



# YOUR ABCCC NEWS

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*The Official Newsletter Of*

THE ALL BRITISH CLASSICS CAR CLUB VIC INC.

Edition N<sup>o</sup>. 245

September, 2020

## BRITISH SPORTSCAR OF THE MONTH



*A fine turn out of Daimler SP250s at the 2019 A.O.M.C. British and European Motoring Show at Yarra Valley Racecourse, Yarra Glen. It was reported that there were six of these fine cars on display. The fourth along the line features a hard top, the same as the car featured on Page 4.*



Associations Incorporation Registered Number: A0035462V



## THE ALL BRITISH CLASSICS CAR CLUB VIC INC. – YOUR COMMITTEE

Executive Committee	Name	Telephone	E-mail Address
President	Tony Pettigrew	(03) 9739 1146	<a href="mailto:president@abccc.com.au">president@abccc.com.au</a>
Vice President	Colin Brown	(03) 5964 9291	<a href="mailto:colin@abccc.com.au">colin@abccc.com.au</a>
Treasurer	Bill Allen	(03) 9846 2323	<a href="mailto:treasurer@abccc.com.au">treasurer@abccc.com.au</a>
Secretary	Pat Douglas	0425 712 973	<a href="mailto:secretary@abccc.com.au">secretary@abccc.com.au</a>
Committee Positions			
Committee Member	Frank Sawyer	0408 633 778	
Committee Member	Greg Anglin	(03) 9876 3293	
Committee Member	Rex Hall	(03) 9795 7669	<a href="mailto:rex@abccc.com.au">rex@abccc.com.au</a>
Committee Member	Walter Thompson	0408 507 890	<a href="mailto:wally@abccc.com.au">wally@abccc.com.au</a>
Membership Secretary	Gordon Lindner	0418 540 920	<a href="mailto:membership@abccc.com.au">membership@abccc.com.au</a>
AOMC Delegate	Bill Allen	(03) 9846 2323	
AOMC Delegate	Mike Allfrey	(03) 9729 1480	<a href="mailto:michael.allfrey@bigpond.com">michael.allfrey@bigpond.com</a>
FVV & CCC Delegate	Bill Allen	(03) 9846 2323	
FVV & CCC Delegate	Tony Pettigrew	(03) 9739 1146	<a href="mailto:president@abccc.com.au">president@abccc.com.au</a>
VCPS Officer (Applications)	Walter Thompson	0408 507 890	<a href="mailto:wally@abccc.com.au">wally@abccc.com.au</a>
VCPS Officer (Renewals)	Colin Brown	(03) 5964 9291	<a href="mailto:colin@abccc.com.au">colin@abccc.com.au</a>
Web Master	Ed Bartosh	(03) 9739 1879	<a href="mailto:webmaster@abccc.com.au">webmaster@abccc.com.au</a>
VCPS Attendance Records	Sue Allfrey	(03) 9729 1480	<a href="mailto:sue.allfrey@bigpond.com">sue.allfrey@bigpond.com</a>
Club Regalia Manager	Maxine Pettigrew	(03) 9739 1146	
Newsletter Editor	Mike Allfrey	(03) 9729 1480	<a href="mailto:michael.allfrey@bigpond.com">michael.allfrey@bigpond.com</a>
Editor's Assistant	Rick Lloyd	(03) 9830 1752	
The All British Classics Car Club Vic Inc. Website <a href="http://www.abccc.com.au">http://www.abccc.com.au</a>			
The Association of Motoring Clubs Website <a href="http://www.aomc.asn.au/">http://www.aomc.asn.au/</a>			
The Federation of Veteran, Vintage and Classic Car Clubs Website <a href="http://www.federation.asn.au/">http://www.federation.asn.au/</a>			

### CONTACTING THE ABCCC VIC INC.

On The Web <http://www.abccc.com.au>  
 On Facebook [www.facebook.com/AllBritishClassicsCarClub](http://www.facebook.com/AllBritishClassicsCarClub)  
 Postal Address PO Box 201, Chirnside Park, Victoria, 3116

### CLUB INFORMATION

Visit the club's Website for information about how club matters are conducted. This Website also features information about how the Victorian Club Permit Scheme (VCPS) is operated by the All British Classics Car Club Vic Inc.

Our club does have one explicit rule – for those motor cars operating on the Victorian Club Permit Scheme (VCPS), using the auspices of the All British Classics Car Club Vic Inc., for the ongoing benefit of the VCPS, their owners must continue to be a financial member for the duration of the permit period, and attend a minimum of three club events during the permit's active year. Failure to respect this rule will result in the VCPS renewal being insupportable and void.

### MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual membership subscription for the All British Classics Car Club Vic Inc. is \$45.00 per annum. This subscription fee also includes the club member's partner. In addition to that, there is a once-only \$30.00 Joining Fee. Please address membership enquiries to: Gordon Lindner, 9 Hagen Drive, Berwick, Victoria, 3806. Telephone Number 0418 540 920.

**Note: Membership subscriptions are due before the end of December each year.**

**The All British Classics Car Club Vic Inc. was founded by the late Frank E Douglas  
on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1997**

#### LIFE MEMBERS

**The ABCCC Vic Inc. is proud to grant Life Membership to those who provide exceptional service to our club.  
Current Life Member: Pat J Douglas**

## ABCCC EVENTS DIRECTORY

**Special Note:** This ABCCC Events Directory lists only those events organised by the ABCCC. There have been other events that, due to constraints, have been deleted from this issue.

**NOTICE: ALL EVENTS TILL AT LEAST OCTOBER, 2020 HAVE BEEN CANCELLED. THESE DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COVID-19 RULINGS FROM OUR GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR MEDICAL ADVISORS.**

**ANY FURTHER CHANGES WILL BE NOTIFIED AS THEY ARE ADVISED TO THE EDITOR.**

### September, 2020

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> The Creaking Wooden Frame Run – An ABCCC Event. Phil Cook (03) 9842 5449  
Venue – TBA. **(Cancelled)**

### October, 2020

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> The 'Terri Allen Garden Tour' – An ABCCC Event. Kate Senko (03) 5169 6626  
Venue – Macedon Open Gardens Fair. **(Cancelled)**

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Terry's Taste Tour – An ABCCC Event. **(Note changed information.)** Ian Terry 0409 097 496  
Start Venue – Caldermeade, Torradin, Victoria. **(Not sure about this event)**

### November, 2020

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> Sapphire Coast Tour – An ABCCC Event. Maxine Pettigrew (03) 9739 1146  
**(Cancelled)**

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Our Car Boot Picnic – An ABCCC Event. Christopher Constantine (03) 9898 4431  
Venue – TBA. **(Not sure about this event)**

### December, 2020

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> Christmas Luncheon – An ABCCC Event. Maxine Pettigrew (03) 9739 1146  
Venue – TBA. **(Not sure about this event)**

### October, 2021

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> The Justly Famed Indulgence Tour – An ABCCC Event. Peter McKiernan 0407 876 023  
Touring – The Port Fairy Area.

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## EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS – Issue N<sup>o</sup>. 245

Having not heard much from the membership, it has to be assumed that everyone is avoiding the Covid-19 plague. Some of us have been in hospital recently and we, collectively, wish them a full and speedy recovery. During visits to physio therapy, in the foyer I have been meeting an elderly gent who always asks me, "How's the old Rover going then?" My response is usually related to it being better than his Mercedes-Benz tractor, and we have a three metres separation chuckle about that. I also tell him that the Rover is only a young pup! All relieving good fun.

Recently, I had to visit Knox Private Hospital, during the compulsory Stalag-IV face mask wearing regime. Having just purchased a bright orange McLaren Formula One team mask, I arrived at the now non-automatic door and was quickly confronted by two Matrons who deemed my mask as being 'not suitable'. Brand new mask not suitable? Well, there was no getting past those two, it was a bit like one of those *Carry On* films that we used to enjoy! I was given a Chinese made flimsy that only wanted to cover my chin, and was escorted firmly to the specialist's suite. My orange mask, with McLaren logo, had been made in Italy, ordered from England and shipped from Holland! It arrived in four days, quicker than our chemist could get some for us – a bit expensive but well worth it so far, and why not?

This month we have a truly wonderful report on the 2020 running of the ALCAN5000 Rally that, in February/March went through Canada's north west and into northern Alaska. Peter Schneider's report is on Page 8, and the photographs he has sent to us are so interesting that they will be spread, in page width format, over coming issues of this magazine. Thank you Peter and Joanne for sharing the rally experience with us.

In addition to that, there is a slight divergence from matters Jowett, in that the feature motor car for this month, is the Daimler SP250 commencing with an article provided by the Daimler Lanchester Club of Victoria, and then some personal memories of a Daimler SP250. For more on the Daimler SP250, refer to Issue 222 of *Your ABCCC News*. So, matters are looking up a fair bit. How about some experiences with such as Sunbeam, M.G., Triumph, Humber, Armstrong-Siddeley, Bentley, Rolls Royce, Jaguar, B.M.C. Badge Engineering and other British marques? What about six (6) pages describing a Rochdale Olympic – riveting stuff? Or, even the Vauxhall PA Cresta, Britain's own American car?

There is also one of my Misspent Youth series (not to mention some Misspent Old Age incidents that are currently happening!), that describes my first of numerous trips to the Le Mans 24-hours race, back in the days when such motor racing tours were just commencing. For a young fellow, then, exciting stuff.

From England, we have a summary from the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, of how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting their clubs over there. We are certainly not the only ones cancelling a virtual year's worth of events. Our A.O.M.C. is conducting a similar survey.

Enjoy this edition.

*Mike Alfrey – Jupiter, Bringer of Jollity!*



## FEATURE CAR OF THE MONTH – THE DAIMLER SP250

### ROAD IMPRESSIONS OF: THE DAIMLER SP250 HARD TOP

An Interesting V8-engined 2½-litre Sports Car Possessing Extremely Good Acceleration, a Maximum Speed of 120 m.p.h., and an Extremely Quiet and Flexible Engine.

*Old gateway, modern car – The Daimler SP250 out-side one of the entrances to Minley Manor in Hampshire. This stately house was built in 1858-60 by Raikes Currie and enlarged in 1886-7 by Bertram Wodehouse Currie.*

*Additions were made in 1898 by Laurence Currie and this fine gateway and lodge at the Fleet entrance was erected in 1899. How many rather more stately Daimlers, we wonder, have passed beneath it? It is a sober thought that it is only a matter of one hundred years ago that private families could maintain fine houses of this size; today, Minley Manor is a Military Establishment.*

WHEN Edward Turner, famous for his design work on Triumph motorcycle engines (and, before that, the Ariel Square-Four), was called in to rejuvenate the Daimler Company, Britain's oldest motor manufacturer, he caused something of a sensation by designing a new 76.0 x 69.8 mm. V8 power unit which was installed in a glass fibre-bodied sports two-seater of 2½-litres capacity, which constituted an extremely fast and accelerative car.

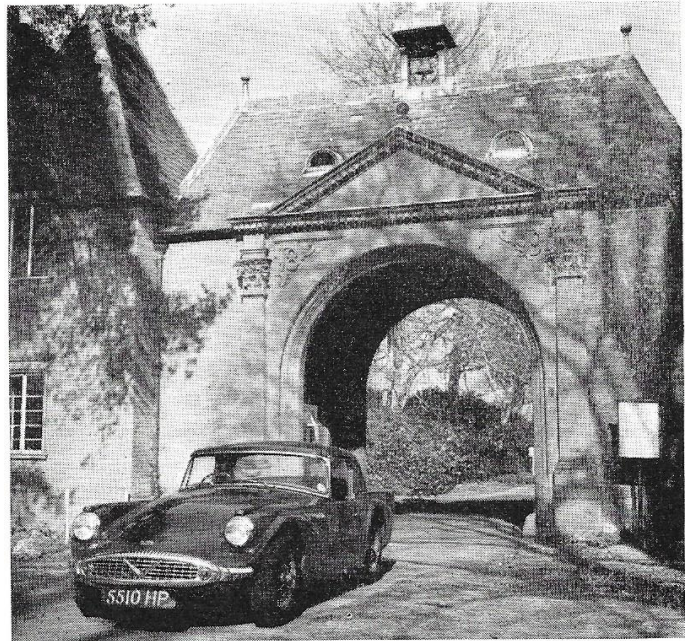
At first called the Daimler Dart, this name was dropped in deference to an American manufacturer who had thought of it first, and the Daimler came on the market as the SP250. It is common knowledge that the earlier models were not altogether satisfactory, chiefly because the glass-fibre body work was crude in the extreme and such dire happenings as doors flying open while the car was being driven fast did nothing to enhance the reputation of the new Daimler.

This has since been corrected and the test car which MOTOR SPORT tried over a considerable mileage last month was a very well-finished car, now manufactured by the Jaguar Company and living up to the latter's tradition of offering extremely high performance for a very modest financial outlay.

The V8 push-rod over head valve 2½-litre engine is the best part of this Daimler sports car. It is an extremely quiet and smooth power unit which it is a delight to sit behind. It is quite ridiculously flexible, the car being able to accelerate away from 500 r.p.m., representing 15 m.p.h. in top gear, and from there of going straight up to its maximum of 120 m.p.h. This type of treatment is in no way detrimental to this remarkable power unit, which peaks at 6,000 r.p.m. but develops its maximum power at 5,800 r.p.m. Admittedly not much power is developed below 2,000 r.p.m. and the Daimler does not really get going until its engine is turning over at 4,000 r.p.m. but for those who like to hang on to top gear, and in this they are encouraged by the unfortunate deficiencies of the Daimler gearbox, such flexibility represents a very attractive feature of the car. Not only is the engine able to pull away from these extremely low speeds without protest, but it is inaudible when idling and is pretty quiet generally, apart from the suck of the S.U. carburettors as it is opened up. Geared to run at 21 m.p.h. per 1,000 r.p.m. in top gear, 80 m.p.h. is a ridiculously easy cruising speed for the SP250. By taking the engine up to 6,000 r.p.m., which is easily reached in the indirect gears, genuine speeds of 42, 69, and 96 m.p.h. are available. Although the SP250 will go up to an indicated 120 m.p.h. very easily, it is pleasantly high-g geared, so that at 80 m.p.h. the silken engine is turning over at an effortless 4,000 r.p.m. This ability to cruise effortlessly at these high speeds is accompanied by acceleration of the kind which makes passing other vehicles a very easy task, even without changing out of the comparatively high top gear. In terms of sober figures, the SP250 will reach 0-60 m.p.h. in 9 sec., 80 m.p.h. from a standstill in 15.4 sec., and will dispose of a standing-start quarter-mile in 17 sec. It will also go from 40 to 60 m.p.h. in the 3.58-to-1 top gear in 7.8 sec. Thus one can feel no dissatisfaction with the very high performance offered by this inexpensive sports car and as its speed and acceleration are matched by Girling disc brakes on all four wheels the Daimler is a fast and easy-to-drive car from the point of view of high average speeds from point-to-point.

The Daimler is a typical sports 2-seater, with bucket seats for driver and passenger, behind which is a seat that one adult or two children, preferably the undernourished progeny of dwarfs, can occupy in some discomfort on short journeys. The backs of the bucket seats fold forward to give access to this rather pointless rear seat, which, however, is better than having no back seat. The main seats hold the occupants firmly in a rather upright position, and their cushions remain comfortable after a full day's drive. The test car had a hard-top, so that with the glass side-windows wound fully up, saloon-car comfort was available. This hard-top fitted well and was rain and draught-proof but a disconcerting feature was the fact that the securing clips would automatically work loose and would then detach themselves and shoot past the occupant's ears with the velocity of bullets, before depositing their screws and washers on the floor.

Before the driver are a Smiths 140-m.p.h. speedometer and a tachometer reading to 7,000 r.p.m., with a red line at 6,000 r.p.m. These instruments incorporate indicator lights for direction flashers, main-beam, and ignition lights; the speedometer has trip and total mileage indicators. There is a neat metal-turned central panel which contains four dials



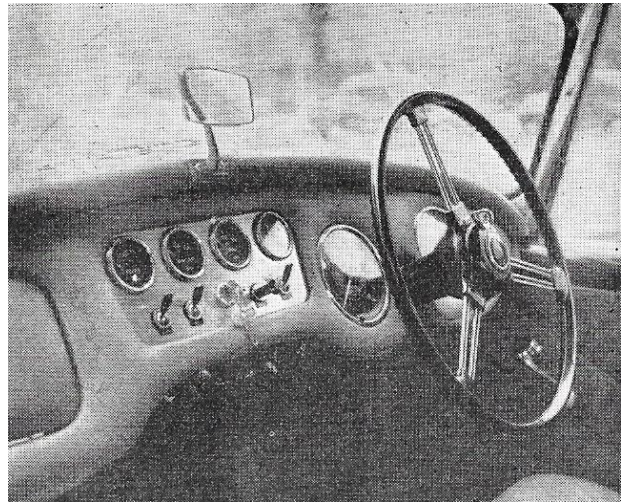


all the same size which indicate, from left to right, fuel contents, water temperature (normally 175° F.), oil pressure (40 lb./sq. in.), and dynamo charge. A row of switches and a knob below these dials, neatly labelled, look after lights, panel lighting, ignition-cum-starter switch, mixture enrichment, and windscreen wipers. The last named work only with the ignition switched on but the horn can be blown when the ignition is not on.

Before the passenger there is a lockable cubby-hole with a well padded lid, this being lined and having quite a respectable capacity.

*The cockpit, note the fully padded facia with neat auxiliary dials and speedometer and tachometer before the driver and sprung steering wheel. The stubby gear-lever can be seen – this looks very good indeed but, when operated, proved horrid.*

The doors possess good pockets. Below the facia is the horizontal quadrant lever controlling the efficient heater, its settings again clearly labelled. On the left side of the heater control is a tiny button which actuates the electrically-operated screen washers, and on the other side a button, labelled 'A', which opens a fresh-air vent under the scuttle. The windows wind fully up with three turns of the handles, behind the gear-lever is a lidded ashtray, and the door handles pull *up* to open the doors, which constitutes a safety factor. There is crash padding along the whole of the facia and its top rail, but the catches for the front of the hard-top would be vulnerable to the occupants' heads in the event of an accident. Reverting to the windscreen wipers, these self-park effectively, but fail to clear the extremities of the screen. It is satisfactory to find that the windscreen is Triplex plate safety glass. The aforesaid flick switches for lights and panel lighting are set rather close together, which can cause dangerous confusion at night.



*Left: Rear view of the Daimler S P250, showing the tail-end treatment. The boot is quite spacious, its plastic lid shuts nicely and it has a flat unobstructed floor.*

The driving position of the Daimler is generally satisfactory, both the front wings being visible, although the central mirror is apt to impede vision to the near side. The front wings have the sidelights in panels above them although, curiously, no sidelamp 'tell-tales' are incorporated in these extensions. The three-spokes sprung steering wheel has the horn button in its centre and the central hand-brake is of the fly-off variety. The direction flashers are operated from a control on the hub of the steering wheel and the speedometer and rev-counter needles are easy to read and remain very steady, while they move in the same plane. It is rather remarkable to find that not only is it impossible to

dim the panel lighting, but no proper interior light or map light is provided in a car which can be expected to be used by rally competitors. The pedals are properly placed, with plenty of room for the clutch foot to rest away from the pedal; the accelerator is of pendant type placed rather high up from the floor.

In keeping with its sporting demeanour the Daimler is provided with a very short, rigid central gear-lever, but unfortunately what appears to be an efficient means of changing gear in practice turns out to be a considerable disappointment. One of the troubles is that the gear-lever is provided with a rubber knob, which is not only unpleasant to the hand but gives to the lever a degree of flexibility which in no way improves the action. The lever also catches up on the gate, care is needed when changing from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> gear or the lever will spring back towards 1<sup>st</sup>, and when at rest bottom gear is difficult to engage unless the very heavy clutch is fully extended. Indeed, the stiff action of this gear-change makes rapid movement of the lever a very tiring undertaking, and while it might be argued that the flexibility of the Daimler is such that the car is virtually a top-gear machine, no driver of a car of such a sporting aspect will willingly accept this. Unhurried gear-changes are passable, but in general the pleasure of driving a Daimler is very largely marred by the short-comings of its gearbox. Nor is the chassis in keeping with the outstanding engine with which it is endowed. When cornered fast, the SP250 exhibits oversteer tendencies, with a considerable amount of roll, and it teeters between over- and understeer on the faster bends. The suspension becomes particularly lively on rough roads and the back axle plays its part in promoting up-and-down motion. Coupled with this, the car has a tendency to weave at speed and consequently it is more pleasant to bring the speed down before corners with the very efficient disc-brakes, and then make use of the aforesaid extremely good acceleration out of the bends, than to enjoy fast cornering in a car which one would have expected to be better able to cope with this aspect of driving.

The steering, too, is disappointing. Although it is satisfactorily high-g geared, requiring only 2½<sup>th</sup> turns from lock-to-lock, the turning circle being extremely small, it is spoilt by some free play and a 'dead' feel, although there is useful castor-return action and no particular tendency to kick-back over bad roads. It is, however, excessively heavy for parking.

From the foregoing it will be appreciated that the main charm of the Daimler SP250 is its V8 engine. To those who like an engine with this cylinder formation giving a 'waffle-waffle' note as it accelerates, it will be extremely acceptable, and apart from some power-roar, it is a very quiet and smooth, as well as being a very flexible, power unit. From the aspect



of petrol economy it proved more partial to fast main-road motoring than to traffic work. The overall fuel consumption came out at 22.7 m.p.g., but motoring in London reduced this to 15.6 m.p.g. Also, when driving in heavy traffic the water temperature rose rather alarmingly towards boiling point although, in fact, only about a quart of water had to be added to the cooling system in a total of 1,000 miles. In this distance the engine required half-a-gallon of oil to restore the level on the accessible dipstick.

The finish of the glass-fibre body is commendable, and there is little indication on first acquaintance that a metal body is not used, although the driver's door tended to sag slightly and when the bonnet and boot lid are raised the glass-fibre finish is very evident. It is necessary to prop up by hand both bonnet and boot lid and the bonnet prop is rather difficult to clip back into place. The luggage boot lid shuts with commendable ease and the luggage space, if shallow, is quite generous for a car of sporting demeanour. The spare wheel is accommodated under the floor, so that the luggage space is unobstructed. There is a quick-action fuel filler cap situated in the centre of the tail, and the boot is lockable. It is pleasing to find centre-lock wire wheels, those on the test car being shod with Dunlop Road Speed RS5 nylon tyres, which made no protest however fast the Daimler was taken through corners.

Under the bonnet the unusual engine has a commendably high finish, the valve covers being polished, while it was amusing to find a polished plate over the Lucas dynamo bearing the word 'Daimler' in the traditional lettering, while the fan-belt also bore this illustrious name. All the engine accessories and components are accessible, as is the battery, but the throttle linkage is not very professional. With the car comes a typical Daimler instruction book, very beautifully produced and also usefully instructive to the owner.

Since the SP250 first came on the market the front end has been considerably tidied up by the Daimler stylists, and the front bumper no longer looks as though it was hung on as an after-thought. But the front number-plate is hung very low, and so is vulnerable when driving towards kerbs, flower beds and the like. The fuel gauge is extremely pessimistic, reading less than zero when rather more than a gallon of petrol is in the tank; in fact, the fuel range is 285 miles under normal fast-driving conditions. The car gave no trouble in a four-figure mileage, although there was a tap in the engine, audible at idling speeds, which probably emanated from the timing chain.

To sum up this interesting, likeable, sporting 2-seater, its best aspect is undoubtedly its V8 power unit, its worst feature its gear-change, which apart from the shortcomings previously enumerated has a remarkable action, inasmuch as when moving from 2<sup>nd</sup> gear into neutral the lever moves through two notches on the gate, giving the impression of neutral before one is there, which is one more factor the driver has to remember when using this ill-conceived gearbox. When all is said and done, however, the Daimler SP250 offers the usual remarkable Jaguar value for money, inasmuch as it has a maximum speed of a genuine two-miles-a-minute, acceleration which makes light of driving in present-day traffic conditions, and with all performs with remarkable smoothness, silence and flexibility. In conjunction with these features the appearance is acceptable and even considered sensational, judging by the amount of attention the Daimler created, and the specification includes not only centre-lock wire wheels but excellent disc-brakes on all four of them. At its price of under £1,400 it is difficult to think of a car providing more performance in such an acceptable form as the SP250 and could it be endowed with a chassis better suited to its performance capabilities, and a gearbox less insulting to keen and skilled drivers, it would indeed be a car worthy of the great Daimler tradition and of the Company that is now marketing it. **W.B.**

## The Daimler SP250 Specifications

**Engine:** Eight cylinders (90° vee), 76.2 x 69.8 mm (2,548 c.c.) Push rod operated overhead valves. 8.2 to 1 com-pression ratio. 140 b.h.p. at 5,800 r.p.m.

**Gear Ratios:** 1<sup>st</sup>, 10.5 to 1; 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6.24 to 1; 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4.41 to 1; top, 3.58 to one.

**Tyres:** 2.90 x 15 Dunlop Road Speed on centre-lock wire wheels.

**Weight:** 1 ton 0 cwt. 0 qtr. (without occupants but ready for the road with approximately 2 gallons of petrol).

**Steering Ratio:** 2½ turns, lock to lock. **Fuel capacity:** 12 gallons (Range, 285 miles). **Wheelbase:** 7 ft. 6 in.

**Track:** Front, 4 ft. 2 in.; Rear, 4 ft. 0 in.

**Dimensions:** 13 ft. 4½ in. x 5 ft. 0½ in. x 4 ft. 2¼ in. (high). **Price:** £1,054 10s. 0d. (£1,495 18s. 4d. inclusive of purchase tax). **Maker:** The Daimler Co. Ltd., Coventry, England.

*Note: Illustrated here is a folding hood version of the Daimler SP250. The motor car used for the test was the works hard top version. The photo from the copy of the originating PDF file could not be transferred into this document, for some reason, known only to itself.*



*From Motor Sport – May, 1961 – With Thanks.*

*Thanks are also due to the Daimler Lanchester Club for providing the information, via Colin Brown.*

## EDITOR'S NOTES

### Police Use

Between twenty-six and thirty black SP250s were used by the British Metropolitan Police in London. These were used by the Traffic Department to catch up with speeders, especially café racers. The police cars used the Borg-Warner Model 8 3-speed automatic, which the Metropolitan Police found to be better for town work and high speed chases, and was also found to be more economical, avoiding the clutch wear that a manual car would develop with usage between

18 and 24 hours a day. Traffic police in Bristol, Cambridge, Liverpool, Manchester, Southend and Surrey also used the SP250 for speed enforcement, as did police forces in Australia and New Zealand.

After the opening of the first section of the M1 in 1959, the Bedfordshire police used the SP250 for motorway patrol.

*Source, the Internet – with thanks.*

## Personal Experience

In about 1965, my father bought a Daimler SP250 at auction from the Metropolitan Police Force (London). His bid was so ridiculously low, he did not expect to get such a bargain! The car came complete with the distinctive police warning bell and, one of the conditions of sale was to remove the bell as soon as possible. He was not permitted to use the bell on his way back to Clapton-in-Gordano, Bristol. The offence of imitating a police officer was rigorously explained while the keys were handed over. The bell finally ended up as our doorbell, driven by a home-rigged transformer from the mains electricity supply – until my mother categorically outlawed it! That door bell could be heard at the Black Horse Inn at the bottom of Naish Hill, more than a mile away, before the motorway was constructed between the house and the pub.

*Right: A scan of a fifty years old colour slide. The ex-Met Police patrol car. This clearly shows the earlier style front bumper.*



What he had was a black early model SP250 with an automatic transmission and a fold down roof. It had a considerable mileage on the odometer, but still performed very well, this was demonstrated to me on my first ride. In the lower centre of the dashboard there was a pull out knob for the transmission that worked like a 'kick-down' and gave the SP250 jaw-dropping acceleration when the throttle was floored – on the Bristol-Clevedon Road through Failand, at 80 m.p.h. in the lower ratio was achieved with great ease. Google Maps – Failand, Bristol, UK and the road from Wraxall Hill to Clarken Coombe (B3128) can be seen. It is my understanding that the Met cars had more performance than the one discussed in the road impressions test.

It can just be seen that 667-ELL has had the windscreen raised, probably an inch and a bit, the hood and frame were also altered to suit. Obviously for a taller driver.

I have, many times, wondered what happened to that SP250. Probably, no one wanted it due to the automatic transmission, or its high mileage count. On the weekend before our Jupiter was shipped to Melbourne, my father offered a direct swap – Daimler SP250 for Jowett Jupiter. That SP250 sat well with the family Daimler Majestic Major, and it coped well with carrying all sorts of small-holding farm stuff, as witnessed and commented upon by many in the village.

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## FOR SALE – MOTOR CAR SERVICING RAMPS

The COVID-19 lock-down situation has instigated a good clean out of surplus 'stuff' from under my house. This has resulted in the discovery that I have a spare set of ramps for car servicing that are now available for sale. Any club members looking for a set of good ramps should contact me on:

Phil Cook (03) 9842 5449

E-mail [philcook@westnet.com.au](mailto:philcook@westnet.com.au)

Asking price – \$40.00 for the pair.

Location, Doncaster East area.



*Phil Cook.*

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## A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE ROVER V8

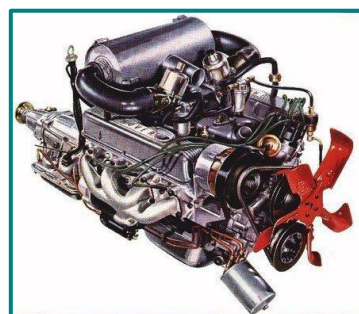
### The Engine That Powered Rovers, Land Rovers, Range Rovers And Morgans

*While re-reading my copy of the book Auto Architect, the autobiography of designer Gerald Palmer, I found the following complimentary words. Gerald was describing his time at Vauxhall Motors and, during that time, made numerous visits to GM headquarters in the U.S.A. His feelings about what became the Rover 3500 engine follow:*

'The last of these projects was the move to introduce an aluminium cylinder block to reduce the weight of the small V8 engine which powered Buick's new compact model. Up to that time aluminium had always been regarded as a rare and expensive metal in Detroit and had been little used in major engine components. To counteract the increased price, the General Motors Technical Centre in collaboration with Buick had developed a new process in which the molten aluminium was transferred from the smelter to an immediately adjacent foundry in heavily insulated containers. Money was saved by not having to re-heat the liquid metal. Cast-iron cylinder liners were developed by the Technical Centre. These were cast into the block and had a rough unmachined external diameter to key into the aluminium.'

*Right: A twin SU carburettors equipped Rover 3.5 litre V8 engine, a real performer.*

'For two years in the early 1960s these engines were used in the Buick Skylark and Oldsmobile F85 Jetfire. However, buyers still preferred the bigger conventional cast-





iron V-8s ('no substitute for litres' when fuel saving was not an issue) and General Motors could not justify the extra expense at that time. The American market's loss was Britain's gain. Rover directors noticed an example of the engine when visiting America. Bernard Jackman (whom I had got to know when he managed Lockheed and who had returned to Rover as director of manufacture) realised that I had visited Detroit. He telephoned to ask why Buick were giving up the unit. I was able to assure Bernard that it was technically excellent and that its demise was for financial and marketing reasons, neither of which would apply for a more expensive vehicle and in England. I have always been rather pleased that Rover successfully used the aluminium V8 in successive saloons and a development is still used in Land Rovers today.'

*From the book, Auto-Architect by Gerald Palmer – With Thanks..*

*Designer of Jowett's Javelin, M.G. Magnette ZA, Wolseley 4/44, 6/90 and Riley Pathfinder.*

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## 2020 WINTER ALCAN5000

### Something To Think About When The Weather Gets Warmer

On Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, in New Jersey, we received our first taste of spring. The temperature hit 62 °F (16·7 °C), the sun was out, we had the windows open to air out the house, and I started planning the route for NNJR-Sports Car Club of America's May Time-Speed-Distance (TSD) rally 'Second Hand Roads'. But part of me was still on the Alcan5000, a 5,200-mile (8,368 km) winter TSD road rally in the Canadian-Alaska Arctic billed as **The World's Longest, Coldest Rally**, which I had just returned from the day before.



*Above: A must-do photograph while on such an event! Is this the furthest north an ABCCC member has been?*

About 296 miles (476 km) north of the Arctic Circle in the Northwest Territories lies the Inuvialuit Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk (Tuk), the northernmost point in North America, which can be reached on all-weather maintained roads. Tuk was the ultimate destination for the forty-two teams, including three Porsches, and ten full-time support staff on this ten-day event.

The road to Tuk opened in November 2017, to provide year-round service to the local community and the Oil and Gas Exploration sites on the Arctic Ocean and Mackenzie River Delta. As stated in the Christian Science Monitor before 2017, "The paved road ended at Inuvik, 92 miles (148 km) south of Tuk. Up here at the top of the world, things didn't get moving until winter catches the mighty Mackenzie River in its grasp and brings it to a halt. Then you can drive on the ice roads. In summer, an ice road is better known as a 'river'. But in winter, the river freezes. The ice is at least a yard thick, and often much thicker. That's strong enough to make a good road even for heavy trucks. Ice roads are maintained by the highway department, just like regular paved roads farther south. (There's a notable difference: The Mounties – Canada's police – do not have any speed traps on ice roads). It's a funny feeling to be driving past frozen boats and onto the ice road near Inuvik. All that was between us and a very cold bath was four feet of ice. But four feet of ice was probably enough".

While the Ice Road no longer goes to Tuk, it still goes to Aklavik, which is ninety-two miles west of Inuvik. The Ice Road is ploughed eight to ten lanes wide, smooth and flat with soft snowbanks for those that take the curves a little too fast and end up in the embankment.



While the details and additional stories about the rally are located at [www.ALCAN5000.com](http://www.ALCAN5000.com), the event is a combination of TSD sections and long transits, with 12-14 hours days in sub-zero temperatures. Some come for the competition while others focus on the adventure/challenge of the event.

This year, due to prior performances on the rally, I was slotted as Car #1, but without a driver a month before the event. As luck would have it, Dave Cole, the owner/event organizer of 'King of the Hammers', and the Ultra4 off-road racing series was looking for a Navigator, so we teamed up for the event. I met Dave during the 2018 Alcan, which was his first TSD rally and assisted him with the basics of the sport. Needless to say, TSD rallying is entirely different than all-out desert racing.

Dave's choice for the event was a Ford Raptor, the official truck of 'King of the Hammers', equipped with Nitto's Grappler studded tires. We arrived in Seattle several days before the event to set up the Raptor and install the Timewise Rally Computer. And with any luck, get some practice time using the prior year's route instructions before the start of the event on Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>.

The route started in Kirkland, WA, and headed north to 'Tuk', then south to Anchorage, AK via Fairbanks and the Arctic Circle in Alaska. Ten very long and cold days.

Days on the road started as early as 6:00 am and at times, did not end until past 10:00 pm, covering distances up to 850 miles in a single day. Once we hit the Yukon, the temperature dipped as low of -42 °F (-41 °C). Believe me, that's cold. The Raptor was able to maintain a comfortable +70 °F (21 °C), making the difference between the internal/external temperatures of over 110 °F (43.3 °C). You had to mentally prepare yourself every time you wanted to leave the truck to get gas or take a picture.

While there was the time each day for a quick breakfast and something to eat in the evening, lunch was either taken on the fly or you lived off snacks on the 300-plus mile transits between TSD sections. The event does not allow Bought Time/Time Allowances, so you needed to be 'on time – all the time', so you could be at the start of the next section to avoid the maximum TSD penalty. Each vehicle carried a GPS tracking unit so the organizers and loved ones at home could follow the progress of each team *via* the event website.

Weather and long days are always a significant factor for both the vehicles and the teams, and friendships of long-standing are put to the test under the long hours, intense competition, and the weather. It is also a great way to know someone new while sitting in a Raptor for 12-plus hours a day. In addition, it was a common occurrence for teams to go 'off', due to the icy conditions and blinding snow storms or on-coming truck traffic, who felt that they 'owned the road'. But we travelled in 'buddy groups' for safety and you were never stuck by the side of the road for long. Unfortunately, on a long night north of the Canadian Arctic Circle on the way south from Inuvik, one experienced team driving a Subaru Forester, went off the side of the road. This occurred while passing truck traffic and was rear ended by one of their Buddy Team vehicles who was temporarily blinded by the trailing cloud of snow in the wake of the semi-truck, and had followed the Subaru's tail lights over the edge of the road. No one was hurt, but the car that was rear ended, was minus a rear window and had to rig up temporary weather protection to keep the wind and cold out for the remainder of the trip, over 2,300 miles (3,702 km). They finished the event in third overall, and won the admiration of the individuals on the event for their 'Press on Regardless' spirit.

There were twelve TSD Sections and a 1.2 km Ice Race in Dawson City on the frozen Yukon River. Due to the nature of the Ice Racing regulations, the Raptor was in the same Ice Racing Class as a Subaru Forester which, needless to say, gave the advantage to the Subaru, due to the design of the course.

While we were in 1<sup>st</sup> place at the end of Day 1, with ten points over 19 controls, we placed lower in the standings after all was said and done.

On the ninth day of the event, while most teams were relaxing in the Chena Hot Springs, myself, along with a dozen others, drove up the Dalton Highway north of Fairbanks. We went past the frozen Yukon River and the Arctic Circle, alongside the Pipeline to Wiseman, AK, an old mining community 270 miles (434 km) north of Fairbanks to help film a Nitto video. If I am lucky, you might spot the back of my head in the final cut, just another 14 hour day on the Alcan5000. It was fascinating watching a camera drone flying eye level towards your vehicle at speed while driving on ice-covered roads of the north. Now that is something that does not happen to me in New Jersey.

The winners of the event were the team of Garth Ankeny / Russ Kraushaar driving a bright yellow two-wheel-drive 1973 Mercury Capri\*. Rumour has it, the last day from Fairbanks to Anchorage (-20 °F -29 °C) the car had no heat, and during the event, it consumed oil by the quarts, yet it finished and won the Alcan5000 in style and with grace, a well-deserved victory.

The next Alcan5000 is August 23<sup>rd</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 – Celebrating thirty-eight years of the event and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with cycles in the summer event! If you are thinking of trying the Alcan, signup now; I am told that over 50% of the slots are taken. But be prepared, the entry fee for two in a car is \$3,300 and \$2,000 for one motorcycle & rider. Your total cost for the event, including entry fee, fuel, meals and souvenirs, could and does exceed \$6,000. From the east coast, factoring in airfare and a rental car, I always budget \$8,000 for the two-plus weeks that I am away. Just, for example, a case of bottled water was \$6.00 USD in Kirkland, WA, and \$35.00 CND in Inuvik, NWT. So plan ahead!

*Peter Schneider*

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\* Shades of the Hillman Hunter that won the London to Sydney World Cup Rally!

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# THE F.B.H.V.C – CLUB COVID-19 SURVEY

## A Summary Of The Results Of The Federation Of British Historic Vehicle Clubs' Survey

### What Are The Effects Of COVID-19?

Clubs are rising to the challenge. More are providing E-mail magazines, most are making special efforts to engage with members.

**53%** – The number of Clubs reporting that their finances are hardly affected.

**61%** – The number of Clubs hoping to hold events this year.

**26%** – The number of Clubs who have made or are considering special arrangements concerning subscriptions.

**30%** – The number of Clubs who will be specifically focussing on future events which enable their members to stay safe.

**10,000** – The approximate number of Club events cancelled as a result of the Coronavirus.

**35%** – The number of Clubs not taking special action to support their members.

**69%** – The number of Clubs who have cancelled their annual rally.

**40%** – The number of Clubs seeing a decrease in membership.

Some Clubs are having to hold on-line AGMs. In others, office holders will remain in post for a further year.

Evidence that some Clubs are finding members have time to work on stalled restoration projects.

### What Are Clubs Doing During The Pandemic?

#### Communication

- E-newsletters, regular updates to social media, daily Facebook articles.
- Special efforts to maintain contact with older members, 1-2-1 phone calls.
- Increase in size of newsletters, more informative articles.

#### Entertainment

- Meetings and quizzes on Zoom
- Virtual events
- Broadcast talks
- Podcasts

#### Income Issues

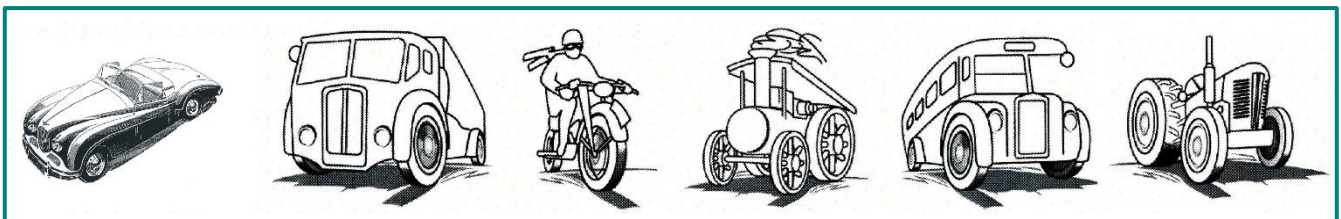
- For some the loss of income from the annual Club day is important.
- Some charities will suffer as fund raising at events has been restricted.

#### Planning For The Future

- Holding cancelled events in 2021 but concern for older members.
- Focus on members who are concerned about attending large gatherings.

There is a significant increase in the use of social media and online meetings and gatherings. Many Clubs are making special arrangements to keep in touch with older members. Indications from technical advice lines and spares groups are that members are undertaking restoration projects.

Thank you to all our clubs members who took part in the survey.



*From the FBHVC – With Thanks.*

## MORE FROM MY MISSPENT YOUTH

### The First Of Several Visits To Les Vingt-quatre Heures du Mans

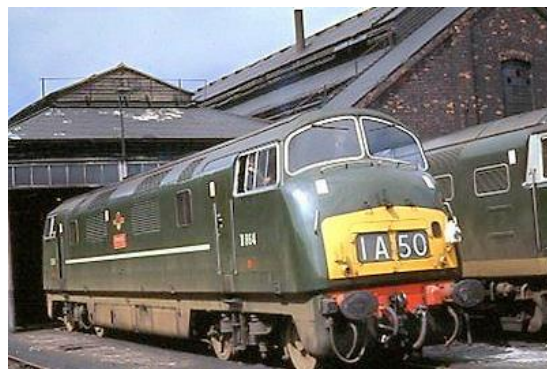
For several years, while at school, I used to listen on my homemade crystal radio set the reports from the Le Mans 24 hours race – live. Raymond Baxter broadcast the magic midnight report in his calm, easy to listen to voice. There was also a 4:00 am report, usually from John Bolster who tried to pump in some excitement. Those were the days of great Jaguar victories and the Aston-Martins so close, but not quite close enough for outright wins – that came later.

I think it must have been in about 1961/2 when I noticed advertisements for tours to Le Mans organised by Page & Moy Tours. At the time I did not realise that this would be their first proper tour to the great race. I think it was £15 or fifteen guineas for the whole trip, maybe less. The best part was that the tour only required the Friday afternoon away from work and I would be back at work on the Monday, rather bleary-eyed and tired, but . . .

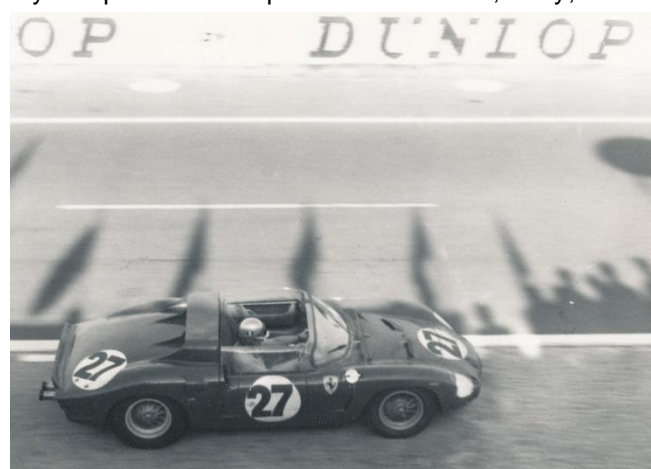


I wrote to Page and Moy and, yes, they would gladly hold a place for me. I went to the Post Office Savings Bank and drew out sufficient for a Postal Order to pay for the tour. This was late April and I had time to save for food and such. The tour price included basic entry to the circuit. Mother was a bit apprehensive about having such a tight schedule, but my father, who had attended the race before meeting my mother, suggested I go ahead and enjoy it all. I was still on my New Zealand passport, mostly because I liked the title – Dominion of New Zealand!

*Right: An example of British Railways' Western Region Warship Class diesel-hydraulic locomotive. The west of England was still 'different'.*



Finally, it was the Friday and I caught a bus from work to Bristol's Temple Meads station to catch the afternoon express to London. It was fortunate that there was a Warship Class diesel-hydraulic locomotive, *H.M.S. Centaur*, in charge, so a fast run was assured. Timing for the 120 miles run to London was 100 minutes, these locomotives could haul an express train at 104-plus miles per hour. The train arrived at Paddington eight minutes ahead of schedule, right into London's rush hour and I wedged myself into the Underground to Victoria Station. I soon found the correct platform for the boat train to Dover and quickly met Leon Page and Tony Moy. There were quite a few other motor racing types gathered round. We boarded the train, another express, but all electric Southern Region, and settled into a compartment. My compartment companions were Leon, Tony, Alan Rees and a couple of others. Alan was a passionate racer in the



junior formulae but, it seemed, could not afford the cost of more active motor racing. One of the others told us that he was involved with 'used motors' and he was short and sort of looked a bit shifty to me. The other was studying to be a solicitor.

*Left: The Baghetti/Scarfiotti Ferrari leaving its pit. Taken with a 1937 Kodak Rangefinder 35 mm camera. This car retired after about 18 hours due to clutch problems. Ferrari number 28, was driven by the Rodriguez brothers and held the lead at a great pace, but retired at 14 hours.*

Then, we were handed our tour packs and, after a while, the 'Used Motors' fellow showed us how to get into the pits (*Tribunes*) area at night. It was really simple – the general admission tickets, the cheapest, featured two red diagonal lines across them, the pits area tickets had just one red diagonal line. The trick he explained to us was to fold the ticket

and crease it hard so that when shown to an official at night, at the darkest entry gate and it looked like the real *Tribunes* pass! Using that recommendation, we simply showed our folded passes and were in! We were watching Le Mans from an interesting angle.

I am pretty sure that 'Used Motors' was none other than Bernie Ecclestone and his solicitor friend was Max Mosely.

We caught the ferry and then the Berliet coach to Le Mans, getting there in time to catch all the pre-race happenings and announcements, in gabbled French of course, but every so often Raymond Baxter would give us British his version, along with race updates from John Bolster. All good. The coach was left open and we could catch forty winks if we wished to. The race was a gruelling event and all of the cars showed the effects of twenty-four hours of flat out racing. The race was won by Olivier Gendebien (*Belgium*) and Phil Hill (*U.S.A.*) in a Ferrari. It was a popular win with the crowd, but we had to make a rather hasty departure, to catch the ferry back to Dover. I arrived at work on the Monday morning with ten minutes to spare, after falling asleep on the Bristol bound express only waking up as the train halted at Temple Meads with an abrupt halt.

The experience was that good, I made the same trip a few times, on one trip the official theme music on the public address system was The Shadows playing *Wonderful Land* – a good choice! My final visit to Le Mans having been in 2000, with our Jupiter to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jowett's class win all those years ago in 1950, when I listened to the B.B.C. Light Programme commentary, in bed to the (to me) exciting midnight report on my crystal radio and headphone set with an aerial hanging out of my bedroom window. Good times, indeed!

*Mike Allfrey.*

## WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

NOT MUCH AT ALL – IN FACT NOTHING!

## WHAT WE ARE HOPING TO DO – Keep your eyes on your E-mail In-box.

Please note that due to the Stage IV COVID-19 lock-down situation the following events have been either postponed or cancelled. Our apologies for these delays (interruptions).

## **ABCCC – BACK ON THE ROAD TOUR – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2021**

**Update:** Reluctantly we have made a decision to postpone our weekend tour – Back on the Road Again, 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020, moving it to early 2021. The situation in Victoria and the increasing COVID-19 numbers in some regional areas have necessitated this decision. We must put the safety of our members first.

Whilst we are hoping the COVID-19 situation will improve soon, we have changed our booking to 2021; new dates: **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.**

All entries/bookings will be updated to new dates. No need for you to do anything at this stage.

As mentioned, we are all disappointed that we have to do this, but the current situation and requirements for the gathering of large numbers of people are changing daily, making it near impossible to continue with our arrangements.

Thank you for your understanding and we hope to see you all in March 2021 for an even better weekend in our northwest regional town of Bendigo.

Join us as we celebrate our ABCCC Motoring “Back on the Road Tour”. This is the extension of our planned event in September, extending this to a weekend away. As we are heading up to our north west regional town in Victoria, destination Bendigo. Plenty of points of interest, places to see where we can definitely catch up and enjoy our ‘social distancing’.

When was the last time you went to Bendigo? The former gold rush town is packed with world-class arts and culture, thriving creative communities, historic landmarks, its all there just waiting for you to re-discover.

**Dates:** 11<sup>th</sup> September to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (2 nights)

**Where to meet:** 12 noon – Meet at Kyneton for lunch venue TBC. Early birds can take the time to look around the lovely township of Kyneton, there are some interesting buildings and shops (including Antique and Oppy Shops)

**Accommodation:** Lakeside Motel, 286 Napier St, Bendigo.

Located 1.5km from the Bendigo CBD with picturesque views over Bendigo’s iconic Lake Weerona. Great walking areas.

Check in 11<sup>th</sup> September.

Check out 13<sup>th</sup> September.

Join us for dinner which has been arranged for Saturday night at Lakeside \$50 pp 2 courses. This will be added to your accommodation invoice. To meet the needs of everyone there are a few options for accommodation please E-mail or call Lakeside Motel:

- E-mail: [reservations@lakesidehotel.com.au](mailto:reservations@lakesidehotel.com.au)
- Tel: (03) 5445 5300

Booked under ‘All British Classic Car Club’. The two options are:

- \$120 Queen rooms (run of the house type).
- \$145 Executive King Suites (new facility).

At this time, continental breakfast is not running, any change will be advised. A full, cooked breakfast will be available for around \$24 per person.

What we are intending to do, this will be a relaxing weekend where we can catch up (social distancing may still apply):

- Friday afternoon – book into accommodation
- Friday night dinner – TBC
- Saturday – Free day
- Saturday night – Dinner at Lakeside
- Sunday – after breakfast head to Harcourt to Morris Garage (subject to confirmation of numbers and owners’ responsibility under Covid-19 rules).

We look forward to catching up, if you are intending to join in can you also please send a quick E-mail to [gkgj@iinet.net.au](mailto:gkgj@iinet.net.au) or telephone or text: Glenda Prewett on 0418 345 499. We can then keep you updated on any changes.

Please note that these prices are being held until 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2020, so book in early to avoid any disappointment.

*Glenda and Garry Prewett.*

## **THE TERRI ALLEN GARDEN TOUR 2020 – Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 (Cancelled)**

### **TERRY’S TASTE TOUR – Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 (No advice on this one yet)**

The GM Holden Proving Ground closes end of August, due to GM shutting down Holden, a very sad affair. I cannot run Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October event now but have got the go ahead to run a Taste Tour event on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October.

Details: Terry’s Taste Tour, South Gippsland. Start at Caldermeade and finish at Cowes for lunch, incorporating small town bakeries, markets and lunch at RSL Cowes. More details to follow in a future edition of *Your ABCCC News*.

*Ian Terry.*

## **INDULGENCE WEEKEND – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2021**

At this point in time, Indulgence 2021 is on the social schedule.

Next year it is proposed we visit Port Fairy in western Victoria. We will be meeting at the BP Service Centre Princes Highway (Geelong-bound), Little River at 10:00 am for a 10:30 am start. Lunch will be at Mortlake prior to proceeding



to Port Fairy. Accommodation has been arranged at The Ashmont Motor Inn however accommodation is limited and it will be a case of first in best dressed. The balance of participants (if any) will be accommodated at an adjoining motel. The format for the weekend will be in-line with that of previous years, and the cost will be \$250 pp + accommodation. If you wish to be part of this weekend extravaganza, would you please confirm your intent to me on 0407 876 023. You may have previously indicated a desire to be part of this event however with what has developed over the past few months, you may care to re-consider your position in relation to the weekend.

*Peter McKiernan.*

#### **ABCCC SAPPHIRE COAST TOUR – 5<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2020 (Cancelled)**

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*A winter scene on the road during the ALCAN5000 Rally – Photo P Schneider.*



*The Ford Raptor poses beneath a huge pipeline – Photo P Schneider.*

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## A BLAST FROM THE PAST!



*This, folks, is real pole dancing!*



*Rick Lloyd driving his Rover P4 Mud Bash car (we need the story)! Right: Frank Sawyer on full song, is he believed?*



*Where were we?*



*Well, that's about stuffed them!*