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us and we will do our best to fix the error.



Summer is almost upon us, and naturally, the time is right for us to start looking at the world of the drophead Mercedes. I've always liked convertibles – and if my budget would stretch to a W124 E220 Cabriolet then I'd have one on fleet. My E220 Coupe – pillarless windows and aircon or not – isn't quite in the same league as a proper drophead! Head to page 16 for our exclusive guide to three pointed top down fun.

It feels recent, but the *smart* City Coupe turns twenty this year. Originally developed as a joint venture with Swatch, *smart* became a wholly owned subsidiary of Mercedes-Benz before the car was launched, and revolutionised small car packaging. It might not have the toys of the larger models, but the same solid approach to engineering is present in smarts as in any larger Mercedes model. Simon Dale charts the story of the *smart* brand to celebrate its anniversary – head to page 36.

As ever – if you have any feedback for us, or if you'd like to see your car featured in these pages, please write to us at the contact address on page 15.



Sam Skelton Editor



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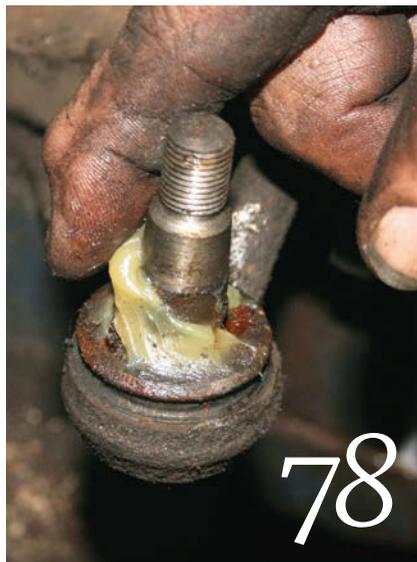
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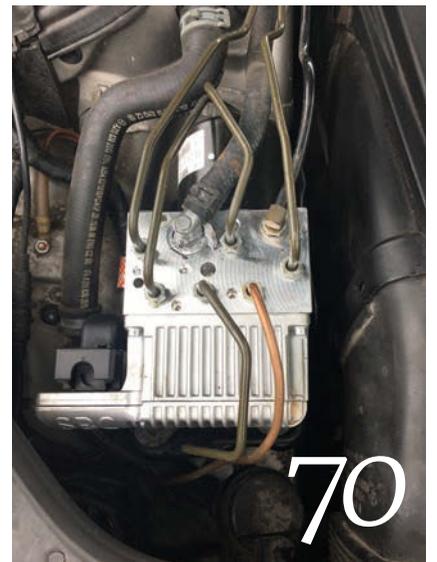
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MERCEDES 300SL 1989 (G)

Mercedes 300SL 1989 (G)

62,024 miles

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Superb condition throughout.

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MERCEDES SL500 1999 (S)

22,343 miles

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A low mileage example in faultless condition throughout.

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MERCEDES 190E 1.8 1992 (J)

Finished in Pearl Grey Metallic with Blue Cloth. This rather special 190E 1.8 has been detailed by ourselves to a Concours condition throughout. With low ownership and only 23,808 miles from new this vehicle is a former Concours event winner and must be considered the best 190E available in the UK today

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MERCEDES CL500 (2004)

33,033 miles Finished in Obsidian Black with Pebble Leather. A very well presented example which low mileage and great Main Dealer and John Haynes history. Cared for by our Service Department for many years. Luxury and comfort assured.

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MERCEDES E320T 1996 (N)

Finished in Ruby Red Metallic with Mushroom Leather. This vehicle is in first class condition with great spec including Airconditioning, 7 seats and a lovely service history. Desirable, practical and with that enviable W124 build quality, this E320T is not to be missed.

£9,995

NEWS

FIVA to support lesser-known events

The Historic Vehicle Federation will now include smaller concours, trials and rallies in the Best Preserved Vehicle award-circuit. This will start with ten shows throughout 2018, starting with Transappenninica, held in Italy from May 6th to 12th.

As president of the Fédération Internationale des Véhicules Anciens – or international federation of historic vehicles, also known as the FIVA, Patrick Rollet explained that ‘There are a great many events that are not as widely known as the likes of Villa d’Este and Pebble Beach, but are every bit as interesting and worthwhile.’

‘In 2018, we are keen to help promote not just the very ‘top-end’ occasions, but also to recognise the passionate individuals who take part in events that are less well known. We hope to encourage a wider spectrum of FIVA members to enjoy these valuable celebrations of historic vehicles.’

The following nine events include the Rally Maya Mexico, Concorse d’Eleganza d’Este in Italy, the Royal Automobile Club 1000-mile Trial held on UK soil and the La Festa Mille Miglia in Japan.

Classic Cars banned from East London



Vehicles omitting more than 75g/km of CO2 will no longer be permitted to travel through certain areas of Hackney and Islington as of July this year. Two Low Emissions Neighbourhood (LEN) Zones will operate from 7am to 10am and from 4pm to 7pm.

Zone 1 will operate between Old Street and Leonard Street, with Zone 2 sealing off Rivington Street and Charlotte Street. Residents and businesses will have the opportunity to apply for exemptions. However, visitors with classic vehicles will be banned.

Set as the first London council to adopt London Mayor Sadiq Khan’s new programme for cleaner air, the City of London, Greenwich, Westminster, Newham and Redbridge have plans to implement the same plan for 2019.

‘Only ultra low emission vehicles (ULEV) will be allowed on nine streets during the morning and

Above: 600 might be allowed on Hyde Park Corner, but not in Islington.

evening rush hours. ULEVs are vehicles that emit less than 75g/km CO2. This includes all electric and hydrogen vehicles and some of the ‘cleanest’, least polluting, hybrid vehicles,” explained a Hackney Council spokesperson.

Classic vehicles over 40 years old may have escaped the worst of London’s anti-pollution charges, succumbing to the Congestion Charge, but owners of pre-Euro 4 modern classics remain liable for the Ultra Low Emissions Zone and Emissions Surcharge.

With plans slowly appearing across the most congested and polluted of UK cities, Oxford is so far the only other council closing off streets to historic vehicles. Its Zero Emissions Zone (ZEM) finished off a successful consultation last year and is now currently under discussion. Depending on how the East London LEN is received, further proposals for petrol and diesel classics to be banned outright could take form.

Mercedes-AMG G-Class UK pricing and specifications revealed

The refreshed Mercedes AMG G 63 has landed in dealerships after a highly anticipated wait. Prices start from £143,305, with a special 'Edition 1' model also available from £164,495.

Featuring AMG's hand-built and personally tailored 4.0-litre 'hot V' V8 petrol engine, the powerhouse variant of Mercedes-Benz's serious off-roader produces 585bhp and 850 nm of torque. Electronically limited to 137mph, there is an optional AMG Driver's package permitting a top speed 149mph and 0-60mph sprint of only 4.5 seconds – nearly a second faster

than Land Rover's recent Jaguar V8-powered Defender. Expect a combined cycle of 21.4 mpg and 299g/km of CO2.

Speedshift Plus 9G-Tronic transmission will be provided as standard, alongside AMG Ride Control suspension.

The Edition 1 adds the new AMG Night package; 22-inch alloy wheels finished in matt black with red trim. An AMG Exclusive nappa leather upholstery in black with red inserts and contrasting stitching is also included. It also features the 'Winter Package' with an auxiliary heater and heated windscreen. Finally, the seats

Below: G62 prices start at £143,305.

work with an Active Multicontour package and 'Edition 1' badging.

Standard on both models is the Driving Assistance package, featuring Blind Spot Assist and Active Distance Assist Distronic.

The AMG Night package (standard on Edition 1) costs £2,700 and includes 21-inch alloy wheels (22-inch alloys available as a cost option) and exterior details finished in obsidian black.

The Winter package costs £1,750 and adds a heated windscreen and an auxiliary heater (including remote control). The Winter package is standard on the Edition 1.



» NEWS

Jenson Button will return to LeMans Classic and Goodwood Revival

Teaming up with JD Classics, the 2009 Formula One Champion is to drive Jaguar's XJR-9 chassis #688 during 2018's Le Mans Classics in July. Competing in the Group C grid against the likes of the Porsche 962CC, Peugeot 905 EV1 and Nissan NPTi, Button's XJR-9 was built by Tom Walkinshaw Racing in 1988 to replace that year's Le Mans-winning racer.

One of the most experienced drivers to have taken the F1 Championship title, Button will return to the Goodwood Revival, also with JD Classics although his car of choice has not yet been confirmed. Previous years have witnessed him racing a Ford GT40, Jaguar E-type Lightweight and Cooper T33 with the JD Classics team.

Having enjoyed close association with JD Classics for several years,



the market leading company currently care for his collection of road cars at their Maldon 155,000 sq/ft in Essex. Having hinted at his racing return during the JD Classics' breakfast morning late last year, Button will receive support from Derek Hood and his classic racing

Above: Button will drive for JD Classics.

team, including vehicle transport and technical assistance.

JD Classics are one of the main sponsors of both the Goodwood Revival and LeMans Classics, and will be hosting guests and VIPs throughout a series of exclusive events.

All change at Mercedes senior management

Rachel Thompson has joined Benz top management as Sales Director, jumping ship from her position at Jaguar Land Rover as UK Sales Director. Thompson brings experience from a broad portfolio across a number of roles at Audi, Volkswagen and Ford.

Currently head of Product Management, Krishan Bodhani, will move into the role of Used Cars and Remarketing Director. Since joining Benz as Head of Smart, Bodhani boasts

a track record of record-breaking sales results.

Gary Savage, Managing Director, Mercedes-Benz Cars UK, said: "I am looking forward to working with Rachael and Krishan to further develop and strengthen our business success."

Sales records smashed in 2018's first quarter

Mercedes-Benz has smashed previous sales targets by seeing 237,307 vehicles off to new owners. Surpassing prior-year months by 3.9%, March 2018 proved to be the strongest-selling month the company

has ever achieved. The previous quarter is now recognized as the most successful quarter of all time, a record 594,304 customers taking delivery of new Benz vehicles.

Mercedes-Benz India shifted 16,236 units over the first quarter of 2018, while the Thai market sold more vehicles than any previous year. Daimler and its local partner Thonburi Automotive Assembly Plant (TAAP) will together invest more than 100 million euros in the production facility in Bangkok by 2020.



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NEWS

In Brief

Minder TV Cars for sale

Listed as the 'Minder Collection', the Daimler Sovereign and Ford Capri made famous by LWT's long running crime drama/comedy are for sale as one package. Sold alongside signed pictures from George Cole and Dennis Waterman and other memorabilia items, you can find the listing on eBay. Arthur Daley also used a Mercedes 280E - this car is believed to have survived until 1998.

All cars sold at Brightwell's Affordable Classics Auction

Attracting a record number of bidders, every single listing in the extensive catalogue offered from the James Hull Jaguar Land Rover Collection sold for remarkable amounts. Two Mercedes-Benz vehicles sold for £14,000, taking the highest result of the day. A one-off Scimitar four-wheel drive passed under the hammer for £13,000. For more see our auction coverage from page 62.

Jim Clark's death commemorated

A gathering of Ex-Jim Clark Lotus Formula 1 and touring cars gathered in the Scottish town of Duns to commemorate 50 years since Jim Clark's fatal Formula 2 accident at Hockenheim on April 7, 1968. A church service was also run with the same programme as the original funeral.



Mercedes-Benz launch ViaVan

W The joint venture between Via and Mercedes-Benz Vans has now been launched under the 'ViaVan' name, A ride-sharing service in London, the project has been called a 'much-needed alternative' to Uber.

The app allows passengers to be matched, in real-time, with other drivers headed their direction. They can then share a trip in a chauffeured vehicle and save costs. Directing customers to a nearby corner which acts as a virtual bus stop for drop off and pick up, this method should also save time, avoiding lengthy detours that take riders out of their way.

A spokesman for ViaVan explained the service will offer "[the] lowest

Above: ViaVan already exists in Amsterdam, but will soon appear in London.

fares, better treatment of drivers and riders, and a corporate ethos that puts safety first".

"The people of London deserve innovative transportation solutions that are safe, convenient, and affordable," said CEO Chris Snyder.

"ViaVan is a different kind of company: we have social responsibility built into our DNA. Our mission is to power truly dynamic mass transit systems, which reduce congestion in our cities while offering drivers the opportunity to earn a decent living.

"We are delighted to launch in London and to finally give Londoners an alternative to expensive and inefficient private car services."

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300 SL, 1989F, 4-speed auto, 34,000 miles, fmbsh, signal red, creme beige sports check cloth, original black soft top, factory fitted hard top, cruise control, rear seats, illuminated vanity mirrors **£49,950.**



500 SE, 1991J, 4-speed auto, 67,000 miles, fmbsh, astral silver metallic, navy leather, aircon, cruise, electric sunroof, electric steering column, electric heated memory seats, otc, headlamp wash/wipe, Blaupunkt radio/cassette..... **£14,950.**



E55 AMG (210-series), 2000X, 5-speed auto/tiptronic, 73,000 miles, fmbsh, brilliant silver metallic, dual tone leather black & ivory leather, climate control, cruise, electric steering column, electric heated orthopaedic memory seats, Command radio/single CD/SatNav/CD Changer/hands free telephone, anti-dazzle rear view mirror, headlamp washers, 18" AMG 5 spoke single rim alloys, AMG bodystyling, front & side airbags, front & rear parking sensors, birds-eye wood veneer etc. A fabulous machine..... **£13,950.**



300 SL, 1988E, 4-speed auto, 4 owners, 80,000 miles, fmbsh, diamond blue metallic, navy cloth, dark blue soft top, hard top, factory aircon, cruise, rear seats, driver's airbag, wind deflector, illuminated vanity mirrors. **£34,950.**



300 SL, 1990G, 3 owners, 4 speed auto, 86,000 miles, fmbsh, astral silver, grey leather, black soft top, factory fitted hard top, heated seats, cruise control, illuminated vanity mirrors, otc. **£29,950.**



500 SL, 1991J, 4-speed auto, 58,000 miles, fmbsh, blue/black metallic, mushroom leather, electric black soft top, factory fitted hard top, factory aircon, cruise, electric steering column, electric memory seats, rear seats, headlamp wash/wipe, electric & anti-dazzle rear view mirror. Excellent original car..... **£18,950.**



190E 1.8 litre LE, 1993K, 3 owners, 4 speed auto, 53,000 miles, fmbsh, brilliant silver, black check cloth, electric sunroof, driver's airbag..... **£7,950.**



SL 500, 2002/52, 5-speed auto/tiptronic, 33,000 miles, fmbsh, brilliant silver metallic, anthracite leather, electric retractable panoramic glass roof, climate, cruise, electric steering column, electric heated memory seats with lumbar support both sides, ESP, ash black veneer, Command with single CD/radio/SatNav/mobile hands free and 10 CD changer, headlamp washers, wind deflector, wood/leather steering wheel, 18" AMG alloy..... **£14,950.**



300 TD Diesel Estate, 1992K, 2 owners/one driver from new, 4-speed auto, 81,000 miles, fmbsh, factory aircon, electric sunroof, 7 seats, otc, illuminated vanity mirrors, tow bar etc. **£8,950.**



SLK 230, 1999T, 5-speed auto/tiptronic, 43,000 miles, fmbsh, linarite blue metallic, black leather, electric retractable roof, aircon cruise, adjustable steering column, ASR, heated seats, headlamp washers, wind deflector..... **£6,950.**



E320 Coupe, 1996N, 4-speed auto, 20,000 miles, fmbsh, azurite blue metallic, mushroom leather, factory aircon, electric sunroof, electric heated seats, sports chassis, otc, headlamp wash/wipe, twin airbags. Out of the Box..... **£24,950.**



500 SL, 1980W, 4-speed auto, 10,000 miles, fmbsh, light ivory, dark brown leather, dark brown soft top, factory fitted hard top, factory aircon, cruise, rear seats, headlamp wash/wipe. A very rare find **£59,950.**

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Letters

Write to us at Letters, Mercedes Driver, Cudham Tithe Barn, Berry's Hill, Cudham, Kent TN16 3AG, or email md.ed@kelsey.co.uk

Sealed-for-life? Change the fluid!

I have just noticed a bit of misleading advice in your C220CDi service guide. No gearbox oil change needed? Sealed for life?

My experience of running many different Mercs (used and brand new, petrol and diesel) is that the automatic gearbox fluid deteriorates with time and use and that MB official dealers have for some time recommended an oil and filter change every 30,000 miles. The difference in drivetrain performance before and after is always noticeable and positive.

The auto box dipstick tube has a disposable/replaceable seal on the top. You can dip the oil to check condition, colour and level but need the correct dipstick (expensive) and a new seal (a few pounds). MB dealers will also test the oil for presence of any coolant, which is highly damaging to the gearbox on certain models e.g. W211s from 2002 to 2009, as the gearbox oil cooler was inside the radiator and can fail! Bad design.

What do you/other experts think?
Richard Curtis, *by email*

I was aware that some specialists have recommended an extra transmission fluid change, and knew that was the case for more recent MB products, but didn't know that the official recommendation had been changed retrospectively for older vehicles, too. - PS

First Mercedes a disaster

Thank you for the feature on buying your first Mercedes – and for including those models found at lower price points as well as the popular SLs and S-Classes. Unfortunately it came too late for me – six months ago, I bought an E220 W124 that looked perfect and which has served me well, but underneath at MoT time I found



Above:
Sealed for life gearboxes are rarely that.

that it was soft underneath the underseal. An expensive first lesson, as either I will have to spend a fortune welding it or cut my losses and scrap the thing! Perhaps I shall use your guide to help me buy my second Mercedes instead...
John Palmer, *Wolverhampton*.

We're all individuals

I loved Nick Lawton's W114 coupe in the last issue. Not only is it a great period colour, but he's made it into something personal. I know not everyone is into modified classics, but it's nice to see someone personalising a car that isn't yet another Ford or Volkswagen. I hope I see it at an event near me soon – I want to congratulate him on an excellent machine.
Ralph Crane, *Cirencester*.

More film stuff please!

Your Mercs on Film feature is intriguing and enjoyable at the same time. I like that you've chosen films in which the Mercedes plays a prominent role, but where it isn't the star in its own right. It's easy to forget that our favourite brand is on screen when it isn't the focus of the film. It's got me thinking about Mercedes on television too... for example, while he's known as a Jag man, did you know that Arthur Daley spent some time behind the wheel of a W123?
Keith Sangerson, *Penrith*

We did, Keith – a silver W123, seen in series 2. For now we're focusing on silver-screen Benzes, but we might look at cars used on television in the future. Watch this space! – SS

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UPFRONT

Let's go
TOPLESS

The English summer is almost upon us – all two days of it.
Sam Skelton chooses our top five Mercedes convertibles



As summer hits, one thing that we all want to do is get out there on the one or two days of English summer we have, and get the roof down. It is a uniquely British trait that despite having weather that varies from drizzle to downpour, we buy the greatest number of convertibles in Europe relative to total car sales and have done so for several years. We yearn for that one chink, that day in a hundred

where the sun is out, it is warm, and driving with the sky above seems like an appealing concept.

Mercedes drivers are no different, and to some a convertible Mercedes epitomises style and glamour. It was no accident that raffish ladies' man Daniel Cleaver drove a W108 convertible in the first Bridget Jones film, and equally it's not by accident that the British were the ones to chop the roof from the C123 to create the Crayford St. Tropez.

Below: CLK is the most affordable entry into open Mercedes motoring

It's not all about the SL, despite what some more general classic car publications might argue. While it's a great GT, and worthy of inclusion on our list – we've only chosen one, so we can focus on the other great convertibles Mercedes has produced over the decades. And unlike many manufacturers, Mercedes acknowledges that a convertible can have rear seats – it needn't be a pseudo-sporting affair, you can enjoy the wind in your hair with passengers too.







Convertible Mercedes

Words: Sam Skelton



Mercedes-Benz CLK

The cheapest way into drop-top Merc motoring is still the CLK. Launched in 1997 as a replacement for the W124 E-class Coupe and Cabriolet, the CLK shared the styling of the contemporary E-class but was in fact based on the floorpan and underpinnings of the smaller C-class. This meant pricing could be more aggressive, and the new model name allowed Mercedes to target the car to a slightly more dynamic audience. Unlike its predecessor, the CLK was intended to compete with the popular BMW 3-series Coupe and Cabriolet, and its 134bhp CLK200 and 194bhp CLK 230 Kompresso launch specifications were ideally suited to competing with the 320i and 328i.

If four cylinders aren't enough, the CLK is also available with a 3.2-litre V6, a 4.3-litre V8, and the startling 5.5-litre V8 from the E55 AMG. Our picks of the range would be the supercharged CLK230 Kompressor and the V6 CLK320 – both offer strong performance with reasonable running costs, and at the price point CLKs have reached these are less likely to have been neglected than the CLK430 V8.

Mercedes-Benz E-class cabriolet

Following the death of the W111 range, Mercedes allowed its two-seat SL to become the range topping convertible. Meanwhile, future S-class coupes were to become available as fixed-head only. For most of the 1970s and all of the 1980s, a four-seat Mercedes-Benz convertible was something only available if you were prepared to pay the converters. In 1991 Mercedes supplanted its popular CE coupe range with the 220bhp 300CE-24 convertible. Supplanted in 1992 by the 217bhp 320CE, rebranded E320 and supplanted by the 150bhp E220 Cabriolet in 1993,

Above: R107 is still the archetypal SL.

the range is prized by Mercedes enthusiasts and open-air motorists alike as one of the last true four seat open tourers. Mercedes also produced a limited run of E36 AMG cabriolets, if you want to feel the wind tear your hair out.

A full four seater, the E-class convertible wasn't a cheap car when new – commanding similar prices to the Jaguar XJS. That didn't hinder sales though; Mercedes' first full four seat convertible since 1971 enjoyed healthy sales figures until its death in 1997 – two years after the saloon and estate versions went out of production.

Mercedes-Benz R107 SL

Launched in 1971 to replace the Pagoda, the R107 is the car we all think of when asked to name a convertible Mercedes. And while prices are rising, they still represent good value for what was once THE car to be seen in on the south coast of France. When the producers of hit film *American Gigolo* wanted a car to show the wealth and style of its protagonist Julian Kaye, it could only ever have been an SL he was given. And that endures today – an R107 is a sign of excellent taste, wealth without flashiness, and of an appreciation for the finer things in life.

And like so many 1970s icons, there is even a specialist industry today catering to the R107's every need, from service kits to uprated handling and performance packs which can bring your classic right into the 21st century. The SL Shop Sportline takes the concept and refines it, turning it into the car that all those rose tinted memories insist that it was when it was launched in 1971. With available engines ranging from a 2.8-litre six through to a thundering 5.6-litre V8, there's an R107 SL to suit everyone at almost every budget. By the time it left production in 1989 237,287 had been produced. »



Convertible

Mercedes-Benz 280SE Cabriolet

The Fintail cabriolet, as it has become known, is a bit of an oxymoron – unlike its saloon brethren the W111 doesn't really have any fins. But this doesn't stop it being one of the most desirable and appealing classic convertibles of all time; it's a timeless reminder than even simple designs can prove to be glamorous. Whenever a film maker wants an open car to show romance, good taste and good fortune, they inevitably turn to the W111 convertible – with feature films such as *The Hangover*, *The Nice Guys* and *Bridget Jones' Diary* to the flash four seater's name.

Available with a choice of six-cylinder or V8 engines, ranging from the 220SE through to the powerful 280SE 3.5. The coupes are a little uncertain where values are concerned, with great disparity between average and good models – but the cabriolet prices have remained strong, with prices starting at around £50,000 for projects and rising beyond £100,000 for anything really nice.

"The Fintail convertible is one of the most desirable and appealing classic convertibles of all time.."

Mercedes-Benz 300S Cabriolet

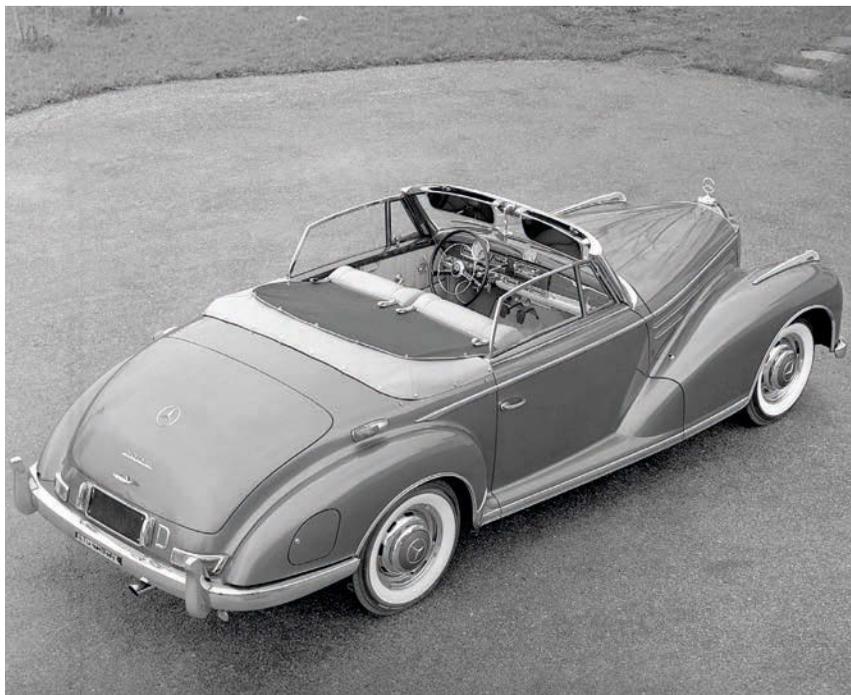
Mercedes followed the Second World War with a series of rather baroque prestige cars – and the very top of the 300 range was marked by the 300S cabriolet. It might have been rather formal and upright, but make no mistake, that body hid a very capable chassis. The later Sc variant not only used the engine later fitted to the 300SL Gullwing, but also used its mechanical fuel injection system to provide a mildly more usable alternative to the sporting SL.

With just 560 Mercedes 300S made, and only 203 cabriolets, finding one over sixty years later is going to be difficult. They're not cheap either, with cars in auctions routinely reaching reserves and estimates of around a million dollars. But there's not an awful lot that's as cool as the sort of man who can attract Audrey Hepburn in an unnamed Mediterranean town. And according to one chocolate company's advertisements, that's the sort of man who drives a Mercedes 300 with an open roof.





Left: Even today, the W111 is a cool convertible.







Left: Be careful buying – and you could look this cool for less than you expect.

Convertible Mercedes

Buying a convertible Mercedes.

As with any other Mercedes, the obvious check points should be rust related, followed by any mechanical maladies. But buying a convertible brings with it its own array of pitfalls – largely because there is a large hole where once a metal roof might have been.

The biggest and most obvious area to check is the hood material, and any bills for recent hood replacements should be viewed favourably. Regardless of age, inspect the hood thoroughly for cracks or tears, and if the rear window is not made of glass then inspect it for cracking, splits, or yellowing as it ages. There are products available to restore ageing hoods, but if it needs a replacement the car had better be cheap.

"Buying a convertible brings with it its own array of pitfalls."



Check too for shrinkage around the edges, make sure the hood pulls taut when raised, but not so taut that securing it becomes difficult. Check the frame too – it shouldn't be too stiff, nor should it rattle once the hood is in position. Correct lubrication is even more important if the hood is electrically operated, as any stiffness can put extra pressure on the electrical circuits and potentially lead to motor damage. If it is electric, check that it raises and lowers correctly too.

When you test the car, test it with the roof up regardless of weather. You might look and feel more special with the roof down, but a roof up test will indicate many of the rattles or draughts or leaks you need to check for.

Interior damage or a damp smell indicate leaks – either current or past, and these can run the risk of water becoming trapped underneath the carpets and rotting the floors. Ensure the carpets are dry and ideally lift them.

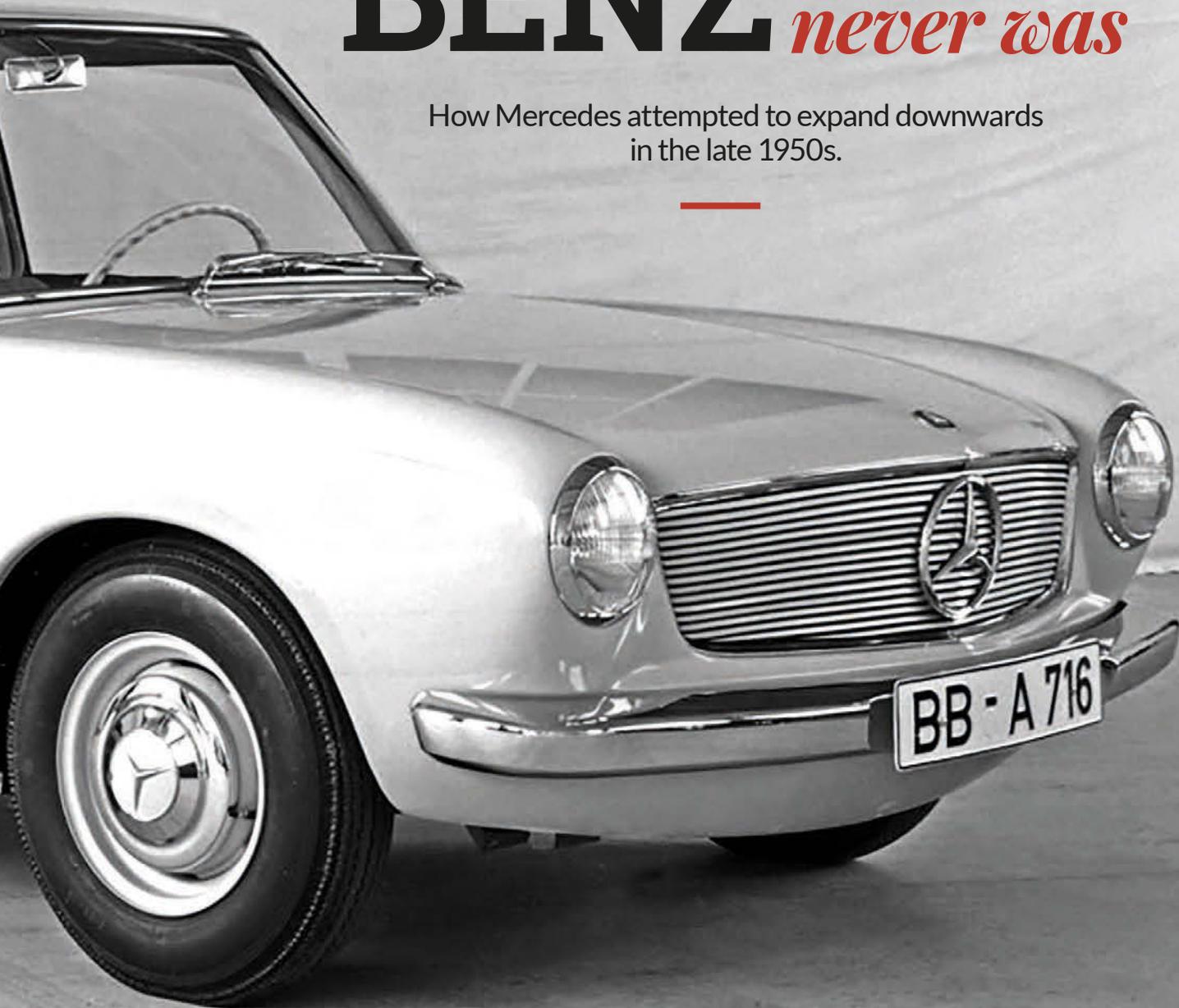
If you're disappointed by the lack of SLs in this feature, don't worry – our next issue is a bumper issue celebrating all that's wonderful about the SL family.

"Had the compact Mercedes-Benz debuted in 1963, its looks alone would undoubtedly have been a sales advantage in its own right."



The
COMPACT
BENZ *that*
never was

How Mercedes attempted to expand downwards
in the late 1950s.





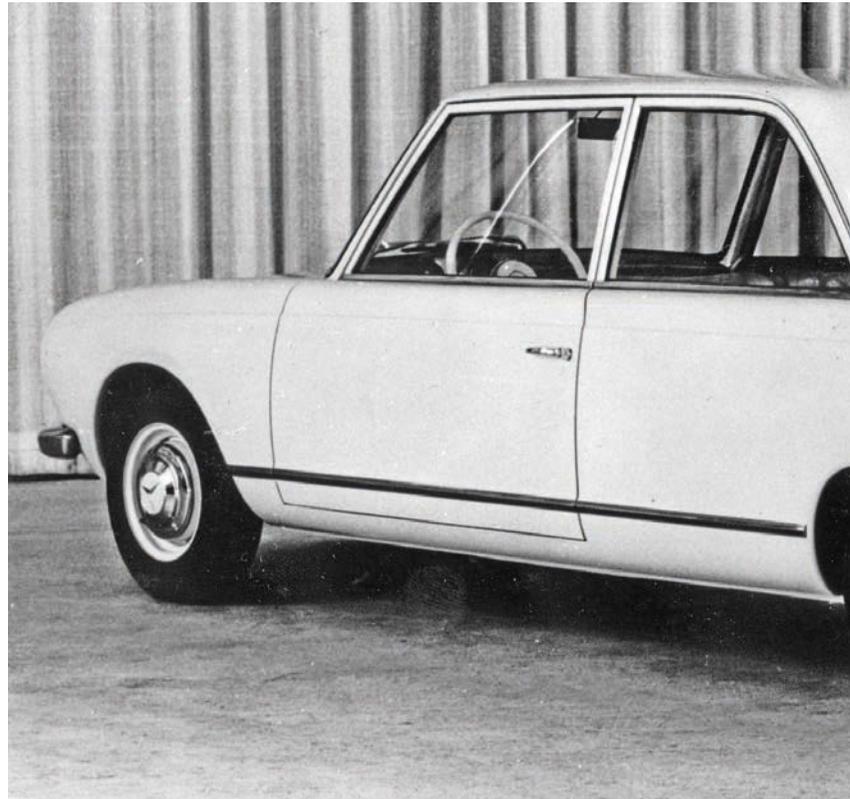
Compact Mercedes

It might have been'. It is often a line that is uttered when catching sight of a prototype of immense promise, and this particularly applies to the Mercedes-Benz W118/W119 project. Its origins lie in the "Wirtschaftswunder" or the post-war German Economic miracle - Between 1950 and 1959 the country's living standards virtually doubled while the GDP increased by almost 8 percent per annum. Car ownership grew by 700% between 1945 and the mid-1960s while in 1954, the turnover of Daimler-Benz was over a billion marks each year.

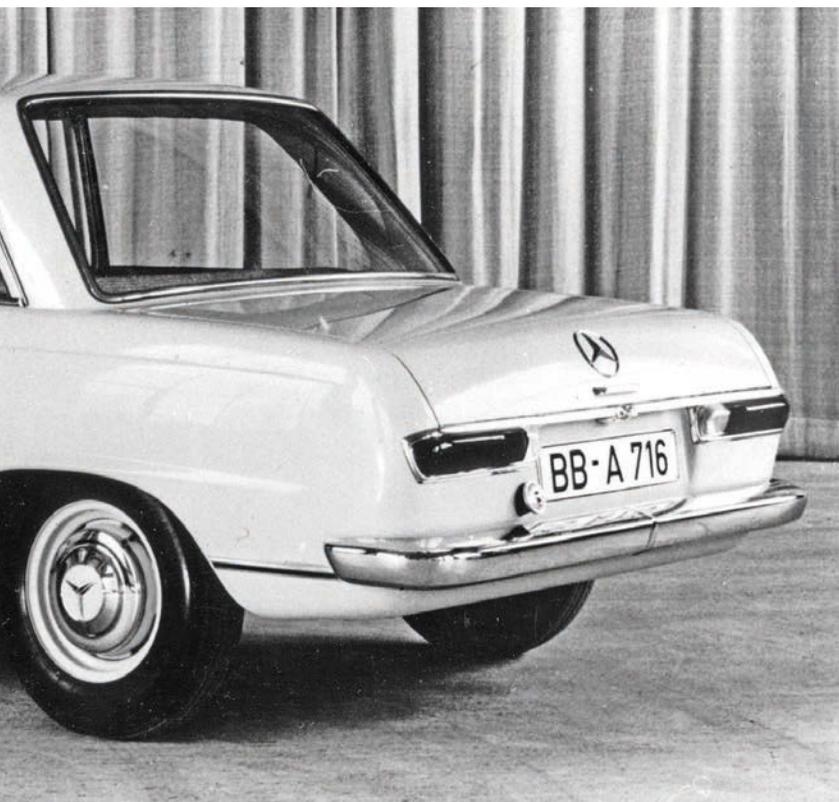
As the 1950s progressed, the company began to consider the possibility of a sized saloon that would compete in the medium-sized prestige market. Daimler-Benz embarked on Project W122 in 1953 which was based on the new 180 "Ponton" and was intended to be 15% to 20% smaller so it would appeal to owners of the W136 170 V but it was cancelled in 1956 as work had already commenced on the W120's W111 "Fintail" successor. A further development was that Daimler-Benz had acquired a majority share in Auto Union in 1958 and took full control in 1959. By that time, Sindelfingen was fully aware that the latest DKW1000 still bore a resemblance to the 1938 F9 prototype and, for all of its undoubted strong points, now looked dated.

The firm was formed in 1932 with its four-ring badge standing for the constituent marques of Audi, DKW, Horch and Wanderer and in the early 1950s, it was mainly associated with small cars sold under the DKW name. The 3-6 appealed to the motorist on a restricted budget and rally drivers alike while the sound of their three-cylinder two-stroke engine (plus the volume of blue smoke they often emitted) was ubiquitous. If you ever see a newsreel or feature film with street scenes of West Germany that were shot during that era, you cannot fail to notice the volume of the sheer volume of DKWs.

But when Daimler-Benz acquired Auto Union, the popularity of such cars was already on the wane as the German Bourgeois were now looking to four-stroke power. Two-stroke engines were increasingly regarded as noisy, dated and prone to crankshaft damage in cold weather but Auto Union's engineers remained devoted to this concept. In 1958 Daimler-Benz's Chief Engineer Fritz Nalliger asked Ludvig Kraus of the "Construction Development" to develop an in-house mid-sized car, and the result was an extremely elegant FWD saloon in two or four-door guise. The initial idea was for it to be powered by a 1.5-litre "boxer" engine (the W118) but the prototype would eventually gain a newly developed a 1.7-litre in-line high-compression engine as the W119. When it was unveiled circa 1960, it seemed logical that it would be made by Auto Union as they had extensive



Words: Andrew Roberts
Pics: Mercedes-Benz



experience of building small cars. However, there was also the issue of their F102, which was due to be launched in three years time.

Kraus was seconded to Ingolstadt to take charge of a product modernisation project, and he was appointed Technical Director in late 1963. One of his tasks was moving the company away from its reliance on two-stroke power, the limitations of which were demonstrated by the F102. The rather svelte lines were a world removed from the quirky looks of the 3-6 range - in fact, they were faintly reminiscent of the W118/W119 - and such technological developments as the inboard front disc brakes. Under the bonnet was a 1.2-litre two-stroke unit but this was now too associated with ageing machinery built in the DDR. The F102, for all of its intriguing details and contemporary appearance, was unlikely to convince owners of the VW 1500 Type 3 of the joys of DKW ownership.

"The rather svelte lines of the DKW F102 were faintly reminiscent of the W118/W119."



In 1964 Daimler-Benz sold its subsidiary - it wanted the funds to construct a commercial vehicle plant - to Volkswagen, and the idea of a generation of compact four-stroke cars bearing the three-pointed star seemed dormant. Kraus remained with Auto Union and to revitalise the F102; his solution was to longitudinally mount the 1.7-litre W119 plant in the bay of the DKW. Before the four-stroke F103 was launched in August 1965, VW decreed that it would not bear the familiar name and, as a decisive break with the past, the familiar DKW badge was replaced by a revival of the Audi brand which had been dormant since 1939.

And although it would be beyond clichéd to then write 'and the rest was history', that does not stop it from being true. The Audi range was enhanced by the 80 and Super 90 in 1966, which was the same year that the F102 finally ceased production. The original line-up was replaced by the B10-series 80 in July 1972 by which time a significant number of Mercedes-Benz dealers across the world were bemoaning the absence of a viable competitor. The impact of the OPEC Oil Crisis meant that it became imperative to offer a more fuel-efficient model that would also serve as a "second car". In 1976 work commenced on the W201, and



Compact Mercedes

when it made its bow in November 1982 as the 190 and 190E they were arguably the first compact Mercedes-Benz since the demise of the 170 V nearly three decades earlier.

"In 1976 work commenced on the W201, which made its bow in November 1982 as the 190 and 190E."

As for the W118/W119, it remains a prime example of how there is inevitably speculation about prototypes that never entered, especially those that looked to have as much potential. Had the compact Mercedes-Benz debuted in 1963, rather than the F102, its looks alone would have almost undoubtedly have been a sales advantage in its own right. There was none of the W111's imposing flamboyance, and instead, there was low-key coachwork with a large glass area and a notable lack of a "traditional" radiator grille – more than one observer has compared it with the W113 "Pagoda". A further controversial aspect of the design was the engine layout,

Below: DKW's F102 used Mercedes-derived engines and similar styling to the W118/W119. Is this the project's legacy?

but 1962 Ford's P4 Taunus had demonstrated that the average middle-class German motorist would have been ready for a medium-sized front-wheel drive saloon car.

Regarding overseas rivals, one logical alternative to the Mercedes-Benz would have been the Lancia Flavia 1500 Berlina, the Fiat 1500, the Volvo Amazon, Simca 1500 and the Peugeot 404; by 1965 it would have competed with the Renault 16. The potential of the lightweight M-B in the UK would have been limited by import duties that almost certainly have raised the price far above the Rover P6 or the Triumph 2000. That said, you can practically envisage a highly polished W119 being driven by villains on *The Saint* or lurking in the background of various Cold War film dramas.

In Germany, the W118/W119 might have also tempted the driver looking to graduate from the quasi-American excesses of the Opel Rekord Series A, but its main rival would have been the BMW 1500. On its launch in 1961, it was regarded by many enthusiasts as the heir to the great Borgward Isabella and definite executive transport. On the evidence of the surviving photographs, the Mercedes-Benz W118/W119 would have tempted thousands of up and coming accountants and lawyers away from their Neue Klasse BMWs as they sped along the autobahn, the sun shining and the sound of Heidi Brühl singing *Marcel* on the Becker radio...





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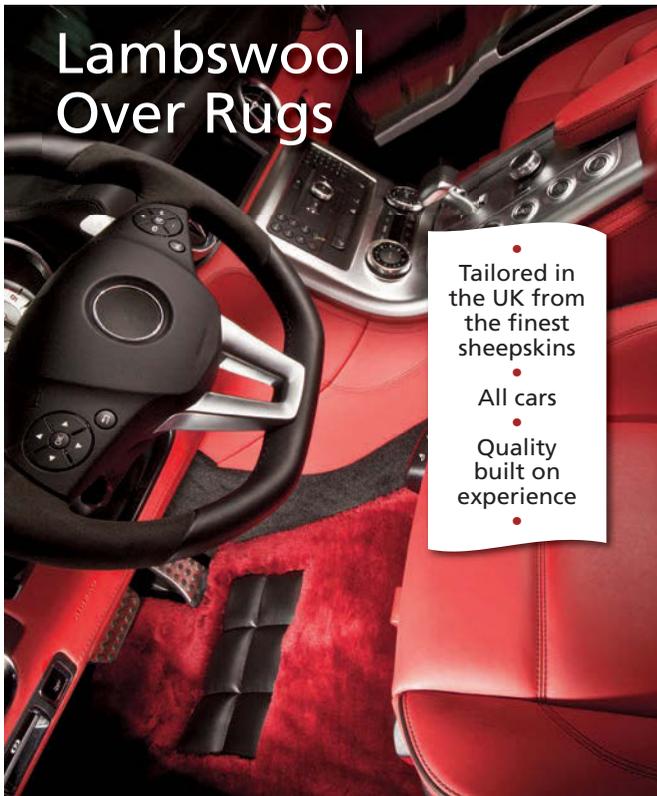
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230TE Estate 1984B

Midnight Blue, blue cloth interior, zebrano wood, auto, 4 x elec windows, manual sunroof, split fold rear seats, seven seats, original alloys, three owners, FSH, 99,000m **£10,950**



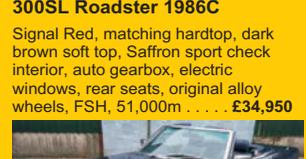
300SL Roadster 1986C

Signal Red, matching hardtop, dark brown soft top, Saffron sport check interior, auto gearbox, electric windows, rear seats, original alloy wheels, FSH, 51,000m **£34,950**



230TE Estate 1989G

Midnight Blue, blue cloth interior, zebrano wood, 4-Sp auto, 4 x elec windows, elec sunroof, cruise, htd seats, two owners (latest since 1yr old), mega history, 172,000m . . . **£6,450**



280SL Roadster 1985C

Midnight Blue, matching hardtop, new black soft top, blue leather, auto gearbox, air conditioning, electric windows, rear seats, original alloy wheels, FSH, 92,000m **£24,950**



190E 2.0 Saloon 1991H

Pearl Blue metallic, Orion Grey cloth, 5 speed manual, 4 x electric windows, electric sunroof, original steel wheels with hubcaps, MB Club concours winner, two owners, 30,000m . . **£8,450**



S280 Saloon 1998S

Brilliant Silver metallic, Orion Grey leather, 5 speed auto, cruise, climate, electric seats, double glazing, electric sunroof, leather gearknob, airbags, original alloys, FSH, 73,000m . . **£7,450**



230TE Estate 1989G

Midnight Blue, blue cloth interior, zebrano wood, 4-Sp auto, 4 x elec windows, elec sunroof, cruise, htd seats, two owners (latest since 1yr old), mega history, 172,000m . . . **£6,450**



S280 Saloon 1998S

Brilliant Silver metallic, Orion Grey leather, 5 speed auto, cruise, climate, electric seats, double glazing, electric sunroof, leather gearknob, airbags, original alloys, FSH, 73,000m . . **£7,450**

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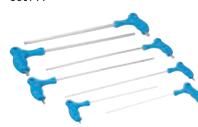
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smart THINKING

Simon Dale takes a look at two decades of smart

With innovation often comes financial calamity and as troubled births go, that of the humble 'Smart Car' was quite the worry for its mighty parent. The Mercedes City Car (MCC) had drained the Daimler-Benz bank before the first model had even rolled off the production line. But was it worth it? There has been a pleasing turnaround in fortune for smart in the early 21st century and now, two decades after launch, the original iconic smart City Coupe is approaching classic status. Gladly, enthusiasm for the marque has never been greater.







Smart history

Words: Simon Dale

Thoughts of a radical town vehicle had existed since the 1970s but the opportunity to team up with SMH (now known as the Swatch Group Ltd) was seen as something of a gift when VW pulled out of their partnership in 1993. Given Mercedes' peerless engineering expertise and Swatch's understanding of great marketing (having previously livened up the stuffy Swiss watch industry), hopes were high for the project.

However, the troubles began before the christening. Daimler-Benz declined SMH's proposal of 'Swatch Car' or 'Swatchmobile', compromising with an acronym. 'smart' was said to translate as 'Swatch Mercedes Art' – certainly a dynamic sounding new brand name and perfect for the turn of the century. However, the partnership didn't get any better and eventually Daimler-Benz AG took total control at the final hour. Production began soon after near the French town of Hambach, close to the German border.

"smart was said to translate as 'Swatch Mercedes Art' – perfect for the turn of the century."

What of the actual car then? Magazine 'scoops' had claimed to illustrate how the new smart City-Coupe would appear, publishing numerous artists impressions of what resembled a wheeled egg. The reality, unveiled in October 1998, was a far more cohesive design – dare we say funky – than anyone expected. With a clear emphasis on style, the new car had chunky wheels astride a visually dynamic steel frame in either silver or black sweeping upwards and clad with recycled plastic panels, interchangeable should the owner scuff one or wish to go the whole hog and have a change of colour. The fashionista went wild.

Those intriguing 'training shoe' looks were backed up with substance in its extraordinary packaging. This was the smart's trump card – it was a design every bit as brilliantly executed as the original Mini. With a tiny 3-cylinder 599cc turbocharged engine nestled underneath the boot floor and more than enough room for two large adults, it was roughly half the size of the average car. Safety had become a very marketable issue in the 1990s and just 2.5 metres long, the smart was



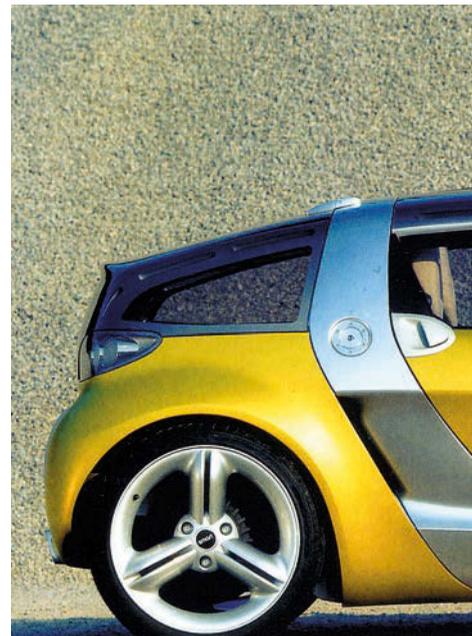
Above: *smart* was short yet tall, leading to a feeling of spaciousness.

always going to be under scrutiny. Crash resistance was laid bare in the very appearance of the car. Rather than hide it beneath the plastic bodywork, that steel frame – or TRIDION as smart called it – was completely visible. Naturally, airbags, traction control and ABS were all standard.

For all the fanfare in the world, the little smart had as a difficult a launch as its Mercedes A Class cousin – with both subject to criticism over their performance in stability tests. Subsequent traction and stability control installations led to an increase in pre-production development costs, with the smart's handling concerns solved by a slightly lower centre of gravity, a wider track and chunkier rear wheels.

The initial reaction from the buying public was one of bemusement – perhaps another parallel with an equally surprising BMC product of 1959? But as with any







Smart history

innovative new model, like the Mini, consumers soon learned to speak the language of *smart*. Acclimatising to the diminutive proportions was easy and even hard-nosed magazine road testers warmed to the frenetic buzz of that engine and the sheer usability of the car. City dwellers were thrilled - especially given that you could park the car forwards into the kerb. The model was eventually introduced to the UK market in right hand drive form in 2001, when a cabriolet version and the bonkers Crossblade were introduced. The latter was a stripped out roofless version with no doors and some sporting pretense.

"As with any innovative new model, like the Mini, consumers soon learned to speak the language of *smart*."

Sporting road manners and truly practical space were, naturally, in short supply with the *smart* City-Coupe so Daimler-Chrysler very quickly aimed to address that with two new models in the *smart* line-up. The 2003 Roadster was a sophisticated two-seater sports car whose ethos was very much in the 1960s. Designers had set out to capture the spirit of vehicles such the Frogeye Sprite and Triumph Spitfire and to an extent they succeeded, despite the rear-engine layout of the new car. Based on the City-Coupe (by now named 'ForTwo'), the Roadster was a riot of clever engineering. A stretched *smart* platform with shared (and subtly uprated) mechanicals, it dished up 80bhp from its 698cc engine and was gifted stiffer suspension and agile handling, with the 790kg car giving drivers a terrific power to weight ratio. The (expensive) Brabus model took power up to 100bhp.

The Roadster was surprisingly practical, with clever use of space far beyond that of rivals such as the Mk3 Toyota MR2. There were two boots, front and rear, and more than enough room for two people to enjoy a holiday abroad with cruise control allowing great economy and an effortless motorway cruise en-route to those twisty Alpine passes. The electric soft-top could be lowered or raised at any speed and for full alfresco motoring, you could remove the roof bars. No manufacturer has since managed to combine such





Smart history

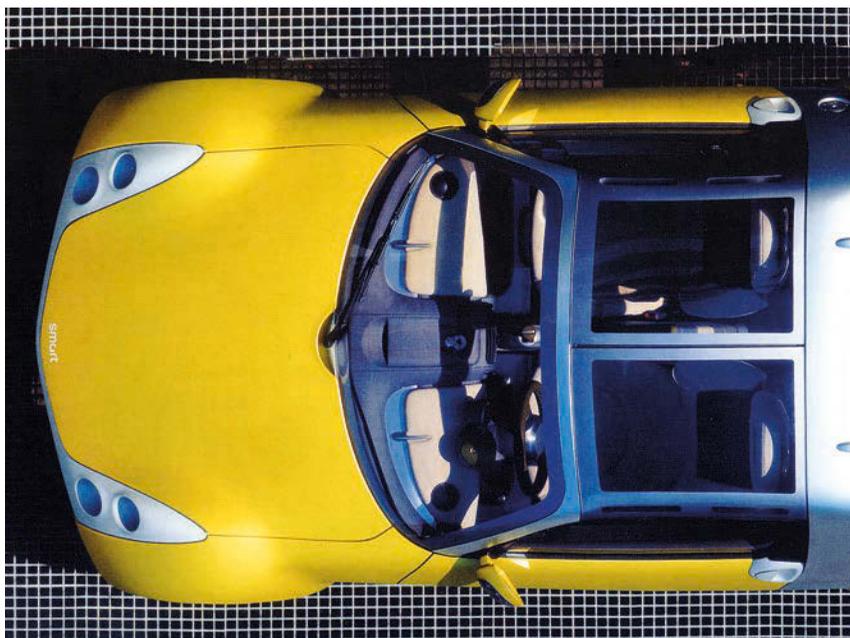
head-turning looks and usability in such a small package.

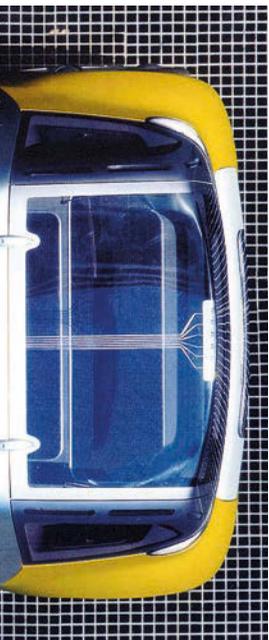
However, the first Roadsters had the feel of a concept car thrown into production. This came to light with numerous costly design hiccups, chiefly of which was the prevalence of water ingress in the cabin (from the roof, usually). Warranty claims cost smart around 3000 euros per car. Worse was to come, with many cars suffering from a fault which saw water dripping onto the so-called SAM unit (Signal Acquisition and Actuation Module) - essentially a box full of relays and a microprocessor that controlled all of the electrical functions. All smarts have them but the Roadster's was positioned in a place directly beneath the wiper tray. Drain holes would block and the tray would fill with water, with the inevitable failure of the SAM shortly afterwards.

"Plans for a planned Mercedes C-Class based SUV – the ForMore – were abandoned."

DaimlerBenz was plunged into a financial dilemma, not helped by another new car launch: That of the ForFour. The four-seater supermini was based almost entirely on the 2003 Mitsubishi Colt, but with revamped bodywork to give it 'the smart look' and interchangeable plastic panels. Built in conjunction with Mitsubishi in the Netherlands, it was a pleasant thing with numerous engine options ranging from a three-cylinder 1.1-litre base spec car to a 1.5-litre Brabus model. Despite the stand-out looks, a clever interior and a generally reliable reputation (aside from the common failure of semi-auto boxes) sales never lived up to expectations and it was quietly dropped from the smart range in 2006 – a year after the Roadster was killed off and plans for a planned Mercedes C-Class based SUV – the ForMore – were abandoned. It was a disappointing outcome, despite some truly brave thinking. Expansion had lost the firm almost 4-billion euros between 2003 and 2006 so smart GmbH was liquidated and absorbed into DaimlerChrysler.

Surviving by the skin of its teeth was the ForTwo, which by now had evolved into the second generation car. Slightly longer and billed as more sophisticated than before, it was launched in 2007 with a 999cc Mitsubishi engine and a diesel option. It lasted until 2014, when smart revealed its collaboration with Renault for the





Above:
Innovative
Crossblade never
really caught on.



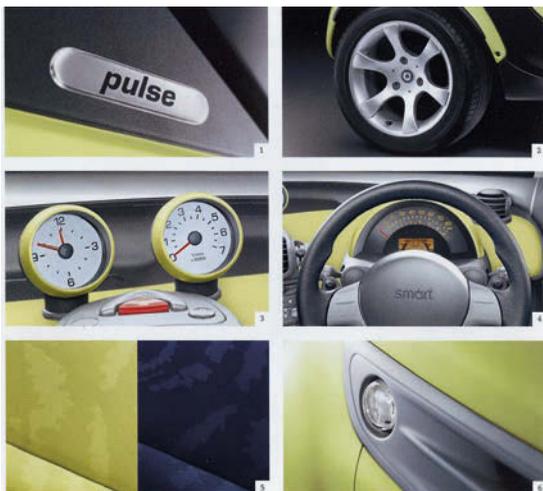


Smart history

third generation ForTwo – the model still on sale today. Making a return was the ForFour – this time a Renault Twingo based four seater built alongside the French car in Slovenia.

"Indications are that it is the City-Coupe which will become the most sought after in years to come."

Twenty years after *smart's* debut on the world stage, the original has begun to attract attention from the classic car world and indications are that it is the City-Coupe which will become the most sought after in years to come. Such was the engineering brilliance and perfection in packaging, a smart continues to be exhibited at the New York Museum of Modern Art. It is the very definition of function over form and testament to the innovative visions of Mercedes-Benz. It seems increasingly unlikely such risks will ever be taken again. 



■ 1. **Equipment variations:** Driving fun is guaranteed in the smart fortwo coupé or the smart fortwo cabrio, with a sporty 61 bhp engine. ■ 2. **Wheels:** Striking and sporty with the dynamic "coralline" alloy wheels (wide tyres, front 175/55 R 15; rear 195/50 R 15). ■ 3. **Dashboard instruments:** Clock and rev counter with white backgrounds to match the other instruments. ■ 4. **3-spoke leather sports steering wheel:** The steering wheel gear shift enables you to change

gear and steer at the same time. ■ 5. **Upholstery:** The pulse is available with seats, door trim and instrument panel in a choice of cool twister bluegrey or vibrant twister green. For added opulence you can always specify leather heated seats. ■ 6. **Special:** The fog lights guide you through the poorest visibility.

Left and right: Original models included Pure, Pulse and Passion.



■ 1. **Equipment variations:** Elegant as a smart fortwo coupé or a real gem as a smart fortwo cabrio. The passion is equipped with a 61 bhp turbocharged engine. ■ 2. **Wheels:** The ultimate in style, elegant "styleline" alloy wheels (wide tyres, front 145/65 R 15; rear 175/55 R 15). ■ 3. **Softouch:** Change gear with zero effort. The fully automatic gear programme with kickdown function for even greater driving comfort. ■ 4. **Interior:** The ultimate in style at the wheel.

The steering wheel and gear knob are covered in finest leather, the instrument cluster is set off by a black background. ■ 5. **Upholstery:** Choose from elegant bungee grey or distinctive bungee red. If you prefer a little more luxury, you can specify leather heated seats. ■ 6. **Special:** Air conditioning plus with exterior temperature indicator and frost warning. Your ideal climate 365 days a year.



Driving the original smart City-Coupe

The most talked about figure for the smart City-Coupe is 0.4 seconds. Why? Because this is how long it takes for the gearbox to respond to changes. The original six-speed sequential box was revolutionary for a small car, doing away with the clutch and enabling drivers to choose between auto-mode or manual (via the stick or steering wheel paddles). That half-second delay did cause a few grumbles from the motoring press but owners soon realised that if you anticipated gear changes and lifted off the throttle when shifting (as with a conventional car) the system worked perfectly fine.

It certainly doesn't detract from the joy of driving a smart. Hopping behind the wheel nowadays, the original model still feels fresh and interesting. The rather scratchy plastics feel their age but the trim is well slotted together and you can't help but grin at the view across that lively looking dash and through the expansive windscreen. Despite the tiny dimensions outside, the smart City-Coupe is very roomy for two with more than enough head and legroom. On the move, few other small cars come close to the smart's range of abilities in town – you don't drive it, so much as wear it. Snicking through gaps,

zipping down side-streets and slotting into minuscule spaces is what it's all about.

The limitations of such a short wheelbase present themselves on the open road, where the odd mid-corner bump can give it a space-hopper quality, making it feel like you're going to bounce off into nearby scenery. Crosswinds tend to blow you about a little on the motorway too but once you have become accustomed to the characteristics of the car, it's possible to motor about quite normally, in safety and comfort with a surprising turn of speed.

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Modded Mercs

Fred Oehmke's unique W126 estate
hails from Japan





"The car was first registered in summer of 1982 to sculptor and artist Yayoi Kusama."





Modded Mercs

Words: Axel Catton
Images: Anna Köster-Nowaczyk/
 Classic Analytics

The Techno Classica Essen in Germany's industrial heartland is a show not to be missed. Everything that is good and important for the classic car hobby, can be found in Essen, spread over 14 halls. Reason enough for Mercedes Classic to visit Hall 1, the "Mercedes Hall". A fabulous mixture of Daimler AG corporate as well as Mercedes-Benz Club cars caught our well-trained eyes, but none more than Fred Oehmke's fabulous W126 S-Class Shooting Brake.

Mercedes never officially made a five-door S, which got us talking to Fred about where his car originated from. In addition to the truly distinct shape, it was the colour combination of powder blue outside and bright red leather inside that made us see that this was far from being an ordinary cut and paste job.

Fred, an affable 55-year-old fan of the brand, has a number of classic Mercedes' at home, "but all of them are blue metallic with a beige interior", he says with a smile. "This one found me rather than the other way around. My focus is always on cars in the same colour combination. It was my wife who fell in love with this one especially because of its unique paint. She works in fashion, and this presented itself as a perfect backdrop for some of her photoshoots".

Fred quickly reveals the remarkable journey this car has been on. It started life as a 500 SEL long-wheelbase saloon, VIN WDB126037120162333. Externally it was finished in beautiful 904 dark blue, a classic non-metallic colour of the era.

On the inside, the conventional choice was leather in grey 238A. It was originally delivered to the Mercedes-Benz sales subsidiary in Düsseldorf, a not so weird choice

Left: This well-executed conversion retains much of the original rear end.

"The fifth door was created entirely from scratch."

when you consider that the city on the Rhine is the epicentre of Japanese business in Germany with a thriving Japanese community. We're suspecting this was some sort of "European Delivery", as the car was first registered in summer of 1982 in Osaka/Japan to female sculptor and artist Yayoi Kusama, a well-known figure in Japanese art circles.

The lady drove the car for about two years but kept it mainly inside her studio. "She must have done fairly low miles", says owner Oehmke, "I suspect not more than 15-20,000 miles until the transformation".

And what a transformation it was. As part of her art work on the 500 SEL, Mrs. Kusama had the entire car dismantled and the roof lengthened to create a shooting brake design with a sloping rear hatch. The fifth door was created entirely from scratch but used the original Series I W126 rear window which adds to the soft and curvaceous rear. To the side, additional windows were added behind the C-pillar, but it has to be said they don't appear to fit naturally in the newly created D-pillar design. The rear doors were kept in shape and size.

While all sheet metal was formed by hand to this unique design, it might be surprising to learn that much of the original rear was retained. The rear valance, the lights, »





Modded Mercs

bumper and license plate mounting were all left untouched. On top of it all, two roof rails were fitted which are not from the 1980s Mercedes parts bin.

The finished product underwent a colour change to suit its new designation as a piece of art. The entire car was painted 934 China blue, in itself a Mercedes-Benz colour. Everything was painted this colour, the body, the engine bay, the inside of the wheel arches and the underside of the car. Even the bumpers, door handles, and wiper arms were are now painted china blue.

Inside, grey had to make way to a vibrant and bright red, but again a Mercedes hue, 477 medium red. "Everything was executed in Mercedes tones", confirms Fred with astonishment. Seat covers, door cards, carpets on the floor and even in the boot were changed to red. In addition, a number of wood applications were specifically designed to fit into the new interior. The original steering wheel now also sports a partly wooden rim. After its transformation, this one-off Shooting Brake was only used for displays in Mrs. Kusama's studio and a number Japanese art galleries.

"The bumper chrome had been deliberately scratched."

"It wasn't all like that when I bought it just a little under year ago", reveals Oehmke. "The 'Sacco boards' were medium blue and the bumper chrome had been deliberately scratched, don't ask me why. Took us forever to polish them again. I then had the boards colour-matched to the rest of the car".

Technically, the car remained unchanged, which facilitated the registration in Germany after the car was reimported to its country of origin. Because of its over 30-year rest as a piece of art, Oehmke had to undertake a thorough recommissioning before applying for the German TÜV. "We had to replace all suspension elements and bushings, as well as all lubricants and switched the air con to R134a. In February it was registered to me and in March it had its first outing here at the Techno Classica". From here on out, Fred Oehmke plans to use his new art car only sparingly for club meets and exhibitions like these. Are there any others? Oehmke smiles: "The artist was very particular. After the build she made sure that all her drawings were destroyed to prevent copycats. Although we're not entirely sure there hasn't been a second one built in the 1980's".

As it stands, Fred Oehmke's china blue W126 shooting brake is certainly a true work of art and we're bound to see it again on the classic car circle.





Left: Vibrant interior is an original Mercedes shade.





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Calum Brown Contributor

Benz On Film:
1984 380 SE

CREEPSHOW 2

When it boils down to onscreen abuse, the Mercedes 380 SE appears to be indestructible, as showcased in an overlooked 1980s horror flick from Stephen King

When tackling a hitchhiking zombie hell-bent on revenge, there are few brands that can aid your survival – Smith and Wesson and Lockheed Martin may bid life-saving ingenuity, but nothing comes close to the dependability a Mercedes can offer.

Released on the big screen in May 1987, *Creepshow 2* consists of three short stories akin to the 1982 predecessor. Overseen by horror masters Stephen King and George A. Romero, *Creepshow 2*'s final saga 'The Hitchhiker' unravels with maniacal Benz testing the likes of which is rarely caught on film.

Ex-Bond girl Lois Chiles is Annie Lansing, a cheating wife who accidentally runs over a hitchhiker during her mad dash home to avoid suspicion, after liaising with her 'man of the night'. Rather than stop and seek help, Annie ploughs into the darkness on a wave of guilt – until she finds herself battling the undead hitcher, determined to seek vengeance by taking her life. Thankfully, Annie has a sturdy 380 SE at her disposal. Needless to say, this film isn't for the fainthearted or the squeamish.



While not the story itself, the Mercedes 380 SE features throughout the majority of the tale's screentime – forced through adverse conditions in a fashion befitting most rally drivers. For twelve minutes Lois Chiles is menaced by the undead hitcher, resulting in drifts, spins, sideways burn-outs and brutal forestry punishment. Panels and running gear are savagely abused yet the Merc soldiers on; Ewy Rosqvist would be proud.

Despite undertaking the sort of terrain most Jeeps would shy away from, the Benz safely delivers Annie home, covered in blood and without a straight panel – but there

is a final twist in the tale. One which we shan't spoil.

Originally, there were four cars used for filming. Three were European imports whereas the hero car was privately rented from a dentist who lived in the area. The only clues for the eagle-eyed remain slight interior changes, grille work and wheel

trim adjustments from shot to shot.

The sole modification made by the stunt team involved removing the radiator fan for crash scenes. Due to the lack of space with 6-cylinder models, the fan would have penetrated the radiator upon collision contact. With several takes required, not even Hollywood could afford to write off each vehicle so quickly. Yet, by filming's end all three 380 SEs still functioned, even if they were sadly scrapped.

The life lesson from this segment of *Creepshow 2* remains: of all the things to take to the face, a Mercedes Benz 380 SE is not one of them.

Above:
Mercedes 380SE is nice to look at. Just watch for hitchhikers.



MARKET NEWS

Buying a Four-Cylinder
PONTON



It was the model which restored Mercedes' fortunes and remade its reputation in the post-war years, and the humble W120/121 'Ponton' still makes a superb classic today. Here's what you need to know if you're thinking of buying one





W120/121 Buying guide

Words: Jack Grover

The W120 was seen by its maker as a low-cost, high-volume model, but that was all relative – it was still, after all, a Mercedes. When it was introduced in July 1953 the Mercedes-Benz 180, priced at just over £1500 in the UK, cost twice as much as a Morris Oxford and slightly more than a Humber Super Snipe for what a rather basic and very slow saloon car, even if it did boast modern streamlined 'pontoon' styling which led to the model gaining its 'Ponton' nickname.

However it was soon realised that this was a vehicle designed and made to standards far above anything else in its class, be that by size or price. It was Stuttgart's first unitary construction car, which made it very spacious for its size, while the stiff structure and fully independent suspension gave it a ride comfort and refinement significantly better than its direct rivals. The old 1767cc sidevalve engine from the pre-war W136 did give it modest performance but the car's comfort, durability and surprisingly economical running costs won it many buyers. It was especially popular with European taxi drivers and for them the 180D, with an OHV naturally-aspirated 1767cc OM636 diesel, was the model of choice.

The Ponton family later included six-cylinder and roadster models but the four-cylinder model remained by far the most popular, selling steadily to over 130 countries worldwide. America was a particularly strong Ponton market and that means that many stocks of spares, specialists and refurbishment services are now found Stateside, which is not a big problem in these days of the internet and cheap international shipping.

The four-cylinder range was improved in 1956 with the arrival of a low-output version of the 1.9-litre overhead cam M121 engine from the 190SL. The W120 received 65bhp while a 75bhp version went into a new W121 model, which had a higher



Above: Much of the Ponton's interior was made of durable materials.

standard of trim inside and out and was badged as the 190. The revised 180 petrol models became known as the 180a. From late 1957 there was also a 190D, with an 1897cc OHC OM621 diesel.

In 1959 the entire W120/121 range was given a facelift with a lower, wider grille and new side/tail lamp units. Cars with the 1959 facelift are known as 'b-models'. When the first W110 'Fintail' 190 was introduced in 1961 the 180s continued for the benefit of the sceptics. These 'c-model' 180s lasted until October 1962, with the 180Dc actually having the two-litre OM621 diesel recently introduced on the new diesel Fintail, albeit in a lower state of tune.

In total 442,693 four-cylinder Pontons were built between 1953 and 1962. Of those 223,099 (or just over half) were diesel-powered.

BODYWORK

With very reliable and long-lived mechanical parts, most major problems with a potential Ponton purchase lie in its rather complex all-steel body.

There is a vestigial 'chassis' frame welded under the floorpan which should be checked for rust, as should the floor itself underneath and from inside. While doing so feel for damp carpets (from leaking windscreen seals or rusted heater pipes) and for corrosion thriving in the area around the battery tray. The sills should be

checked inside and out along their entire length and particularly around the jacking points at each end for rust or wrinkles. The lower edge of all the doors is another breeding ground for corrosion and repairs or replacements can run into the hundreds of pounds, although nearly all the panels and parts are available if you're prepared to pay for them. Naturally the panel fit and the quality of the door shuts should be excellent, so any wonky joints indicate accident repairs or a poor-quality restoration.

The front wings should be inspected carefully around the headlamp bowls (both outside and inside the wheel well) as well as the seam where the wings join the bulkhead. At the rear check the boot floor and spare wheel well, and the rear valence including its supporting brackets which can be awkward to replace.

ENGINES

The five petrol and diesel motors fitted to the basic Ponton are all thoroughly reliable and long-lived units without inherent faults. The only issues stem from prolonged neglect or old age, and so you only need to make the generic engine checks for errant smoke or mixing oil and coolant. Spares availability is excellent with the exception of some parts for the M136 sidevalve engine.

The Ponton is all about mechanical refinement and healthy petrol engines run almost silently. Even diesels should gurgle away without too much clatter or vibration, especially the later OHC units. Rattles, taps and knocks indicate wear, especially in the timing chain and its gears, or backlash developing in the valvetrain. Oil pressure should be between 30 and 40 psi on the gauge with a warm engine at cruising speeds.

Black smoke and poor performance from petrol engines usually means that the carburettor (a single Solex) needs rebuilding, which is not expensive. Misfiring, especially under load, can also mean the throttle spindles or



manifold gaskets are leaking air.

Diesels will inevitably issue some smoke when starting and when running cold, but black smoke under acceleration with a warm engine should be minimal. If it is excessive then the injectors and the injector pump probably need overhauling. All the diesels should start briskly when cold in our mild climate, although they need a lot longer on the glow plugs (up to 40 seconds or so) than other classic diesels.

TRANSMISSION & SUSPENSION

All W120/W121 Pontons used a four-speed manual transmission with full synchromesh and a column-mounted lever. The gearbox and final drive are both over-built for the power they have to deal with and last for prodigious mileages.

Selecting gears should be a easy, almost fingertip, business and problems with finding gears are usually due to worn nylon bushes in the linkage, which can be replaced fairly easily although access is awkward. Other problems with engaging gears may indicate that the clutch is worn or out of adjustment. Again, smoothness is the operative word and any feelings of shunt or knocking either indicate excessive wear in the transmission or tired gearbox and final drive mountings.

The rear suspension of the Ponton was originally provided by a conventional coil-sprung swing axle arrangement, which from 1955 was switched to an improved 'single joint' system shared with the six-cylinder models. This joint has large rubber bellows gaiter which must be in good

Above: Check the sills and front wings, both rust prone.

condition and fitting a new one is a surprisingly big job involving several hours' labour. Otherwise check that the springs haven't sagged and that the rubber mounting blocks for the axle and trailing arms are all sound, as is the metal they attach to.

At the front be sure that there is no excessive play in the kingpins and that they show signs of regular and adequate greasing. Tight spots or heaviness in the steering usually indicate partially-seized king pins. Also check the trunnions of the wishbones – both items are best checked with the car's front end off the ground. On all four corners test the dampers. Pontons are softly-sprung but should not bounce excessively. The ride quality and refinement should be superb, so any thuds or knocks indicate something adrift in the undercarriage. »



W120/121 Buying guide

INTERIOR

There's not much to the interior of the W120/121 and it's all made of very durable material – mostly metal and bakelite. Any trim parts that are missing or damaged will be difficult to source or expensive to put right but problems are rare. The soft furnishings are the most vulnerable to wear and tear, especially the cloth seats found on these basic models. New seat frames, stuffing and cover materials are all available but at high prices.

Window winders should operate quickly and smoothly but the regulators do wear out with age and the windows can jam or judder. Interior brightwork such as window handles, badges and trim strips are very difficult to source now. The electrics and gauges are all conventional and any repairs can be made by any instrumentation specialist.

Not strictly in the interior, but affecting its comfort, is the heater. The Ponton has two small heater units, one on each side of the engine bay, and the ducts and matrix casings are made of cardboard. When this splits and degrades with age the heater essentially stops working. Reproduction units in a variety of materials, including rubber, fibreglass and metal, have been produced at various times and most Mercedes specialists and clubs will have a stock.

VALUES

Original UK-spec RHD four-cylinder Pontons are rare, so the market primarily consists of imported LHD



Above: The diesels make for fun classic buys.

examples with a smattering of RHDs brought in from South Africa or Australia. Be prepared to buy a car from Europe if you don't want to limit your options. Condition easily overrides specification when it comes to value, but if all other factors are equal an early car is worth more than a later one, with the pre-facelift 'narrow grille' models especially being more desirable. Petrol or diesel, W120 or W121 makes little difference. Solid, complete, rust-free cars requiring restoration start at around £5000, while roadworthy and useable cars in scruffy 'fresh off the boat from California' condition can be had for £8000-10,000. Previously restored or largely original examples are currently hovering around the £12,000-16,000 mark. Pontons that have been recently and comprehensively restored to a high standard can go for £25,000 or more. 📌

Verdict – what to buy

It's easy to see the appeal of the four-cylinder Ponton, with its mix of streamlined 1950s styling, laid-back driving character, charming simplicity and indomitable reliability. Any variant would provide this package and be an enjoyable, dependable and practical classic car. The W121 190 makes the best case for itself from the practicality point of view but there's something alluring about the added quirky charm of the diesels and the way they encapsulate the spirit and success of Mercedes in their time. So a 190Db or 180Dc would be our choice.

Technical Information

180

Engine 1767cc/4-cyl/SV
Power 52bhp @ 3400rpm
Torque 84 lb-ft @ 1800rpm
Gearbox 4-spd manual
0-60 31.1sec
Top Speed 78mph
MPG 24.4mpg

180D/180Db

Engine 1767cc/4-cyl/OHV
Power 43bhp @ 3500rpm
Torque 72 lb-ft @ 1500rpm
Gearbox 4-spd manual
0-60 40.3sec
Top Speed 62mph
MPG 35.2mpg

180a/180b/180c

Engine 1897cc/4-cyl/SOHC
Power 65bhp @ 4800rpm
Torque 95 lb-ft @ 2200rpm
Gearbox 4-spd manual
0-60 21.0sec
Top Speed 84mph
MPG 26.9mpg

180Dc

Engine 1988cc/4-cyl/SOHC
Power 48bhp @ 3800rpm
Torque 77 lb-ft @ 2000rpm
Gearbox 4-spd manual
0-60 36 sec
Top Speed 75mph
MPG 36.8mpg

190/190b

Engine 1897cc/4-cyl/SOHC
Power 75bhp @ 4800rpm
Torque 102 lb-ft @ 2800rpm
Gearbox 4-spd manual
0-60 19.3 sec
Top Speed 86mph
MPG 23.1mpg

190D/190Db

Engine 1897cc/4-cyl/SOHC
Power 50bhp @ 4000rpm
Torque 77 lb-ft @ 2200rpm
Gearbox 4-spd manual
0-60 29.2sec
Top Speed 78mph
MPG 33.2mpg

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Table of numbers for Spring Clearout: ALL £50 (F486 HWJ, Q70 G56D, T709 LJR), ALL £75 (X358 DDA, J973 CRM, J767 DCD), ALL £150 (AEY 279A, AUJ 654A, C48 437B), ALL £195 (AGW 121V, ANN 201A, BPR 681A, EFX 396C, FMA 521F), ALL £250 (F486 HWJ, Q70 G56D, T709 LJR), ALL £315 (B431 KGY, R126 MAU, F389 KRM, T132 MAU), ALL £688 (JVG 868M, LVR 664B, X812 MTS).

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1989 Mercedes-Benz 230E

An ideal starter Mercedes, this 230E is full of period charm.

The Smoke Silver coachwork is in excellent condition, and unlike so many examples it's had no additional upgrades such as spoilers or alloy wheels. Barring the optional metallic paint, this is as basic an example as it was possible to order in 1989 – and shows those Bruno Sacco lines to their best advantage. It's one of the first W124s to receive the plastic “Sacco panels” – and these are in good condition with no cracks or scuffs. Behind them, what we can see of the doors is equally good – this is a very solid, very straight example.

Having researched the VIN it appears that this car was specified with no options beyond the interior colour. Odd, because it has all-round electric windows, a front centre



armrest, and walnut trim in place of zebrano. An anomaly on the VIN records perhaps? Regardless, the Palomino cloth interior is in excellent condition, and its warm tones lend an extra degree of comfort to an otherwise fairly sparse interior. The wood is in good condition too – the gauges all work, the heater is spot on, and it certainly doesn't feel its 127,000 miles in here.

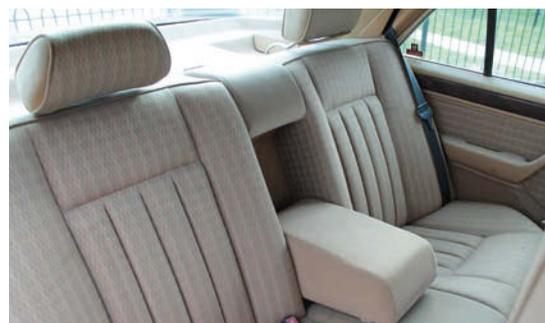
It starts nicely without too much cranking, and settles down to a healthy idle. Under the bonnet there are no fuel leaks – and while we had to use a jump pack to start the car it was fine once we had it out – we think this was just a low battery which shouldn't pose an issue by the time the car is sold. There's no steam or smoke indicating any issues, either.

£ *One to buy*

Mileage: 127,551 miles
Price: £2,495



Below:
Palomino trim lends a warm feel to the interior.



It's funny just how sprightly a 230E can feel – and this one is no exception. It pulls well, and changes both up and down the box smoothly. There's no play in the steering, and it turns in sharply with plenty of grip – the four cylinder cars might not be so quick, but they handle better than the six cylinders. The brakes are effective, and the handbrake works as it should to boot. On a technical level this car works perfectly – but apart from that is how it makes you feel. It may be relatively basic but the interior colour makes it feel like a far more upmarket car.

"Barring the optional metallic paint, this is as basic an example as it was possible to order in 1989."

The history file is strong, though all it shows is servicing data – seemingly the car has needed no significant work. A nice touch, however, is that it had every old MoT dating back to 1992 – that and the amount of servicing paperwork lead us to believe that the file is complete. We would make a full service our first priority though, to ensure it's nicely up to date.

Conclusion

While we've seen nicer examples of the W124 for less money, this isn't a bad example for someone who wants the reassurance of buying from an established trader. The colour scheme is very of its time, it's practical enough for regular use, and as an M102-engined four cylinder there should be very little to trouble any potential buyers. It's perhaps not the most imaginative choice, but it is the ideal starter Mercedes if you're on a budget.

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Market Analysis

The Brightwells sale at Bicester suggests strengthening prices across the board





Market news

Words: Jack O'Brien

Brightwells perhaps provided us with the landmark sale of 2018 on 21st March, with their "Affordable Classics" sale at Bicester Heritage. The premise of this auction, and what made it so unique, was that all of the cars, boats, caravans, model cars, pedal cars and aeroplanes came from the Jaguar Land Rover Heritage Collection; having been acquired from the collection of James Hull in 2014.

With all lots offered at No Reserve and with excellent publicity leading up to the sale, there was always going to be a

"There was always going to be a bidding frenzy."

bidding frenzy, and the prices achieved for the four Mercedes Benz cars on offer reflects that. The most unique and rare Mercedes on sale was one of 26 W215 CL 63s, which sold for £23,072 including buyer's

Below: 280CE sold for £8960.

premium and VAT. These cars do not come up for sale very often and due to the rarity have real collectors appeal, way beyond that of a regular W215. The last CL63 auctioned in the UK was at Silverstones and topped over £30k. However, it must be noted that as with all the other cars in the auction, the CL did not come with an MOT – and I am told that prior to the auction, it was not running well.

With the values for W123s being on the steady rise, the Diamond Blue, 89,000-mile, three owner 280CE was always set to do well. Its condition was good, above





"The cars that really stole the show, however, were a pair of rather interesting, one model year only W124 320CE Cabriolets.."

Above: One of a pair of 320CE cabriolets at Brightwells.

average, let down slightly by perished window rubbers – which are expensive, hard to get hold of and coupe specific. The car had also not been started prior to the sale and was sold for £8960.

The cars that really stole the show, however, were a pair of rather interesting, one model year only W124 320CE Cabriolets. Both finished in Pearl blue, these cars could not be more different in specification. One carried a relatively unexceptional UK specification with Mushroom Leather interior, automatic transmission, AC and a Power Driver's seat. A three-owner car with an indicated mileage of 39,155 and limited paperwork to consummate the mileage, it sold for £15,680 all in. With 18,803 recorded miles, the second example could not have been more different.

Originally Cyprus delivered, this outrageously specified Sacco Benz is the sort of thing we all dream to find. Grey Sports Check cloth upholstery, 390mm Sportline Steering wheel, Self-Levelling Suspension, instead of the oh so obvious Sportline set up, and



£ Market news

my favourite; the dog leg, short shift Getrag 5 speed manual transmission. With 9 history stamps on file, this 3 owner car fetched an incredible £16,800 including buyer's premium and VAT. As a market indicator for two door, specifically cabriolet W124s, this is quite a momentous result. The 18,000 mile example was quite clearly suffering from wiring loom degradation under close inspection, and neither car had been run prior to the sale – the power hoods had also not been tested. The level of confidence displayed by buyers for complex, LH Jetronic, fuel injected, M104 engined cars is in my opinion is admirable, as the spending will only just begin when they're taken from the auction hall.

At Historics' Ascot sale on March 3rd, a 55% sale rate for Mercedes Benz was achieved – down on their November sale. A highlight of the sale was the 21,000 mile 380SEC, with Sports Velour upholstery, which reached £21,840 all told. Proving that the booming market for SECs is almost entirely condition and mileage driven, the silver 560SEC sold for £4,480 from no reserve having covered 160,000 miles. Also in the pillarless coupe department, and made to look good value by the Brightwells 280CE, Historics sold a pleasant 115k miles Ascot Grey 230CE W123 for £5000. With an MOT, but down on cylinders – this comparison allows for a very interesting market comparison for the W123 coupe. Continuing Historics' good run with W108s, £16,500 was achieved for the delightful 19,000 mile manual transmission 280SE. As Justin Lasic pointed out in issue two, the key to strong financial performance for W108s is unmolested originality and low miles. These cars will always command strong money.



"Silverstone Auctions recently achieved £71,300 for Rowan Atkinson's 500E."

R107s fared less well, with only the no reserve 350SL selling for £11,648 and the no reserve 450SLC making £8288. Also sold from no reserve were a W124 220CE and a W210 E320 Binz Limo.

Over at Duxford on the 21st of March again, H+H did slightly better with their selection of R107s, selling three out of the five cars on offer. With a good spread on the entire production run, their 143,000 mile 1971 350SL sold for £18,562 and the late model 1987 300SL with 114,000 miles sold for

£16,312.

With the E500 failing to reach its lower estimate at £14,000 and remaining unsold, it is perhaps and interesting time to look at the slightly unpredictable market for these V8 W124s. While Silverstone Auctions recently achieved £71,300 for Rowan Atkinson's 50,000 mile car, this must – at least at the moment – be treated as the exception to the rule. With super low miles for a 500E, and a provenance to match, I can't see another 500 reaching anywhere near this figure in the near future. 📸



1976 Mercedes-Benz 280E

One for the collectors to preserve and enjoy, this is one of the first W123s and is reasonably priced.

You don't often see W123s in Mimosa Yellow, which is a shame because the colour sets off the shape nicely. Unfortunately we can't access the datacard via the VIN, possibly owing to the age of the vehicle, so it isn't possible to check which options it did or didn't leave the factory with. However, as a 280 it has the elongated bumpers shared with the coupe model, plus the rectangular halogen headlamps which four-cylinder models were initially denied.

There's a small rust bleb around the rear pillar finisher above the fuel cap, this appears small and localised. Apart from that the car presents really well, with just a small amount of front bumper damage



and a cracked number plate to its detriment.

Early W123s are rare, and this one retains the unique features of its early interior – the original style steering wheel is in good order, as are the walnut inserts in the dash and centre console. The car is fitted with manual windows all round, though there is slight damage to the drivers' window winder. The plastic trim has split, with rough edges scratching your hand as you wind if you aren't careful. The nearside front interior door handle has lost some of its springiness, and can sit pointing outward in expectation of an approaching hand. Otherwise all is well inside, with the half-Tex half-cloth seats in good condition, good carpets, and no untoward smells indicating damp.

£ *One to buy*

Mileage: 108,582 miles
Price: £4,995

"This car might have done a fair mileage but it still feels good. We like this car a lot."

When we tested the car it required a brief squirt of easy-start – we think because it had sat idle until we asked to test it. Once running it continued to run well, settling into a nice idle, and showing no signs of overheating once warmed up. There's no steam or smoke, and the fluids haven't mingled – it appears to be as healthy an engine as it sounds.

This car might have done a fair mileage but it still feels good. It pulls nicely, the gearbox is good, and the steering is relatively communicative for a W123. We drove this very car back in 2014 for another publication, and it feels as good today as it did then. More than that, there's something about a W123 that makes you feel good. We like this car a lot.

The history file is fairly strong, with a series of maintenance bills and MoTs dating back several years. The only concern we had was that while there is a V5 present, it doesn't appear to be the current one. While we may have missed it, it is something which ought to be checked before purchase.



Conclusion

The 280E is one of the most desirable derivatives of the W123, and from a collectors' perspective the earliest cars are the ones to have. This one is from the first year of production, and it's in a delightfully period colour scheme. It might not be the tidiest one on the planet but there's plenty to like about it, and it can certainly be used and enjoyed while you do the last few little jobs to tidy it up.

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In the early years of the new Millennium, Daimler-Benz introduced a Bosch developed computer controlled braking system - but this over complex system led to thousands of recalls.





Brake by wire

Words: Iain Wakefield

One of the most confusing dashboard warnings that will suddenly light up the instrument cluster on a R230SL produced between 2003-10 or a W219 CLS (2004-2008) and even the first generation of the W211 E Class (2003-08) is the dreaded 'Service Brake - Visit Workshop' message. Many owners incorrectly interpret this innocent looking message as a gentle reminder that the brake pads are almost worn out or the handbrake mechanism is defective, but this warning is far more serious and shouldn't under any circumstances be ignored for too long.

All the models we mentioned in the opening paragraph, including early examples of the luxury Maybach limousine, were fitted with Mercedes-Benz's innovative for the time Sensotronic Brake Control (SBC). This extremely sophisticated computer controlled 'brake-by-wire' electro-mechanical anti-lock braking setup proportionally distributes brake fluid from a high-pressure reservoir to each individual caliper and when it goes wrong, expect a big bill to put it right.

The white 'Service Brake - Visit Workshop' message is a warning to the driver that the car's SBC system requires urgent attention. Ignore the white warning for too long and the message will turn red - an alarm will also sound at this stage - and the car's braking power will ultimately be seriously reduced. Not only will the car be dangerous to drive with the red message showing, as braking will be limited to just the front wheels only, the engine management system will very likely cut in and put the car into limp mode.

To prevent this happening, as soon as the white 'Service Brake - Visit Workshop' message appears on the instrument panel, the car should be immediately booked into a dealer or



Above: This dreaded 'Service Brake - Visit Workshop' message could probably end up with very expensive new pump or a ten quid brake switch being fitted.

"The white 'Service Brake - Visit Workshop' message is a warning to the driver."

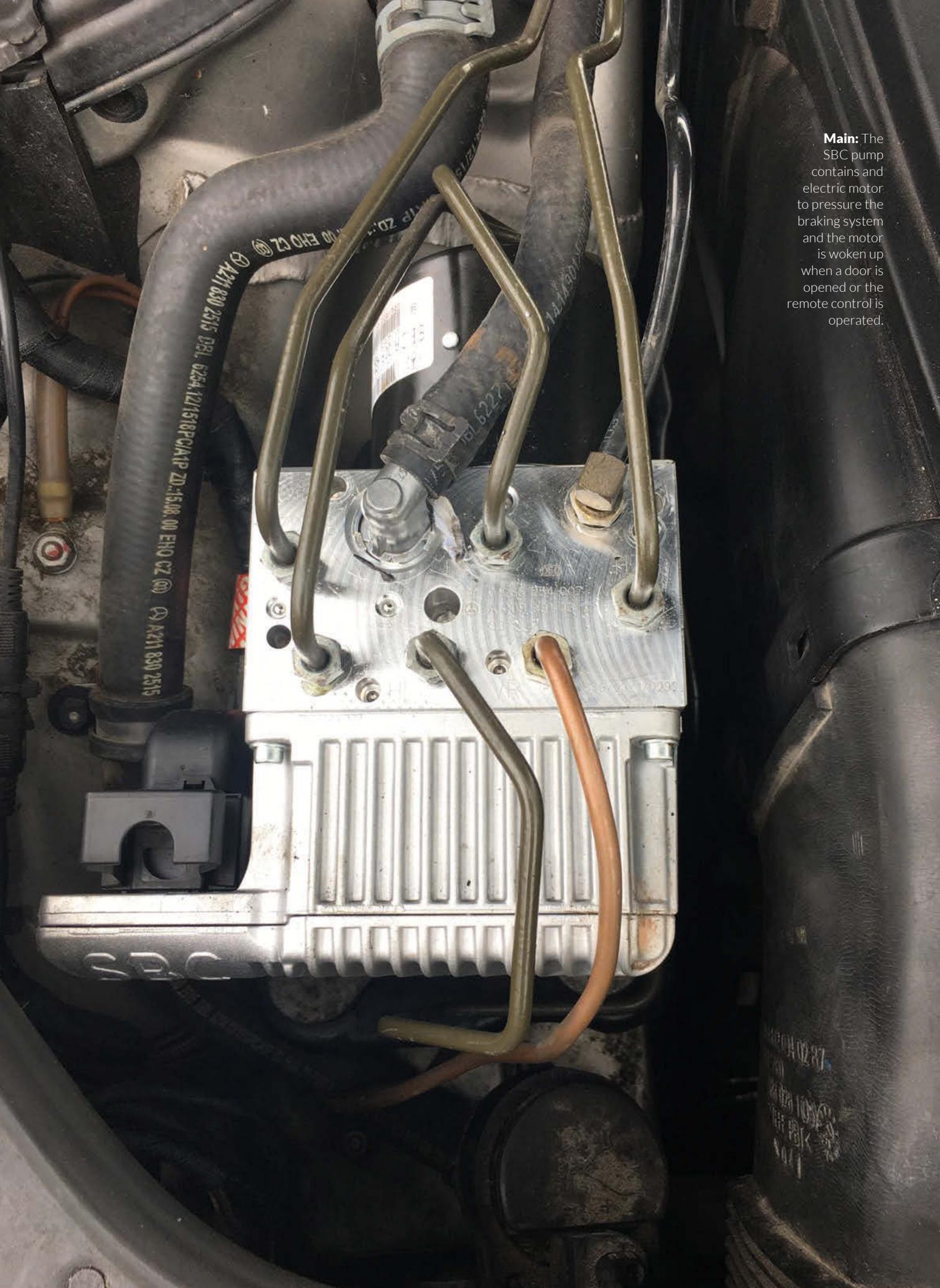
independent specialist to have the SBC system professionally analysed on a STAR diagnostics set up as soon as possible.

HOW DOES SBC WORK?

Daimler and Bosch jointly developed Sensotronic Brake Control in the

late 1990s and the 2001-introduced R230 SL was the first model to utilise this highly advanced new anti-lock system. The principles behind SBC are that it improves the metering of the required brake pressure for each wheel by controlling the amount of fluid going to calipers by automatically adjusting the pressure going to the individual brake lines. A computer monitors when the accelerator is released and any subsequent braking effort is then precisely proportioned around the four calipers, from front to back and side to side.

Unlike a conventional anti-lock set up, if an individual wheel on a car fitted with SBC does lock up under heavy braking; the driver won't feel any vibrations bouncing back from the brake pedal. This aids safety by eliminating any unwanted distractions that may result in the driver inadvertently taking their



Main: The SBC pump contains electric motor to pressure the braking system and the motor is woken up when a door is opened or the remote control is operated.





Brake by wire

foot off the brake pedal when more force is actually required to safely stop the car.

A typical SBC system comprises of the brake-operating unit, which is connected to the brake pedal, wheel spin sensors and a traction system hydraulic pump to send fluid under pressure to each caliper. The brake-operating unit is located on the front bulkhead and includes an electronic sensor to calculate how much pressure the driver is putting on the pedal and the speed at which the brakes are being applied. This is the unnerving 'brake-by-wire' part of the SBC system, as the brake pedal doesn't operate directly on the car's tandem master cylinder.

Actual brake pedal travel and speed is converted into an electrical signal by the computer. A simulator measures the amount of pressure put on the brake pedal and activates the traction system hydraulic unit, which normally sits in the a corner of the engine bay and is identified by the brake lines leading away from it.

As this complex braking system is constantly operating under full electronic control, it even has its own small 12-volt back up battery, which on the W211 is hidden away underneath the pollen filter close to the front screen. This back up ensures that the electronics controlling the SBC braking system always have an independent power supply, even if the main battery fails.

HIGH-PRESSURE PUMP

The traction system hydraulic pump is made up of the SBC control module, a pressure reservoir and a high-pressure charge pump. To ensure the brake hydraulics are fully charged before the engine is started, the SBC system performs a 'wake up' routine when either the central locking is operated, a door is opened, the parking brake is operated, the ignition key is turned to position one or the brake pedal depressed.

Left (clockwise from main):

When Mercedes Benz facelifted the W211 E Class in 2008, the new model lost its SBC brakes and the model reverted to a less troublesome and more conventional ABS system; Don't even think about working on the brakes of a car fitted with a SBC braking system until the pressure in the unit has been; The SBC pump and high-pressure reservoir is located in the lower corner of the engine bay on this 2003 W211 E Class Estate.

"Actual brake pedal travel and speed is converted into an electrical signal by the computer."

When any of these operations is carried out, the SBC's high-pressure pump will start up for a few seconds and the system will perform a pre-drive self-check. This is when the worrying white 'Service Brake - Visit Workshop' message will appear in the centre of the speedometer if the electronics have discovered a fault with the system.

Accessing the car's OBD2 port with a reader should bring up any the following fault codes while the white message is showing: C249F, C235A, C235C, C235D, C235E, C2359 or C2498. Translated, these codes will either indicate the 'operating time of the SBC control module has been exceeded' or 'service threshold reached'. The latter refers to the unit's inbuilt electronic counter recording the number of times the brake pedal has been pushed.

A few members posting on M-B forums claim the internal counter on these units was originally set far too low by the factory and in some circumstances can be reset for further use with a piece of proprietary software. However, when the white 'Service Brake - Visit Workshop' message came up on my 2003, W211 320CDI, I contacted a very knowledgeable mobile specialist who claimed the SBC counter could be reset





Brake by wire

providing the right codes were showing.

This specialist obviously didn't reveal what these codes were over the phone, but did offer not to charge if the unit couldn't be reprogrammed. However, erring on the side of safety, as brakes are very important, I decided to have a new SBC unit fitted to my E Class Estate by a local independent M-B specialist.

Before having the new unit fitted, the fault codes were read off but it would have been impossible to reset the counter on my car as the codes showed this had been done sometime in the past and the operation couldn't be repeated. This is obviously a built in safety factor to prevent worn out and unsafe units being reprogrammed, as one of the main failing points can be worn pump motor brushes and this item a critical

"As the vehicle's VIN number is stored in the SBC pump's memory banks, fitting a second-hand unit isn't an option."

Below: This shows the manufacturer's codes on a replacement SCB pump. Fitting a new one to the author's E Class cost nearly what the car was worth!



part of the system.

As the vehicle's VIN number is stored in the SBC pump's memory banks, fitting a second-hand unit isn't an option unless it can be reprogrammed. As there's no real way of knowing if a used pump isn't about to fail after few thousand miles, fitting a brand new one seemed the safest and most cost effective option. However, this wasn't a cheap repair and the total bill to fit a new SBC pump and re-program the system came in at just over £1300, an amount that was almost the same as the trade-in value of my car!

WORKING ON THE SYSTEM

Exceptional care needs to be taken when working on the brake system of a car fitted with SBC. This is because the brake lines are highly pressurised (up to 60bar) and before working on the brakes, the SBC system should really be fully deactivated. Although this should only be done at a dealer or specialist repairer using a STAR diagnostic system, the SBC pump can be put to sleep at home by closing all the car's doors and waiting for the system to fully shut down.



Before working on any of the calipers or brake lines, make sure the instrument display is completely black, the doors are shut and keep the remote control hidden so the central locking can't be operated. To be on the safe side, both batteries should also be disconnected and the large connector on the side of the SBC unit could also be removed as well. Doing the latter will throw up lots of fault codes when restarting, but these can usually be cleared by turning the ignition on and off a

Above: SBC maintenance is not a DIY job. Leave it to the experts.

few times when the work has been completed.

When undoing a bleed nipple, be aware that the SBC system will still be under pressure if the car has been driven recently. Extra care must be taken when working on a caliper so fluid doesn't squirt into your face or the pads snap shut and trap a finger. Once all the work has been completed, the SBC system will have to be partly charged before the car can be started up and safely driven away.

This should be done by using

a pressurised bleeding system to activate the system and once all the air has been purged from the brake lines, the car can be started up and the ignition key cycled a few times to clear any error messages. Replacing a defective SBC pump is not really a job that can be done at home if there's no access to professional standard diagnostic equipment. Any work on the Sensotronic Brake Control system should be left to the experts with the correct knowledge and experience. 

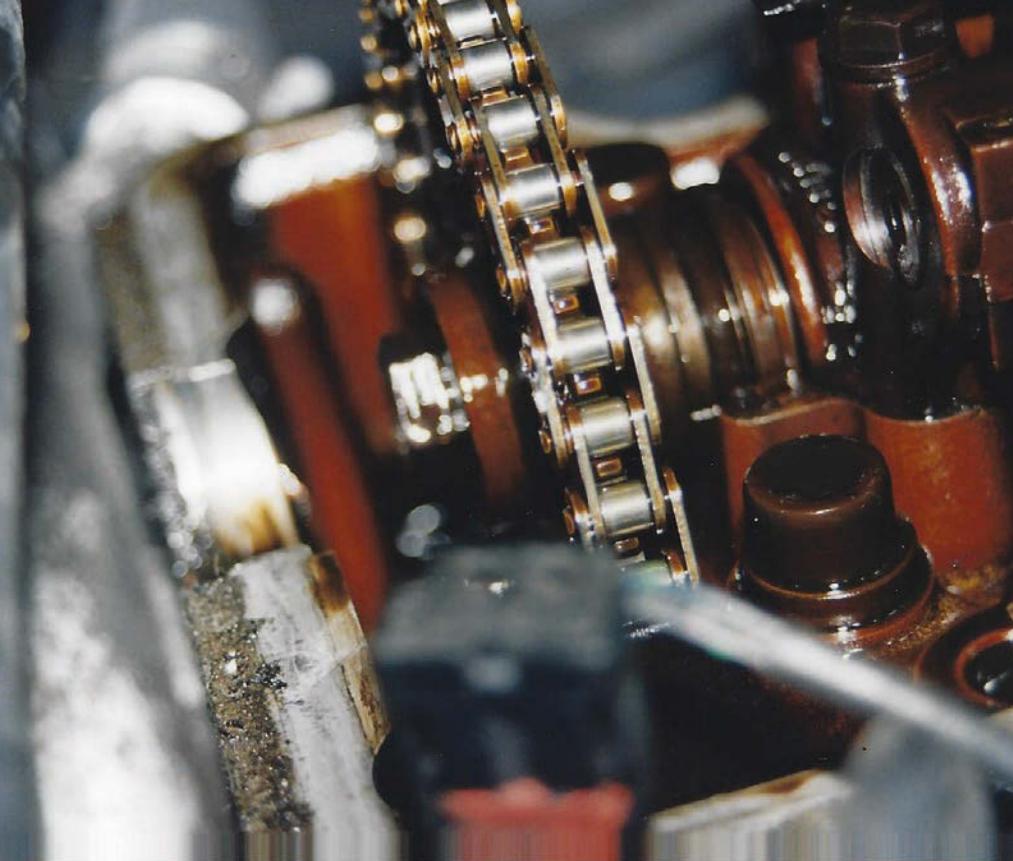
Conclusion

Although the SBC system has its faults and can be expensive to repair it was designed with safety in mind. The system also works in conjunction with the car's traction control (ESP) to prevent excessive wheel spin or skidding by slowing down an offending wheel or wheels. Another useful feature the system offers is SBC Hold. This allows the driver to take their foot off the brake pedal while the car remains stationary in heavy traffic and the brakes will remain applied until the throttle is opened.

When this computerised braking system was first introduced in 2001 on the revised SL, the motoring press applauded Sensotronic Brake Control and reported how safe cars fitted with this very advanced anti-lock system were to drive. However, it wasn't very long before this complex 'brake-by-wire' system was causing owners countless headaches and Mercedes-Benz ended up recalling thousands of cars to correct annoying software errors and even replace faulty units.

Despite the severity of the now dreaded white 'Service Brake - Visit Workshop' warning, it needn't be all doom and gloom if this message appears on the instrument cluster. A dodgy brake light switch can also trigger the message and replacing a faulty ten quid switch is a lot better than paying out almost what the car is worth to get it back on the road to have a new SBC unit fitted.

However, reliable brakes are very important and at the end of the day it's your family's lives that are at stake. So don't mess with Mercedes SBC 'brake-by-wire' systems unless you really know what you're doing - always leave servicing the brakes to the experts.



We're part of the Chain Gang....

OTo my mind, one of the best things about the Mercedes-Benz 'brand' from a technical point of view is that it never used timing belts in any of its engines – in fact the only M/B cars with belts are the small number powered by engines supplied by others. But it's not just the fact that belts were never used; the reason they were never needed is every bit as impressive.

Contrary to popular belief, the 'lesser' car makers didn't start using timing belts as a deliberate ploy to introduce a major weakness into engines. Rather, it was to reduce noise and, more importantly, to provide more accurate valve timing over a longer period than was possible with a chain. All chains start to wear and stretch from the moment they are installed. With an overhead valve engine, the chain run is relatively short, stretch is relatively little and valve timing can vary a bit without causing problems. With overhead cam, however, the cam and crank are much further apart, and the length of chain needed is more than doubled. Consequently noise and stretch are issues, and there are also engineering 'challenges' when it comes to providing proper lubrication along the whole length of a chain running an engine's entire height.

Above: Unlike most 'lesser' makes, Mercedes never strayed away from timing chains in its own engines, because they always had the ability to make long chains that lasted and design in sufficient lubrication. Well most of the time...

For most manufacturers, the timing belt was a convenient, sensible and cost-effective solution. Rubber doesn't rattle, doesn't need lubrication, and can be constituted so that it doesn't stretch. The downside, though, is that a rubber belt that can't stretch will, eventually, break. However, provided a service life can be predicted and renewal specified before breakage will happen, there's no problem.

Thus most car makers, as they switched to overhead cam engines also switched from timing chains to timing belts. Even Volvo started using belts when, in 1974, the OHV B20 engine gave way to the overhead cam B21. Mercedes-Benz, however, did not. Their engineering and build quality were, it was felt, such that they could design and make chains that wouldn't stretch or rattle.

By and large, that faith was justified. There were a couple of exceptions – most notably the single-width simplex chains used on early (1986/7) 190s, but once these were replaced by a double-width duplex chain from late 1987 there were no further issues.

Since then, as manufacturing tolerances and quality has improved industry-wide, most other makers have come back to chains. It is, though, rather nice to think that we are part of the 'gang' that never left them...



Cheapest Tip of all

Here's an idea that I was shown by a neighbour many years ago – and it really is a good one. Next time you're in a DIY store or similar, buy a length or two of foam pipe lagging; it costs next to nothing. Then, when you get home, take your cross-shaped wheel brace out from wherever you keep it, and attach the lagging to it with tape as shown here. Not only does this make the brace a while lot more comfortable to use – especially in a roadside emergency – but it also makes it easier to grip hard. Try it – you'll be surprised just how much difference it makes!



Technical Tips

Words: Peter Simpson

Relay Race...

As those of you who read this issue may recall, I've something of a soft-spot for the A-Class.

However a friend who runs a petrol version has recently had an infuriating ongoing problem of intermittent cutting out or refusing to start; far from ideal in a car used to transport children!

First time this happened, the car stopped suddenly on the road, but fortunately it restarted after a few seconds. Later the same day the same thing happened, except that it wouldn't start. Rachel summoned the AA who quickly diagnosed a faulty fuel pump relay; the patrol mentioning that fuel pump relay issues aren't uncommon on nineties/noughties Mercs. Anyway, a new one was fitted (the fuse/relay box is under the driver's footwell, next to the battery) and all was well for a few weeks.

Then it started happening again, so hubby popped in another relay. This one lasted about a month, something Rachel immediately blamed on his penny-pinching, because he'd paid £12.95 whereas the AA had charged around double that for the one they fitted. So he put in another, and to eliminate any question of it being of poor quality, bought it from a main dealer. Guess what - within a month the car started cutting out again. By this point the family were, probably understandably, beginning to think in terms of trading the car in. Yes, relays are not dissimilar to bulbs on that they can fail at any time, but three in three months was excessive.

However before doing so, they did discuss the matter with a local diagnostic specialist who suggested a possible cause; if the fuel lift pump was defective



Above: Relays are like bulbs in that they can fail at any time, but when one keeps on going there may well be an underlying cause, and on an A-Class (and others) a failed fuel pump relay might indicate a failing fuel pump...

and drawing too much current, then that in turn would put extra pressure on the relay, causing it to fail. There are two ways of determining if this is the problem. One is to simply fit another pump, but before doing this it's worth checking how much power the pump is drawing using a multimeter. Set the meter to 'Current' (ie amps) and remove the fuel pump relay, connect the meter between terminals 30 and 87, start the car and note what is being drawn. A momentary 'surge' of perhaps 8amps on startup is fairly normal, but after that it should settle down to around 5amps - much more than this means the pump is working harder than it should. There are other possible reasons for this - it might, for example, be that the second, underbonnet pump has failed, but in most cases it means another tank pump is needed.

As I say, this time it was an A-Class; however similar issues could well apply to other models; if a relay or relays do keep failing, it's worth looking for a cause beyond the relay itself.

Let it flow

Tip now for those of you who, when spring starts breaking through, feel an urge to reach for the wax and top up the rustproofing. Whichever brand of material you choose it will be a lot easier to apply if it's been warmed up slightly and consequently more free-flowing. First place the can in a bucket that's suitable for hot water. Then warm up a couple of kettles of water - probably best to switch off just before it boils - and then pour the water into the bucket. Let the can stand in the bucket for 10-15 minutes, remove it, and you'll find the wax flows far more smoothly and is far easier to apply. It also 'seeps' further into panel joints etc., which are where you want it...

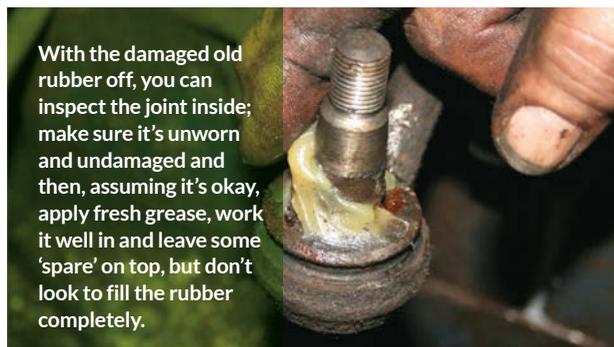




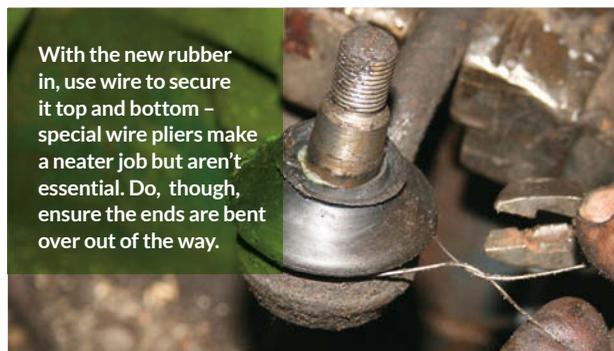
Technical Tips



Typical split balljoint rubber – this should fail an MoT or safety inspection as grease can get out and dirt can get in, meaning that if the fault isn't caught in time the joint could fail.



With the damaged old rubber off, you can inspect the joint inside; make sure it's unworn and undamaged and then, assuming it's okay, apply fresh grease, work it well in and leave some 'spare' on top, but don't look to fill the rubber completely.



With the new rubber in, use wire to secure it top and bottom – special wire pliers make a neater job but aren't essential. Do, though, ensure the ends are bent over out of the way.

TIP
OF THE MONTH

Balljoint Rubber Renewal

One fairly common cause of MoT failure on older cars is a split, damaged or insecure balljoint rubber. This fault is a 'fail' for good reason – a damaged rubber will allow grease to escape from the joint, meaning it's not being lubricated properly. It will also allow rust to form inside, and dirt and grit to enter the joint, where it will eventually cause even more wear.

When a rubber fails, it's usual to renew the complete joint. Often, though, this isn't necessary, and on a well-maintained car where such a fault will be spotted fairly quickly, it's often possible to renew just the rubber. Besides being cheaper, this method may also help in cases where replacement joints are scarce.

I do, though, need to stress that this is only appropriate for the sort of owner who checks things like this

regularly, and notices that a joint which is known to have been fine last time has started to leak. If you're inspecting a car you've just bought, or there's a possibility that it's 'been like it for ages' then unless you are absolutely certain nothing has got inside, you should assume the joint has been contaminated and renew it.

If, though, you are going to go ahead and change the rubber only, the procedure is actually pretty straightforward; the hardest part is likely to be splitting the joint for access. There are two types of balljoint splitter; the screw-type which pushes the joint apart by screw pressure and the fork type which involves use of a heavy hammer; where reuse is a possibility the screw type is preferred. Once you've got the joint apart double-check the ball's movement; it needs to feel consistently tight

all round and then top up with fresh grease before popping the replacement rubber on.

Replacement rubbers can be bought online for a pound or two apiece – tip here; the price comes down significantly for bulk buys so get together with others if you can! You then secure it with wire – you can buy special wire twisting pliers which make a neat and easy job of this, and if you do a lot of this sort of thing may think the investment worthwhile. They're also quite fun to use, and the sort of thing that might appeal to 'tool collectors'. You can, though, do the job just as well with conventional pliers. Do though, whichever method you use, ensure that the sharp end of the wire is turned over and tucked well out of the way – otherwise it may cause injury next time this part of the car needs attention.



Don't forget the pollen filter!

Many's the time that I've come across a car with poor cabin airflow and where the owner has assumed the problem is caused by an underdash problem with the pipework or air control flaps; and such faults can be very tricky to fix. In my experience though there's often a far simpler cause – check the pollen filter first!

These, as the name sort-of implies, 'filter' air entering the cabin, chiefly to remove pollen – something hay fever sufferers in particular appreciate. However the filter also removes other unpleasant stuff such as dirt, airborne dust and the like. Most maintenance schedules will specify a fairly long service/renewal

interval for pollen filters; four years/48,000 miles isn't unusual. This means it's often overlooked completely, especially as cars get older and tend to change owners more frequently than a four-year service interval. Some pollen filters are also a bit tricky to reach – on some A-Classes for example you need to remove the windscreen wipers and the cowl underneath.

More significantly though, the schedule usually recommends more frequent changes for a car used in dirty or dusty conditions, and this can include both very urban environments and rural areas where mud, dust (and pollen!) proliferate! This is often overlooked, but in some conditions a pollen filter can become

Above: Pollen filters are often overlooked during servicing, but can also become clogged well before the official change time if a car is used in dusty/dirty conditions.

clogged in less than two years.

So if you don't seem to be getting as much air from the dash-vents, even with the blower on maximum setting, it's well worth taking a look at the pollen filter. Sometimes, and if you're a cheapskate, you can get an extra year or so out of one by blowing it clean with an airline – though frankly I'd prefer to just pay the money and buy a new one. The one thing I definitely don't recommend, though, is just leaving the filter out. Yes, there's an argument that cars managed perfectly well without them for many years. However if a car does have a pollen filter then the system will have been designed with that in mind, and leaving the filter out could well result in nasties getting right up inside and causing all manner of problems.

Not Hot Enough...

A weak heater is a common cause of complaint with older Mercedes and in many cases the cause is a partially or totally-clogged heater matrix. Sometimes such things can be fixed or 'improved' by reverse-flushing (swapping the heater inlet and outlet pipes so the coolant flows the opposite way. If not, the heater matrix probably needs renewing – and how easy or difficult that it varies enormously.

Sometimes, though, a cure is far easier, because it's not the heater that's at fault at all. Rather, it's the car's cooling system. In essence, the car's heater uses a by-product of the internal combustion engine – heat – to improve comfort. If, though, the engine isn't running at normal temperature, then it won't create as much heat as it should, and the heater will be below par.

The most common causes of over-cold running are a thermostat which has failed in



the open position, or the thermostat having been removed. Sometimes a faulty fan will also cause excess cooling – an electric fan that runs all the time, or a viscous coupling mounted on one on which the coupling has failed, meaning the fan turns all the time rather than being able to slip until the engine reaches temperature.

There are a couple of things you can

check while driving if you suspect this is happening. One – obviously – is the temperature gauge; in most cases normal is mid-way across the gauge, and a needle which struggles to get past the first quarter may be a sign of trouble, though diesel engines always run cooler than petrol. Secondly, if the gauge gets to normal, but only in slow-moving traffic and then drops back when you return to the open road then that again is a good indication. A seized-open thermostat isn't usually any cause for concern beyond the fact that it needs to be renewed – though the ease and cost of this varies. If, however, the 'stat has been removed by a previous owner this may indicate a more serious overheating-type problem which a previous owner is trying to mask.

Certainly something to think about, before condemning the heater itself.



Revolt *into style*

Bored with life in the estate, Skelton's chosen something more rakish.

I mentioned in my last fleet update that I had sold the estate. MAF sensor related issues were rendering it near unusable, I no longer needed an estate, and when Sam Mace came to me offering his E220 Coupe and cash my way I felt I would have been silly to refuse. I've always liked the Coupe shape, especially in facelift form, and when Sam told me that a previous owner has sorted the loom I was sold. I was interested to try a four-cylinder too - life with the 280 had shown me the six pot could be a touch too nose-heavy in the corners for my liking. No, it was never meant to be a sports car - but why settle for less than the best you can do?

Sam's Coupe was cosmetically attractive too. Blue-Black has always been a good colour for them, and the Palomino leather interior is both rare and characterful.



Coupes were always significantly pricier when new, and a jump from a 280TE to an E220 Coupe is one that a company car user on a 3 year rotating deal could conceivably have made. And most of it works - even the air conditioning system blows icy cold. There's not much for me to do with this car.

What there is looks fairly simple. The offside front wing is as rotten as a six month old apple, and the nearside is starting to let go too. There are a few tears in the interior trim, the nearside seatbelt presenter doesn't work, the offside rear electric window is stuck closed and the offside front window regulator has shorn some of its teeth. I'm not sure about the wheels yet. From what I can ascertain, they're a TSW replica of the AMG style 2 5-spoke. As standard the car would have had 15-hole wheels; I may go back to 15-hole wheels in future.



Sam Skelton Editor

1995 Mercedes E220 Coupe
 Mileage: 177,953
 First instalment



"I'm enjoying my E220 far more than my old 280TE."

One aftermarket tweak I've really taken to is the Bluetooth radio. It might not look very pretty - and I had sourced a mid 1990s Blaupunkt from a friend breaking a C-class to replace it - but I like the fact I can take calls hands free, and I like the fact that it links to music on my phone without endless wires trailing across the car (a personal bugbear of mine). So the Blaupunkt sits on the shelf, waiting for another suitable car into which it can be fitted.



Below: Iffy window regulator led to gaffer tape 'fix'...



What has surprised me most is driving my new coupe. I like larger engines and more power than most in my cars, with supercharged Jaguars, T5 Volvos and turbocharged SAABs in the past roster of everyday life. And yet I find I'm enjoying my E220 far more than my old 280TE. Turn-in is sharper courtesy of less weight over the nose, it handles more sweetly as a result. It almost feels sharper, despite the fact that it shares the same steering box as my estate had. The power delivery is more eager, albeit slower - and my wallet is kissing me every time we stop at the pumps. 35mpg as an average is not to be sniffed at - and it hasn't once dipped below 30mpg brim to brim yet.

So what have I done so far? I've bought a wing on eBay - someone was breaking a matching Blue-Black coupe, and offered me the wing for less than £50 delivered to my door. It's a pattern part, but having seen it on the donor it's not a bad effort - and when the weather warms up, I can try my hand at fitting it.



Matt Richardson

1983 Mercedes 230E

Mileage: 135,002

First instalment

Mystery Benz barn find

Matt's accidental W123 appears complete... except for keys

For years I've wanted a W123, there's something very appealing about the rock solid build and classic Mercedes lines, so I could hardly contain my excitement when I saw one lurking under a thick blanket of dirt in the corner of a barn I was using as a photoshoot location.

After spending the shoot repeatedly wandering back to look at the car, the land owner mentioned the 230E had been abandoned for nearly two decades and it needed to be moved. If I wanted it, fetch a trailer.

I couldn't believe my luck (good or bad remains to be seen), but filled out a V62 to apply for a V5 before moving it and when that arrived booked a car transporter. The only fly now bothering Stuttgart's ointment was a lack of keys. The doors weren't locked but the steering was, and there was a moment of panic over whether or not the automatic gearbox would go into neutral to allow it to be towed. A call to a friend with a collection of these confirmed it would be fine.

The steering lock proved more of an issue - the wheels looked straight, but were skewed just enough to make rolling on and off the truck and finally into a corner of my drive a tricky task involving jacking up and dragging sideways, and took about an hour each end rather than the usual couple of minutes.

A night of heavy rain washed away the worst of the dirt so I was able to take a proper look and assess what I'd taken on. It's a handsome looking beast but more of a project than I expected, there's some light panel damage on the front offside and the alternator and tail lights have been stolen. The coil



"The 230E had been abandoned and needed to be moved. If I wanted it, fetch a trailer."

Above: 230E cleaned up well.

and fan turned up in the boot, which I was nervous to open - a luxury saloon dumped in the wilderness, who knows what gangster could have been trussed up in there?

Thankfully corpse free, the interior is in excellent condition after years in the dry darkness and only 135,000 miles of use. I'm foolishly excited to try the town and country horn.

My big issue is the lack of keys, I can't move it or see if the engine runs so will have to find a lock number and have some cut as soon as possible, what a way to welcome my first Mercedes. 



Sam Mace Contributor

1992 Mercedes-Benz 280TE

Mileage: 201,864

Third instalment

Estate of play

The editor's former steed has a new home. And while issues persist, we're getting somewhere.

Impulse purchases. We all make them. That shirt you don't need or perhaps a cheeky chocolate bar when you're paying for fuel? But how many of you have bought a Mercedes on impulse? Actually, I'm guessing it's quite a lot of you. Though that doesn't make buying the scruffy E220 coupe I ended up with any less stupid. I bought it off a friend who didn't really have the space or the use for it - then yours truly bought it, who soon realised he didn't have the space or the use for it.

With a preserved Peugeot 405 and my daily-driver Volvo V70 competing for room and attention already, I wasn't able to justify keeping it. Thankfully, the editor came to the rescue with a solution. He'd always had a soft spot for my coupe, and his white 280TE was looking for a new home...Can you guess where this is going?

I may have gained two cylinders, but have I also gained more work for myself? I'll be picking up where Skelton has left off (see issue 2). A bearing on the heater fan motor is dying, and making a racket like a diesel generator in the process. But the running issue which Sam wasn't able to fix during his brief tenure of ownership is more urgent. Despite his efforts, the fault not only persists, but appears to be getting worse. Previously the problem was restricted to only occasional stalling at low speeds, but I've now developed a fear of roundabouts, petrol station forecourts and car parks. The Mercedes now happily



cuts out at the slightest hint of being driven slowly. Following an evening consulting the web, I suspect a MAF sensor to be at fault - so I've decided to keep the Volvo until the Mercedes is working as it should.

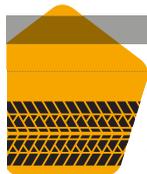
At this point you may be wondering why I swapped my coupe for this car? Vocal fan motor and truculent MAF sensor aside, I'm pleased with it. Apart from some

Above: Looking behind the rear inner wing linings exposes the worst of this S124's rust. This will need sorting.



corrosion to the rear inner wings, the rest of the car seems untouched by the W124's most fearsome enemy - the tin worm. The paint may be flat and pitted in some places, but this is going to be my daily workhorse in the future, so I can overlook some cosmetic scruffiness. Will it be a good idea to use this 25-year-old classic day in, day out? I'm about to find out.





Delwar Matin

1993 Mercedes 320CE

YOUR CARS

Delwar Matin's got his Coupe just the way he wants it.

I love my 320CE. I purchased the car on a whim back in November 2013 from a gentleman who had it for 10 years and really cherished it and only took it out for trips with his wife. It came with a raft of paperwork but was a bit tatty bodywork wise.

After driving it daily for 2 years then I put the car in for its 1st respray which was supposed to be in original Almandine but I didn't like the colour that much. Instead I went for a modern Mercedes colour from the Designo range. Whilst in for paintwork I had various things done such as adding a Remus exhaust box, custom exhaust, and H+R cup shocks and springs. I fitted AMG wing spacers to allow for wider front wheels - a set of 18" AMG staggered monoblocks. I also fitted poly bushes to the rear subframe, and to the front & rear suspension.

During the summer of 2017 someone tried to steal petrol - damaging the rear wing. Due to fitting wider rear wheels I needed the arches flared anyway, so combined the two - I used the opportunity to go to a real specialist on paint work who made the car panels straight as an arrow

Left: AMG monoblocks and custom paint set Delwar's car off.

" I went for a modern Mercedes colour from the Designo range."

and replaced the front windscreen while it was in the garage.

The next step is to get a new engine fitted, something more potent than the 3.2 - maybe an E36 AMG engine or maybe even an E500 V8. I also want to install a Sportline steering box sourced from Australia - as the coupes didn't get the quicker ratio steering boxes.

I never intended for the car to be such a project - but I've got it looking how I want it now, and the next step is the performance. It's still a work in progress - but it's slowly getting there now.





CLUB NEWS

Our Club Editor Jack celebrates the return of model days to the Mercedes calendar

It's the time of year when the garage doors are opened, the covers rolled back and the cobwebs blown off. The show season will be making its return in the next month and the club calendar will be off to a start.

In South Yorkshire, we kicked off the year with a dinner at the Hickleton Golf Club near Doncaster. The evening was a success, with 40 members in attendance. It was a good opportunity to catch up with people and find out what projects have been completed / taken on over winter (Watch this space for what promises to be an outstanding W123 280TE restoration). The car turnout was sadly unexceptional for a pub meet, my W124 was the oldest vehicle in the car park, but Tim Shambrook's Toyota Yaris Hybrid was unquestionably the biggest head turner.

In other news, making a return

for the 2018 club events calendar is W123 day. Organised by Dave Bambury – long-time 300D owner, Concours winner and advocate of the model – for July 15th at the “World of Wedgewood”. By then my Thistle Green 230E will hopefully be ready, but then again; Rome wasn't built in a day.

In a very “E-Class” themed Club News, we also look forward to August 19th and E-Class day. It seems as though my calls for this event have been answered. I wrote in the first edition of Mercedes Driver how I thought that building on the achievements of the “S Fests” of recent years that dedicated E and C-Class days would be welcome additions to the calendar. Bringing together Chrome and Plastic bumper models is something of a challenge, as fans of each are usually steadfast in their opinion of the other but I

Above: W124 day success has led to C and E-class days joining S-Fest on the calendar.

look forward to /8 models parked alongside the latest W213s. The evolution of the performance saloon, the very backbone of AMG, will be obvious at this event – but which is the best? I find myself painfully drawn to the classifieds for an E55 at the moment... I digress.

A month later and round off the show season for most will be W124 day at Leyburn in North Yorkshire. By all accounts, last year's event was a highlight. The theme for this show will be High Mileage cars. 489,000 is the highest mileage I am aware of on a W124 – a 230TE to be precise, so if you can beat that be sure to bring your car along. In my opinion, this is a great move on the part of Simon Harrison, as being able to achieve telephone number mileage is an often-overlooked asset of a model that was “Engineered Like No Other Car in the World.”



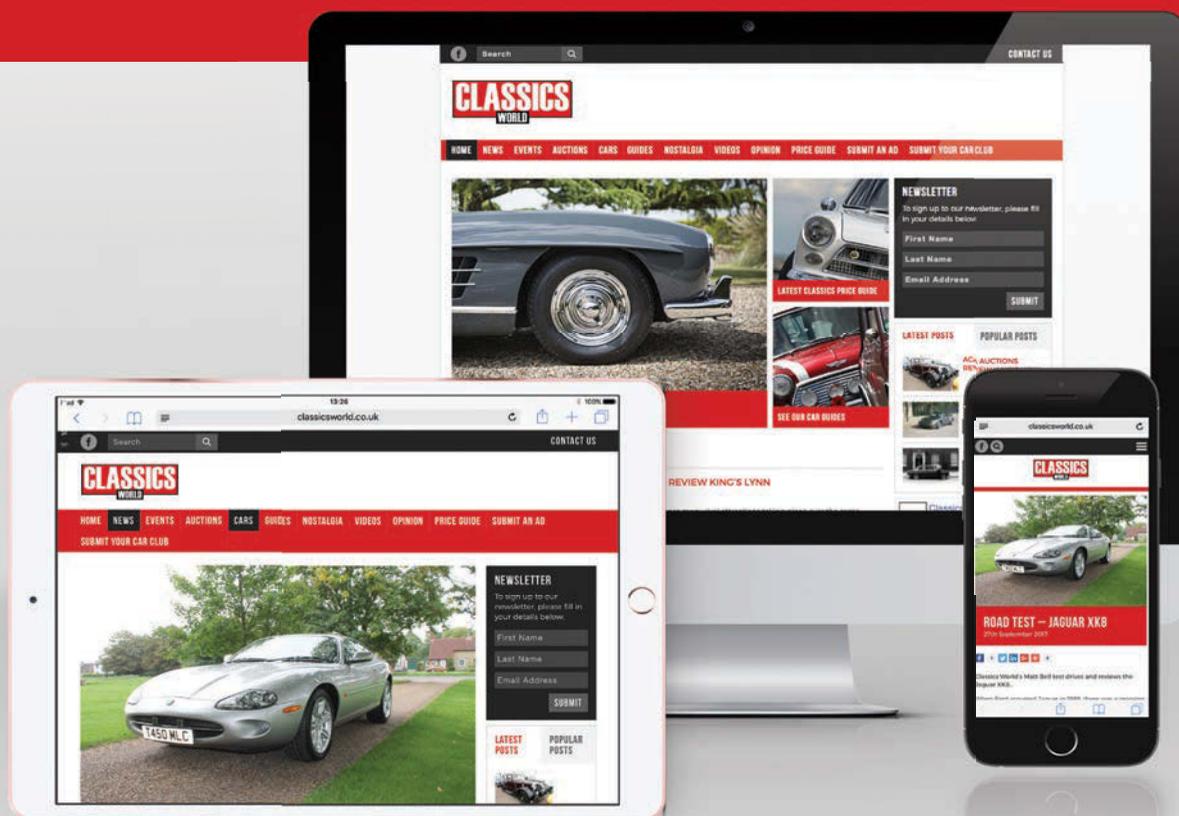
Jack O'Brien Club Editor



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190

190E



1991, 65,000 Miles, £6,995. Finished in smoke silver with unmarked brown interior. Factory sunroof, lovely unmolested example. Full service history. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

190 2.0 DIESEL



1992, 98,000, £1,100 ONO. Excellent condition, no rust, perfect runner. Electric tilt and slide sunroof. All electric Windows. 5 speed manual gearbox. Please call 01728 833337.

230

230



1981, 57,000 Miles, £12,995. Only one owner. Finished in immaculate Taigu beige with tan interior. Spec includes auto transmission and power steering. Very hard to find low mileage and one owner. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

250

250 SE AUTO



1997, 23,555 Miles, £19,995. Finished in immaculate Mercedes classic white with unmarked red MB tex trim. Huge history file with this car and known to us for a number of years. The car was imported from Botswana in 1998 by a titled gentlemen who we purchased the car from in 2008 and we have looked after the car since then. The car is in immaculate condition, rust free and original. One of the best you will ever find. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

C-CLASS

C220 CDI



2004, £3,950. Advant Garde SE Auto, diesel, silver, service history, very tidy car. Please call 01484 420902. (T)

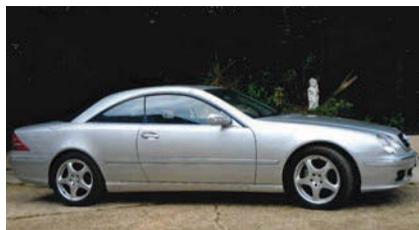
C250 CDI



2011, 39,000 Miles, £12,999. Automatic, estate car, diesel, one owner, 39,000 miles, heated seats, full black electric leather seats, cruise control, remote central locking, 2 keys, roof rails, parking sensors, alloy wheels, stereo and CD player, finished in metallic grey, full black leather trim. Please call 02380 766870, Hampshire.

CL

CL500



1999, 99,000 Miles, £2,750. Automatic. Silver with grey leather interior. MOT. Good condition all around. Please call 01483 282830.

CL500



2002, 89,000 Miles, £7,995. Finished in light metallic blue with grey hide, immaculate unmarked car, very high spec with full service history. Superb looking and driving car, exceptional value. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

CL600



2008, 80,000 Miles, £23,995. Black metallic exterior. Automatic gearbox. Finished in immaculate Obsidian black with unmarked black leather. Panoramic roof, upgraded alloy wheels and Mercedes Command system. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

CLC

CLC180 KOMPRESSOR SPORT



2011, 31,000 Miles, £8,950. Automatic, gun metal grey. All of the extras included. Please call 01484 420902. (T)

GLE

MERCEDES GLE CLASS 350 D 4MATIC AMG LINE



2016, 15,000 Miles, £37,995. 9 speed automatic gearbox, aromatic suspension with adaptive damping, multi- function sports steering wheel, tyre pressure monitoring, reverse park camera with parktronic, smartphone integration and Apple play, DVD player and DAB radio, command with satellite navigation, power fold heated mirrors, LED intelligent high performance headlights and electrically adjustable front heated seats. Please call 01798 874477 (T).

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E-CLASS

E320CDI AVANTGARDGE



2005, 145,000 Miles, £2,750. Full electric, AMG alloys. Lots of history available. Please call 074499 58665.

S CLASS

500 SEL LWB



1986, 105,000 Miles, £3,250. Auto, excellent solid condition. Thistle Green, just out of long term storage. Looks and runs superb, needs minor repairs. Genuine bargain. Please call 07885 519770.

S500L



2001, 52,000 Miles, £7,995. In mint condition. Finished in silver with black hide. Full spec car including dual climate control, sun roof. Electric seats including rear seat, black nappa leather. Full service history. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

W140



£3,995 ONO. Burgundy with cream leather, 10 months MoT, low miles for the year. Automatic, reverse aerials. Lovely car. Please call 07717 773954.

SL

SL60 AMG



1997, 155,000 Miles, £29,995. Metallic grey with charcoal leather. AMG styling including front spoiler and side skirts and the correct AMG 18 inch bolted alloys. Cruise control, heated memory orthopaedic seats, electric windows, and naturally air-conditioning. Please call 01798 874477.

SL 280



1969, 27,000 Miles, £79,950. Pegoda, hard and soft tops, automatic, power steering, finished in unmarked brilliant signal red with tan hide interior, always garaged. Please call 02380 766870, Hampshire. (T)

SL350



2003, 91,000 Miles, £9,495. Finished in dark blue metallic with light beige leather interior. With a full Mercedes service history. Very high spec car with AMG alloy wheels and panoramic roof. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

SL350



2005, 42,000 Miles, £13,995. Black metallic exterior. Automatic gearbox. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

SL 500



1988, 102,000 Miles, £4,800. A very high specification top of the range 500SL in the beautiful and rare colour combination. Please call 07485 656775.

SLK

SLK230 KOMPRESSOR



2003, 68,000 Miles, £5,995. Finished in special order sapphire blue metallic with full black leather trim. Includes the owners handbook, service book, spare keys and original document holder. The car also includes front fogs, red brake callipers, mesh grill, MB dustcaps, AMG badging, cruise control, climate control, high level brake light, GB badge, white dials, hrw, overmats, wind deflector, radio/cd with extra speakers, airbags, centre armrest, ESP, and extra chrome kit. Please call 01202 709407, Dorset. (T)

SLK230 KOMPRESSOR

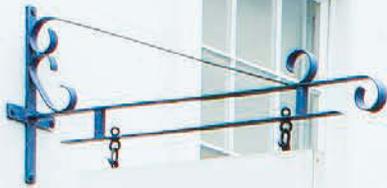


2001, 51,000 Miles, £5,495. Finished in desingo blue with two tone desingo leather interior. Turbine alloy wheels. Full service history. Very well looked after car. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

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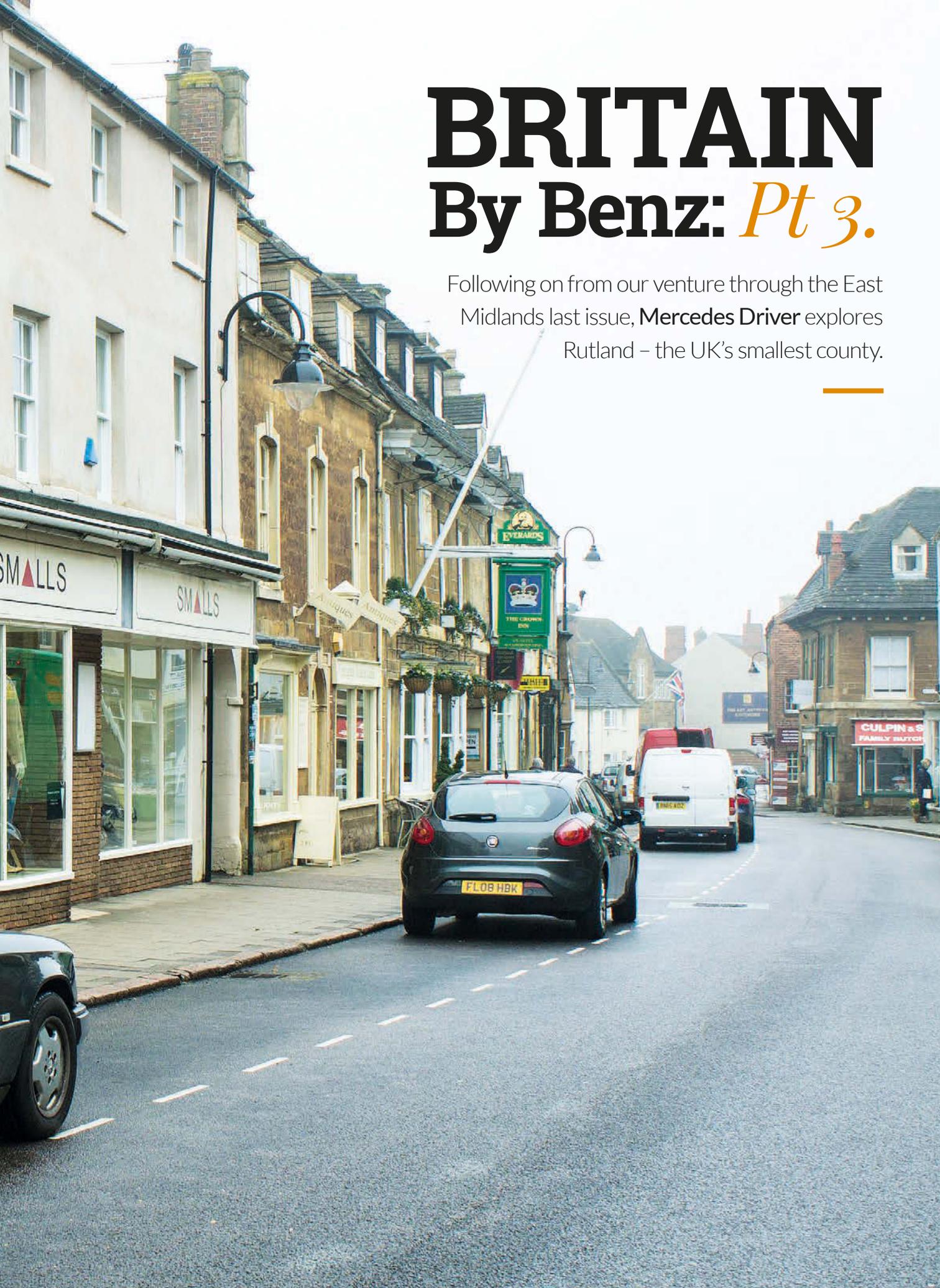
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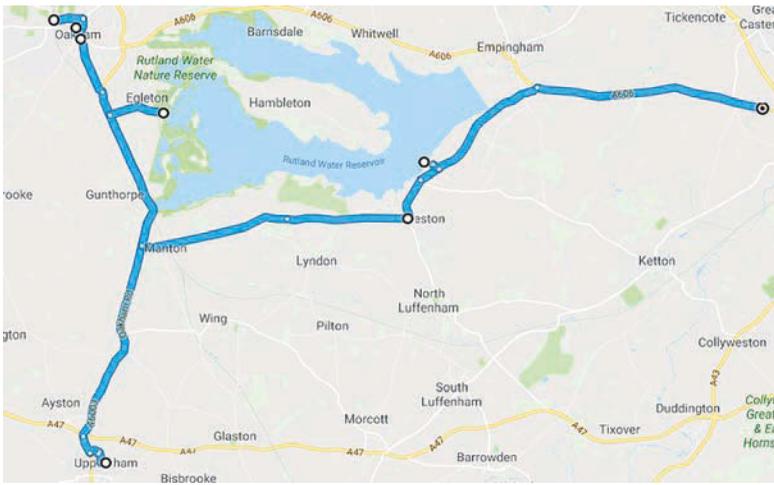


BRITAIN

By Benz: *Pt 3.*

Following on from our venture through the East Midlands last issue, **Mercedes Driver** explores Rutland – the UK's smallest county.







Classic Touring

Words and pics: Sam Skelton

Our travels this month would make a perfect accompaniment to the tour from Kimbolton to Kirby Hall – or, should you find yourself at a loose end for a day, would make for a grand day out in their own right. Rutland has often been lampooned as a result of its size – notably by Monty Python's Eric Idle in his first television project post Python: *Rutland Weekend Television* was named in jest as a reflection of the size of the budget allocated. After all, a county spanning under 50,000 people in 150 square miles would warrant a relatively small televisual budget...

Fast forward some fifty years or so, though, and the UK's smallest county has acquired a reputation for quaint gentility and picturesque surroundings, and makes the perfect backdrop to a day out in your Benz. To ensure ease of access for those who might choose this as a follow-up to

our previous tour, we're approaching Rutland from the south. Take the A47 west bound from the A43, and approaching the town of Uppingham.

Uppingham is known for its antique shops. With six antique shops in a town playing host to under 5000 people, it is unsurprisingly a haven for collectors of old and interesting ephemera. Uppingham is also a market town – and has been since it was granted a Market Charter in 1281. Now, the weekly market takes place on each Friday. Managed by the town council, Uppingham Market regularly features upwards of fifteen traders, specialising in everything from bread and vegetables through to linen, fish, and ladieswear. To judge a town on its market is perhaps quaint, but such is central to the premise of a market town, and Uppingham is thriving as a result.

Uppingham is also host to the only fatstock show still to be held in temporary pens in a market town,

Below: Oakham Castle has mostly gone – but the Great Hall survives.

with the Falcon Hotel later playing host to the exhibitors. Champion pigs, sheep and cattle are exhibited at this event, typically held toward the end of November, with prizes for those deemed best. The weekly fatstock market has been gone for over fifty years, but the annual show ensures that the spirit lives on.

North, then, following the A6003 and the A606 to the county town of Oakham. Oakham not only features a castle, but the Rutland County Museum – a popular attraction which details a great deal of local history. A lesser known fact is that Oakham's signal box is world famous. It seems unusual that a signal box might become a renowned visitor point within a tiny county, but when immortalised by Airfix as its generic OO-gauge signal box, used by several thousand railway modellers on fictional lines. The model, now made by Dapol, is still popular today.

Fans of crime and punishment »





will note that the Rutland County Museum features the only complete New Drop Gallows in existence – among its collection of crime and punishment collection. For fans of rural life, archaeology and social history, the museum has several collections spanning over 11,000 artefacts depicting Rutland through the ages.

History fans will be equally intrigued by Oakham Castle, one of England’s most complete examples of surviving Norman architecture. Built between 1180 and 1190, it may not look like most peoples’ idea of a castle but nonetheless is a striking building. The surviving structure is the Great Hall – used for banqueting and other court activities. Housed within is a collection of over 230 horseshoes donated by peers of the realm, a custom whose reasons are lost in time but which was originated in 1470 by King Edward IV. The horseshoe has become recognised as the symbol of Rutland as a result.

One of Rutland’s better known features is of course Rutland Water. Known as Empingham Reservoir until building work was finalised in 1976, it is a drinking water reservoir which supplies the whole county of Rutland. Its construction submerged the hamlets of Middle Hambleton and Lower Hambleton, though Upper Hambleton has remained upon a peninsula. Rutland Water is also



home to a wetland nature reserve, which features Special Protection Area status owing to its populations of Gadwall and Shoveler ducks. The Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre is located here, and every August hosts the British Birdwatching Fair – an event which attracts in excess of 22000 people each year.

On the opposite side of Rutland Water lies the fabulously named village of Edith Weston. Named for Edith of Wessex, Queen of Edward the Confessor, it stands as a reminder that traditionally Rutland was land granted to the wives of English Kings. Here you will find the Wheatsheaf pub, an ideal place to break for lunch. A traditional pub replete with beer garden and stone walls, the Wheatsheaf offers both good beers (Largely from the

Top: Normanton Church Museum is an architectural oddity - now mostly used for weddings.

Everards brewery in nearby Leicester) and traditional meals made with local ingredients. It’s delightfully unpretentious, with much of the menu given over to steaks, gammon, egg and chips, and other staple elements of the pub menu. Sunday’s menu also features an excellent roast – and as with the standard menu, vegetarian options are available.

Head out of Edith Weston in a northeasterly direction, and you will approach Normanton Church Museum – a former church which was set to be demolished in preparation for the creation of the reservoir, but which survives owing to popular protest. Once known as St Matthew’s Church, it was used for centuries as a private mausoleum for the Heathcote Baronets, and fell into disuse when the left Rutland in 1920. Deconsecrated, it now acts as a local history museum devoted to Rutland Water and its background. The lower half has been filled in – acting as a floor to ensure that crumbling masonry will not lead to the church collapsing into the reservoir. It is also possible to hire Normanton Church Museum as a wedding venue, with prices set at £699 for two hours at the time of going to press.

Head east from Normanton toward Empingham to join the A606. Follow directions to Stamford, and you will meet the A1 dual carriageway – and so begins your journey home. 



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2008 MERCEDES CL600 AMG Finished in immaculate Magnatite black with unmarked ivory ventilated leather. The car has every option including command system, heated and cool seats, Multisentric front seat with bolster adjustment and massage setting, night vision, DVD and sunroof. AMG wheels, distance drive dynamic and much more! The new car invoice is in the file amounting to £108,000 when the car was new. MINT CONDITION EXCEPTIONAL VALUE! **£21,995**



1968 MERCEDES 250 SE Finished in immaculate Mercedes classic white with red MB Tex Trim. The car was imported from Botswana in 1998 by a titled gentleman who we purchased the car from in 2008 and looked after the car since then. The car is in immaculate condition, rust free and original. NOT MANY LIKE THIS..... **£19,995**



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1981 MERCEDES 230E AUTO Only one owner and 57,000 miles. Finished in immaculate Taigu beige with tan interior. Spec includes Auto Transmission and Power Steering. Very hard to find low mileage and one owner 123 Mercedes in this condition. **£12,995**



2001 MERCEDES 500 SEL Only 52,000 miles and mint condition, finished in silver with black hide. Full spec car including dual climate control, sun roof, electric seats including rear seat, black nappa leather. Full Service History. Very hard to find a better one..... **£7995**



1991 MERCEDES 190E 1.8 AUTO Finished in Smoke Silver with unmarked brown interior. Factory sunroof, lovely unmolested example. Only 65,000 miles and Full Service History. **£6995**



2000 BMW Z3 3.0 Finished in titan silver with black leather sports seats. With lots of Schnitzer modifications, including Schnitzer front bumper, 17inch Schnitzer wheels, Schnitzer exhaust system, Schnitzer handbrake and Schnitzer gear knob. 98,000 miles with a Full Service History. **£8995**



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