Is the problem cured?

Well we will have to see, immediately after carrying out the work the car was put into storage for the winter, but I am reasonably confident that it was the ignition control box that was faulty, especially given the very intermittent nature of the fault and Jeremy’s finding of dodgy solder. Fingers crossed and watch this space!

Jeremy Stevens adds

This type of ignition unit is known as the TSZ8 and was first used on the M102 engine. It is the first ignition pack using dwell control to replace the external 0.6 Ohm and 0.4 Ohm ballast resistors previously employed with a ‘blue’ coil. There are two TSZ8 versions, one for four and six cylinder engines and one for the V8s. They use different coils and the correct coil must be used with these units.

There is one integrated circuit (IC) in the ignition pack and it is in the silver can you see when you take the lid off. The power transistor that switches the coil is buried out of sight in the base of the unit.

The IC uses analogue techniques to shape the incoming waveform from the reluctance transducer in the distributor to automatically adjust the dwell angle according to speed so that the coil is always charged with the maximum available energy. This is necessary to prevent the coil from overheating at low speed. Because the dwell control is not that precise the IC also limits the coil current to around eight Amps for the four and six cylinder units and 10 Amps in the case of the eight cylinder engines. Another feature provided by the IC is that the coil is not energised when the engine is stopped and ignition is switched on, saving unnecessary battery drain.

These units are pretty reliable and most faults are associated with water ingress causing internal corrosion, a failed power transistor, I suspect more often than



The ignition control unit as received from Dave Collins....



...and on test in Jeremy Stevens' workshop.



The control unit being stripped down.



Its interior looked to be in good condition.

not caused by human intervention, and as in Peter's case our old friend solder fatigue. Solder fatigue is caused by work-hardening of the soldered joints on a printed circuit board over many years due to mechanical stress as a result of many thermal cycles. Stripping these units can sometimes be problematic due to corrosion, and the connector and/or lid screws sometimes shear off making for a difficult and time-consuming repair.

The PCB is most easily removed after first demounting the connector. It is also necessary to remove the four mounting screws. Pop the coil current-sense resistor out of its spring clip holder and de-solder the connections to the base drive resistor (located under the PCB and out of sight) on the opposite side of the PCB, as well as the three connections to the power transistor in the centre of the board. These are on springy thermal relief connections and care must be taken not to 'twang' them as this could result in molten solder flying around.

As the PCB is removed don't lose the two *Paxolin* insulators under the connector-end mounts.

The next part of the refurbishment process is somewhat time consuming as every soldered joint on the board should now be re-soldered with the joints wetted and fresh solder applied as required. Pay

particular attention to the 16 pins of the IC, taking special care not to inadvertently short pins together with excess solder or dragging the soldering iron between pins; it is easily done. The other prime candidates for broken joints are the large box-type capacitors, of which there are many in the TSZ8.

Once the soldering operation is finished the complete PCB should be cleaned in *Safewash*. When dry, it is a good idea to spray the trace side of the PCB with an acrylic conformal coat to protect against moisture.

Often the connector will be corroded and the O-rings perished. Clean the connector with *Safewash* and replace the O-rings.

Reassembly is straightforward once the two *Paxolin* insulating washers have been successfully positioned.

Carrying out this refurbishment, whilst time consuming, is worthwhile as after completion there is no reason why an original factory unit shouldn't last another 35 years!



The printed circuit board (PCB) removed.



Safewash was used to clean the PCB after soldering. The re-assembled control unit is on the right and its connector block in the centre.



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ANGLIA – SOUTH

Mid-summer's dream

The vaccine continues rolling out, the covid risk rolls on, and the government will follow a road plan to a slow easing of lock-down. If all goes to plan June 21 could see a mid-summer's dream of freedom. The Club's Board will be reviewing government rules about when it is safe to reverse the current Club policy that all events and pub meetings remain cancelled. Let's all keep positive! Hopefully 2021 will allow us to run a programme of events and pub meetings later in the year.

David Page



Let's hope we can get out in the sun soon.

Light at the end of the tunnel?



Snow in Monica Blood's front garden.



Things were just as bad for David Page – "I left the car where it was under a blanket of snow! Even the bonnet star was lost under the snow".

We had temperatures dropping into minus figures, so the fires and the heating were on, and I have never watched so much TV. Then snow and more snow. Everyday Gerry cleared it, pushing it to the sides and into the middle of the drive with his snow scraper, so we could get a car out for shopping and work. I could only drive at 10mph, any faster and the car was shuddering as it struggled to brake.

We then had a mountain of snow, with our A-Class and the C-Class having to brave the cold, some days their doors were frozen, while the classic car was tucked away in the garage. We

had to check it would start after all the bad weather. Don't forget, if you have to use a car battery charger only leave it on for a few hours each day to get to a full charge, as there have been a few accidents with them over-heating and causing fires if left on overnight.

I am now looking forward to spring and the lock-down easing. By now many Members will have had covid vaccinations, so there may be a light at the end of the tunnel.

Monica Blood

2007 CLS63 AMG – the real cost



Chris Kent's CLS63 AMG was first registered on June 28 2007.



He bought it on September 12 2013 with a mileage of 34,927.

This W219 is totally standard and finished in silver with a rare grey leather interior. Its 6,208cc engine develops 514bhp, 464lbs/ft of torque and nought to 60mph 4.5 seconds. Its CO₂ emissions are 345g/km its current mileage is 86,864.

In its first three years the car covered 26,000 miles, the next three years just

9,000. I am the fourth owner. How many CLS63 AMGs are left? A website indicates that from a possible 150, 122 remain.

Driving this car always makes me smile, with the combination of comfort and power. I try avoiding short journeys; long journeys are effortless and I have travelled as far as Stockholm.

After seven-plus years of ownership and nearly 52,000 miles what has been the cost? Totalling everything it's around £1 per mile. Petrol is a good place to start: £14,404 – Shell V Power, 2,473 gallons. It may seem over the top but a spreadsheet I have tells me it works out at 21mpg.



Servicing, MoT tests, tyres, wheel refurbishments and repairs total £9,956. It has been serviced every 12 months, as per Mercedes-Benz's schedule, regardless of mileage, by a Mercedes specialist. It likes tyres – I have just had my fourth set fitted – £800 per set. It had new brake discs and pads, front and rear, at 62,000 miles (£2,100).

What's broken? Nearside front window cable – new regulator required (£130). Headlight bulb (£100). Two parking sensors (£370). Fan belt idler pulley bearings (£240). Auto-box control solenoid (£1,250

at a Mercedes-Benz dealership).

Wear and tear items replaced are the Mercedes-Benz battery, a front wheel that cracked (£565), steering and front suspension, components, engine and gearbox mounts.

Road tax has been £3,800 (currently £565 for 12 months but the car is SORN'd until the end of the covid restrictions). Insurance has been £2,450, including breakdown cover (the last renewal was £400).

Depreciation. I paid £21,980 plus £350 for a Bluetooth adapter and Comand CD

upgrade. Looking at *Autotrader* W219 CLS63 AMGs appear to have held their price against other models so I'd expect at least £10,000. This means depreciation comes in at £1,660 per year.

Hypothetically, if I had bought a new CLS in 2013 for circa £80,000, I may not have incurred the repair costs, but with today's values of a 2013 car with 52,000 miles at £25,000, depreciation would be £7,430 per year, which is a big difference. Maybe a six-year-old car is not a bad option.

Chris Kent

Lock-down's just plain boring now, isn't it?



Lisa Ferrari-Woodward's 'Scarlett'.



Kevin's 'Bluebelle'.

There we were thinking the final approach to Kev's retirement would be full of sunshine and European travels. Yes, of course in our motor-home – but we dreamt of doing it in my 'Scarlett' too! Semi-retirement clearly befuddles the brain slightly – as he went and treated himself to a new car – another Mercedes in the stable. One thing we always said was never to duplicate our cars... Hmmm... Thanks to Colchester Mercedes-Benz's advertising back in October, we now have 'Bluebelle' as well as Scarlett.

Kevin and Lisa Ferrari-Woodward



Lisa and Kevin with the new arrival.

If you have a car story from Anglia – South for the Gazette please contact david.page@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Club nights and 2021 events

Club nights continue to remain cancelled until further notice, but we do have some events provisionally lined up for 2021, all of which are subject to being permitted by Government rules on the relevant dates:

Drive It Day, Rockingham Castle – Sunday April 25

Our Drive It Day booking from 2020 was bounced on a year, and is now reformatted with socially-distanced parking for a bring-your-own picnic, within the castle parkland (near Corby, postcode LE16 8TH). There may still be spare places – the deadline for pre-payment is Wednesday March 31 and if you would like details of the event and

payment process please e-mail me (graham.black@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk).

Kimbolton Car Show

Unfortunately the organisers have abandoned the idea for 2021, but we hope to get a stand at next year's show on Sunday July 10 2022.

Surfleet Day, Lincolnshire – Saturday August 7

Simon and Janet Harrison have very generously agreed to facilitate this popular event again for us, albeit with a simplified format in view of covid concerns – essentially a bring-your-own picnic. As

some of you may know, Simon is a joint Model Register Captain for the W124, but this event is open to all Mercedes-Benz models. Arrival time on the day will be between 11.00am and 12 noon (postcode PE11 4JF, near Spalding). Our cars will be displayed in a large paddock, with ample room behind each vehicle for us to set up individual picnic spots. We are limiting car entries to a maximum of 50 and you will need to e-mail a request to me (graham.black@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk) for an advance booking form, to be completed and returned to me no later than Monday July 19 please.

Graham Black

My family in Mercedes-Benz

Our family fleet includes six Mercedes and as you will see from the descriptions below we have for the most part gravitated towards rarer models and versions. For your interest I offer my personal views on each of them, and it will be interesting to see if my comments provoke any correspondence!

CL500 Blue Efficiency

This is one of only 389 429hp M278



Which photos show which car? A1.



A2.



B1.

4.7-litre GDI bi-turbo V8 W216 S-Class coupés in the UK, and among the last 85 cars registered in 2014, the final year of the CL model name. It has more rear passenger space and a larger boot than its rivals in the luxury GT marketplace, though shorter and lighter than our W221 S-Class. It has a slightly louder exhaust note to enjoy, and is much more nimble thanks to the superb Active Body Control suspension with cross-wind stabilisation, which manages to combine the superbly supple ride of air suspension with much better active control and roll reduction, keeping the car level even in fast corners. Its lovely coupé shape, with no B-pillars interrupting the sleek curve of the side windows, enables all four windows to be lowered simultaneously in order to enjoy the V8 soundtrack, without interrupting the elegant, flowing lines. It is perfect for crossing continents in superb comfort and quietness, while the Gorden Wagener and Peter Pfeiffer design looks better than the subsequent, shorter-lived and now discontinued W217 S-Class coupé in our eyes. With a different character from the W221, it's a future classic that is well worth the price premium over an equivalent four-door S-Class. It is probably the car we would keep if we had to keep only one.

S500L Blue Efficiency

This rare, last of the line face-lift W221 S-Class 500L 4.7-litre Blue Efficiency 429hp M278 GDI bi-turbo V8 (one of only 104 long wheelbase W221s so equipped in the UK – over 95 per cent were diesels)

is noticeably quicker, more powerful and significantly more torquey (700Nm) than the previous (530Nm) 5.5 V8 version W221. It offers first-class luxury and space, with electric reclining heated rear seats, huge rear legroom from the longer wheelbase and a big luggage capacity. It's not a sports car, but delivers effortless overtaking with nought to 60mph in 4.7 seconds, nought to 100mph in 11 seconds or 70mph cruising at well under 2,000rpm together with 35mpg-plus if you want it to on long runs, where the Distronic Plus radar-controlled cruise control really comes into its own. The air suspension is pillow soft and supple in Comfort mode, while much tauter and more controlled in Sport – handling far better than you'd expect a huge limo could. The 7G-Tronic Plus gear changes are as smooth as silk, and it's so peacefully quiet inside, thanks to the double glazing and a plush interior, however a lovely V8 rumble is always available on demand. It's a better looking Gorden Wagener design than the subsequent W222 and W223 in our eyes, and perfect for crossing continents in superb comfort and quietness. It's a lovely place to be. One of three cars we'd keep if we had to keep only three.

CLK500

This ultra-rare, last of the line face-lift W209 Sport cabriolet, with the 388hp M273 32-valve 5.5-litre V8 and paddle shift seven-speed box (one of possibly only 10 out of just 31 coupés and cabriolets



B2.



C1.



C2.



D1.

in total in the UK) is noticeably quicker, more powerful and more torquey than the older CLK55 AMG with its five-speed box. Significantly better looking than the predecessor W208 and much prettier than the W207 in our eyes, it can provide effortless overtaking, with nought to 60mph in five seconds, nought to 100mph in under 12 or 70mph cruising at under 2,000rpm with 30mpg if you really want it to. The sport suspension is supple yet controlled, with road noise nicely suppressed, the gear changes are as smooth as silk and there is a thunderous roar available from the sports exhaust on demand. De-badged, it's a superb sleeper car, looking just like a CLK280, except once the road clears all its V8 muscle and soundtrack is available to enjoy, even more so with the roof down. One of three cars we'd keep, if we had to keep only three.

CLS350 CDI Blue Efficiency Shooting Brake

One of 910 in the UK, this car replaced our much-loved W251 R320L which had provided luxury and space with ride and handling superior to most MPVs or SUVs, the nearest thing to a LWB S-Class





D2.
4-Matic estate, with room for up to six in comfort, which suited our family needs when the kids were growing teenagers. The lower and more elegant CLS Shooting Brake loses the third row of seats and the associated load height of the R-Class, while more than compensating with a chassis that absolutely loves to change direction and corner more flatly than the W212 E-Class it's derived from. Nevertheless it still swallows huge amounts of luggage in its elegant Gorden Wagener designed five-door, frameless-window coupé body.

It is worth every penny of the significant price premium over an equivalent E-Class for the way it drives, on top of its looks – both inside and outside. I am so glad I took my son's advice (who said "You'll thank me later") and opted for the smoother, more refined and effortlessly torquy V6 350 CDI instead of a four-cylinder 250 CDI engine. (I did duly thank him later). The Shooting Brake hasn't been replaced in the current W257 CLS range, so our W218 looks set to retain its place in the fleet indefinitely.

SLK350

This car is one of around 200 Sport Editions in the final 750 or so face-lift



F1.

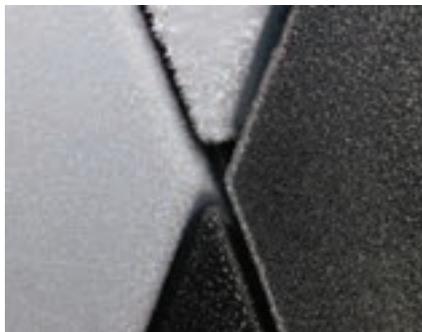


E1.

R171s in the UK. The rev-happy revised 305hp engine under the bonnet makes it a pleasure to use all of the revs up to the 7,200rpm red line, all of the time. It has more oomph than the similar vintage soft-top alternatives from other quality marques, none of which cosset their occupants with a hard-top roof or ride over rough roads with such aplomb and control. It delivers nought to 62mph in 5.4 seconds, with 30mpg-plus if you want it to. Steve Mattin's styling makes this face-lift, second generation SLK the best looking of all the SLK/SLCs in our eyes. A complementary set of talents for the fleet, and in daily use by our son as his first Mercedes.

A180 CDI

This W169 Elegance SE auto, one of 1,600 or so left in the UK, was a replacement for our W168 LWB that perfectly met our family needs when the kids were small. The W169's compact exterior dimensions make for easy parking, while the similar 'Tardis'-like huge space and excellent legroom on the inside remains. However the vastly improved chassis delivers far superior



F2.



E2.

handling and ride comfort, combined with much refinement. I am not tempted to replace it with the subsequent conventional-design W176 or W177 A-Classes, so our W169 will retain its place in the fleet until it dies. It is now in use by our daughter as her first Mercedes.

Photo quiz – which car?

Frosty mornings have provided some nice photo opportunities, and I have formulated the images into a mini quiz for readers – each of the six cars is represented by a pair of close-ups and all you have to do is decide which model is which! (You can make it easier by flicking through previous issues of the Gazette to find photos of whole cars to see if you can spot the details). The answers will be in next month's Gazette.

Bob Pearson

Thank you to Members

Early last year, when it became apparent that we would not be able to get together for some time and would therefore be deprived of events to write about, I circulated an e-mail to my local Club database requesting contributions of topics of interest which could be published in our region's section of the Gazette. Over the last year several Members have responded with information and photographs and I am sure readers will have enjoyed those contributions – many thanks to all concerned!

Graham Black

HERTS, BEDS AND BUCKS

Club events in 2021

I am receiving regular requests from event organisers urging us to sign up for shows later this year, which I would obviously love to do. However, following a brief e-mail conversation with the Club Company Secretary Phil Greaves, the situation remains that we cannot confirm events until the Club gives the green light, even when they are well into the future. I have to say that I support this difficult but pragmatic decision in these unprecedented times.

I suspect there will be very few, if any, events in 2021 unless we manage to get sufficient people vaccinated to create 'herd immunity'. Whether this can happen by the summer is, in my opinion, highly doubtful, but I remain optimistic.



The first car moved by Keith Green in his automotive career was a Pagoda SL.

On that note my thanks also to Warren Birnbaum for suggestions of events to support should we be lucky enough to get the lock-down lifted during this season. My thanks also to other Members who

have contacted me to suggest events, and to Keith Green in particular who is also a former North Easterner and appreciated my description of the rather peculiar habit North Easterners have of First Footing

on New Year's Eve. Keith has had a very interesting automotive career too, informing me that the first car he ever 'moved' was a Pagoda.

The grey-haired classic car market



Definitely one to watch!

According to the various magazines I have read lately, the classic car market is still buoyant, which surprises me since there are no events to enjoy or appreciate. I imagine all of the recently purchased classic cars will burst out of hibernation one day, creating record attendances at future shows.

I regularly watch a TV programme called *Bangers and Cash*, which is not an American detective series, but instead is about a family-run classic car auction house called Matthewsons, in a lovely Yorkshire village not far from Scarborough called Thornton-le-Dale. Derek Matthewson, who oddly enough is a Londoner, and his sons and grandson find interesting cars all over the country, and sometimes even in Europe, and put them under the hammer in North Yorkshire. Each episode focuses on three different cars and their sellers and then shows them under the hammer and usually post restoration. There are a few Mercedes featured, but not many, although I frequently see some very nice three-pointed-stars in the background.



Matthewsons' garage and auction house.

Derek Matthewson is definitely a showman, and manages to make the entire programme extremely entertaining with his sometime chaotic exploits, all held together by a laconic Yorkshire lady called Sarah who runs the office, and I understand also runs an R129 SL.

However, looking at the assembled throng bidding in Matthewsons' auction room, I can't help thinking their profile mirrors the view that I see at classic car events, in that classic car owners are getting older, and almost all of the heads in that room are grey. Often the people selling are in their 70s and 80s, looking for a good home for their beloved classic and the people buying them aren't much younger!

This raises a serious question about how to attract younger Members into the Club or into the classic car scene generally. I joined when I was 35 and was relatively young, but that was nearly 30 years ago. I believe that people buy the classic car they would have liked to have owned when they were a teenager. I was 12 when my



R129 SL320 – a classic for the 40-plus-year-old.

Pagoda SL came off the production line, so we really should be targeting people who are in their 30s and 40s now, who probably imagined themselves in a W124, SLK, R129 SL or even an R230 SL when they were teenagers.

I don't have the answers, but thinking about my own son, who drives an SLK55 AMG, he enjoys 'road trips' to new places with his friends rather than static classic car shows and perhaps this is something that the Club might like to explore, without people having to join the Club first. So the event itself becomes the recruitment vehicle to attract younger Members. Food for thought...



SLK55 AMG – a future classic.

New Members

I would very much like to welcome our recent new Members in the region, who are C-Class owners Julian Welham, Danny Killeen and Martin Austin, and E-Class driver Stephen Ellis. A big welcome to the Mercedes-Benz Club and I hope to meet you soon.

Paul Jobling

IRELAND – LEINSTER

Stately Mercedes-Benz motors

During the period of Club inactivity since covid lock-downs began, I have kept in touch with Leinster Members by circulating their stories as submitted to me. It started off in a small way but soon it became a weekly event, usually on a Sunday evening. I believe that a few of them may be worthy of inclusion in the Gazette as regional reports. One such story came in two parts from David Costello.

Turlough Mullen

David Costello's story

Part one

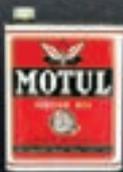
A recurring trait among adult Mercedes-Benz owners is how their childhood experiences inspired their liking of and loyalty to the marque, and often to a particular model. So, given the stories that have appeared in the Gazette and the Leinster newsletter recently, I thought I would share some of my Mercedes memories and how I was introduced to these great cars.



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I was born in 1966, the youngest of five siblings. Neither they nor my parents were remotely interested in cars. Nonetheless, from a very young age I can recall noticing and liking cars, a trait which I put down to being by nature an observant person with an interest in my surroundings. Happily my awareness of Mercedes – rare cars in Ireland in the early 1970s – developed at an early age in unusual circumstances. My paternal grandfather, an elderly man, in his 80s when I was a young child, had a black Mercedes, a W115 230. He also had a driver, and this combination,



A 1970s advertisement for Mercedes-Benz by the Irish distributor.

together with the respectful deference which my grandfather seemed to attract, naturally made an impression on me. However, a seminal moment in my Mercedes experience occurred one spring morning in 1973 when, aged six, I awoke to see another black 230 parked in our driveway, also with a driver! What was this about, I wondered?

It was soon explained to me that my father, a barrister and newly elected TD (member of the Irish Parliament) for Dublin South West, had been appointed Attorney-General in Liam Cosgrave's coalition government, hence we would have the use of a state car and a garda (Irish police) driver. Happy days! I now got to experience Mercedes motoring first hand. As an impressionable six-year-old boy it was not lost on me that my grandfather and father both had chauffeur-driven black Mercedes, and it was this rather special set of circumstances that permanently attracted me to the Mercedes marque from such an early age.

The standard issue 'ministerial Mercs' of the early 1970s were black W115 230s. These cars were interesting in their own right because they were hand assembled in Ireland at the MDL premises on the Long Mile Road. The story behind these Irish assembled Mercedes was recounted in the June 2008 Gazette. I recall that my father's car had red cloth upholstery with gold piping. This I firmly believe was unique to the Irish assembled cars, as I have never seen the same material in German manufactured W115s. Located above the rear seat was a telescopic, flexible reading light that allowed the minister to read his papers while travelling to meetings late at night. However, the piece de resistance was a two-way radio in the glove compartment for communicating with the Garda (Irish police) headquarters. This was a security feature that thankfully was only used once – when the car broke down!

In the 1970s we used to go on family holidays to the west of Ireland and I eagerly anticipated the long drives in the big Mercedes. As I was so small at the time, and clearly besotted with the car, my parents allowed me to ride shotgun on the folding front armrest beside the driver. Health and safety didn't enter anyone's mind, least of all my own, and thankfully we never had



The Costello family on holiday in the west of Ireland, Easter 1975, with a W115 230 serving as a seat.

any accidents or close shaves – the garda drivers were excellent and they always inspired great confidence. Sitting up front gave me a bird's eye view of the road ahead and, critically, the speedometer. I was always thrilled to watch the needle creep up to 80mph or more where road conditions permitted (state cars and garda drivers were never subject to speeding fines). As you might imagine, the Mercedes was generally much faster and more powerful than nearly all of the other traffic on the Irish roads of the early to mid-1970s, and I can only remember our car being overtaken (the impertinence!) on one occasion during our long journeys across Ireland on single carriage-way roads. Needless to say, I never asked "Are we there yet?"

On another occasion, while holidaying in County Mayo, we were shadowed by the local gardai on security detail. I wondered how their very basic Hillman Avenger would keep up with our Mercedes if any trouble arose. In any event, it was a comfort to know that our garda driver was armed with an automatic pistol. If this seems a little far-fetched then let me explain the security background to younger Club Members and those of you who are unfamiliar with Irish politics in the mid-70s. In July 1976 the British Ambassador to Ireland, Christopher Ewart-Biggs, was murdered by an IRA bomb explosion near his residence in south County Dublin, Glencairn. This was less than five miles away from where I lived. In response the government introduced controversial anti-terrorism legislation which the President (Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh) referred to the Supreme Court to test its constitutionality. When the Supreme Court ruled that the Emergency Powers Bill was constitutional, the President signed the bill into law. On the same day, October 16 1976, an IRA bomb in Mountmellick killed garda Michael Clerkin. In these febrile times my father (the Attorney-General) was potentially a target of the IRA.

The year 1976 also marked the end of my family's association with Mercedes-Benz. In January of that year my grandfather, J A Costello, died and his 230 departed the scene. Unbelievably it was only after he died that I found out that my grandfather had been a former Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) which, among other things, had allowed him to enjoy the benefit of a state car and garda driver for his lifetime. (This perk was affordable when the country had very few former Taoisigh, but as time passed and the country accumulated several living ex-Taoisigh the benefit became unpopular, not to mention unaffordable – by 2011 a ministerial car and driver cost €280,000 a year – so that perk was abolished as part of the economic cutbacks during the last recession). A few months later in 1976 my father's W115 230 was withdrawn from the ministerial fleet and replaced with a black Peugeot 504. I was devastated. The Peugeot was a comfortable car with a sunroof, but it lacked the gravitas of a Mercedes. Our family's motoring nadir, as far as I was concerned, was completed the following year when my father retired from politics and bought a white Ford Cortina 1.3L. This was a modern, contemporary looking car but it was about as quick as my Raleigh bicycle. Still, the seeds of my Mercedes passion had been sown. The question of how or when I would ever own one was at that stage unanswerable, but I quickly (wisely?) decided that politics was not the optimal route to Mercedes ownership for me!

Part two – driving my own stately Mercedes-Benz



David at the first Club event in Ireland, at Finstown House on May 12 1997.



During my teenage years my interaction with Mercedes-Benz cars was limited to the occasional car show in the RDS (Royal Dublin Society Arena), but I continued to educate myself about the brand, its automobiles and racing pedigree. I read numerous classic car magazines, brochures, historical books and contemporary road tests. I even kept scrap-books filled with Mercedes-Benz advertisements and newspaper test reviews, which I still have. Hence my admiration for Mercedes-Benz cars and my determination to own one someday was continually reinforced and nourished.

A phrase beloved of sports psychologists is to ‘control the controllables’. This maxim became relevant as I approached my 17th birthday. I managed to persuade my parents to insure me on my mother’s car and to pay for driving lessons when I turned 17. The quid pro-quo was that I had to agree to abstain from alcohol until my 21st birthday! A deal was done and I commenced my driving lessons a few weeks after my 17th birthday in November 1983.

My driving tutor, Michael Kilkenny, had an impeccable pedigree. He had been one of my grandfather’s garda drivers and in later years he had driven Pope John Paul II around Phoenix Park during the Papal visit in September 1979. Needless to say Michael taught me the basics of driving very well. I learnt to drive in my mother’s car, a white Mini Clubman estate with a four-speed manual gearbox and a 1.1-litre engine. This was a great little car with its light, responsive controls, torquey engine (at low speeds!) and manoeuvrability around Dublin’s narrow roads and streets. Although I failed my driving test on the first attempt, having applied to sit it a bit prematurely, I passed with flying colours the second time, before my 18th birthday. I could now enjoy the freedom and pleasures of driving further afield on the open road and fantasise about doing so someday in a Mercedes, ideally a 450SEL 6.9! On very rare occasions opportunity emerges from adversity. In the winter of 1995-96 I became seriously ill and I was hospitalised for 10 weeks, undergoing two abdominal operations. During my treatment, and while under the influence of pain-numbing morphine, I decided that I needed something to look forward to and so I resolved to buy a classic Mercedes when I got home from hospital. I was rather surprised when my friends and family encouraged me in this endeavour, as I had assumed they would blame the morphine and tell me to do something more sensible. A year before my illness I had qualified as a solicitor and I was working in my first post-qualification job when I was struck down with ill-health. Thankfully my employer continued to pay my salary while I was in hospital, so I was able to save enough money to buy a classic car. At that time I was still living with my parents and I had no mortgage or living expenses, but it never occurred to me to put my savings towards a deposit for a home of my own – the Mercedes took first priority!

My classic Mercedes-Benz had to be a W114. I have always had a liking for Mercedes coupés and I was smitten by the graceful lines of the W114 coupé, a car that has always been much more affordable in comparison to every other Mercedes two-door classics. Another important attraction was that contemporary road tests revealed that the 280CE, introduced in June 1972, was, by the standards of the early 1970s, a high performance car (*Autocar* magazine recorded nought to 60mph in 8.9 seconds and a maximum speed of 126mph), it being noticeably quicker than its W123 successor. Having chosen the specific Mercedes model, I had to decide how I was going to locate a good car and carry out the due diligence on any potential candidates. In this regard I was not confident in my own abilities and self-control as I felt my emotions would probably get the better of me and I would end up buying the first car that I viewed. The alternative was to ask someone to find a car for me.

It so happened that I knew a good mechanic and car restorer, Ian Meldon, who owned a business in Ranelagh, a suburb of Dublin, in the 1990s restoring Morris Minors. For a modest finder’s fee Ian kindly agreed to source a W114 280CE in the UK and bring it back to Ireland for me. After a few weeks Ian telephoned to say he had identified a potentially good car and that I was to give him a bank draft and some sterling cash prior to him taking the ferry to the UK. As I trusted his judgement I unhesitatingly gave Ian the funds and authorised him to do a deal if he saw fit after looking over the car. It was the best decision I made. Ian had found a sound car and he did a deal with the seller for IR£2,000. Happily for me, at that time, September 1996, the Irish punt had by sheer coincidence attained parity with the pound sterling and so I could take advantage of the

The Celtic Experience

By Steve Edwards

In over forty years of our Club's existence, there has never been a visit as exciting, held in any part of Ireland and at all open places and I hereby declare this visit as 1997. The weather here in Dublin was perfect, and due to our many holiday visits to Fenian's family we felt confident we could manage a better weekend visit.

My driving tutor, Michael Kilkenny, had an impeccable pedigree. He had been one of my grandfather's garda drivers and in later years he had driven Pope John Paul II around Phoenix Park during the Papal visit in September 1979. Needless to say Michael taught me the basics of driving very well. I learnt to drive in my mother's car, a white Mini Clubman estate with a four-speed manual gearbox and a 1.1-litre engine. This was a great little car with its light, responsive controls, torquey engine (at low speeds!) and manoeuvrability around Dublin's narrow roads and streets. Although I failed my driving test on the first attempt, having applied to sit it a bit prematurely, I passed with flying colours the second time, before my 18th birthday. I could now enjoy the freedom and pleasures of driving further afield on the open road and fantasise about doing so someday in a Mercedes, ideally a 450SEL 6.9! On very rare occasions opportunity emerges from adversity. In the winter of 1995-96 I became seriously ill and I was hospitalised for 10 weeks, undergoing two abdominal operations. During my treatment, and while under the influence of pain-numbing morphine, I decided that I needed something to look forward to and so I resolved to buy a classic Mercedes when I got home from hospital. I was rather surprised when my friends and family encouraged me in this endeavour, as I had assumed they would blame the morphine and tell me to do something more sensible. A year before my illness I had qualified as a solicitor and I was working in my first post-qualification job when I was struck down with ill-health. Thankfully my employer continued to pay my salary while I was in hospital, so I was able to save enough money to buy a classic car. At that time I was still living with my parents and I had no mortgage or living expenses, but it never occurred to me to put my savings towards a deposit for a home of my own – the Mercedes took first priority!

My classic Mercedes-Benz had to be a W114. I have always had a liking for Mercedes coupés and I was smitten by the graceful lines of the W114 coupé, a car that has always been much more affordable in comparison to every other Mercedes two-door classics. Another important attraction was that contemporary road tests revealed that the 280CE, introduced in June 1972, was, by the standards of the early 1970s, a high performance car (*Autocar* magazine recorded nought to 60mph in 8.9 seconds and a maximum speed of 126mph), it being noticeably quicker than its W123 successor. Having chosen the specific Mercedes model, I had to decide how I was going to locate a good car and carry out the due diligence on any potential candidates. In this regard I was not confident in my own abilities and self-control as I felt my emotions would probably get the better of me and I would end up buying the first car that I viewed. The alternative was to ask someone to find a car for me.

It so happened that I knew a good mechanic and car restorer, Ian Meldon, who owned a business in Ranelagh, a suburb of Dublin, in the 1990s restoring Morris Minors. For a modest finder's fee Ian kindly agreed to source a W114 280CE in the UK and bring it back to Ireland for me. After a few weeks Ian telephoned to say he had identified a potentially good car and that I was to give him a bank draft and some sterling cash prior to him taking the ferry to the UK. As I trusted his judgement I unhesitatingly gave Ian the funds and authorised him to do a deal if he saw fit after looking over the car. It was the best decision I made. Ian had found a sound car and he did a deal with the seller for IR£2,000. Happily for me, at that time, September 1996, the Irish punt had by sheer coincidence attained parity with the pound sterling and so I could take advantage of the

FEATURES

1. Welcome to the Club!

2. Meet some of the cars of Mercedes Park Motor.

3. A typical colourful Irish town.

4. Much more with Mercedes-Benz's Mercedes in the distance.

THE MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB UK LTD

The Gazette's report of the 1997 event in Ireland.

favourable currency exchange. However, as my new car was less than 30 years old it attracted VRT (Vehicle Registration Tax) which I vaguely recall adding about another £1,000 or so to the purchase price. I ended up with a good – not perfect, perhaps seven out of 10 car for roughly IR£3,000 in 1996. I was thrilled with my new acquisition, particularly as Ian had bought an early pre-facelifted 280CE made in late 1972 which to my taste had nicer classic details, such as the front double bumper, taller grille, quarterlights, chrome-ringed steering wheel and smooth-glazed rear lights, all of which were replaced as part of the 1973 face-lift. My newly acquired 280CE had a four-speed automatic gearbox with light green bodywork and an olive green MB-Tex interior. The only extra fitted to the car was a single rear fog-light, which was located under the chrome bumper. The car came with very little documentary history but its benign condition overall indicated that the recorded mileage of 52,000 was genuine. Regardless, I had my own Mercedes-Benz at last.

On May 2 1997 I attended the Mercedes-Benz Club UK's first official visit to Ireland, which had been organised by Mark Cosovich, and which held a display at Finnstown House. That weekend rally was extensively reported in the July/August 1997 Gazette. More importantly, the friendships and contacts made at the event eventually led to the establishment of the Irish regions within the Club, beginning in September 1997 with the new Northern Ireland Region managed by Trevor Mitchell. Aside from attending car shows and Mercedes Club outings, I could mention numerous other incidents and anecdotes that occurred during my 14-year ownership of the 280CE, such as the time the brake master cylinder failed as I was coming off the old N7 dual carriageway southbound at 80mph outside Kildare, or when the throttle stuck open while I was driving in Ranelagh! Despite these scares, I was proud of my car and I invested heavily in it over the years to replace worn components, fix niggles and repair and repaint the bodywork. The feature I most liked about the 280 was its lusty, free-revving in-line six-cylinder petrol engine, Mercedes' long-standing multi-purpose M110. As a matter of course that engine consumes a lot of oil. I strongly advise anyone whose classic is powered by an M110 engine to check the oil level regularly and to top it up as required in between oil changes and servicing, a routine maintenance task



David collects his new E350 CDI coupé from Isacc Agnew in Belfast.

that was recommended in my car's owner's handbook.

A combination of adverse events forced me to reappraise my ownership of the 280CE in early 2010. By that time I had settled into an apartment complex in Milltown, south Dublin. Nothing remarkable about that except for the fact that my complex does not have an underground car park and I did not have access to a garage nearby. Even though I drove my classic regularly (it was my daily driver) and pampered it, I found myself losing a long war to keep the car watertight. Some years previously I had spent a large amount of money respraying the car and repairing extensive rust in its bulkhead. This is a renowned problem with most Mercedes designed and built in the 1960s and 70s. For the uninitiated, the issue is caused by undrained rainwater collecting in the car's plenum chamber below the windscreen and eventually leaking into the interior as the bulkhead insidiously rots away unseen. Thus, the harsh snowy winter of 2009-10 brought renewed leaks and I had to make some tough decisions about my continued ownership of the car. Other emotional factors weighed on me. The financial crisis of 2008 had subsequently led to compulsory redundancies and pay cuts at the law firm where I worked, and there was a general mood of fear and despair throughout the country as we headed towards national insolvency. Closer to home, in September 2009 my father

suffered a very bad stroke which brought on the vascular dementia that eventually killed him two years later. In short, I needed a new project to counterbalance all the stress and despondency of that cold winter of 2009-10.

These circumstances made up my mind to sell the 280CE and replace it with a brand new Mercedes, on the basis that you should try everything once in your lifetime! Anyhow, I sold my 280 to a Club Member in Northern Ireland (who still owns the car I believe) and pressed ahead with project Benz. Before I ordered my new car I carried out extensive research on dealerships, purchase and finance options, annual road tax of petrol versus diesels, and the potential VRT/VAT costs of importing a new Mercedes. In the end I chose to buy my new car from Isaac Agnew, Belfast. Given my preference for coupés it will come as little surprise that I bought a two-door W207 E350 Blue Efficiency belonging to the 2009 introduced W212 E-Class range. I deliberately chose a diesel because of the cheaper annual road tax compared to the petrol 350 (ironically introduced by the Green Party in 2007 to promote the purchase of reduced CO₂ emitting diesel cars). In addition I ordered the cheaper SE over an AMG specced car. The SE coupé cars have a more compliant ride shod with higher profile 17-inch wheels (the AMGs use 18s), an important consideration given the poor state of our roads in 2010. The most enjoyable part of the purchasing process was being able to pick the colour of the bodywork (sandine beige), the extra specifications (panoramic sunroof among other things) and the interior appointments (designo leather in the body matching sand colour). Despite my expensive tastes I saved a considerable amount of money by buying my car in Northern Ireland, notwithstanding the additional VRT and VAT which I incurred on importing the car south of the border.

This brings me to the end of my Mercedes story. I have owned my E350 CDI coupé for 10 years now. The design has aged gracefully and I still get pleasure every time I sit in it and drive somewhere. My car has been extremely reliable (albeit having done only 45,000 kilometres (28,000 miles)) and it doesn't leak either! I do wonder about the future though. It seems that it is no longer possible to specify any new Mercedes in the UK or Ireland to suit one's personal taste, and gloomy black interiors cannot be changed for something more uplifting (the glitzy 'nite club' interior ambient lighting used in many of today's Mercedes is no substitute for a more cheerfully upholstered interior in a pale shade in my opinion). Then there is the question of diesel and petrol cars becoming obsolete or outlawed altogether. Environmental arguments aside, from a purely driving point of view I am not particularly enthusiastic about electric cars. Yes, they are comfortable, quiet, rapid, cheap to run and their range is improving, but they have none of the tactile and aural pleasures of driving a car with an internal combustion engine, especially one with a manual gearbox. Even though my annual mileage is only 4,500 kilometres (2,800 miles) and an electric car would be much more suitable for my driving needs, I will hold onto my E350 CDI as long as possible for the enjoyment it still gives me. I might even buy another 280CE someday!

David Costello

MIDLANDS – EAST

Music, sculpture and time travel at the bistro



Our regular monthly meetings continue at the 'Bistro Pan D'Emique' (Zoom meetings

of course) and it would be great to see more of you there. We currently have them booked until June.

We try to keep the discussion broad and since we started in April 2020 we have enjoyed a wide range of topics. Roger Aston gave us a selection of Little Mix's greatest hits on the Peruvian nose flute. Pete Tomkins has been busy sculpting busts of lawn bowls champions from mature cheddar. Barry Doswell gave us a fine rendition of classic show tunes sung in their traditional middle English. Richard Bowles has been busy installing a Flux Capacitor

into an early R171 SLK and if he can successfully achieve 88mph we hope to see him at last October's meeting. And finally, we understand that Mic Bennett has been experimenting with some of the stealth technologies used by the world's secret service agencies, but we haven't seen him at recent meetings.

If you would like to join us, please drop us an e-mail to david.jo.beardsley@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk

If you are not receiving our monthly update e-mail, please let the Club Office know so that your details can be added to our region's list.

David and Jo Beardsley



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NORTH EAST

Watch this space

James Burrage and I have very little to report this month and both of us cannot wait until we can get out and about again.

It's starting to look unlikely that our Drive It Day event will take place in April, but watch this space as we might get the green light around Easter time.

Dates for your diary

Saturday July 3 The Great North Classic Car Show, the Aston Workshop near Beamish, Co Durham. There will be a Club stand at this event.

Sunday July 11 Classics at the Castle, Witton Castle, near Bishop Auckland.

There will be a Club stand at this event.
Bank Holiday Monday August 30

Durham City Classic Car Show. We have a 15-car reserved area in Palace Green in front of the Cathedral for this event. As this is a very popular show, if you would like to attend it please let Nicky Porter know as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

That's about it for now. Stay safe.

Nicky Porter and James Burrage

NORTH WEST

Calendar of events

We are delighted to announce our season's events, which are somewhat reduced due to the covid-19 restrictions currently in place. I will keep you informed as more events are announced by the promoters.

Sunday April 25 Drive It Day to Chatsworth House

At 10.30am we will start our day with complimentary coffee at the Deanwater Hotel and then leave for Chatsworth, arriving approximately at lunchtime. The cost of £18 will include entry to the grounds and group preferential parking for Club Members. A brief outline of the route will be given. An optional additional fee of £10 will offer a Drive It Day rally plate from which all proceeds will go to the Childline charity. This will need to be paid in advance. The closing date for entries to this event is Monday April 19.

June 5-6 Tatton Park Classic and Performance Car Spectacular

Unfortunately this event has had to be cancelled because of the ongoing coronavirus restrictions.

Sunday June 27 Lymm Transport Festival

Running from 8.30am to 5.00pm this will be a welcome return to a popular event that encapsulates the whole of Lymm village, with something for everyone, both on the showground and in the village itself. Due to covid-19 and the increased spacing of cars we have been granted only a small pitch so availability will be limited. There is no cost for this event. Please contact me to secure your place.

August 21-22 Tatton Park Passion for Power

Open each day from 8.30am to 4.00pm this will be a great weekend for all classic car enthusiasts, with all Mercedes-Benz cars welcome. We will have an engaging programme for you throughout the day and promise you that you will enjoy it. We will be holding a show and shine contest on both days with prizes being given for the best and runner up cars. Please get in touch sooner rather than later in order to secure your place. The closing date for this event is July 22 and the cost is £10.

Please contact me for further information on any of these events and to book your places.

Gordon Stewart

SOUTH

The inaugural Simply Mercedes



Just one corner of the 424 Mercedes at Beaulieu in 2019.

It all started in the late autumn of 2017, with a passing comment by one of our Members, "I wonder why they don't have a 'Simply Mercedes' day at Beaulieu?" And he was right, but I had never thought of it myself, even though I had recently attended the Simply Porsche day and had thoroughly enjoyed the event.

So it was decided that I would contact Beaulieu first thing the following Monday morning and arrange the first ever Simply Mercedes day, thinking a phone call would do the job. How wrong was I. After several phone calls, e-mails and a visit to the museum, we came to the conclusion that holding the event in 2018 was not likely – the only free weekends clashed with the Club national events, so it had to be August 2019.

It wasn't long before the word got round and Club Members from all over the country started booking tickets and planning a weekend away in the New Forest. All I had to do now was to keep a record of the numbers and pray for good





There were cars from the 1960s...



...to current models.



40 years of the G-Wagen.



This event was a great success for the Club.

weather. The question I was asked on several occasions was, "How many cars are you expecting?" Not having organised anything like this, I had replied, "I'll be happy with 50 to 60".

Never in my dreams did I think that the grounds of Beaulieu National Motor Museum would be filled with 424 Mercedes. Models from the 1970s, 80s, 90s and beyond were well represented, from a

subtly modified and lowered 1973 W114 coupé to immaculate examples of the latest AMG GT roadster. We also managed to celebrate 40 years of the G-Wagen, with models present from each decade.

Beaulieu Events Co-ordinator Sophie Boyes said: "For Simply Mercedes' first year, we had expected around 100 cars to join the show, so to have over 420 Mercedes drive in to take part was

astonishing. It was brilliant to see the event come together on the day and it far exceeded our expectations."

Show-goers voted for their favourite Mercedes in the People's Choice Award, with Stuart Haynes, from Worthing, winning with his incredible 1966 600 'Grosser'.

So don't waste time – book your tickets for this year's event before they sell out.

Simply Mercedes, Beaulieu – Sunday August 22

Beaulieu has again agreed to hold a Simply Mercedes day. All Mercedes-Benz owners are invited to drive into Beaulieu on Sunday August 22 and park within the museum parkland for what promises to be a superb day out for Mercedes owners and enthusiasts.

As well as being a chance to see an array of Mercedes, there will also be the opportunity to enjoy all that Beaulieu has to offer – your entry will include admission to all the Beaulieu attractions, including the National Motor Museum, the World of Top Gear, Palace House and Beaulieu Abbey.

Participants' tickets are £13 for adults, £6.50 for children and are available through the Beaulieu ticketing website www.beaulieu.co.uk/events/simply-mercedes/

There will be an area allocated to Club Members, so if you wish to park there please e-mail me (naser.sharifi@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk) once you have purchased your tickets.

Elizabeth Hayes RIP

I was very saddened to hear that Liz Hayes passed away at home whilst her husband, John, was in Southampton General Hospital. Liz and John, both big supporters of the Club, were regular attenders at Club events and very passionate about their Mercedes-Benz cars and their Freemasonry.

Liz will be sorely missed by her family and friends.

Naser Sharifi



SOUTH WEST PENINSULA

Hopes and sayings

I am writing this on a bitterly cold February day, but by the time you read it, it should be spring time, with a bit warmer weather. By April some of us will have had the first dose of the covid-19 vaccine, some maybe the second one. We have to hope that this will be the way out of this pandemic and set us on the way to being able to arrange events. Until we can do that, we will continue to try to find items of interest for our e-newsletter to keep in touch with everyone in the meantime.

For now some sayings. A circle is the longest distance to the same point – Tom Stoppard. Good artists copy, great artists steal – Pablo Picasso.

And did you know? A jellyfish has no brain, heart, bones or eyes and is made up of about 95 per cent water!

Kathy Atherton

Magnificent Motors, Eastbourne – Saturday May 22



Peter Grunert's 1975 W116 280SE at this event in 2019.



Keith Ross's 1996 W124 1996 E320 Sportline cabriolet.

It's time to dust off your pride and joy (car) and drive it south, west or maybe even east to join in with one of the Club's events in Sussex. We have reserved 15 spaces for Members to show their cars at Eastbourne's Magnificent Motors on Saturday May 22. This event is held outdoors and is near to Eastbourne's seafront. It is free to attend. If you would like to join us then please send an e-mail to one of our Regional

Officers, Andy Allen (andy.allen@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk) or Kerry Dickson (kerry.dickson@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk) giving your name and car type.

We will meet at Birling Gap (postcode BN20 0AB) at about 8.30am from where we will drive to the show together. The show ends at about 5.00pm.

The Club will take part on Saturday May 22 only but Magnificent Motors is also open

on Sunday May 23. If you would like to take part on Sunday please do so independently by completing the application form on the website given below. Apologies but your ROs have other commitments on Sunday May 23. For more information please see www.visiteastbourne.com/magnificent-motors This event is subject to covid restrictions, as given on this site.

Kerry Dickson

Silver Surfer



The E320 'Silver Surfer' as Andy Allen bought it.

In early June 2014 I had two pieces of good luck. I was part way through planning a wild camping trip to the Highlands of Scotland with my two eldest children, Millie then 14 and Josh who was 15½ at the time, when I saw a 1996 E230 advertised for sale in a local shop. The plan had been to take an elderly Suzuki SJ tin-top 4x4, but the Mercedes looked far better suited to the job and I had long wanted another Mercedes since owning a 1976 W115 230/4 in the 1980s. The E230 had no MoT but looked quite tidy and the asking price was only £500, so I made arrangements to view it. It appeared to be in pretty good shape with very tidy bodywork and only 108,000 miles and a full service history. Apparently bought new by a London based

doctor, it was Elegance specification and had been equipped with virtually every extra available, except heated front seats because only the chauffeur sat in the front! The interior, trimmed in grey leather, was in superb condition and very luxurious. I agreed to pay £450 and arranged to collect the car the next week, the only stipulation was that we should send a postcard to the previous owners when we got to Scotland.

The second piece of luck was when arriving home my wife greeted me saying, "It's your birthday tomorrow but I haven't got time to go shopping – get yourself something you want and I'll pay for it". I'm pretty certain she had a pair of socks in mind not a Mercedes-Benz, but opportunities like that don't come up very often and you have



The interior was spotless.



The car has a very high specification – note proximity sensors in the rear bumper.

to take them when they do.

The car sailed through an MoT test with only a suggestion that a pair of rear tyres might be a good idea, so with that done and also a thorough valeting and a service we were ready for our trip, although my daughter pointed out that we couldn't take such a grand car camping and we would have to book hotels for accommodation now.

We left Worthing on August Bank

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- Go out to the garage, pull off your car's cover, snap several photographs. Email photos but hear back that "the photos are too dark" or "we need six and you only sent five".
- Cough up a £15-50 "certification" fee, on top of your policy premium.
- Wait on hold half an hour while their staff reviews the information. Lose the connection. Ring back, get transferred to three wrong departments. Get put on hold again.
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Holiday Monday at 2.00am. At about 6.00am we took a left turn and popped over the border into Wales as, having started in England, heading to Scotland, and having been in Belfast the previous week, it seemed rude not to collect the set – not bad for a person who can go for months without straying north of the A27! A further detour took us into the Lake District for breakfast, then on to Carlisle for our first night by 2.00pm. The car, now known as the ‘Silver Surfer’, had performed absolutely faultlessly and was a joy to drive – even the kids settled in with out any arguments.

The next day we took the Road to the Isles, spending the night on the Isle of Skye, followed by a night in Inverness, then heading home down the east coast via Bradford. We were back in Worthing on the Friday, with a couple of hours rest for me before working the night shift.

We covered 1,750 miles in five days in a £450 car getting around 40mpg and enjoyed every moment. On the way home it seemed only proper to stop at Mercedes-Benz World,



The E230 (right) outside Andy's shop very early on the morning of March 27 2020 – a very uncertain time.

where we discovered a similar specification new E-Class would cost approximately £45,000. Our E230 had cost only one per cent of that but it was very difficult to see how a new car could have been any better – I'll just have to hope my wife is too busy for shopping on one of my next birthdays so I can

find out!

We kept that car for another six years of faultless service with trips all across the UK, and it ended up as my wife's daily driver – although I don't think she ever gave me the money back.

Andy Allen

Brighton City Airport meetings



Humair Malik's W108 280SE 3.5.



Colin Staff's W126 500SEC.



Alan Lowe's W123 230E.



Keith Ross's W124 320CE Sportline.



Terry Ashdown's SL500 Silver Arrow.



Paul Toppin's E320 coupé.

In the past, Sussex has held popular events at Brighton City Airport, Shoreham. These have been our monthly breakfast meetings and back in 2018 our first German Car Day, the location of which changed to a facility with more parking – the Hawth in Crawley. All of these events have been well attended but we don't yet know the future at Brighton City Airport which, as of January, is closed due to covid restrictions. That said, your Sussex Regional Officers, Andy Allen and Kerry Dickson, have found alternative venues if needed, which we'll tell you about as soon as our Club Directors allow us to restart events.

We've been lucky enough to have seen some great Mercedes-Benzes at our events, which have included Humair Malik's W108 280SE 3.5 which I believe he completely refurbished and reported about in some detail on the Club's interesting forum. He also owns a few other rare Mercedes. Another of our regular visitors has been Colin Staff with his 500SEC. It's also always good to see Alan Lowe in either of his great MBs. He bought his W123 230E from another Member, Terry Grange, at one of the Shoreham breakfast events. As Alan said, it was the most expensive breakfast he's had, but I'm sure it is still a great drive. Alan also

owns an SL400 which he brings to some of our events. Another of our friendly Members is Keith Ross who owns a rather lovely tourmaline green W124 320CE Sportline. Keith tells me the car was fitted with the factory option of a rear spoiler. Terry Ashdown is another regular visitor; you may have read in the June 2020 Gazette that Terry is lucky enough to own three fabulous Mercedes, but his SL500 Silver Arrow is the oldest. Terry's other cars are an E350D and a rather lovely SL400. Paul Toppin is another visitor and now drives an E320 coupé.

Some other Members who have attended our meetings have driven another W123 saloon, a Pagoda SL and a jaw-dropping W114 280CE.

Kerry Dickson



Visiting Members' cars have included this W123...



...this Pagoda SL...



...and this W114 280CE.



TWO COASTS

Sometimes it is quite a challenge preparing our report six weeks or so ahead of the Gazette publication date and this one is no exception. At the time of writing we are about six weeks into the lock-down and we are still in guess-work territory as to what will happen, when it will happen and who it will happen to!

Our first regional Club event for over a year is planned for the end of April (see below) but whether we will be allowed to go ahead with it is still something of a guess. We're hoping and keeping fingers crossed, but this covid-19 virus has a habit of staying one step ahead of anything we try to do and thwarting our plans.

Going by the progress to date (mid-February) and the expectations we've all been given, it is expected that most of the over-50s will have been vaccinated by the start of May, so it may after all be possible to continue with our event programme running from the end of April. We hope so. We are sure everybody in our region is longing to get out and about on the road again and meet with fellow Club Members.

We hope everyone has stayed safe and healthy and look forward very much to seeing you later in the year at one or more of our events.

Upcoming events in our region

Please be aware that all these are subject to cancellation or change depending on the covid restrictions applying at the time.

National Trust Greenway, Kingswear – Sunday April 25

We're liaising with the NT events co-ordinator at Greenway and we're both keeping an eye on the progress of restrictions being eased, but it's still too early to be able to pin down the final details.

We are hoping that the probable necessity for some measure of continued social distancing works in our favour such that we can have a block-timed entry for our visit inside the house to make it a Club only tour. That would be good. The talks and garden tour may not be able to go ahead as we'd have liked, again we're going to be rather dependent on what is and what is not allowed. If you would like some more information about what we had planned then please refer back to last month's Gazette or, if you still have it, the March 2020 Gazette, or get in touch with us.

At the time of preparing this report we have a few spaces left for the day so if you haven't booked your place with us and would like to join us, please get in touch quickly with Dennis or Sarah Parker and we will see if we are able to fit you in.

Please make sure we have your e-mail address so that we can get in touch with you about late news on this event.

June meeting, drive, treasure hunt or lunch – date to be advised

Details will be in the May Gazette.

Historic Vehicle Gathering, Powderham Castle – Saturday-Sunday July 10-11

This Show has been the South West's largest gathering of historic and classic vehicles for many years – this year's will be the delayed 47th. The Club has enjoyed being there many times.

We still do not have any details about the event from the organisers, the Crash Box Club, except for the dates when they expect it to be held. As soon as we have more information – which we're expecting in March – we will get it out to you as quickly as possible via our regional e-newsletter.



Part of the Club stand at Powderham Castle in 2019.

In the meantime please make a note in your diary to keep that weekend free and contact Dennis and Sarah to register your initial interest. At some point in the not too distant future, we will have to go firm on the number of cars we expect each day so that we can book the right amount of space. As in previous years there will be an entry fee for attending this show.

Vintage and Classic Weekend, RHS Rosemoor Garden – Saturday-Sunday July 31-August 1

We'll be having a Club stand at this weekend at Great Torrington for the first time, but we know that some of you have been before as individual entrants. We are aware that Rosemoor has already sent out information for its 2021 show to people who have entered before so it is possible you've already heard about this year's event directly from them.

If you would like to be on the Club stand please send your entries to Dennis and Sarah in the first instance so we can co-ordinate them all with Rosemoor and ensure we get you on our stand. If you send your entry directly to Rosemoor there is the possibility we won't know about it and may not then allow room for you on our stand. There is no entry fee for cars taking part in the show.

National Trust Killerton Classic Car Show

Still no news on whether this will be on this year. Their show in 2020 was to have been their last ever so it could be that they decide to call it a day and not have their 'Last Ever' at all. Watch this space for updates.

Our Members' cars



Kelvin Blake's E53 AMG coupé.

This month we've been in discussion with Kelvin Blake, a Member from the Bristol area, about his Mercedes-Benz cars and his passion for living life to the full.

First we have to go back to 2006 when Kelvin, aged only 34 at the time, had a very unfortunate and serious road accident, resulting from a collision between his motorcycle and a car on a roundabout. Motorcyclists invariably come off worse in these encounters and it was no different for Kelvin. His injuries were life threatening and he was extremely fortunate that a passing medic was able to administer a scene-of-accident tracheotomy otherwise Kelvin would not be with us today.



The hand control behind the steering wheel...



...and its connections to the brake and accelerator pedals.

After a couple of months in intensive care and four more months in rehab, Kelvin was left paralysed from the chest down. He had always been involved in the local community and local politics and after his accident he still wanted to be involved and to continue working, but he needed to be mobile, so he set about thinking about what car could be adapted for hand-control use and the merits of different cars. Not wanting anything too quick and sporty until he had adapted to using hand controls, he settled on a Honda Civic. He was surprised in retrospect that he kept this for 10 years.

Once his 'apprenticeship' with hand controls was over his thoughts turned to something a tad more exotic and settled on an E53 AMG coupé (*good choice*) purchased new in 2019. It's not really a family oriented car but it pleases Kelvin to bits and he especially likes the full-throated AMG exhaust roar. Surprisingly hand controls are not expensive and consist of mechanical linkages from behind the steering wheel to the accelerator and brake pedals below, fitted and adjusted for the



The E53 coupé alongside the 280SE when Kelvin collected the latter from the auction.



The 280SE is a 'doer upper'...

driver at around £600. It is then a simple pull to accelerate and a push to brake.

Kelvin was very pleased with the car and then thought about buying a more sedate, classic Mercedes, and bought a 1972 280SE 3.5 at auction last year. This is a decent runner but a doer-upper, requiring welding and bodywork to bring the exterior up to scratch, as well as some mechanical fettling and general sprucing up. In the first examination, once on a ramp it became apparent tin plate had been welded over rotting wheel arches and various poorly filled and finished areas of paintwork were seen. Kelvin reckons he will spend as much on the remediation work as it cost him to buy in the first place, but that is an investment in the long term future of the

car he is prepared to make.

He now divides his time between his cars and various local physical and mental health charities and trusts where he is a valued member of their boards.

Where from here? Well, Kelvin likes his E53 AMG but has an eye out to trade up to an E63 S. We look forward very much to meeting him at future Club events and admiring his cars – he would like to bring both of them to various events throughout the year.

We'd like to feature your car in here or in our e-newsletter so if you have something interesting to say about your car, or where you've been in it, or are just very happy to have a photo of it shown, then please get in touch and we'll follow it up.



Kelvin in the 280SE.

Newsletters

Our monthly newsletter goes out by e-mail to Members in our own region as well as to those in the West Country region (TA, BA and BS postcodes).

Your Regional Officers

Your Regional Officers are Dennis and Sarah Parker (dennis.sarah.parker@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk 01237 421776, 07575 446400) and Mavis and David Cherrill (mavis.david.cherrill@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk 01398 331199 or 07710 248080). Please don't hesitate to get in touch, we'd like to hear from you.

Dennis Parker



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WALES – NORTH AND BORDERS

Friends across the 'Pond'



Tom Harruff (left) with Service Manager Mike and John Heeley (right) in the Mercedes-Benz of Naples workshop.

Looking through some old photos recently I was reminded of the three occasions in recent years that my wife Linda and I attended breakfast meetings held by the Southwest Florida Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America (MBCA) whilst on holiday with Club friends John and Sue Heeley from Shropshire.

John and Sue holiday for an extended period each year in Bonita Springs near Naples on Florida's Gulf coast and Linda and I joined them for a couple of weeks during their early autumn breaks in 2014, 2016 and 2018. On the three occasions that we joined the Heeleys I contacted the Mercedes-Benz Club of America area President with a view to joining them at their meetings. The Mercedes-Benz Club of America was founded in 1956 and is now the world's largest Mercedes-Benz Club, before this time American news



The club breakfast meeting in full flow at Mimi's.



Tom (centre) accepting our Club's 60th anniversary book with past National Club President Peter Lesler and his wife Josie.

and events were reported within our own UK Club Gazette. Their national club magazine is the Star which is produced bi-monthly.

2014

At this time the Southwest Florida Section President was Tom Harruff assisted by his wife Anne. Most of the events organised by Tom were during our autumn, winter and spring months to avoid being exposed to the hot sun at events such as car shows during the summer. Anne organised a separate programme of events for the ladies of the club.

In the days before we joined them at their October breakfast meeting Tom arranged a guided tour of his local dealership, Mercedes-Benz of Naples. Here we were escorted around the various departments within the business, spending most of our time in the workshops, as in previous lives John and I were both motor technicians – to this day I've not seen a larger workshop cooling fan! The dealership is situated in a very wealthy area with a high percentage of AMG and



The workshop caters for a wide range of Mercedes models – a W215 CL600 is nearest the camera.



Linda and Clive Henderson (left) with Anne and Tom Harruff and John and Sue Heeley (right) at the conclusion of their visit to Mercedes-Benz of Naples.

S-Class sales. To provide a high level of customer service they were running 90 C-Class saloons as courtesy cars at the time of our visit.

Early the following Saturday morning we drove to the local Mimi's Café to join Tom, Anne and their group of local members for breakfast followed by their meeting. Unexpectedly Tom asked me to give a presentation on the history and activities of our UK Club, which seemed to be well received. Then John volunteered a few words in which he dispelled the myths that are held by some of our American friends that here in the UK most of us know the Queen personally and London city gents still wear bowler hats and twirl black umbrellas. John's contribution created much more laughter from the assembled group than mine! At the conclusion of the meeting I presented Tom with a copy of our Club's 60th anniversary book which was



John and Sue Heeley with fellow SL owners.





Monica and Peter Ruehl with their Adenauer.



The group at Mimi's. This photo is the Southwest Florida's website cover photo – yours truly by the left-hand wing of the SLS!



Our group during the tour of the Mercedes-Benz of Bonita Springs workshop, hosted by Scottish born Grahame Morpeth.



The impressive 'Heritage Wall'.



Breakfast being served in the meeting room.



An E-Class undergoing an alignment check on arrival at service reception.



Mario Peunte (right) introduces his W123 to a fellow Southwest Florida club member.



The 11,000-mile R129 SL that has never seen rain!



Grahame Morpeth presents the results of the check – this E-Class has failed!



A matching pair of members' C36 AMGs at the Bonita Springs meeting.

received by all UK Club Members in 2012. The meeting dispersed but before leaving there was time to look around the various Mercedes-Benz models that the members had arrived in, which included an AMG SLS and a W186 Adenauer owned by Peter Ruehl, a dental surgeon from Ibiza. The photo taken at this 2014 meeting still remains as their section's website 'cover photo'.

2016

Once again I contacted Tom before our visit in October 2016. This time we were invited to join their group at a breakfast meeting held at the newly opened three-storey, state of the art Mercedes-Benz of Bonita Springs dealership located on Interstate 41 (Tamiami Trail) north of Naples. The service department has a four-lane indoor service reception area where the suspension, steering alignment and tyre condition are checked on every car on arrival and a workshop with 47 ramps/

work bays. A feature of the building is the 'Heritage Wall' situated between the showrooms and after-sales departments which details the history of the Mercedes-Benz marque together with the company's record of technical innovations and sporting achievements.

After a comprehensive tour of the dealership with introductions to staff members we made our way to the first floor meeting room where our cooked breakfast was being prepared. Also in the large room were a number of the latest Mercedes-Benz models, together with two local members' cars, an R129 SL500 that had only covered 11,000 miles and a W123 200 saloon. Outside on the open display area were two AMG G-Wagens. The owner of the W123, Mario Peunte, had recently imported the car from his home town in Ecuador and carried out a programme of refurbishment, it was previously owned by

another member of his family.

Once again, after the meeting dispersed we proceeded to the car park to view the attending members' cars, which included a matching pair of W202 C36 AMGs.

2018

When contacting Tom to arrange our October 2018 meeting I learned that he



Tom Harruff's S55 AMG, registration MB S55, and Ron Cordeu's 560SL, registration 87 MBZ outside our breakfast venue.



Very appropriate registration for an SLK.



Linda, John and Sue ready to start breakfast.



Southwest Florida Section Officials Monica and Ron Cordeau with their copy of the October 2018 Gazette.

and his wife Anne had retired from their previous club roles and that the new section officials were Ron and Monica Cordeau, who I duly contacted to arrange to join them at their breakfast meeting, however Tom was now responsible for the production of the section's newsletter. On this occasion we travelled north to a Perkins Diner near Fort Myers. I was informed I would have no problem finding the venue due to the extremely oversized stars and stripes flag on site. We enjoyed a typical American breakfast and engaged in interesting conversations with the members. At the conclusion of the meeting I presented Ron and Monica with a number of copies of the latest Gazette which coincidentally featured my photo of Brian Ellis's Pagoda SL on the front cover, pictured at the first Mercedes on the Prom event at Llandudno.

When it is safe and appropriate to travel overseas once more maybe you would consider making similar connections, it's very interesting speaking with people who share our automotive interests.

Clive Henderson

YORKSHIRE – SOUTH

The lure of concours



Dave Bambury (centre) receiving his runner up award from Richard Lee (left) and Phil Emmett for his W123 in the 2014 Yorkshire – West Show and Shine.

As I sit writing this article with the snow laying around 100mm (four inches) in depth, my thoughts turn to the coming spring and what preparations we will be giving to our beloved classics to awaken

them from their winter slumbers. Early in the life of the Yorkshire – South Region a number of Members discussed the possibility of entering the Club's National Concours and model register events.



Dave with Neville Wright (left) and Martyn Marrocco at the 2014 W123 Day where his W123 won 'Best Saloon in Class'.

Yorkshire – West started my interest with their annual 'Show and Shine'. The Midlands – East Region invited Members to attend a workshop on 'how to prepare a car for a show' at *Meguiar's*, purveyors of all things to make your car stand out. I was hooked.

In my working life, in manufacturing and engineering, I had come across and practised the concepts of Continuous



Historic...



...iconic...





...and exotic models at the National Concours.



Dave's W123 (right) and his wife's W202 C-Class at the 2014 National Concours.



Left to right Rob Holloway, Bob Gascoigne, Dave and Pat Bambury and Ian Keers at the awards presentation.



Michael Broadbent receiving his award from Rob Holloway in 2016.



Bob Gascoigne, Tim Shambrook and Dave Bambury with their awards.



Keith and Sue Duke with their E250.

Improvement and Quality Circles. For those of us on a DIY budget what better way to preserve cars such as my 1983 W123 than to use those concepts by attending concours, model register events, meetings with such people as leather restorers and the dent repair man to name but a few – to see what the best had to offer and to improve my car. It took me around six years of continual improvement, replacing and upgrading parts, listening to advice, observing what cars had won their respective classes, ongoing devotion and attention to detail. But the day dawned when the diligence and all those hours of work paid off.

Attending a Yorkshire – West show and shine in 2014, sitting among their Members, the results were announced. "Runner up SAM 710Y". No response from the group. "Hello, would the owner of SAM 710Y step forward". A dig in the ribs and to my utter surprise and delight my W123 was runner up. That year I also went again to the W123 Day at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, where judge Neville Wright and organiser Martyn Marrocco awarded 'SAM' 'Best Saloon in Class'.



Mike and Linda Ferkin's E350 CDI.

Then it was onward and upward to the National Concours in 2014, 15 and 16. I went with Bob Gascoigne, Tim Shambrook, Lee Holbrook and other Members from our region, some of whom just went out of interest to see the types of car you normally only see in museums, the latest Mercedes exotic models and the many competitors exhibiting their beloved classics.

The National Concours is a great way to bench mark a car, so initially in 2014 and subsequently in 2015 I entered my W123 along with my wife's W202 C-Class, both in the Enthusiast class. Much to our surprise both took top spot in their respective classes. Bob Gascoigne also entered and took runner up in his class. That year was a good year for us as we each took a prize in our respective classes. We were presented with our prizes by then Chairman Ian Keers and current Honorary President Rob Holloway.

Saturday June 25 2016 saw a large contingent of cars from Yorkshire – South at the National Concours at Milton Keynes, again with some considerable success – it turned out to be a vintage year for the region. We had three winners in the Enthusiast classes and a runner up in the Concours d'Elegance. Michael



Keith Duke receiving his award from Rob Holloway.

Broadbent was a class winner with his very nice W202, as were Bob Gascoigne with his superb W123 280C coupé and Tim Shambrook with an excellent W140 coupé. I entered my W123 300D saloon and came runner up in Concours d'Elegance class four. A number of other Yorkshire – South Members also attended in 2016, notably Keith and Sue Duke with a 2013 W212 E250 saloon and Mike and Linda Ferkin with a 2010 W207 E350 CDI coupé. Keith and Sue took top spot with their E-Class in the Enthusiast class and Mike came a creditable third.

These are memories of happier times past, with the hope of better times to come, particularly now that a number of vaccines are available against the various mutations of the coronavirus that has ravaged our programmes over the past year or so. So, until the good times return when we can renew old friendships, stay safe.

Dave Bambury

ANGLIA – NORTH

Tony Gilbert C180

ANGLIA – SOUTHRobert Awbery 450SLC
Phillip Southam ML350
Hadley Foster E-Class
Martin Fry SLK
Jeremy Stewart S350
Jerry Townsend SL500
Adam Porter
Colin Williams SL
Steve Johnson SL**CUMBRIA**

Terence Abson CLK

HERTS, BEDS AND BUCKSClive Cross E-Class
Charles Holford E-Class
Lee Craze
Raymond Sackey SL
Angelo Bosco SL
Nigel Crump SL
Pete Emery C-Class
Robert Hardy C-Class**IRELAND – LEINSTER**Edward Gilmartin
Aiden O'Byrne S-CLASS
Robert Matthews 280SE 3.5
Morgan O'Ceallaigh SL
Damian Burke E-Class**IRELAND – MUNSTER – SOUTH**

Freddie Ryan S-Class

KENTSusan Bott CLK
David Markland
Tom Fowler E-Class**LANCASHIRE**Paul Simmonite CLK
Barrie Kehoe CLK
Robert Egford SLK**LONDON**Gill Makhan S-Class
Danny Lathia E-Class
Richard Hickman
John Duffy E-ClassCarl Harker E-Class
Katherine Adams SLK250d
Deyan Dobrev S-Class
David Seth E-Class
Aaron Reiff-Zall C-Class
Pritpal Ahluwalia
Rohan Parikh
Mo Bilal E-Class
Vincent Knight SL
Krzysztof Kazmierski 450SLC
Ali Shour SL
Andrew Learmond
Vincent Knight SL**MIDLANDS – EAST**John Burt 320SL
Colin Ord SLK
Ivan Todorov E-Class**MIDLANDS – WEST**Martin Bradbury
Nigel T A Simkin CLK
Karl Leslie Chan W123,
W113 Pagoda SL
Andrew Maitland CLC
Azeem Majahid S-Class
Stephen Hayden C-Class
Paul Edwards SL
Robert MacPherson SL**NORTH EAST**Kevin Hutchinson SL
Marty Downes CLK
Phil Moore SL**NORTH WEST**Chris King
John Walters Sprinter
Ian Harris E-Class**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

Michael F Gadsby 230SL

SCOTLAND – SOUTHJames Muir SLK
Robert Cumming E-Class
Gordon Cunningham E-Class**SOUTH**Vicky Parrott SL
Edward Seal SL
J G Knight B-Class
Stuart Stocks S-Class**SURREY**Patrick Lacey CLK
Michael Lockett SL**SUSSEX**Florin Parvu C-Class
Jarrod Howe SL
Mark Thompson E-Class
Angus Goldfinch B-Class
Bryan Hartley SL**THAMES VALLEY**Dave Ball 280TE
Simon Monks C-Class
Stephen Cooper CLK**WALES – NORTH AND BORDERS**Kenneth Eggerton SL
Julia Burton SLK
Nick Powell CL
Shane Williams CL
Andrew Roberts SL**WALES – SOUTH**Marcus Thomson
John Gough E-Class
Michael Perkins SL**WEST COUNTRY**David Pester SLK
Tom Longmire C-Class
Chris Bird SL**YORKSHIRE – NORTH AND EAST**

Terence Gallagher E-Class

YORKSHIRE – SOUTHGeorge Beck SLS
Paul Morrell 230SLK
Adam Dolinski Vito
Mark Butters**YORKSHIRE – WEST**William Park E-Class
Michael Clarke CLK
Gordon Smith
Simon Oxby A-Class**OVERSEAS**Penelope Anne Torok (Australia) 190d 2.5 Turbo
Matthias Bonczkowitz (Germany) SL**DATA SECURITY NOTICE**

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No information extracted from these records can be passed to a third party without written permission from the Board of Directors and the Members(s) concerned.

It is a legal requirement to ensure strict compliance with these regulations and the security of any such information in your possession.

Phil Greaves *Company Secretary*

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due for renewal at the end of the month as recorded on the Membership Card. For those who normally pay by cheque individual notices are sent out about three weeks prior to

the expiry date. The forms should be returned promptly and Members who fail to pay within one month will have their names removed from the Register and no further copies of the Gazette will be sent. Members who pay by Direct Debit will receive a new Membership Card within a few days of the Club bank statement being received.

Geoff D'Cruze *Membership Services Director*

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Phil Greaves *Company Secretary*

CONTRIBUTIONS

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Rosemarie Maslin *Chairman*

COPY QUALITY

The preferred forms for text to be included in the Gazette are type written or word processed. CDs, memory sticks or files sent as e-mail attachments are welcome. If hand-written copy is to be submitted please send the original written in black or blue ink. All material should be sent to the editorial office (address on page three).

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The Club Directors and Honorary President on screen. Top left row left to right: Stephen Beresford – Marketing Director, Trevor Mitchell – Regional Development Director and Red Mackinnon – National Events Director. Middle row: Kenny Ooi – Finance Director, Rosemarie Maslin – Chairman and Rob Halloway – Honorary President. Bottom row: Geoff D’Cruze – Membership Services Director and Phil Greaves – Company Secretary.

On-line AGM 2020 – Sunday March 7 2021

The opening part of the meeting followed the agenda sent out with the November 2020 Gazette.

1. Notice convening the meeting

The Chairman Rosemarie Maslin said: “Welcome to the 62nd Annual General Meeting of the Mercedes-Benz Club. In compliance with current Government regulations regarding the covid pandemic, and to comply with the Club’s Articles of Association, this meeting is only taking place on-line. All postal and e-mail replies to the motions quoted in the published agenda are valid and will be the basis of the recorded wishes of the Members. I declare this meeting now in progress.”

2. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

3. Minutes of the 61st AGM

The draft minutes of the 61st AGM were printed in the February 2021 Gazette, the votes cast were as follows: Acceptance of 61st AGM minutes in favour 249, against none, abstain 10. The minutes were signed and pp’d on behalf of the Chairman.

4. Chairman’s Report

The Chairman said: “This is my third annual report since becoming Chairman, my aim being to provide you with an overview of the past 12 months together with some of your Board’s ideas on how we hope to make your Club an even better place for you to indulge your interest in everything Mercedes-Benz.

My report to the Members for the year 2020 was published in the February 2021 Gazette so I will not be reading this out and no vote will be taken on its contents

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to your current Board of Directors: Kenny Ooi – Finance, Phil Greaves – Company Secretary, Trevor Mitchell – Regional Development, Stephen Beresford – Marketing, Red Mackinnon – National Events, Geoff D’Cruze – Membership Services. I would also like to introduce our Honorary President Rob Halloway.

I will now pass you over to Phil Greaves our Company Secretary.”

5. Directors’ Report and Audited Accounts

The Directors’ Report and Audited

accounts for the year end 2020 were published in the AGM booklet, the Finance Director’s Report was published in the February 2021 Gazette and will not be read out.

The votes cast for the acceptance of Financial Director’s report were: In favour 241, against four, abstain 14.

6. Directors’ elections

The Secretary said: “In accordance with articles 16.2 of the Club’s Articles of Association the following Directors seek election or re-election to the Board of Directors. All are proposed by the Board but under the present circumstances there will be no seconder.

To elect Mr Stephen Beresford: In favour 233, against seven, abstain 19. Mr Stephen Beresford is elected to the Board.

To re-elect Mr Kenny Ooi: In favour 133, against 118, abstain eight. Mr Kenny Ooi is re-elected to the Board.

Since the publication of the AGM agenda booklet last November, Mr Jeremy Stevens has decided to retire from the Board and will not be seeking re-election.”



7. Club Auditors

To approve a proposal by the Board that Messrs MacInyre Hudson be appointed Registered Auditors of the Company for the Financial year 2021-2. The votes cast were: In favour 238, against seven, abstain 14.

8. Questions relating to the AGM

The Chairman said, “We would now like to deal with questions relating to the AGM.”

These were submitted before November 20 2020 in accordance with instructions on the AGM agenda.

Question from Alan Chalkley

May I suggest to the Board that we give Club Members the opportunity to attend the AGM virtually and allow postal votes as a permanent arrangement. It seems a lot more inclusive for a UK, Ireland and worldwide membership.

The Chairman responded: Any decision about future AGMs will be taken at the time, but the Board’s preference is to hold a physical AGM if at all possible. Whether or not a Zoom participation is possible at such a meeting is something that will have to be looked into at the time.

Postal votes by proxy have always been part of the procedure at the AGM and will continue to be available to every Member.

Question from S Hewitt

This postal vote plus Zoom AGM should become a permanent feature.

The Chairman said her answer was as above.

Question from Georgina Fuller

The ability of Members like me being able to vote remotely is an improvement that I would like to propose is used in future.

The Chairman said her answer was as above.

Close of meeting

The Chairman said: “As there are no more questions relating to this AGM, I now declare this part of the meeting closed.”

It was noted that 46 Members logged on to the meeting.

Honorary President

The Chairman then said: “It is my great pleasure to welcome Club President Rob Hallaway to this meeting and I would like to hand the meeting over to him as he would like to say a few words.”

Rob Hallaway said how convenient it was to be addressing the meeting from his home – especially as he had gone to the wrong hotel for the last AGM. He noted that the past year had seen unprecedented disruption and that the Club is at its best when Members can meet, with their cars, and drive to events in the UK and Europe. He said the Board has done a terrific job in keeping the Club alive, as have all the Officials, and that he was impressed that the Gazette had continued every month packed with a wide range of articles – a credit to the Editor Chris Bass, the proof

readers and the team at Hine Marketing who have been having a particularly difficult time.

He said that without the Board the Club would be in poor condition and that this was the most professionally moderated Zoom meeting he had seen. He expressed his thanks to the departed Directors John Wallis, particularly for his work on the new website and other IT matters, and Jeremy Stevens for all his work on technical problems.

Turning to the Mercedes-Benz companies, Rob said that the last 12 months had been most unusual – having to stop doing things that they had done for more than a century, such as manufacturing and running dealerships. They had had to regroup, and this is ongoing, but they had reacted well, with a reasonably good year for sales and research and development continuing.

He went on to talk about recent new models, such as the S-Class, with its striking 3D dashboard display, and the new C-Class which shares much of the bigger car’s technology. He mentioned the all-electric EQA, which is to be followed in April by the EQS.

But “more exciting” than this he wanted to tell the meeting about his ‘President’s Award’ to the Club ‘Woman of the Year’. He said this is usually celebrated with a lunch and photos of the winner with the trophy (at least for a couple of minutes before it is whisked off to a display cabinet, as is the Club tradition). This year’s winner is Vivienne Franks in recognition of her 12 years’ work, with her husband Malcolm, in running the Club’s National Concours, which Rob said she did with “an iron fist in a velvet glove”. This mantle has now been passed to Brian Ellis.

Rob concluded by saying we have to endure a few weeks more lock-down and the Club needs its Members to stay healthy and safe and to look after each other.

The Chairman thanked Rob for his address.

Informal question and answer session

The Chairman said: “We would now like to deal with questions submitted by Members, either by post or e-mail. I will read each question and then a nominated Director will give the response. This question and answer session does not constitute part of the formal AGM, but the questions and answers will be published in the Gazette.”

Questions from Brian Ellis

1. I note in the financial report that it is stated that the Club’s cash reserves have been deposited over several banks in order to be protected under the FSCS (Financial Services Compensation Scheme). This seems to be an unnecessary complication when up to £2million can be deposited with NS&I (National Savings and Investments) and be fully guaranteed and protected by the Government, it is also instant access and interest bearing. Should

the Board consider moving the Club’s reserves into this single account to simplify the situation and allow more transparency for Club Members?

Finance Director Kenny Ooi answered: The protection of the Club’s cash reserves is an important matter for the Board. Our first port of call was to consider the full range of NS&I products as advertised on its website, but we were very disappointed to note that its products are only available to individuals and not companies. Hence we could not invest with them, otherwise we would have chosen to deposit our cash reserves with HM Government with full protection for the total sum involved. Thus, we had to adopt the additional effort of using a number of banking entities selected from research from various financial sources that offered a mix of notice periods and best-possible deposit rates. We are happy to provide details of the banking entities chosen.

2. I feel that ‘open’ voting is detracting from the accurate feelings of the Members and this has been highlighted on the Forum several times where Members have commented on the negative effect upon them if they do not toe the line and vote in accordance with the Board’s recommendations. I feel that electing Directors should be voted for via a ‘secret’ ballot in order to gain the true feelings of the membership. This would be in line with most other elections, including regional and national government elections.

Company Secretary Phil Greaves answered: It has been a long-standing rule of the Club that motions at the AGM are voted for or against with a show of hands. The Board is not aware of any negative effects experienced by Members who vote as they choose, and would be disappointed if this were the case. Members who do not attend the meeting also have the right to vote by proxy, either through the Chair or via an eligible Member who is attending the meeting. There is no distinction in the way the votes are cast or counted.

3. Could the Board explain the rationale relating to including membership fees within pre-payments in the accounts. Once a Member has paid his annual fees the whole amount becomes within the Club’s account. This under any circumstances is never refunded to the Member. The only ongoing obligation to the Member is providing the Gazette, which I believe is self-funding via advertising. Not including these pre-payments within the Club’s cash reserves does not give a true financial position to the membership, as most will not be used to reading financial reports and it tends to shroud the true position in a ‘smoke and mirror’ effect. Simplification should be the Board’s goal.

Finance Director Kenny Ooi answered: This matter has been covered regularly over the last four annual financial reports. The explanation given below was deliberately removed from this year’s report as we did not wish to repeat the

same matter each year.

The accounting policy adopted by the Club is to match income with expenditure for each accounting year in question. This policy has been the norm for many years and falls in line with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Hence membership fees collected that relate to a future financial year are always treated as a pre-payment, waiting to be matched against future expenditure. The production of future Gazettes is accounted for based upon actual invoices received each year.

All pre-payments are specifically called out in the Notes to the Accounts and an analysis of its breakdown (including future membership fees) is also illustrated there. We do not operate any 'smoke and mirror' effects in our financial statements.

It is also true that our Club rules state that membership fees are non-refundable. However, we do operate a compassionate and discretionary approach, for example when the estate of a deceased Member seeks to obtain a refund for obvious reasons. In those instances we will usually make the refund as requested for compassionate reasons.

Questions from Neil Townsend

The Chairman said: "These questions have already been published in the March Gazette on the Letters page, so I will only read out a precis of them."

1. Would the Board consider publishing the minutes of Board meetings?

The Club Secretary answered: In principle the Board has no objections to publishing the minutes at the time of the following meeting. This is because the minutes are classified as draft until finalised at the meeting after the one that is covered. The Board will discuss at the next scheduled Board meeting a policy for the publishing of the minutes on the Club website.

2. Can we see a breakdown of membership by age, ethnicity and perhaps geography. Also why are dealerships not promoting the Club?

Membership Services Director Geoff D'Cruze answered: We do not record Members' ages or ethnicity, but are considering asking Members when they join and renew to complete a tick-box age indication. On the point about dealerships, Mercedes-Benz garages are independent and any encouragement to promote the Club needs to come from local relationships rather than a general instruction from MBUK.

3. As an individual who spent my career working in the charity not-for-profit sector, it seems to me our explanation of our reserves level could be stronger. If I have understood the safe level of operating reserves is around £300,000, totally justifiable and, as the treasurer has stated, we are facing a potential deficit but one that is manageable and in my book is exactly why we should hold healthy reserves. However we appear

to hold considerably more than this. We should therefore be giving consideration to how some of this should be designated for specific uses, an example could be researching and then designing a membership drive.

The Finance Director answered: Thank you for your support on our policy that the Club should seek to maintain a healthy level of reserves in order that the Club can comfortably continue to operate during times of economic challenges, for example as experienced during the current virus pandemic.

Just to reiterate the purpose of 'Reserves'. A reserve is surpluses that have been appropriated for a particular purpose. Reserves can be set up to purchase fixed assets, pay liabilities and debt, pay for on-going repairs and maintenance and so forth. Your Board of Directors is authorised to create a reserve.

There are no legal restrictions on the use of funds that have been designated as being reserved. Thus, funds designated as a reserve can actually be used for any purpose.

In the 'Notes to the Financial Statements' we have referred to the primary purpose of the reserve of £300,000. We have established our dedicated Club Office with our leased premises in Stamford. We have also relocated the bulk of our archive storage to here. If this way of working suits, then our long term objective to consider acquiring permanent Club Offices can be realised through this provision.

Our reserves also include the amount collected from new Members as their Joining Fee of £5.00 (circa £55,000 to £60,000 based on the current membership level) which is the maximum exposure of Members in case of the Club being wound up.

The explanation given above was referenced in the last three AGM finance reports and, unfortunately, I did not wish to bore the audience again by repeating the same things.

However, thank you for your comments to make our notes on Reserves stronger which has been noted and this will be addressed in the next set of annual accounts.

4. My final point concerns the Club's overheads and previous ideas to obtain an office. I understand the need for the Club's archive but given what other organisations large and small have learnt because of the pandemic, surely this needs re-thinking with staff, enabled by technology, who can work from home, indeed anywhere in the country. We could end up with an office and associated costs that could be counter productive to running an agile organisation.

The Membership Services Director answered: Historically the Club staff did work from home, but this became impractical due to the need for meetings, equipment storage, document storage and access, and the difficulty caused if this material or information was at someone's house and they became sick or on holiday.

We have two members of staff, both of whom need access to printers and other documents, and having an office means we do not duplicate equipment.

Questions from Stuart Mathieson

1. I notice that in the Chairman's report for 2020, there was no mention of any thanks to John Wallis who worked so hard to try and get the Club to invest in its IT. Can the Board please properly thank him for this and the work he did on the Archive?

The Company Secretary answered: There was a valedictory statement about John and Jeremy Stevens [by the Editor] in the January 2021 Gazette on page nine.

2. The last year has been difficult for many car clubs and clubs have had to adapt to new offerings to keep their members. This has included making more use of on-line channels by clubs and club officials generally being more visible on-line. The exact opposite appears to have happened with our Club. Membership has dropped significantly and other than the Gazette and Forum, there appears to have been little activity by the Club. Could the Board not make more effort to be on-line, for example a weekly or monthly on-line Zoom presentation on a topic, or by contributing to the Club Forum? I know that some Regional Officers have done this off their own backs, but we need to see some regular activity from the Club leadership on-line to show value. Can you consider doing this please.

The National Events Director Red Mackinnon answered: Whilst it is always possible for the Board to be on-line at any point, we are all Members of the Club first and foremost and so can attend the Forum as and when we feel we wish to and I think that is the way it should remain. Nobody should have any obligation to log-on to the Forum, Facebook or our Instagram site, but we can do so should we choose to, as these facilities are there for all to use.

I personally think that a regular feature on the Forum with members of the Board would be of little or no interest to the vast majority of Members and would overall be poorly attended, but I would say to all Members who may have a particular point or question that they wish to ask or clarify to please contact their Regional Officer in the first instance or the responsible Director.

There are many Club Officials, not just Board members, who have never used the Forum or other Club internet features, which is a shame but the fact remains.

The carrying out of more on-line activities was put towards all ROs a while back. Some have taken this up with great success, others have not, but it does still need the people in those positions to think of the ideas for their region and to host them, as this is something that the ROs should be doing in the first instance, as they are the ones who would otherwise organise events for Members in their area.

The Board specifically should not be



seen to be the first 'go to' place for every Club idea.

Any Members who feel that they would like to join in with their region are encouraged to contact their RO and make sure they are subscribed for any newsletter that is sent out.

3. The way in which people do their work has changed significantly over the past year, and for many, this will become permanent. Car use has changed, technology, car ownership and paying for their use will also evolve quickly. This will make a challenging future for car clubs that cater for all ages of cars like ours. The Club needs to have a clear strategy to embrace this change. What will the Club look like in 10 years? What do we want it to look like? To have a useful strategy means asking the Members what they want and need. Will the Board please undertake an open, transparent survey now of the whole of the Club's membership to inform the Club's forward strategy?

The Company Secretary answered: Good idea. The Club has previously looked at publishing an outline plan, but recent events have made this impossible for 2021-2. However, work is underway on 22-23 and it will be published in the Gazette for consultation.

4. The Board has appointed itself, and so appoints like people. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with this, it does perpetuate a feeling of alienation from the Club as a whole. To avoid this I believe that all positions on the Board should be filled by candidates, nominated and seconded by any Members, who publish a candidate statement and are then voted in by the membership. This is standard good governance practice. Can the Board please consider this? I suggest that this starts with the current vacancies and continues to the other posts as they become due for re-election.

The Company Secretary answered: When a position becomes vacant or the Board decides that a position needs to be created, a job description is written setting out the functions of the role and the skills required.

The vacancy is published in the Gazette outlining the purpose of the position and inviting Members who feel that they may like to be considered to e-mail for a copy of the job description.

If their interest remains they are invited to provide a short background statement of the reasons for their suitability and what they could bring to the role, then suitable candidates are invited for an interview.

The interview will be conducted by two members of the Board who are experienced in many aspects of the job; a standard set of questions will be asked, with appropriate supplementary questions, and concluding with an opportunity for the candidate to question the Board members.

The interviewing Board members then review the candidates' responses and inform the Chairman of their decision.

The Chairman will then write to the

successful candidate to offer them the position for a probationary period of six months and make arrangements, if accepted, for the handover of information.

If the position is potentially a Board role the job holder will be invited to present their ideas at one or more Board meetings. If the Board is then of the opinion that an appointment should be made the job holder is informed. At this point it is made clear that all elections and re-elections to the Board are subject to a vote by the entire Club membership at the next AGM.

This procedure has been adopted to give an equal opportunity to all Members to apply, to appoint the best members to the roles to both benefit the Club and the Member's ability (the Board feels it would be unfair to appoint outside a Member's skills set) and to give Members the opportunity to experience the work involved prior to making a greater commitment.

5. When does the current term of office of each person currently on the Board end please?

The Company Secretary answered: Listed below are the re-election dates of the current Board members should they remain members and seek re-election at the appropriate AGM.

Name	Elected	Next re-election due
G D'Cruze	2018	2021
S Beresford	2020	2023
R Maslin	2018	2021
R Mackinnon	2018	2021
T Mitchell	2018	2021
K Ooi	2020	2023
P Greaves	2018	2021

Question from Martin Edwards

Given the success of on-line meetings, would the Club be willing to hold more meetings and events on-line and live?

The National Events Director answered: This question has already been answered as part of the questions asked by Stuart Mathieson.

Question from Beverley Hewett

Can you please publish the membership numbers on a monthly basis in the Gazette?

The Membership Services Director answered: Our database is live and the numbers change almost everyday. If numbers are published in the Gazette they will be two months out of date. Membership numbers are included in the Chairman's Annual Report and within the Financial Report and form the basis of our financial budgeting. As such we are not going to publish membership numbers on a monthly basis.

Question from D Beardsley

I have abstained on the matter of the election of Stephen Beresford as no background information (resumé, biography etc) has been provided and I therefore have no basis to vote for or

against. NB if this information has been published elsewhere it would have been helpful to point this out.

The Chairman answered: An announcement was made in the May 2020 Gazette on page nine outlining Stephen's experience and Club membership. I apologise for not pointing this out, but all this information was available to everyone through the Club Office.

Question from David W F Wilson

Will the Club consider switching to an 'E' (electronic) membership card – resulting the saving of costs of producing and distributing a plastic card and lower carbon/plastic waste? Another organisation I am a member of has done this – the Chartered Institute for Securities Investment (CISI).

The Membership Services Director answered: All our cards are printed via Daimler AG at a favourable rate. Part of our agreement with them is that we will use the standard club card format that they provide to all clubs around the world.

Question from Ian McKechnie

I'd be keen to understand the five-year vision that the Club has – in particular a) to increase membership and b) to address opportunities via digital platforms.

The Membership Services Director Geoff D'Cruze answered: By way of an introduction, our membership numbers were less than 9,000 in the years to 2014. They increased to a peak of 10,500 in 2016 and have declined slowly to 9,240 as at the end of February. These numbers are full Members and we have maintained just over 1,000 joint Members, these are partners, wives, husbands. So, as you can see, numbers in total peaked at circa 11,500 and are now 10,240.

Some analysis has been undertaken by Dick Hibberd, Membership Assistant, and this showed that during the last five years only 50 per cent of new joiners renewed their membership for a second year. There are figures for second, third and five-plus years, but not for this meeting. Analysis also showed that since 2017 Members joining via the website have increased to 64 per cent, showing that the digital platform is ever more important.

The Club appointed an in-house Social Media Team in 2019 who maintain our presence on Facebook and Instagram. Yes, we know there are many other platforms, but these are still the main two. With this in mind, a new website was investigated by John Wallis and his budget was approved; this cost is still available for the project and has not been decreased. In fact we expect the budget to be exceeded, but I am straying into other portfolios.

So, with that in mind, our strategy has been to increase our digital platform and drive potential Members to our website. The new website should be a more attractive place for browsing and it is intended to entice more uptake of membership.

Stephen Beresford has proposed an advertising campaign which he can tell you about which is intended to broaden the appeal of the Club to a wider audience. He has organised a couple of competitions through Facebook to steer the public to our Club and we will look at the growth of Members for the same period year-on-year to see how effective it has been. The campaigns are too recent for detailed analysis.

So, with a review of membership numbers and targeted campaigns we will evaluate results for our Club. Would you like to suggest to your Regional Officers other shows that the Club could attend?

Marketing Director Stephen Beresford added: The Club has a marketing plan to increase Member acquisition by using a mixture of marketing tools, including social media, digital marketing such as Google advertising, press advertising and public relations activity.

In spring 2020, the start of the pandemic, we moved the majority of our advertising on-line, we focused on Facebook advertisements, pay per click advertising. This has proved highly successful and from May to December 2020 has resulted in a 742 per cent increase in visits to the Member sign-up page on the Club website. As part of this marketing campaign, a new advertising creative was developed to engage enthusiasts of both classic and new Mercedes-Benz cars.

The Marketing Director is supported by an excellent team of specialists working with Facebook, Instagram and more recently a new IT and Website Manager. The focus for the marketing team is now on getting our new Club website launched by the spring.

In addition to the above, to continue to maintain Member engagement during the pandemic, the Club Directors and Officials have all been very innovative in the use of the various technology platforms, such as Zoom and WhatsApp. Our new W140 Model Register Captain is proposing a group on the Signal platform, it will be interesting to see how this is received.

It should also be noted that one of our most successful ways of attracting new Members to the Club is our presence at car events – where we find that existing Members talking to visitors is a very successful method to recruit new Members. Obviously over the last 12 months that has not been possible due to the pandemic.

Question from J Fletcher

The Board does not seem to give any recognition to the North West Region. Can we not get Brian Ellis on the Board to give ourselves a voice?

The Chairman answered: All Members in all regions have equal access to have articles published in the Gazette or hold events. Brian Ellis is welcome to apply for any vacant Club Officer position as are all Club Members.

Question from Tony Wood

What would the Board think of one of the more regular users of the Forum being elected as an Official, like the ones who currently operate the regions?

Regional Development Director Trevor Mitchell answered: Events are generally organised by Regional Officers for their Region and Model Register Captains for a particular model, which works well.

We already have two Officials who are the Forum Moderators and do an excellent job. We do not feel there is a need for another Official to be involved in the Forum.

Question from D Riggs

There were some events last year that we cancelled that included hotel accommodation being pre-booked (but refundable). In some cases maybe Officials and Members elected to retain their bookings. Can you confirm that any such bookings would be at the individual's expense, and, in the case of an Official, ineligible for a claim via the Travel and Substantance system?

The Regional Development Director answered: Any bookings made by individual Members, whether Officials or not, are at their own expense. All Club related expenses have to be pre-agreed via the normal expenses system currently in place.

For any events that were cancelled no expenses (eg mileage incurred during the actual event) would have been paid out as the event did not take place, unless they are costs for preparation for the event (eg recce costs, costs of plaques) that have already been approved by the Board.

Questions from John Wallis

1. Will Board meeting minutes be made available to Club Members and if not why not?

The Company Secretary answered: Please refer to the previous reply re Board minutes.

2. Could Members have a vote to change the Articles of Association allowing for a number, say 50, to call an Extraordinary General Meeting if they saw fit? If not why not?

The Company Secretary answered: The Board has sought some preliminary legal advice on this matter.

As we are sure many Members are aware, the primary power to call a general meeting (any meeting which is not an AGM is now simply referred to as a general meeting) is vested in us, as Directors, as this forms part of our general powers of management of the Club. Likewise, proposals to change or alter the Articles are normally instigated by the Directors, with a copy of the proposed changes being circulated to the Members in advance of any general meeting. In putting forward any

proposals we need to be mindful of our general duties as Directors, including acting in good faith, to promote the success of the Club for the benefit of all of our Members as a whole. If Members have particular changes to the Articles that they would like to see, and they are reasonable, appropriate and address legitimate concerns of the wider membership, the Directors would of course be happy to give appropriate consideration to proposing any such changes.

If any changes to the Articles were proposed, such changes would, in any event, require a special resolution to be proposed, and passed by the requisite majority (on a show of hands at a general meeting, not less than 75 per cent of the votes cast by those entitled to vote).

If for any reason Members are unhappy with the position taken by the Directors, it is open to Members to take advantage of certain provisions in the Companies Act 2006 which give, subject to certain conditions, Members the power to convene a general meeting and/or circulate written statements, but it would be necessary for Members to meet the minimum thresholds required to do so (for example, Members representing five per cent of the total voting rights, in the case of Members calling a general meeting).

At the time of the AGM, five per cent of the total voting rights would be around 500 eligible Members. The Board takes the view that the provisions in the Companies Act 2006 mentioned above are sufficient to protect Members and allowing a number as few as 50, currently less than one half of one per cent, to call a general meeting would potentially allow a very small group of Members to disrupt the smooth running of the Club and create unnecessary expense and use of the Club's resources.

3. Are answers to questions going to be read during the AGM or do Members have to post them on the Club forum?

The Company Secretary answered: Questions and answers will be read out at the meeting and published in the Gazette and with the AGM minutes.

The Chairman then made the following closing statement:

“Thank you all for attending this on-line Annual General Meeting. A ‘chat’ facility will remain open for a further 10 minutes, the Board invites you to use it to record your feedback and comments on the proceedings.

All the Members of the Board look forward to meeting Members at those events that Government regulations allow for this summer and to the normal AGM for 2021.

Thank you all for attending this AGM and I would like to bid you goodbye.”





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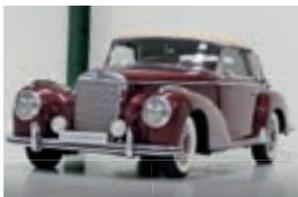
CHASSIS	YEAR	MODEL	ENGINE
R129.058	1993-97	SL 280	04.943
R129.059	1998-2002	SL 280	112.925
R129.060	1990-93	300 SL	103.984
R129.061	1990-93	300 SL-24	104.981
R129.063	1994-98	SL 320	104.991
R129.064	1998-2002	SL 320	112.943
R129.066	1990-92	500 SL	119.960
R129.067	1993-93	500 SL	119.972
R129.067	1994-95	SL 500	119.972
R129.067	1996-98	SL 500	119.982
R129.068	1999-2002	SL 500	113.961
R129.076	1993-93	600 SL	120.981
R129.076	1994-95	SL 600	120.981
R129.076	1996-2002	SL 600	120.983



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1952 MERCEDES-BENZ 300S A CAB £POA
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