

THE
DAIMLER TRADITION

BRIAN E. SMITH

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Foreword by
Sir William Lyons, Chairman and Chief Executive
The Daimler Company Limited

Maintenance of tradition is of prime importance to the individuality of any marque. The particular traditions of Daimler (and of Lanchester) cars are of outstanding engineering and workmanship; this is as it should be, for Daimler were the first British 'series-production' manufacturers, whilst the Lanchester of 1895 was Britain's very first petrol-driven four-wheeled motor car. The Daimler and Lanchester Owners' Club of today contributes to these traditions by the enthusiasm of its members, and I am happy to share with Mrs George Lanchester the honour of being patron of this club; and it is through the diligence of the club's official historian that 1971 – the 75th anniversary of Daimler – is being marked by the publication of this record of the many varied types of Daimler cars which have been produced down through the years.

The 2½-litre v-8 and v-8 250 saloons

2½-litre v-8 saloon (Type XDM 2) chassis numbers 1A 1001–1A 13377
(R.H.D.); 1A 20001–1A 20622 (L.H.D.)

v-8 250 saloon chassis numbers 1K 1001–1K 5780 (R.H.D.);
1K 30001–1K 30105 (L.H.D.)

The suffix 'DN' indicated overdrive

The suffix 'BW' indicated automatic

TOWARDS the end of the Conquest–Century production period (1958), the 2½-litre engine of Edward Turner's design was in the course of development for the SP 250 sports car and it was logical to expect the unit to be installed in a new saloon. During the experimental stage, the v-8 engine was, as already mentioned, fitted into a Century saloon with good results but in order to present a new image a lower and more modern looking body was envisaged. A Vauxhall Cresta (PAD type) was acquired with a view to ascertaining the feasibility of using the main structure as a basis for a new Daimler saloon which would, had it been developed, been much modified externally to conform to Daimler design concepts and of course to incorporate the famous fluted radiator. One prototype was actually made but whilst preliminary negotiations were in hand for the possible supply of body parts, Jaguar Cars Ltd – seeking more space for expansion, acquired The Daimler Co Ltd, Transport Vehicles (Daimler) Ltd, and their subsidiaries at a price of £3,400,000.

Sir William Lyons, in a paper entitled – 'The History of Jaguar and the Future of the Specialized Car in the British Motor Industry' – read to The Institute of the Motor Industry in 1969, gave a brief account of the takeover:

By 1960 our factory was once again 'bursting at the seams'. Unfortunately, this came just at the time when the Government was increasing its pressure on manufacturers who wished to expand, to move into distressed areas and, of course, no factory extensions were permitted in Coventry. It came to my knowledge that the Daimler Company, which occupied the very fine factory at Radford, within two miles of our existing factory at Browns Lane, was for sale. After some preliminary talks with Jack Sangster, who was then the chairman of BSA, having followed Sir Bernard Docker, we eventually agreed terms for us to acquire the Daimler Company. I do not recall a more amicable deal with anyone although, when we both thought everything had been settled, a matter of £10,000 arose between us. Since each of us was honestly convinced that this was in our own favour, we decided that the only way to settle the matter was to toss-up for it. I am pleased to say that I won.

The Daimler factory just about doubled our floor space and, in addition, we acquired a bus