

June 2020

Gazette



**SIR STIRLING MOSS
STREAMLINED SSKL
KEN DODD'S R-CLASS
W202 C-CLASS SPRING PERCH REPAIR**

THE OFFICIAL MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB FOUNDED 1952



What's inside...

23



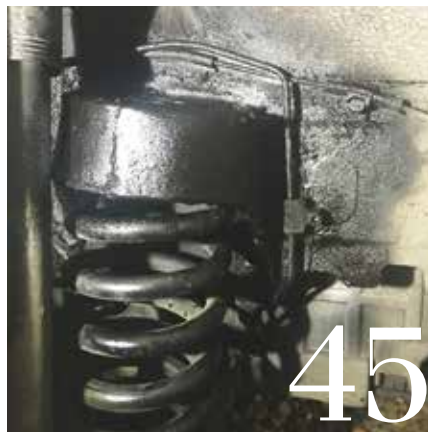
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RETURN TO WORK IN GERMANY



Production has resumed at Daimler AG's factories in Germany with a range of measures in place to restrict the spread of coronavirus infection.

After a phase of suspension of production and short-time working caused by the covid-19 pandemic, the Mercedes-Benz car factories in Untertürkheim,

Berlin, Hamburg, Sindelfingen and Bremen restarted production on April 20. The engine and component plants in Untertürkheim, Hamburg and Berlin

gradually recommenced production first, followed by the assembly operations in Bremen and Sindelfingen. On May 4 the plant in Rastatt also began to restart work. The plants in Kölleda and Arnstadt, as well as selected international factories, will resume production on a step-by-step basis. These include the factories in Sebes/Cugir (Romania), Kecskemét (Hungary) and Tuscaloosa (USA).

The battery plants in Kamenz, where batteries for the EQ models, drive batteries for plug-in hybrid vehicles and 48V batteries are produced, continued to operate during the suspension of production and short-time work phases as important strategic aspects of the electric initiative by Mercedes-Benz – on a two-shift basis with strictly segregated shifts and extensive safety measures for the employees.

To protect its employees, the company has taken precautions to prevent infection and has agreed on a comprehensive package of measures with the General Works Council. These include hygiene and cleaning standards, regulations to maintain a minimum safety distance of 1.5 metres and the use of masks covering the mouth and nose.

REGALIA MANAGER REQUIRED

The Club has an increasing quantity of items of regalia held in central storage and taken to regional and national events throughout the year as required. This includes marquees, tables and chairs, banners, flags etc. We are seeking someone to hold the voluntary position of Regalia Manager. Their duties would be to deal with any queries regarding the booking of regalia for individual events (not the booking of the regalia) and liaising with the event organiser, the Club Office and the company responsible for delivering and erecting the regalia.

In addition they will be responsible for sourcing suppliers for replacement and new items of regalia, obtaining quotes to be presented to the Board and, on an ongoing basis, placing orders for the items needed. From time to time, they will need to liaise with the regalia delivery company to assess the condition of the equipment to meet Health and Safety requirements.

Much of the work would be done via the internet and telephone. Experience in dealing with suppliers and using on-line forms and spreadsheets would be an advantage.

The successful applicant would be invited to our annual Officials' Study Day in February at a location in Leicester.

If you wish to apply for this position please complete the short on-line form from <https://mercedesbenzclub.wufoo.com/forms/application-for-the-position-of-club-official/>

Should you have any queries on the vacancy please contact me (trevor.mitchell@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk)

Trevor Mitchell, Regional Development Director

GENUINE PARTS FOR SALE

A Birmingham based Mercedes-Benz specialist has told us it is closing down and has a number of original parts to be disposed of. These are for 1990s onward cars and vans and an offer for the whole lot would be considered. For more details please contact Iqbal Ubhi (theautoclinic152@gmail.com 07774 476000 or 01217 062006).

BTCC PROVISIONAL REVISED DATES

The organisers of the British Touring Car Championship Series announced at the end of April a revised provisional calendar for the 2020 championship, comprising nine events and a total of 27 races, all of which will be screened live on ITV. They are scheduled to run from August onwards, however the calendar remains conditional on government directives and approvals regarding the resumption of sporting activities and the need to ensure the health of all involved.

The revised dates and venues are August 1-2 Donington Park, August 8-9 Brands Hatch (Indy circuit), August 22-23 Oulton Park, August 29-30, Knockhill, September 19-20 Thruxton, September 26-27 Silverstone, October 10-11 Croft, October 24-25 Snetterton and November 14-15 Brands Hatch (Grand Prix circuit).

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

As the onset of the covid-19 pandemic began to deepen in the UK, the Club's Board of Directors, at its meeting on March 16, voted unanimously to suspend all Club events for the foreseeable future. This included pub meetings, shows and the participation in any other organised gatherings. We took this decision because we hold the ultimate responsibility for the safety and welfare of everyone involved in the Club. The UK and Irish governments subsequently announced the introduction of stricter social distancing restrictions and that all gatherings would be prohibited.

It is still very unclear when it will be safe to resume large gatherings in the UK and Ireland. Therefore we have to maintain the current Club position of being unable to schedule future pub meetings or confirm our attendance at any events until further notice.

We are aware that some third party organisers still believe their events will proceed later in the year. We will continue to print the events list in the Gazette in the hope that some may eventually take place once restrictions are eased. But, again, we must remind all Members that the Club is currently not able to commit to attend any such events.

However, we have seen some very innovative ways in which our Regional Officers have used digital technology to stay in touch with Members. By holding on-line pub meetings and virtual car shows they are all helping to keep the spirit of our Club alive. We would like to thank everyone for their determination and resilience during these most exceptional times.

The Board



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. Meguiar's has kindly agreed to sponsor this and the Member whose letter is selected receives a Wash & Wax car care kit.



CAR OF THE MONTH – UNDER LOCK-DOWN



Martin Wiltshire's CLK200 at the moment... ..and on the Reims-Gueux circuit in happier times.

Dear Chris,

It's April, and here is a photo of my 2008 CLK200 cabriolet driving around the Loire! At least it would have been if we weren't in the current situation, so here is a photo of it self isolating in the garage.

We bought the car in 2018, originally we were going to buy an SLK but decided they were too small for our needs as we were due to go on holiday to France and wanted to visit a couple of vineyards and bring back some of their produce. With the CLK we can use the rear seats for the luggage, fill the boot with wine and other French goodies and still have the roof down.

Last year we took the ferry from Portsmouth to Bilbao and then drove down to the Algarve, where we spent a week. Then we drove back through Spain and France and got the Eurotunnel back to the UK. We also did another trip through France last year, living in Kent the Eurotunnel is very convenient, and took a slight detour to Turin to stay at the old Fiat Lingotto factory, which is now a hotel but still has the test track on the roof. Sadly they won't let you take your car up to it, but you can access it as a pedestrian and, looking at the steep banking, I wasn't too disappointed about not being able to drive round it.

The car isn't pristine, it has a few battle scars from its 96,000 miles, although I prefer to think of it as patina, I don't want to have to worry about every small stone chip on the paintwork. I was planning on getting the wheels refurbished this year as they do show signs of being parked too close to kerbs, but that will have to wait for the current situation to improve.

Martin Wiltshire, via e-mail

'100 UP'



Keith Mitchelson's 280SL.

Dear Chris

I very much enjoyed this article In the last Gazette. David and Michael Smith are great domestic and international ambassadors for the Club.

I first met them at Techno-Classica, Essen. I had been looking for a top grade W113 Pagoda 280SL for a number of years and they kindly pointed me in the direction of Brian Bourne. Brian had owned his W113

for 20-plus years and had participated in many European Pagoda rallies. Luckily Brian agreed to sell his much loved and immaculate Pagoda to me. The bulkhead has the signatures of Hans Herman and Eugen Bohringer which adds a nice historic touch.

John Haynes maintains the car to the high standard he does for David and Michael and indeed he undertook a lot of work for Brian.

It is a matching numbers car with the engine being completely stripped at Roger Edwards Motors when Cedric Selzer (previously Jim Clark's senior mechanic at Lotus) was a commercial partner of Roger's.

Best wishes,

Keith Mitchelson, via e-mail

EARLY 'SOCIAL DISTANCING'

Dear Chris,

Having time on my hands I was browsing through some old Gazettes and came across this 1973 article. I was surprised that auto

MERCEDES CONTINUING RESEARCH

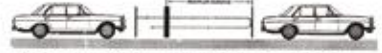
Automatic Distance Keeping

Electronic devices capable of preventing a driver from travelling too close to the car ahead of him are under active development by Mercedes-Benz.

In a new safety publication called "Mercedes-Benz extends its lead" the Company states that it is already co-operating with leading electronics manufacturers in designing an automatic distance controller.

"Ghost Cars"—driverless vehicles—are no longer just a product of Utopian imaginations, says the booklet, but the idea pursued by Mercedes-Benz goes far beyond what has been achieved up to now.

Starting point for the research is the trend towards bumper-to-bumper driving in long columns on Motorways and trunk roads.



Rising standards of living are seen as forcing an inevitable increase in the 200 million passenger cars and 50 million commercial vehicles currently serving mankind. By 1980 4.4 billion human beings will be demanding transportation. Under such conditions, the introduction of reference speeds might become imperative in order to keep traffic moving, suggests the booklet.

Until recently, the dominating trend in automotive research has been to reduce the load on the driver by such auxiliary devices as power-assisted steering and automatic transmission. Mercedes say that road traffic developments are already pointing to the need for a new breed of auxiliary units, capable of compensating for human failure and faulty reactions. They point to their A.B.S. anti-lock-brake device which enables an inexperienced driver to brake and steer at the same time, as an example of the type of unit envisaged to meet future needs.

An automatic distance controller, which would prevent nose to tail "abuses" on Motorways arising from faulty judgment on the part of drivers, could also make a significant contribution to traffic safety.

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The research so far has looked at three possible solutions:

1. An optical distance warning device
2. An acoustical distance warning device
3. An automatic distance keeper

The first two suggestions were dropped because they did not guarantee that the brakes of the car would be applied in sufficiently good time to prevent an accident.

The planned distance keeper is expected to be able to record not only the speed of the vehicle in which it is installed, but also that of the vehicle ahead. It would also take into consideration such factors as whether the road was wet or dry and then compute the stopping distance from these three factors. As soon as the minimum distance between vehicles was attained, the device would apply the brakes automatically.

"No-one can say, however, when such a system will be ready for installation," adds the booklet.

From a 1973 Gazette.

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Regards,

Bob Coxshall, via e-mail

TOMORROW'S CAR

MERCEDES-BENZ 300-SL

**Tomorrow's car
—here today!**

No exhibition hall dream, the 300-SL with its fabulous 260 hp fuel injection engine and aerodynamically functional body is here. At a cost of just \$10,000 in city traffic up to 150 mph on the track, it creates tomorrow's standards of performance, handling ease, safety and comfort. **Standard Details** give the 300-SL, traditional Mercedes-Benz elegance in a car that breaks with all traditions.

You can see it today at any Mercedes-Benz showroom. You can drive it. You can own it now!

Going to Europe? Order a Mercedes-Benz model delivered anywhere in Europe, from 19250

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DEALERS FROM COAST TO COAST

It's still tomorrow's car for most of us.

Dear Chris,

Just came across this in the June 1956 edition of *Road & Track*.

Cheers,

Dave Beardsley, via e-mail





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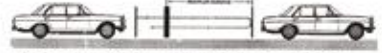
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Dinosaurs under lock-down

by Phil Greaves

I don't know why I watch the news these days, there's only one story and it doesn't change much.

Gazing out of the window at two ossified cars and an empty street, my mind begins to wander, we did some good events last year and with luck the summer won't be completely over by the time all this lot passes and we can get out and enjoy what's left of it – we've owned a 450SLC for about 25 years now.

If cars were dinosaurs what would the 450SLC be? Perhaps not a Tyrannosaurus Rex, that would be more like a Ford Thunderbird or a TransAm, no the SLC is more of an Allosaurus, fairly impressive but not quite king of the road.

We acquired our dinosaur, a direct result of the carbon age, in 1995 after a long search for a good example of the large and we hoped comfortable four seater coupé – the convertible was out of the question and we liked the idea of the longer

wheelbase and the four seats plus the added security of the fixed head.

Several trips to both dealer and private sellers reset my vocabulary somewhat, I realised that a car in 'good' or 'excellent' condition could have holes in the inner wing or huge dents in the floor, maybe I'm a bit awkward (this has been mentioned by those close to home) but I've never found kicking the tyres particularly informative. One or two of the sellers pulled a rather downbeat expression when I got out the boiler suit and torch.

Strange thing is, the one we really liked was just a few miles from where we live in Telford, and, being 100 miles north of some of the restoration projects we had inspected, about 30 per cent cheaper.

Finished in a rather fine lapis blue, which shows off the chrome rather well, the contrasting interior is upholstered in, don't laugh, velour – believe it or not an additional cost option in the era of the three-day week and bell bottom jeans.

So what's it like to drive? Well it feels big, in fact the bonnet seems massive. With a bonnet this big you would think there would be plenty of room under there to get things done – you know, like a Ford Capri – where you can check the tread depth down the side of the engine. No, you open the bonnet and all you can see is metal, mostly black metal. Of course, this makes a pleasant change from a modern Mercedes – when you open the bonnet there you can see plastic, mostly black plastic.

Anyway, having got the old girl home, it was time to change the fluids, oil, transmission, water, diff oil, power steering. So, let's see how she performs. First things first, unless you have a large, fully charged battery you won't be going anywhere. The big 4.5-litre V8 is a lump to start, but ticks over nicely once motivated, and immediately swings the rev counter up to a fast tick-over.

You don't need to have gone very far before you realise that the fuel injection





ClubShop

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

Available from the Club website. Post and packing is not included in the prices shown.



Club fleece in various colours £32.00



Softshell jacket in various colours £35.00



Red trim jacket in various colours £40.00



Reversible coat in red £58.00



Cufflinks £18.00



Pin badges £7.00



Keyrings from £5.00



Holdall in various colours £25.00



Tee Jay jacket in deep navy or hunter green £85.00



Jacket in various colours £20.00



Beanie hats in various colours £12.00

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All orders will be despatched within 14 days, if there is a problem we will contact you. Post and packing is not included in the prices given above.

Goods found to be faulty through design flaws or postage damage will be replaced free of charge.

Contact details Donna Butter To order please ring 01278 652340

If we are unable to answer the phone, please leave a message on the answer-phone and we will call you back.

The e-mail address is sales@mercedes-benz-club-shop.co.uk

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





Tina and David Bellamy in their 300SL on the Mercedes-Benz Centenary Rally in Stuttgart in 1986.

David Bellamy

– 1941-2020

by Roger King

It is with much sadness that I find myself writing this obituary for my dear friend David Bellamy, beloved husband of the Club's Honorary Vice-President, former Director and Membership Secretary Tina. As some of you may know, David had been in poor health for several years now but it was when he was admitted to hospital towards the end of March with an ear infection that he contracted coronavirus which ultimately took his life.

Although in the early 1970s Tina and David lived quite close to each other in Essex, it was only when they were on holiday in Tenerife that they first met, a chance meeting which resulted in their marriage in 1975. At the time of their getting together Tina was living and working with Ron and Trudy Cushway, and those amongst you who knew Ron won't be surprised to learn that it didn't take him long to 'persuade' David to exchange his pride and joy, a white Triumph GT6, for a Mercedes-Benz 200D which, to quote Tina "wouldn't even pull the skin off a rice pudding!" But at the time Ron's persuasive powers were second to none – even Trudy's! However, the 200D was the first of many Mercedes-Benz cars that David had over the next 40-plus years, including both saloons and sports cars. All of David's cars were special to him, but I think the 1958 300SL roadster which he and Tina purchased in 1981 was probably his favourite, closely followed by their 280SE

cabriolet. When David and Tina joined the German 300SL Club they made many new friends and in the following 20 years much enjoyed themselves taking the roadster on numerous 300SL Club rallies all around Europe.

My earliest memory of meeting David was when I attended my first Club event in Kensington Gardens, but it was when Diana and I founded the South East Section of the Club in 1978 that we became friends with him and Tina, and have remained so ever since. When David left school he went to work in Harrods and spent all his working life there until the last couple of years when he transferred to Harrods' associate store House of Fraser. Although his job regularly kept him out of the country, David was a staunch supporter of all Club events in general but of the SE Section in particular. In fact I don't ever remember him missing any of the events that Diana and I organised, whether it was a static car show, one of our driving test days or one of our rallies to Stuttgart. No matter what we planned, David was always present, always wanting to participate and always ready to help where he could. David and Tina won numerous trophies during their motoring activities with the 300SL, including third place in the 1982 Philpa International Rally in Greece, second place in the 1985 300SL Club Rally in Hamburg, the *Thoroughbred and Classic Car* magazine cup at our 1986 Centenary Rally in Beaulieu, as well as the

Club's 40th Anniversary Car Cup in 1998.

David will be sadly missed by all those who knew him and our hearts go out to Tina at this time.



All dressed up.





Rob writes...

by Rob Halloway

The complicated business of simplifying things

At the beginning of March I left the office an hour early. I did so for this sentence: After 45 minutes of trundling homeward, at four minutes to 5.00pm I was a 45-year-old driving an A45 on the A45 at a sedate 45mph.

The A45 is important for a number of reasons. As a dual carriageway it's a handy route linking Northampton to some interesting back lanes home. As a car, the A45 is a convenient conduit into this month's special, extended 'Rob Writes...' on product simplification.

The cruising car in this numerically-alliterative commute is (at the time of typing) the world's hottest hatchback. With 421hp tearing through all four wheels, the mighty Mercedes-AMG A45 S 4-Matic+ is an exceptional piece of advanced engineering. It's also terrific fun to drive.

This A45 had vivid sun yellow paintwork, highlighted by a night pack which replaces chrome with black trim parts. Smoky grey 19-inch AMG alloys gave a delicious glimpse of bright red brake callipers clamping on high performance drilled discs. Sitting low on its race-tuned but reasonably compliant sporting suspension, the car looked tremendous, even in the midst of a raging Storm Dennis. Inside, hunkered down into firmly-gripping sports seats, dark grey with yellow contrast, it felt good. It had everything I needed and nothing I didn't.

Which was convenient, because this, the 'no spoilers' version of the hottest of hatchbacks, isn't available with any options. Not a single one. Nothing. Even the delicious custardy colour is standard.

Because, as well as arguably being the ultimate modern point-to-point car, the A45 is a machine in pole position for something called product simplification.

Simpler, not stripped out

Product simplification shouldn't be confused with product de-contenting. I'm well aware of the old stories and legends about halcyon over-engineered models from various manufacturers, and the subsequent stripping of equipment and features from a car. This isn't that. This is simplicity replacing complexity.

If you're considering an Apple electronic device, you can purchase very easily from a limited, clear choice of high spec products. Apple's phones come in a handful of sizes and capacities; its laptops and tablets are similarly easy to browse and to choose. The products are incredibly complex and crammed full of kit, but they're simple to select and easy to buy. Other laptop vendors might offer much more choice, but unless you're an informed 'expert' it can be tricky to build the perfect PC from a pile of parts.

Offering a selected collection of well-considered, prepared products is a bit like that with what my colleagues and I offer for Mercedes-Benz Cars UK.

The clever, passionate and enthusiastic people with whom I work did some sums a couple of years ago. They worked out how many optional equipment permutations of each car were available – how many different ways there were to build one. For the A-Class there were 382,208 different variables. That's an awful lot of hatchbacks. For the C-Class – available with an even wider choice of options – there were 10.5

million different specification variables. Looking at the E-Class the numbers became so eye-watering we needed to use a bigger calculator. Taking into account options, engines and not even colours, we stopped counting when we got to just over one billion. Yes, in the UK we could have sold *one billion* E-Classes and no two would be the same. With more than a billion versions available, it was theoretically possible to get either a totally bespoke, unique product, or to accidentally create a car that is so odd no-one else would want to buy it, which would make it far less appealing to a used car buyer, and therefore reducing the used price, or the vehicle's residual value.

Monthly payments not savings

Residual values are important because over the past decade many more of us are buying cars on finance rather than with our own cash. As time has gone by generations have shifted from the post-war 'baby boomers', enjoying a working life in relative peace time, significant property value growth and a golden age of income and disposable cash, through 'Generation X' (I'm one), 'GenY' and so on. Even the famous 'Millennials' are well into their 30s now.

Generally, these later generations don't have as much cash in the bank as their parents and grandparents, but do tend to earn enough to afford things with monthly payments. So we get usage rather than outright ownership. Whether that's mortgages, rent, cars, posh watches, TV packages, the gym, phone upgrades – society has shifted to paying per month. Car buying isn't immune to this trend.

The UK sales growth of Mercedes-Benz since 2010 is due to a number of things, including lots of newer, smaller, affordable and desirable cars arriving, and the availability of competitive finance. The finance is competitive because the amount paid back over the life of a car is – predominantly – the difference between the initial purchase price and the residual value



UDT World Cup Rally

by Vic Quayle

The sad news of Sir Stirling Moss's death last month has of course prompted many tributes to him and acknowledgements of his achievements. This article, which by chance was submitted to the Gazette at this time, presents a lesser known aspect of his wide-ranging driving skills. I hope you find it a suitable celebration of his life – Ed.

Sir Stirling Moss' associations with Mercedes-Benz are well known, his Mille Miglia win with Denis Jenkinson in a 300SLR being perhaps his best victory. He accumulated hundreds of successes on the race circuits of the world, but his rallying rarely gets a mention. He was no slouch as a rally driver and although he only competed on about 20 major rallies he usually did very well.



The Africa section of the rally.

Moss used 300SL Gullwings to compete in two Tour de France Automobile events in the mid-1950s, which involved nearly a week's competitive driving around race circuits, hill-climbs and familiar rally roads. He finished second overall in 1956 and fourth in 1957. It was not until 1974 that a racing driver friend and Mercedes-Benz enthusiast Michael Taylor invited Moss to take part in the UDT World Cup Rally.

This would be an endurance rally crossing Europe, the Sahara to Nigeria, back to Tunisia before meandering across southern Europe. The finish was in München to coincide with the FIFA World Football Cup Finals.

Taylor had previously taken part in the London-Sydney Marathon in 1968, only retiring his 280SE when halfway across Australia. They decided to approach the Mercedes-Benz Competitions Department for help and it prepared another 280SE for Taylor. They took a mechanic, Allan Sell, for the ride.

Even before the start the omens were not good. When Taylor collected the car

from the works there was a serious petrol leak as he drove away and there was nearly a conflagration.

Their rally started amid much razzmatazz at Wembley Stadium and they were a fancied team, the bookies had them at eight to one. Other top crews included Polish driver Zasada in a Porsche 911 and Andrew Cowan in a Ford Escort 2000. The cavalcade of rally cars

headed for the ferry at Southampton via two short stages to sort out a result so the news hounds had a headline result for the media. The author was marshalling there.

Moss tried very hard, probably too hard, and even unloaded the car of their spares etc and drained the fuel tank to the minimum. Taylor was worried Moss was trying too hard too soon, and warned him to take it easier, but he kicked up the gravel and thrashed the car to take 12th place.

A long trip followed across France and Spain to Algeciras for another ferry to Tangier. Moss was still trying very hard on four more stages and the car was already showing problems as their inflatable jack had a puncture, the compass had no light (essential in the desert) and the car was bottoming out. These were all fundamental to rally preparation, but a lot of the issues seemed to arise from Moss's over-exuberance.

Restarting in Tangier the remaining competitors were warned of the dangers ahead, the remoteness of the region and lack of possible rescue, by organisers





Moss (right) with co-driver Denis Jenkinson on the 1955 Mille Miglia.



In later years he was a very entertaining 'brand ambassador' for Mercedes-Benz.

F1 NEWS

by Will Gardner

SIR STIRLING MOSS

As we continued through lock-down the sad news broke that Sir Stirling Moss OBE died on April 12 after a long illness at the age of 90. Of his many achievements perhaps the most iconic, and important to Mercedes fans, was his 1955 victory in the Mille Miglia in the 300SLR – driving the 993 miles at an average speed of just short of 100mph in one 10-hour stint; the best time ever achieved in the event. The same year he won the British Grand Prix for Mercedes, becoming the first British driver to do so.

The Mille Miglia, together with finishing four times as runner-up in the F1 championship, marked him out as perhaps the best all-round driver ever, racing in a time when fatality was a very real part of motor sport. He had his own brush with death when racing at Goodwood in 1962;

his Lotus crashed heavily, leaving him comatose for a month and leading to his retirement from professional sport.

Post retirement Moss remained a high-profile figure and served as a brand-ambassador for Mercedes for many years, often driving at events such as the Goodwood revival and sharing his time generously with fans. He suffered serious injury again in later life when he fell down the lift-shaft in his home, breaking his ankles, bones in his feet and damaging his back. Irrepressibly he overcame injuries that could have been life changing to continue his public life, from which he withdrew in 2018 having been hospitalised in Singapore with a serious chest infection two years earlier.

If you met him in later life, you'd see a gentle and funny man, with a keen sense of humour and excellent memory, often

joking that he was "the greatest driver never to win the World Championship". In 2000 Moss was knighted for his services to motor sport. Stories have it that as he drove away from the palace, a guard was asked to approach him, which he did, stopping the car and asking "Who do you think you are, Stirling Moss?"

Sir Stirling was an honorary Club Member and a previous winner of the Scott Moncrieff Trophy. He is survived by his widow Lady Susie and his children Alison and Elliot.

PROJECT PITLANE

The project to deliver ventilators to the NHS led to the unprecedented spectacle of team staff working in each other's production facilities. Red Bull Team Principal Christian Horner revealed that Renault staff worked in the Red Bull factory. In the end, that particular design didn't go into production, but Horner said how proud he was that teams had found a way to put commercial and technical pressures aside to join forces, and throw all their joint expertise at the project. Meanwhile, Mercedes' Performance Engine facility at Brixworth has been re-purposed to manufacture the Continuous Positive Air Pressure (CPAP) machines developed by the team as part of Pitlane. Machines normally producing pistons and turbochargers are now producing up to 1,000 of these per day to fulfil a government order.

RESTART

As we went to press options to restart the season in July in a 'biosphere' type environment, without public attendance, are being considered. The Austrian race is scheduled for July 5 and talks are apparently ongoing to hold two races in Austria over consecutive weekends, with two races at Silverstone at the end of the month. This would allow the F1 paddock to remain isolated; it's hoped that this, together with regular testing, would enable the sport to remain covid-free and complete four championship rounds. Ross Brawn, F1's Technical Director, said the plan has significant appeal, but stressed no risks would be taken and F1 would return only when it was safe to do so. It now seems likely that when it restarts the 2020 season will last for around 10 races instead of the 22 originally planned.



On his way to victory in the 1955 British GP at Aintree.



Car 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, 30 Scotgate, Stamford PE9 2YQ or chris.bass@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk



Steven Homer's SLK200

Steven writes: 'Firstly I would like to say thank you for making my SLK car of the month. I've had it since May 2018 and had plenty of chances to get the roof down and put some miles on the car. I've had a big passion for cars ever since I can remember, but I've always had a particular interest in Mercedes.'

My SLK is an R172 200 AMG Sport, powered by a 1.8-litre turbo petrol engine coupled to a seven-speed automatic gearbox. Finished in selenite silver metallic paint with full black leather upholstery and contrasting red stitching, this SLK was registered in 2011 and was fitted with options such as Aircscarf and Comand. It is an Edition 125 which celebrated the 125th anniversary of Mercedes-Benz. It spent the first three years of its life in Central London, covering just 3,500 miles in this time, and has only covered around 30,000 miles in total, which is low for a nearly nine-

year-old car. I'm very lucky that I only work half a mile away from where I live, so don't use the car to travel to and from work, just for social occasions. My main plans for my SLK are to simply use and enjoy it.

I've had a varied car history with my first one being an Abarth 500C finished in two-tone grey paintwork with a contrasting grey leather interior. The Abarth was an extremely fun car to drive and I would recommend anyone who gets a chance to try one to do so. I will always remember the fun and memories I created in that car. But my driving needs changed and I required a slightly bigger and higher specified car, so I opted for a 2015 flash blue Vauxhall Corsa VXR. I reckon this was a 'Friday afternoon' car as I took it to the dealer at least once a month to fix various problems. After several months of this I decided I'd had enough and needed a new car. I looked at various different options but deep down I knew I

wanted a Mercedes. After looking around I found an SLK at a Volvo dealership about 10 minutes from my house and it was love at first sight. It was a trade-in from a gentleman who left with a seven-seater XC90, from one extreme to the other.

As well as being a Regional Officer and Co-ordinator of the Club's Instagram account, I contribute to my own blog called *Steven's Four Wheels*. In that I talk about everything from my SLK to Mercedes as a brand, shows and events and wider car related topics. I post weekly blogs on Blogger and Facebook as well as photos and other content on my Facebook and Instagram pages.

Finally I would like to say a big thank you to everyone in the Club for being so welcoming. I really enjoy going to the pub meetings and shows. I am very much looking forward to organising and attending more shows and events in the future and getting to know Members a lot more.'





Avus streamlined SSKL
in the Classic Centre
workshop.

Secrets in the 'Holy Halls' – and the 'Gherkin'

by Chris Bass

Each year Mercedes-Benz Classic, the division of Daimler AG responsible for the museum in Stuttgart, the Classic Centre and the company's archive, holds a meeting for the editors from all the Mercedes-Benz clubs it recognises in Europe. This year there were 35 attending and I think all showed up as this was at the end of February before the coronavirus really closed things down. 15 of these editors were from German clubs – which for the most part only cover one model each. Most of the other clubs, but not all, cover a range of models, although a lot are restricted to classics.

As the meeting was being held in Stuttgart the first item on the agenda was a visit to the Classic Centre, in the suburb of Fellbach. This is responsible for maintaining and restoring the cars displayed in the museum and also undertakes restorations and repairs for private owners, sales of veteran, vintage and classic cars and the supply of re-manufactured parts that are no longer available through the supply chain for current and recent models. Nearby are the 'Holy Halls' which house the reserve collection for the museum – cars not currently being displayed there or involved in Mercedes-Benz Classic's

activities at events and exhibitions around the world.

Our group was split into two on arrival with one part being taken to the nearby 'Holy Halls' and archive building, the other going into the Classic Centre's workshop.

In 2008 we were taken to the 'Holy Halls' and allowed a free reign – invited to wander where we liked, to lift any dust sheets we chose to and to take photos of anything that caught our eyes – see the May 2008 Gazette. Times have changed. This year we were under strict instructions to take no photos and the well-informed and perfectly pleasant guide showing us round prefaced his remarks by saying that anything he told us had to be "off the record". We were not even allowed to take notes! This seemed a little odd because the cars he showed us, as he said, were those currently being used to support the company's marketing activities at exhibitions and events such as the Mille Miglia. Could it be that the editors and their readers are not in the 'target audience' for this marketing?

From the notes I scribbled down as soon as we left, I can tell you that the cars we saw were numerous W198 300SL Gullwings and roadsters, some G-Wagen and 600-based 'Popemobiles' and several

other interesting classics. Among them was the W201 190 cabriolet displayed at Retro Classics in 2016 (see the June 2016 Gazette) and a 190 saloon, seemingly converted to battery and electric motor power during that model's production life – the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. Perhaps it is an indication of how progress has been made in this field that this was a three-seater, I presume because one of the back seats was taken up by some of the batteries needed to give the car a worthwhile range.

The subject of the increasing level of ethanol found in current fuel was a topic that came up during our visit – which it seems is as much a problem for the museum as it is for those of us trying to keep older cars going ourselves. Frequent use is the museum's advice and if a car has to stand for more than a couple of months if possible drain the tank.

Don't forget – all this is off the record, if you would like to know more you have to buy the book *Holy Halls – the secret vehicle collection of Mercedes-Benz* by Christof Vieweg, published by Delius Klasing.

Archive

Next we were taken to the archive. For many years it was housed in a building





Ian Keers' former 220S 'it looked quite nice when I got it sorted, it still horrified my wife though!'

What got you into this in the first place?

by Ian Keers

As we Club Members stare into the dark abyss of a spring and summer with no events due to the frightening covid-19 pandemic, and thus will miss a lot of our usual Mercedes-Benz based social contact, it struck me that it might be interesting to learn more about how we all ended up sharing this common interest, so I thought I would start what I hope may become a series of articles by Members.

From being a small boy, I have always been interested in cars of all kinds, I think it might have come from my maternal grandfather who was a real car buff and forever changing them. My father didn't have a car when I was very young, but granddad used to put me on his knee and let me 'drive' his various Austins and Hillmans, and I think this must have fired my interest. I did have a motor scooter when I was 16, but the minute I was 17

and could legally drive I took lessons and passed my test and have never been on two wheels since. The first time I really noticed Mercedes-Benz cars was when I joined the RAF in 1966 and met a lot of guys who had served in RAF Germany and had brought back Pontons and some Fintails, which they said were available quite cheaply on the second-hand market over there. I had a tatty 1946 Hillman Minx drop-head then, bought in Cirencester for 25 quid and these Mercs seemed big, smooth and sumptuous to me, but way beyond my reach.

Moving the clock rapidly forward, leaving the RAF and entering the business world, through a succession of company Ford Cortinas, a Hillman Avenger, a Renault 16, even a Citroen G Special, to 1991 when I was the Sales Director of a medium sized business and could choose a quality company car, I opted for a new Mercedes-Benz 300D, W124 series, in 904

'dunkel blau'. I loved that car, I even got used to its leisurely acceleration, but the build quality, the engineering, the driving experience were on a different level to anything else I had previously driven. Now, I had been interested in classic cars for quite a long time, although had never owned one; at one time 1960s Jaguars were my thing, then for a while American cars of the 1950s and 60s believe it or not, but when I found myself in that first W124 I knew that this was *the* marque, it was a classic Mercedes for me, a Fintail just like the ones my pals in the RAF had nearly 30 years before. So, the search began in 1993. My principal, probably my only, source then were the classic pages in the *Autotrader* magazine which I closely scrutinised every week, not that there were many Mercedes there though. Looking back now, I am ashamed how little I knew then about these cars, virtually nothing! I looked



Extensive colour choices.

From deep in the Archive

by the Archive Team

When you are launching a flagship model it is always a good idea to push the boat out and hang the expense. As this latest 'From deep in the Archive' (FDITA) shows Mercedes-Benz, which has a very long history of launching successful range-topping models, knows what it is doing in this respect.

The subject of this FDITA turned up quite by chance with the Archive scribe moaning about the large amount of dust in a box of long-undisturbed workshop manuals which he was cataloguing. Suddenly his tone changed as he discovered, in amongst the dust underneath the manuals, a

wonderful brochure, entitled: 'Fire and silk – the Mercedes-Benz 500E'.

This headline encapsulated the breadth of ability of the new 500E saloon. And the large page size, exceptional pictures and editorial style accurately portrayed a car designed to be equally at home carrying VIPs at high speeds across continents or waiting about town – all in equal high comfort.

In the 1990s, when the 500E was launched, it was a technical tour de force. The brochure hammered this home to prospective customers. The first spread, titled 'The truly exceptional', set the scene, the opening sentences being: 'What is it like? Does it have the power and the handling characteristics of a sports car? The comfort and safety of a saloon? Or could it be a combination of everything? ...A new model that will always remain desirable because of its performance, styling, safety and comfort, as well as its rarity. The truly exceptional car – the Mercedes-Benz 500E.'

In describing the 500E's engine the brochure says it 'can of course be described by listing its technical features, but its real values cannot be expressed by any statistics – it is a smooth V8 engine with a silken touch and a barely audible murmur; the exciting way it develops its power potential is something with which other saloons cannot compare'.

The brochure then goes on to mention how the 500E's all-round ventilated disc brakes were developed from Mercedes-Benz's motor racing programme. Or, as the brochure puts it, 'You can bring the 500E to a halt just as safely as you can accelerate it.'

Two double page spreads of the 500E brochure are given over to the interior and exterior colour choices available. In the case of the interior the 500E could be specified with a choice of five different colour fabric or five different colour leather trim materials. Externally the choice was even wider as 500E customers could select from no fewer than 14 metallic paint colours.

Certainly the Archive Team all know that they want one of these range-topping Mercedes.

The Mercedes-Benz Club's digital archive is having new material added every month and now includes thousands of items. If you haven't yet done so please take a look by registering. It's a simple process, just go to: <http://archive.mercedes-benz-club.co.uk> and follow the on-screen instructions – happy browsing!

If you would like to dispose of surplus Mercedes-Benz literature or photographs please let us know. Whether it's one brochure or a car-load your surplus material will benefit Club Members. Even early Gazettes are welcome, although the Archive does have a full collection of the later A4-format editions. Please contact the Archive Team: Jon and Lynne Bell, Bryan Allman, Andy Holmes and Phil Reed (archive@mercedes-benz-club.co.uk). If you do not use e-mail please telephone 01932 346981 and leave a message.



A exceptional brochure.





Cromer's end of the pier show musical director Nigel Hogg with his ex-Ken Dodd R-Class (note the registration number).

A tattyfilarious diddymobile for cruising Knotty Ash

by Paul Jobling

In deepest north Norfolk is the town of Cromer, famous for many things, but especially its end of the pier show, now the only one in the world.

During the wonderful end of the pier performance, with its cap doffed to both pantomime and variety shows of the past, with his head poking above the parapet, or to be more accurate, the orchestra pit, is a Yorkshireman, from the engineering town of Guiseley in Leeds, who is responsible for the musical direction of the entire singing, dancing and musical performance. Yet Nigel Hogg has never studied music academically. Like most Yorkshiremen of his age he studied engineering but it is his love of music that has been driving his career and not his knowledge of machine tool drift.

Hitting a high note

Nigel's other driving force is an R-Class Mercedes-Benz, quite an unusual vehicle in its own right, but made even more so by the fact this car belonged to comedian, singer

and dedicated Liverpoolian Ken Dodd.

Nigel was introduced to Ken in 1981 and the relationship immediately hit a high note, because within a few years Nigel became Ken's musical director and they remained firm friends until Ken's death in 2018.

Ken Dodd was a man of simple taste and although he had a succession of competent, reliable and good quality cars, these were his workhorses rather than statements of success. Nigel recalls Ken driving a Toyota people carrier and various estate cars, but the R-Class was the only Mercedes Ken ever owned.

Mercedes answer to the Range Rover?

I was fortunate to be able to catch up with Nigel before an Anglia – North Christmas party on Cromer Pier and see the R-Class for myself. The first thing that struck me about the car was its size, it was truly a vast vehicle with a capacious boot, which Nigel was quick to point out was essential



Nicely laid out instruments in the R-Class.





The W202 jacked up ready for the repair work.

W202 C-Class front spring perch repair

by Martyn Lennon

I'm sure by now that most Mercedes-Benz owners and enthusiasts will be aware that although the brand is known for its engineering excellence and product quality, it did have a low point in its history which in many ways it still suffers from today. In 1998 Daimler-Benz AG finalised a deal with the Chrysler Corporation to create DaimlerChrysler, which would stay together until 2007. Although this deal opened up even more opportunities for the US market and introduced new models, it did weaken Daimler's reputation by cutting corners during the manufacturing process. Cars became increasingly more complex with experimental electronics, cheaper materials being used, the introduction of water-based paints and less care being taken during the testing and inspection processes.

Before going any further with this article, I would like to point out that this does not make the Mercedes of this era terrible cars. The W208 CLK, W210 E-Class etc are all beautiful to drive, very

comfortable, reliable (if serviced correctly) and make for absolutely bargain luxury motoring. Rust is of course the weak point in these cars, which unfortunately runs deeper than just some minor surface corrosion on the bodywork. One main area which is prone to corrosion issues on the W202 C-Class, W208 and W210 cars is the front spring perches, the cup the spring locates into. The main reason I was aware of this issue is due to my Dad's experience with Mercedes-Benz ownership when he used to run W210 cars. What causes this problem is a combination of thin steel, poor welding and insufficient protection. As the factory underseal begins to break down through age, moisture is able to get in behind the spring perch and rust away the join between it and the inner wing until it dangerously breaks away and collapses the front suspension of the car. This happened to two of my Dad's W210s and both times it was difficult to spot until it was too late, as the remaining underseal had hidden the corrosion which was going on underneath.



Spring perch split, a weak point on many DaimlerChrysler cars.



 CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Future events and Club nights

Please note that this was written on April 23 – for the latest information on our events please refer to the most recent Cambridgeshire e-newsletter or e-mail your query to us.

Haynes Museum, Somerset – Saturday

June 20 *cancelled*.

Kimbolton Car Show, Bedford – Sunday July 12 *cancelled by the organisers*.

Surfleet Selection, Spalding, Lincolnshire – Saturday August 8 *on hold, subject to review in late June*.

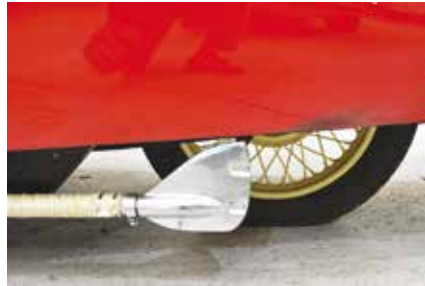
Cars by the Lake, Bury St Edmunds – Sunday September 6 *not taking place this year, but we are looking into an alternative event for this date*.

Club nights – *cancelled until further notice*.

Try Cambridgeshire's Christmas Quiz!



A. Jaguar XJ engine and brakes.



B. And the spare makes four.



C. Ettore was long gone when this car was built.



D. Quite often in red.



E. Bit of a van moniker?



F. Did it corner at Le Mans?



G. Real ones are curvy.



H. Modified fifth rig?



I. The first was 1961.



J. 2,496cc looks like this.



K. Doesn't mean the investigation of a crime scene.



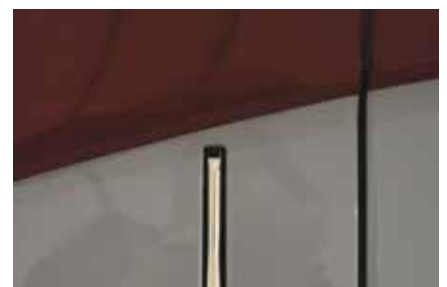
L. Alphabetically speaking it included the first.



M. Michelotti all over.



N. The same number goes on and on.



O. No involvement of David Brown though.





300SE (W126), 1992, unmarked Padgett red metallic with pristine cream/beige leather interior. 91,391 miles, power windows, sunroof, aerial, cruise control, Blaupunkt Cambridge radio/tape, Laserline alarm, MB overmats, FSH, original invoice, 12 months MoT, superb original and a joy to drive. £8,450. **Tel: 01529 497671**. Photos: brucewmarvin@btinternet.com (Grantham) (06/20/02)



W124 300CE COUPE. 1988. Auto. 96k. Unfinished project. Runs smoothly and moves but will need trailer. Light grey velour interior, sunroof. SH. Some spares £795. **Tel: 01363 774196, 07979 721227**. (Near Exeter.) (06/20/01)



1989 300SE auto W126 saloon. 120,000 miles. MoT to March 2021. Sun roof, leather interior. Body, interior and mechanicals in really excellent condition. Well looked after, always garaged. Must be seen. £5,250. Bargain. **Tel: Robin Lea 01934 838203**. (Bristol). (NM 06/20/01)



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