

179

**THE**

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**Photo**

**Daimler 4.2 litre Landaulette by Vanden Plas.**

**Daimler**

Sept 1979

## A DOTTY TALE. 1. ACQUISITION

For those who remember the pre-1940 days—and partly for those who have read “Royal Daimlers”—Daimler cars represent luxury. I was driving cars of in lower sphere and wondered if one day I might possess a Daimler. This did not happen until Daimlers had descended somewhat down the social ladder in the car world and produced the Conquest series.

Our Daimler was an attractive green colour and we enjoyed having it. By this time, about 1957, our two children were at school and the Daimler carried the family in reasonable silence and comfort, although I have never forgotten the hard ridge which formed the top of the upholstery of the rear seat.

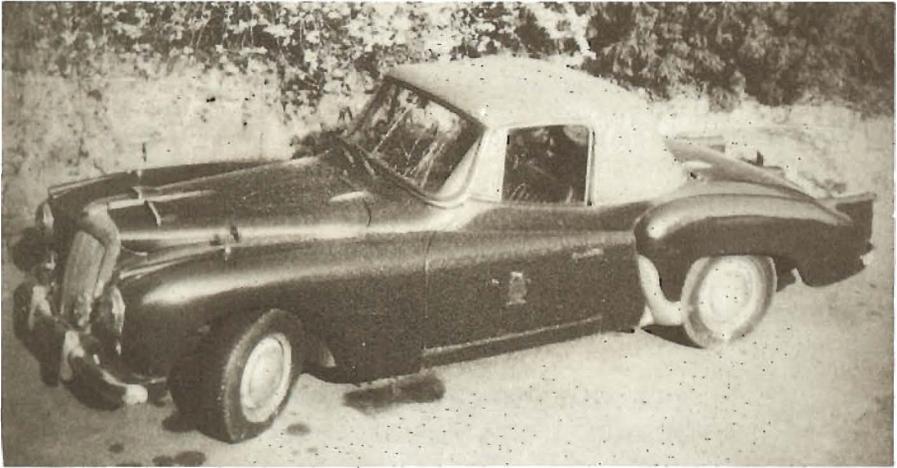
One day, possibly in 1960, I was driving home and passed a two-seater Daimler which could only be described as smashing. I pulled up to admire it and, to my surprise, I knew the owner who was basking in the sunshine. The car was a small drophead Daimler which I now know to be a DJ 254. What would I have given for that car? But with a family and a new house it was out of the question.

Time passed and eventually I sold my Daimler and acquired a hugh 12-cylinder P111 Rolls-Royce. This was followed by a slightly smaller (17'3") successor and together they served us very well for some twenty years. By then (1973) parking was getting worse and we no younger so the time had come to change to something smaller and my thoughts turned back to (no guesses) the DJ 254 which I had so admired years ago.

Well, it took nearly a year to locate a DJ 254 but I found one advertised in London as “in original condition” for £1,150. After a delay while we made sure that it had wind-up windows, my wife and I set off from the Midlands one cold March day in 1974 through gusts of snow to inspect this car. We were armed with a crawler, jack, tow-rope, flashlight and a full set of tools and hoped that the snow would not set in properly.

At 2.30 p.m. we drove into the square where the car was kept. I would like to say that it stood out as a classical model amongst so much modern tinware but no, it stood out as a delapidated dustbin. The windscreen was cracked, the lower ends of the door rusted away, the chrome dull and pitted, one over-rider was missing and the leather seats were split. An oily, dark material served as a carpet. We were turning to leave when the door of the house opened and the owner appeared, so some interest had to be shown. I jacked the car up and noted that the chassis was oily and that all the parts, although in grubby condition, were there. To my astonishment the owner then asked if I would like to go for a run in the car—I could hardly imagine that it could move under its own power! Then, to the smell of hot oil and exhaust fumes, we moved off. Immediately the situation brightened, I liked the view from the passenger's seat (through the broken windscreen) and the position of the car on the road appealed.

Before we reached the point of suffocation we returned to the square and the owner asked, “Are you interested?”. By now I was and said so but not at his price and offered £400, hoping that he would refuse, but he promptly



Photo

G. Ramage

The car as bought. Note the cracked windscreen.

accepted. So there I was at 4.00 p.m., in London, on a darkening winter's day, in possession of a just mobile wreck.

Then followed a nightmare journey home—the sort that makes the “fun” of old cars, at least when they are successfully over! As soon as I moved away from the house the use of the preselector came to me but the first snag occurred at the second street corner, when I changed down to third it wasn't there. Nor could I see in the rear view mirror for the window in the hood was opaque!

We took the motorway as the quickest route and had just started on it when there was a mighty clatter from the back. On the hard shoulder this noise turned out to be the exhaust which had fallen down, but it presented no problem as it had happened so many times before that lots of broken pieces of string were left hanging on the chassis and this was quickly used to tie the exhaust up.

As night fell the problem of whether or not to use the headlamps arose because I could not tell if the dynamo was charging, anyhow the light from the headlamps was unbelievably dim. The general apprehension was heightened by a banchee howl from the back axle but we arrived home safely about midnight and no uncomfortable explanations had been necessary to the mobile police.

The next morning we went out to inspect the newest and most disreputable member of the family. Sitting in the car with my wife I said, “look, the window winds down” and proceeded to demonstrate—crash—and the car was filled with little glass octogons!

A week or two later I was at a meeting and recited the above story. A man of my age present asked me if the car belonged to Dr. X of N..... I replied that I had bought the car off the widow of Dr. X through her son. “Don't you remember the case?” he asked and then I recalled it from many years back.

Dr. X's wife began to show an interest in other men and the situation went from bad to worse. One night, furious, he took a gun and shot at the man, this lead eventually to his going to prison for six months, a bit hard seeing that he missed! A significant point was that there were two round holes in the windscreen at the top on the passengers side. Secondly, the lady who sold the car (via her son) told me that it had belonged to her husband who had sold it. Two years later she bought it back "for sentimental reasons" and kept it until I purchased it.

The doctor whom I saw lolling luxuriously in the open DJ 254 in 1960 was the Deputy Superintendent at a sanatorium a few miles from N..... Did he buy it and have I now the actual car which I coveted twenty two years ago?

To be continued.

Gerald Ramage.

## **A CLOSER LOOK AT DAIMLER BUSES**

### **3. THE FREELINE. A Single-Decker for the Fifties**

The dawning of the 1950's marked the development of experimentation among bus manufacturers with a view to producing a single-decker vehicle with an engine mounted beneath the vehicle amidships. This allowed a full-front design with the doorway right at the front (although for some years, centre doorways were popular with coach operators). The newly introduced 30 foot length limit on single-deckers enabled better usage of space within the bodywork and seating capacities increased from 35-39 to 43-45.

Daimler's new single-decker was designed to replace the faithful CVD6 front engined coach and it also used the newly developed CD650 engine. The prototype appeared on 1951 and the Freeline was born! It was intended to offer an alternative power unit, a Gardner 6LW of 8.4 litres and, whichever was used, the unit was mounted horizontally. This led to the chassis designations of D650HS and G6HS, which were quite unusual for Daimlers as the C (for Commercial) was dropped.

The Freeline was aimed at the UK market and for export, being offered with three wheelbase lengths (16ft. 4in; 17ft. 6ins; and 20ft. 4ins.). Whichever engine was fitted the transmission was the usual pre-selector arrangement, with selection being either air or electrically assisted. The underfloor engine raised the gangway height considerably and the driving position was also very high.

The first Freeline (chassis No. 25,000) with a Daimler engine was followed by Gardner powered 25,001 and, as demonstrators LKV 218 and LRW 377 respectively, they did the usual rounds at the Commercial Show of 1952, before being sold off to operators. The D560HS example was a 37-seat coach, while the "Growler" was a mere 30 seater bus with dual doorway bodywork.

Production started slowly and, even at this stage, the order book suffered two cancellations. The first pair of production models went to Gash of Newark who had plenty of Daimler experience by this time. The first export order from Australia saw chassis 25,020 on its way in 1953 but it seems likely that a pair of unusual G5HS (5 cylinder Gardner powered) examples went to Bombay in 1952. 20 others followed in due course.

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## A DOTTY TALE

### 2. Doing the Mechanics

With the "dustbin" at the front door, the pleasant anticipation of at last having the car I wanted for so long began to change to a mild depression, seeing no way of ever getting the car into an acceptable condition.

I decided that, before starting the mechanical work, I should be sure that a new windscreen was available. After some weeks the indefatigable Mr. Boyd-Carpenter told me that one was available in Chalk Farm, London. So down I went, blowing exhaust, broken windscreen and all. It was not too bad a journey, until I met London traffic when there was a sudden heavy knock in the engine. Probably a big end, so, at 20 m.p.h., I completed the journey and a few hours later, to my astonishment, I had a new screen. After adding an extra half gallon to the sump I crawled home at 20 m.p.h., the second triumphal return from London.

Now came the search for a knowledgeable engineer to do the whole mechanical work. A certain garage was recommended and agreed to accept the work. The car was taken over with trepidation and care but, after some six weeks, the owner telephoned to say that the job was too big, so I had to bring the car away. I was rather glad about this as on my first visit I had seen one of the garage workmen tightening the spined end of a layshaft in the unprotected jaws of a vice. Enough said!

Then salvation came in the person of John Alcock who is deeply versed in Daimler Lore as indeed in anything else he touches. So Dotty was transferred to the town of beer fame and henceforth (apart from the time taken) all went swimmingly. John not only has a meticulous standard of work but is willing to carry out non standard work when it can be justified.

Every portion of the car's mechanics was removed and renewed, there would be no point in detailing this but additional items will be listed:

The cylinder head was planed and the ports polished. Two S.U. H6s replaced the original carburettors. A 150 watt mains oil heater was fixed in the sump. The clock was replaced with a combined oil pressure and water temperature gauge, the latter reading the sump oil temperature. The mechanical petrol pump was replaced with dual electric pumps. The girling Bijur lubrication system replaced with the Tecalemit, using the original threaded oil holes, the gear and brake pedal bearings were added. The back axle was changed with a second hand one. New rear springs were added, spring gaiters being fitted to same.

So, after eighteen months work, the car could be driven. Subsequent additional work done was as follows:

The Michelin Xs fitted to the car were changed to Cinturato's. Separate switches were fitted to each half of the electric petrol pumps. The valve cover was modified to eliminate the oil leaks from it. Lumenitron transistor ignition was fitted. The oil filter was relocated to a bracket at right angles to the engine to make it accessible. Front hub assemblies and brake drums were balanced dynamically. A new petrol cap made to avoid overspill on cornering and a petrol pressure control unit in the petrol line. Aviatric petrol consumption



Photo

G. Ramage

**Dismantlement begins.**

meter and gallons gone recorder were added. The petrol reserve tap was removed and the petrol line taken from the bottom of the tank. A bowl type sediment filter was placed in the petrol line. The reverse lights were converted into brake lights.

To be continued.

G. Ramage.

## **A CLOSER LOOK AT DAIMLER BUSES**

### **Wartime Daimlers**

At the outbreak of the War in 1939 Daimlers had been on the brink of introducing their own diesel engine into their bus chassis (the famous CD6 8.6 litre unit). However, this progress was halted and production ceased some time in 1940. This cessation was across the board as far as bus manufacturers were concerned and no psv's appeared until the Ministry of Supply permitted manufacture to re-commence in 1942, and even then in a strictly limited manner. Bedford were allowed to build single-deck chassis while the others could only build double-deck chassis.

Daimlers got going again in 1943, which was really quite an achievement as the Coventry factory was bombed in 1941. The new production began at a

no 1979

Most firms connected with motoring have film libraries that cost little or nothing to use and the numbers of cameras at rallies etc. would seem to provide a lot of potential for meetings where something connected with motoring was happening.

We've had a number of letters saying what you want at rallies so how about your grumbles and suggestions for branch meetings. Names need not be published but must be supplied. It can be equally embarrassing whether or not you know your branch secretary to be seeming to tell them how to run their branch.

B.W.

## A DOTTY TALE

### 3. What a Holiday!

In February 1976 the car was at last home and mechanically fine, although still stiff in its joints and engine. After 1,500 miles to run it in, the car was taken to the coachbuilders for the second stage of its rescue, i.e. the bodywork, for it was intended to take it to Cortona via Czechoslovakia for a conference in August. The panels and the steel part of the body were so bad that, in the time available, only the major defects could be undertaken. Even so the one or two days left for the hood to be meant that this and the trim were roughly finished at midnight the day before leaving.

Full of holiday spirit we set off in the hot sun of that summer for Felixstowe to coast, alas, to a standstill on the hardstanding at the side of the motorway half a mile from the Coventry exit. The petrol pumps were clicking furiously and the engine would restart only to peter out in a hundred yards.

A dreadful journey of fits and starts in the traffic on the outskirts of Coventry came to an end at a small garage where petrol pump failure was diagnosed. Luckily a new one was available and fitted (bill number one). One hour and a half later we were off with just time to catch the boat at 11 p.m. Putting on a little speed I noticed wheel shake above 50 m.p.h. which did nothing to cheer us up but all went well until night fell. When the headlamps were put on they at first flickered but then stayed on. At a petrol station in the outskirts of Ipswich we stopped to fill up and on trying to restart all the electrics had disappeared, the car was completely dead. We were tired and weary of trouble and then appeared a good Samaritan in the form of a Club Member and his fiancée who took us in his car to an hotel at 11 p.m. Our reserved beds were moving slowly across the North Sea without us but we were able to sleep.

Next morning the petrol station staff had a try at bringing life to Dotty but in vain (bill number two—small), but it was our Samaritan who fixed it with Lucas to replace the headlight switch (bill number three). That night we did get over the water.

Limited to 50 plus because of the wheel wobble, we progressed well through Germany, except for the speedometer cable packing up. On we went through the prison wall into Czechoslovakia, where we were fined twice on the spot for trivial unknowing "offences", the second, in Prague, was because the engine was dripping a few drops of oil, in the best Daimler fashion. The policeman said, "Das Motor ist kaput—es lässt Oel am Boden fallen". Now



Photo

G. Ramage

**Dotty on her way to the top.**

we were another £6 poorer and alarmed that the car might be impounded so, when we had another attack of engine stopping in spite of the new petrol pumps, we decided to run for Austria. After another adventure with the police, peaceful but involving great suspense, we got to the border with difficulty and crossed it with equal difficulty as we did not like leaving behind £120 as well as our fines!

It was appropriate that the town we reached in Austria was Freistadt, friendly and comfortable, where garage help abounded. Bill number pronounced the new petrol pump O.K. and the dual ones which we had brought from Coventry. Nothing wrong could be found. It was also found impossible to balance the front wheels because, they said, of radial runout.

After a day or two of recovery we set off to Leonfelder nearby but immediately we were down to a crawl until, in desperation, I switched on the reserve petrol position. The car immediately responded and off we went under full power. By now we had noted that petrol was not getting through properly and that this was usually relieved when we filled up the tank. Garage number

five concluded that the petrol gauge was reading optimistically and that the petrol starvation was due to an actual shortage, hence the restart on switching to reserve and when we filled up. So we bought a 5 litre spare container and continued rejoicing on our way, at last, our trials were over. The garage owner would not take any money because he had done no work although he had given us an hour of his time.

But the dream was shattered on the way to our next destination, Halstadt, by the familiar symptoms of petrol starvation. Good fortune meant that we were outside a petrol station and filled up—off we went without further trouble but with renewed apprehension.

Determined to cure this strange trouble we spent the next day at Bad Ischl where Herr Zeppentauer thoroughly investigated the petrol system and concluded that no air was being admitted to the tank and so a vacuum formed and prevented the petrol coming out. He drilled a little hole in the neck of the tank and presented us with a large bill (number five) and we moved off towards the Gross Glockner Pass full of renewed confidence.

On a superb sunny morning we filled up with petrol at the foot of the pass and all was set for a gorgeous trip amongst the peaks. Gorgeous it was indeed but Dotty did not do very well, needing second gear whereas third should have sufficed and getting hot. Conquest Century engines never overheat! Well, we made it and at the top we had difficulty in shaking off a would be purchaser. I might have gladly sold if I knew how to get home without the vehicle.

As is usual with most cars we ran very well down the pass and luckily found a beautiful hotel overlooking the valley and mountains above Lienz, near the Italian border. Here we stayed, but not in peace! Looking over the car I noticed that the fan belt was slack—ha, here was the reason for the overheating, so it was a small matter to tighten it.

On the second day we motored the ten kilometers into Lienz and were lucky enough to park in the main square, where my wife sought a hairdo. As we stopped I heard a tiny tinkle beneath the car and just thought that we had run over a tin. After wandering around the town the time came to return to our hotel. It was dark and the rush hour. As we left the town I noticed, with dismay, that the water temperature was 110 and there was no charge. Luckily I was able to turn into a garage which was about to close. In the dark I could see that the fan belt was still there but the front of the dynamo pulley was not!

This was a facer. The mechanic, full of sympathy and willingness to help, enquired where the front half was as their pulleys would in no way fit. Then I remembered the tinkling sound and realised that in a civilised country the public does not throw down their empty beer cans in the street. That he got out his car and took me back to the market square where I picked up the now bent front half of the pulley. Back at the garage he and his pal took off and brazed the two halves together. Messrs. Lucas had considered three spot welds sufficient. Bill number six I paid gladly.

So there, I thought, was the explanation of the overheating on the Gross Glockner, a slack fan belt on the pulley which must have commenced separating. Tightening the belt completed the job. But that did not explain the feeble engine performance which, surely, was due to the old trouble of petrol

starvation. So another day was spent in a superbly equipped Austrian garage. Here I asked them to bypass the electrically operated petrol reserve tap which I suspected of acting irrationally and causing and adding to our troubles. This was done, at enormous expense, producing bill number seven.

The next day we left for Cortina D'Anzeppo, motoring quite well although it is mostly downhill. Then we had a weeks freedom from motoring, staying in the largest hotel in the town, where the conference was held. A de-luxe existence marred only by bad personal news of the death of a close relative.

Eventually we had to take to the road again and limited to 50-55 m.p.h. (or rather not exceeding 3,000 r.p.m., having no speedometer) we did rather well on the motorways. The last bill should have been the last, it was big enough to last a year or so!

Only once, nearing the Belgian border, did the engine falter but the addition of some petrol from our reserve set us off again. But in Belgium trouble really started. We had plenty of time to catch the night boat but, in the late afternoon, petrol starvation struck again. Usual routine, sticking carburettor needles diagnosed, the carburettors were dismantled, bill number eight.

Off again only to peter out a few kilometers away on the motorway. By now darkness had fallen and we managed to crawl off at an intersection to a wayside garage. This bright young man produced a new cause, an intermittent open circuit in the L.T. supply to the ignition. At last, with the "holiday" nearly over the "real" reason had emerged and we would have no more trouble, and there was still time to catch the boat! Bill number nine was cheerfully paid.

Regaining the motorway to Brussels we pushed ahead full of confidence but alas, on the outskirts of Brussels the engine faltered and, after crawling off the motorway to a nondescript suburb, finally came to a halt. No hotel in sight, we had had no food for hours, eleven o'clock at night and the ferry left at midnight. In desperation I headed for the only bright light, which happened to be an exclusive restaurant. I explained our plight and human kindness showed itself again. At midnight we were taken in the restaurateur's own car into the centre of Brussels, leaving our car where it had stopped. We had had generous help but not much luck and had again lost our boat reservations. Next morning the weather was fine but that was all that was. The banks did not open until 9 a.m. and we had insufficient money to pay the hotel bill let alone for a taxi back to the car plus the usual reserve necessary for the next garage bill!

Once refurbished with a large quantity of Belgian francs we took a taxi on a tour of Brussels to find our Doty and, surprise surprise, we found it and it was completely untouched, binoculars and all! Immune to further possible troubles we set off for Zebrugge but not on the motorway. St. Christopher must have decided that we had been tried enough because we arrived at the dock without incident. Not until we had actually got the car into the ship's hold did we believe that we had actually made it and thoughts of hiring a transporter could be abandoned. But we were not out of trouble, a storm blew

up and delayed the boat getting into Felixstowe at 11 p.m. Anxious to find a bed before everyone else took them, we put up the green card for the Customs but were waived down by an officer. O dear, what is it now, we hadn't had time to acquire any contraband.

"I don't care what you've got", he said, "but what does your registration number mean?". EOG 1 was quickly explained and we did find a bed for the night. On our way home the car had the same symptoms but now we knew what to do. Stop the engine, wait, shake the car and carry on. All right on the open road but rather trying in traffic.

The solution to the mystery? The petrol tank had in it two pieces of rag, a disintergrating matchbox and a quantity of sludge. Obviously this lot had been dislodged when the tank had been moved for the welding under the mudguards. Strangely enough, this simple explanation has not removed my wife's objection to Dotty touring! Anyone interested in a well documented guide to a garage holiday in Europe?.

To be continued.

G. Ramage.

### 250 DAIMLER AMBULANCES

In the Driving Member for March 1978 I mentioned that I was preparing an inventory of the 500 Daimler DC 27 Ambulances built between 1949 and 1956 on chassis Nos. 54,000-54,499. As the list has now reached the halfway mark with 250 vehicles accounted for it may interest readers to have brief details of the information gained so far.

The largest fleet of DC 27s was that of the London Ambulance Service, who owned no less than 222 vehicles altogether. These were registered JKP 63, KJJ 308, 310, 320 and 691-700, KLC 446-550 and LLA 121-222. Most of these Daimlers averaged two or eleven years in service, although KLC 449 lasted only a matter of days in 1949 before being written off in a bad accident. JXP 63 was the first to join the L.A.S., on February 7th, 1949, and lasted until 1st February, 1962. The last to retire was LLA 184, which joined on 6th July, 1951 and left on 4th June, 1964.

Surrey Ambulance Service had 13 DC 27s (XPD 991-997 and 241-246 APG). These entered service in 1955-56 and were withdrawn in 1967-69. Six vehicles, in a striking dark green livery, were run by the now defunct Bath City Ambulance Service. These were registered BGL 116 and 201, CFB 114 and 115, EFB 127 and EGL 731 and, although records relating to length of use have now been destroyed, the registration numbers suggest that these Daimlers entered service in 1950 (BGL and CFB), 1953-54 (EFB) and 1954-55 (EGL).

Nine other Daimlers are accounted for as follows: West Sussex Ambulance Service LPX 96 and 110 (registered 1950 and based at Horsham and Worthing), Hertfordshire Ambulance Service LNK 102 and MAR 114 (registered 1950), Coventry LRW 178 and MWK 331 (registered 1951 and 1953), Vickers Armstrong works ambulance, Surrey VPK 880 (registered 1954), Carmarthenshire Ambulance Service FTH 707 (registered 1950 and in service until 1962) and Wiltshire Ambulance Service MMW 864 (registered 1955 and in service until 1964).

DEC 1979

## A DOTTY TALE

### Part Four—Coachwork

The appearance and body condition when Dotty was first bought were mentioned in part one. There was no single aspect of the body, except its general outline, in acceptable condition. The windscreen discoloured and broken, all the chrome dull and mostly pitted, the lower halves of the doors resembled the tattered edges of a tramps trousers, the boot lid would neither stay up or lock down, the headlamp reflectors were as rusty as the bumpers and I could continue.

These horrors were forgotten while the mechanical side of the restoration was being dealt with but, eventually, the time came to deal with them. If you are unable to do the job yourself there's not much choice in approach: either one places the car in the hands of an expert restorer together with a signed cheque for an unlimited sum (perhaps one should say astronomical sum), or one seeks to have items separately done by different firms or persons and hope that the final result will be acceptable. The latter course was taken.

The windscreen had been replaced as a precondition for any restoration and the next priority was the doors, firstly to replace the metal and secondly to make them shut without several bangs, each shaking the whole car and gradually bruising my right shoulder (which is still not right two years later).

Body repairer number 1 had a go, with pop rivets and No. 38, then, to my relief, declared the job to be too big. The next body builder was more skilful and better equipped. He removed the doors from the body and welded in new metal sheet, finishing with lead filling. Unfortunately he did not continually offer the reconstructed doors up to the door apertures so they remained a poor fit.

Then the rear body shell and front wings were renewed and the rear under mudguards remade. The holes in the floor were filled in. All the chrome parts, except the handles, were removed and I found the means to have them rechromed.

While this work was proceeding I took the original green leather seats to our local upholsterer to be remade and recovered in brown rexine (or its modern equivalent). This may cause disapproving looks from some enthusiasts, as they say a little north of the Midlands, "There's nowt like leather". But it was intended to use Dotty mainly as an open two seater and they are liable to be caught with their hoods down. Leather feels nasty when soggy and eventually deteriorates, also leather is vulnerable to the slightest spot of oil, hence the Rexine.

We now had brown leatherette seats and door trims and a delapidated green leather covered dashboard, which obviously had to be renewed. This the body builder, alas, cheerfully undertook to do. It looked fine but underneath the wires were left in such a tangle that eventually two separate and serious electrical shorts were caused, which nearly led to the whole car being set on fire. The wiring has been patched up but a new loom is now on the programme.

Then came the time for the respray, which was done in a slightly creamy white. It was well done in a hard acrylic paint. I had asked if it could have a final coat of a product which is advertised to remain shiny without polishing for some years. This request aroused some mirth and I was told that this "varnish" is merely a hard colourless coat which is always part of car paint and particularly metallic finishes.

In the same subject I discussed waxing and received the reply that this was a way to occupy husbands on Sunday mornings but served no other purpose. When I thought about this I remembered that I had a Wolseley years ago which never needed polishing in four years, so I've saved myself a lot of time not polishing this last year.

Now the car was mainly finished except for one vital point, the doors would not close properly or remain closed and this caused a crisis in ownership. Various knowledgeable (so called) experts "adjusted" the doors. The adjustments varied from a liberal application of grease, soon to be removed onto the driver's and passenger's clothing, to the restoration of the original profil on the striker plates by electrodeposit. One well known firm agreed to deal with the doors, with a six weeks waiting period and a possible cost of £200 per door. A week before the car was due to go in a letter came cancelling the appointment as they had decided to limit their work to two makes of car not including Daimler.

I now went right to the top, an internationally famous body-builder who would, for a consideration, make you a replica Roi des Belges body on a 40-50 Rolls-Royce. But they would have no truck with a Daimler dhc unless I could produce new striker plates.

Salvation came unexpectedly and by mere chance. Tom, at Brunts the Rolls-Royce specialists who have done excellent work on my cars for years, said that he would have a go at making the doors shut if I took the risk of the paintwork being damaged. The alternative being scrapping the car, I agreed with the result that both doors closed freely. Progress, but I still depended on the string.

Professional work in Coventry brought me in contact with an engineer who used to work for Daimlers in "the old days". Incredibly his job had been to check the bodywork of each saloon before it was delivered and in particular to check the closing of the doors. There then followed a protracted and painstaking assessment of the conditions to be fulfilled to make the doors close and lock properly. The correct profile of the striker plate was worked out then the necessary movement of the strikerplate to allow adjustment was made. Very surprisingly, the plates were originally fixed in one position and I have since noticed that the striker plates on my son's Hooper coachbuilt Daimler are not provided with any adjustment. Eventually, new striker plates were made in laminated form out of mild steel plate. These have great strength compared with the original extruded metal. Each door now shuts easily and securely but with a noise like a prison cell being slammed to. Alas, there is no satisfying clunk for Dotty but satisfaction that the car has been saved.

Then followed the relatively simple, but expensive, repaint of the whole body, the fitting of seat belts and a new hood, which actually disappears into

the recess provided for it. Problems had to be overcome with the hood. In the original description the hood was said to be made of material impervious to oil and then have a detachable rear window. With much persuasion the difficulties of fitting two zips and waterproofing them were overcome. So, if ever we have some hot and sunny weather, it will be possible to have the hood up and a through draft of air.

To be continued.

G. Ramage.

### ARE WE SUCCEEDING!

Over a year ago David Mitchell, my predecessor as Treasurer, warned of the need to increase the subscription rate. Soon he proposed new rates and, five months ago, the A.G.M. voted to implement them. Now, seven months into the financial year, the new rates are just about to provide the first significant income.

In the meantime, the effects of continuing cost inflation have been cushioned by the health of our sales activities. These have carried us through without having to dip into an overdraft on our small reserve account at the building society. To show the main contributions and costs to the Club some ledger totals for March 1st to September 30th are shown below:—

	Income(£)	Expenditure(£)	Difference(£)
All subscriptions and joining fees ... ..	4,571		
Spares loan fund ... ..	759		
Advertisements in The Driving Member ... ..	415		
Magazine (envelopes and postage) ... ..		4,860	
Stationery ... ..		322	
Postage ... ..		530	
Meetings, branch expenses, official journeys ... ..		241	
Administration expenses and assistant secretary ... ..		939	
	<hr/> 5,745 <hr/>	<hr/> 6,892 <hr/>	<hr/> -1147 <hr/>
Net spares sales and related costs ... ..	6,867	5,489	+ 1378
Net sales badges, T-shirts etc. and related costs ... ..	978	828	+ 150
Books, photocopying & related costs ... ..	2,587	2,169	+ 418
Rallies and prizes ... ..	440	633	-193
	1,119	1,185	+ 214
V.A.T. ... ..	772	723	+ 49
Gross turnover ... ..	18,788	17,919	+ 869
Building society balance ...£1,866 (including interest to September 30th)			

Jan 1980

## A DOTTY TALE

### 5. Was It Worth It?

I have some motoring friends with long experience who seem to regard the car they own at any one time as the measure of their intellectual standing. They never admit that it has any faults, for to do so would open them to the criticism that they should have chosen better. Years ago, perhaps 1930, I met a man who insisted that there was no better car on the market than his, an Austin Seven, this in the days of the Dusenbergs, the Bentley 8 Litre and other exotica from Europe.

Well, to be fair one should assess an old car firstly by the standards of the cars in the time when it was made and, secondly, how it fulfills the purposes of its owner today.

The original Drophead Coupe was intended to be a refinement of the Roadster DJ 254. The latter had been criticised on account of the exhaust noise, the possession of side screens and a hood that was difficult to get up. These criticisms were met in the DHC and heater was added, so far so good, but a third seat was installed, which reduced the luggage space in the boot. Indeed I cannot reason out the market for which the DHC was intended. Apparently Thoroughbred & Classic Cars had the same view and wrote, "the sporting two/three-seater Roadster derivative (from the Conquest Century) was a bit of a disaster".

In its day the DHC was not a sports car, three seats don't qualify! Anyway, the performance was moderate only. It was not a long distance "Grand Tourisme" model for the luggage accommodation is poor and the provision for maps, cameras, binoculars, gloves etc. is just non-existent. It was not a luxury car, hard small seats, no arm rests and only a modest finish to the body and engine. It was not a family car, only a child could fit into the side seat and could not get into it if the hood was up. It was not a tidy persons car for it dripped oil from every point underneath.

I must conclude that it was ill conceived, but what a beauty in the eye of the beholder, a real Boulevard Convertible! As explained in part one, appearance was an element in my wanting this model, although my real requirement was a quiet luxurious DH Coupe of small size for pleasure use. Well, how has that worked out? The answer must be "not yet" and that covers five years restoration.

The performance has been improved and the top gear running is pleasing up to 40 m.p.h., indeed the most attractive feature of the car is doodling about the town or country at 10-15 m.p.h. in top, in near silence. At and above 40 m.p.h. an unpleasant groan emanates from the engine compartment which has not yet been conclusively diagnosed. At 60 m.p.h. upwards, wind noise takes over. The car is definitely noisier with the hood up. The fluid flywheel is a pleasure to use and its firmness is a welcome contrast to the torque converter of the family barouche but the gears are dreadful. It is hoped to fit an overdrive, which has become an essential with the advent of motorways and the engine could easily pull a much higher gear. Modern motoring has brought a new feature, traffic congestion, which tries the charging system (and cooling system) of old cars. A seven mile tailback, at night, in the rain, crawling at 3-4 m.p.h. is too hard on the battery.



Photo

G. Ramage

Still a four seater?

The steering is excellent and the springing hard but acceptable. In fact it's better by far than the sick making, soft modern suspension. Brakes, after careful attention, are excellent. Petrol consumption varies from 20 m.p.g. over hilly country to 27 m.p.g. at a steady 50 on the motorways. Oil consumption is about 1,500 m.p.g., again dependant on engine revs.

There is no backdraft, which is a very good point, but the provision for cool air to be admitted when required is pathetic. An attempt is being made to remedy this and to reduce the heat from the engine which cooks one's feet. So, if the engine groan and the cockpit heat can be reduced, new comfortable seats installed, an overdrive fitted then the original intention will have been almost achieved, the bit lacking will be silence. But these are material considerations, is there no psychological satisfaction in changing a rusting dustbin into a good looking, sound, usable, even unique, car? Of course there is, even if the swan has some noticeable duckling features.

In the days of alchemy, years were spent pounding curious materials in a mortar and although the lodestone was never achieved the seeker had learnt patience and tranquility. Is there a parallel here? Tears of expectation, frustration of trying to find materials and expert help, the completion of journeys in spite of near impossible difficulties must toughen the mind and teach patience, even some tolerance towards the limited understanding and ability of many of the so called experts.

Back to earthly considerations; the car cost £400 and has had some £3,500 spent on it to date, plus a certain amount of professional work at no cost.

G. Ramage.

Oct 1981

this, together with its attendant trains of epicyclic gears and re-bush everything. To cut a long story short, we had five more test runs before we considered everything first class. In fact, we were only just ready in time for the Veteran Car Club's next event, a rally to Ramsgate on July 12th, followed by a gymkhana the same afternoon with the usual egg and spoon race, ballon bursting, bottle races, etc. This was followed by the Ramsgate Concours d'Elegance the next day. There was a special class for veteran cars and the old Lanchester carried off the first prize, G. H. Eyre's 1902 Norfolk being second and J. M. Turner's 1899 Panhard third. Twenty-three veterans were entered for this event, which was followed by a dinner and dance at the Granville Hotel, Mrs. K. Petre presenting the prizes. The car behaved very well except for a certain amount of over-heating. The engine actually seized once, and this Messer and I put down to all the slow running in processions in connection with the "Concours", plus the effect of the new bearings.

Reprinted from *Motor Sport* of 1945.

(To be continued).

F. W. Hutton-Stott.

## A TALE WITHOUT END—A DOTTY TALE

### 6. Nearly Right

In the January 1980 issue of *The Driving Member* an assessment of the car as at mid-1979 was made and the main failings noted were the undergearing, noise and the charging system.

When the car was originally rescued from the scrap heap the back axle had a banshee howl at about 45 m.p.h. and the second gear just wasn't "all present and correct". The gearbox was put right, probably the toggle mechanism needed adjustment, but it was still noisy. The back axle was simply dealt with by swapping it for one off a scrap saloon. These changes made the car useable but did not restore its normal behaviour.

As originally supplied the DJ 254 had a back axle ratio of 3.73:1 which gave 20.8 m.p.h. at 1000 r.p.m., although an alternative of 4.11 (which gave 18.5 m.p.h. at 1000 r.p.m.) was available. After chassis 90500 the 4.11 was standardised and the 3.73 became the alternative. As Dotty had an exceptional pickup from low speeds and buzzed a lot at speed, it was obvious that the replacement back axle was a lower ratio than 4.11 and must have been the 4.56. This would account for the speedometer reading 35 m.p.h. when the true speed was 30, so an improvement in the gearing was sought early in the car's ownership.

It was suggested to me that all that was required was a higher back axle ratio. I have no information as to how many 3.73 back axles were supplied or where they are and the 4.11 is not high enough. With the latter the engine revs at 4300 at 80 m.p.h. and I get terrified when I see the rev. counter at 4000 revs., expecting to see the engine erupt through the bonnet at any moment! More to my taste was the gearing of the 1905 Rolls-Royce 40/50 which peaked at 1250 r.p.m. but had plenty of torque at 200-300 r.p.m. to pull the car along at 5 m.p.h. in the 'Sprinting' overdrive top. This gave 38 m.p.h. per 1000 revs!

The real point of the objection was that with a sufficiently high top for motorway cruising a high proportion of ordinary running would necessarily be

in third gear, which is too low and possibly noisy. I wonder if this was the reason for the change of ratio originally?

The next proposal came from my then (1978) Guru, all that was needed was a two speed overdrive unit from a Rover and this to be installed behind the existing gearbox and shortening the prop. shaft. This sounded an excellent solution, giving a choice on all gears. Recently I heard of a Century so fitted.

Then began the quest for a Rover overdrive unit. An advertisement brought one response from, of all the motorists in England, the then D.L.O.C. Hon. Treasurer, David Mitchell! I picked up the unit at the Annual Rally on that magnificent day at Sudely Castle.

I bore it triumphantly to the Guru's temple, to be met by a stoney faced manager who was not at all pleased. 'Yes, we can do it for you. We've done a Packard and it works well but the cost will be at least £1,000'. Well, that would be about £1,500 today and was not on, particularly as the finished car would have a shortened prop. shaft.

After a while I recalled an article on fitting an overdrive in an early DM, in the days when it was a duplicated sheet and I found it. It seemed just what I wanted and I cannot do better than reproduce it.

"I made a conversion to my 1956 Daimler Century when I bought it, fitting an Empress overdrive box without changing the axle ratio. This gave a really high gear, 3rd being straight through top. The car now does 60 at about 2100 r.p.m. in (top) overdrive on Michelin tyres. It also weighs about 4½ cwt less than a Barker Special Sports with 85 b.h.p. and also has 100 h.p. to push the car along. The car goes so well that in night driving, cruising comfortably and never exceeding any speed limit, one can average 45/50 according to trip and type of road. With all that comfort, at 30/2 m.p.g. and more on a run, the effort put into it was very worth while.

Fitting the box is quite simple. First take off the (1) radiator, wings etc. in one piece, also hoses and electricals. (2) get a garage crane to lift the engine and gearbox, first having taken off prop. shaft and remove nuts on engine mountings. Two men can lift (1) and three men can lift (2) quite easily without a crane when out of the car.

Remove the box from the engine, then make a pattern for the bellhousing cast in aluminium to be made and machined, also a drawing of a box mounting bracket to be made as the box is 3" and five sixteenths shorter than the original. In the meantime get a propshaft made three and five sixteenths shorter than the original, I still have the drawings and pattern I made, if anyone is interested.

When the casting arrives put it on the centre boss of the box and square up and mark, drill tap holes and dowel, then get three men and two well packed straw sacks and stand the engine vertically on the sacks. Lower the casing on the centre shaft, mark and drill holes in the engine end of the casing and dowel, the box the bell housing and the engine being vertical, line them up without any side load on the bearings or twist on the shaft.

I made a bell crank lever for the side of the box, I also used a Minor 1000 handbrake cable to change left hand for right hand gear lever. After bolting completely together, replace in car and put everything together.

Without any paint or 'bull', the car from start to finish took 70 hours only. This included new pistons, new big-ends, new prop., new bellhousing, new swivel pins and bushes. Also fibreglass two sheets thick on all four wings and two door sills internally and make bellhouse pattern".

*D. C. Farrar, The Old Rectory, Welbourne, Dereham, Norfolk.*

Just the ticket! So the search was on for an overdrive box.

I quickly learnt that these were not hanging on trees like a good crop of damsons waiting for me to pick one off! But fortune smiled one day and a man rang living in Lichfield (not far from my home in Stafford) to say that he had one for sale. I was particular to know if it was off a 2½ litre car, and not the later 3½ because I had been told that the overdrive box suffered with the extra work.

My box must be the only one ever to be supplied with its licence book; that is the licence book of the car from which it was taken. To my pleasure I saw that it belonged to a former Bishop of Lichfield, whom I knew slightly. I am not sure if this sanctified home confers a blessed future on the box (and hopefully on its new owner!), or if the non-mechanical Bishop ruined it. The car ended up by being piled against a wall.

We were in early 1979, and having the box, I rang David Farrar who readily agreed to lend me the bellhousing pattern. Pushing my luck a bit I asked if he would arrange for the same foundry to cast me a bellhousing which he agreed. But it never materialised through no fault of his. So in June 1979 I went over to Dereham, where I was most hospitably received—David is another D.L.O.C. member.

It is worth a moments digression from the tale to describe this visit, which was favoured with glorious sunny weather. David owns a large picturesque old house next to the old church with the typical local round tower, but the best part, to the Daimler enthusiast, are the extensive outbuildings—stables. These are chock-a-block with Daimlers of all types of the 'middle period' (except a DJ 254) in varying stages of restoration and decay. David is an expert restorer and has the most complete amateur workshop I have seen—including panel shaping machinery. What a place to visit—and thrown in for good measure is a collection of car models. Now I had the use of the mould and took it to the engineer who originally restored Dotty. Yes, he would try to get a casting made and fit the box.

You have guessed it—nothing happened!

By now (September 1979) nine months had passed and no new bellhousing was in prospect nor seemed likely to be. Then one day my son rang to say that, as a favour, a client of his who had a foundry in the Black Country not far from my home would 'do his best to help'. I was over there in a shot.

Hearing my need and having examined the pattern, the owner and his manager agreed to do the casting but stipulated two conditions. One, that they would make no charge and two, that I should not tell anyone where I got it. No delay in agreeing and no delay in receiving the casting, which I picked up a week later. A case of potent liquid fuel for human consumption expressed my appreciation and in accepting this I was told to make the pattern and casting de

novo would cost about £1,000. Now smelt high finance and secrecy, casting gun barrels etc. James Bond stuff.

But this was progress at last, but who would machine my new bellhousing? Mr. 'X', the foundry owner, had a cousin nearby who might, so round we went.

Another digression; what a visit! Alladin in the cave was not more astonished than I. This small factory is a mechanical wonder. There are only ten workers, each a highly skilled machinist and between them they can reproduce any mechanical part you may name. Their speciality is Bugatti's, and any part can be made or repaired, naturally new castings present no problem. I saw a newly made eight cylinder block about two litres with overhead valves with no detachable head. They said that machining the valve seats down the bores was 'rather tricky'.

*To be continued.*

G. Ramage.

### READER'S LETTERS

Dear Editor,

I would like, through the columns of this magazine, to congratulate Sandford Marcus on organising an excellent meeting at Mr. Hutton-Stott's on the 23rd Of August. It was indeed a memorable and surely historic occasion, the Lanchesters present were a sight to behold.

As Denis Offler and myself are restoring a 1928 Limousine we were able to talk to Mr. Shapland from Bristol and he kindly gave us a ride in his magnificent limousine which is similar to ours. Many thanks Mr. Shapland. Hopefully it will not be too long before another Lanchester event takes place. Before I close just a word of thanks to members Chris Clark and his wife Lynne of Monks Risborough for their kind hospitality shown to us when we turned up at their stately home set in the heart of the Buckinghamshire countryside on Sunday morning.

Yours sincerely,  
E. J. (Ted) Smith, Nottingham.

Dear Editor,

Referring to the Hints and Tips articles one of the things that I omitted to mention in the above was the altering of the oil relief valve pressure. As installed originally by the makers this was set to give a maximum of 40 lbs pressure, but after the opening of motorways, it was found that folk were travelling at higher speeds thereon and doing damage to engines through lack of oil pressure. If the valve is drilled out to give an orifice of 3/32" this will increase the pressure by 10 lbs. Reference Daimler Trade directive 10.4.60. This might be of interest to Conquest-Century owners.

Yours sincerely,  
V. Boyd-Carpenter, Baslow.

Dear Editor,

I recently purchased a copy of the "Owners' Companion" and read through the section which dealt with my car, a DB 17-1. It seemed to show some doubt on the introduction of independent front suspension with this model. There can be no doubt, the New Daimler Fifteen as it was titled is fully

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water ingress. It also prevents the creosote from drying up the wood which therefore stays even more resistant to water and to the decay which it causes.

Old or new posts which are to be set into the ground should be soaked in the 25%:75% mix for several days. An old softwood post can drink up half a gallon, if you are stuck for a suitable receptacle you could cut the top off a gallon can using a tin opener (remove the handle and neck first using a blowlamp to prevent them from fouling the tin opener).

Do not paint wood with oil in frosty, cold or wet weather if you are worried about the short term appearance of the wood because some of the oil will emulsify and the white foam will make the wood look blotchy until it has washed off. In dry sunny weather it will soak in quickly leaving both new and old wood with a pleasant dark stained appearance. Use the oil liberally to achieve the best results and you will be surprised how nice your woodwork will look and how quickly the oil disappears especially when your neighbours (who are not home mechanics) scrounge the rest of it so that they can make their fences look as rich as yours.

Adrian Hanwell.

### A DOTTY TALE

In an earlier chapter I mentioned the work done on the car while the gearbox struggle was going on and these may be of interest.

**ALTERNATOR.** With road conditions an alternator has obvious advantages over a dynamo. Actually, I saw one DJ 254 so fitted but the original fan belt had been retained. While the engine was out was the obvious time to have the front pulley changed for a narrow one to take the modern belt used with an alternator. The replacement was from an Austin 1800 f.w.d. and required redrilling and packing out to line up with the fan pulley. While this was being done one might just as well complete the job, so a viscous fan was added. There was just room and some accurate lathe work was required to adapt the standard water pump spindle. I hope the two pump bearings will carry the increased load of the tension of the alternator belt. By the by, I wish some one would tell me how a viscous fan really works.

It would have been far simpler to fit an electric fan, but my past experience with these contra indicated this: Electric fans only operate at low speeds when the engine is at its quietest and the ones that I had were very noisy, not what I wanted.

**STEERING BOX.** Since buying the car the steering box has leaked. EP grease was tried in vain and now was the time to have it rebuilt and this was done through the D.L.O.C., George Bennett referred me to Alec Stewart who had a modification done. This has been a total success, not a drop of oil has been added since and before I was almost driven to an oil sump and recirculating pump! A further bonus is the lighter steering with an immediate spin back after a sharp corner.

**REWIRING.** Two electrical shorts, amounting to a small fire in one case (not of my doing!), had played havoc with the original wiring while the fitting of tandem electrical petrol pumps, electric windscreen washer and, finally, the fitting of the alternator had modified the wiring considerably. The old wiring,

with its snap connectors, was completely pulled out and the necessary circuits drawn out from scratch. Obviously no harness was available so a uniform coloured 15 amp wire was used for all circuits except the alternator output (35 amps) and the main lead. The wires were identified by pushing on the plastic numerals used in professional electronic work. Very practical.

The opportunity was taken to fit four fuses in an accessible position, which is more than can be said for the standard two fuses buried under a mass of wires. The standard 30 amp ammeter was retained because the maximum output of the alternator is 34 amps and this is never likely to be reached in use.

**BODYWORK.** After the upheaval of the mechanical work it was the turn of the body. For too long I had made excuses for the badly shaped and fitting doors. Our local garage, whose owner is an old car enthusiast, made a superb job. The hood rods were shortened slightly and at last the hood folds down completely into its recess. A new cover for this was made. The cracked windscreen was replaced and finally the car was resprayed off white in a modern twin pack paint. The car is now restored to its original beauty.

**OIL FILTRATION.** Members with long memories will recall the description of the 'Triple R' oil filter in the days of the cyclostyled club notes and this was so effective that it eliminated oil changing.

I have been trying to trace this filter ever since reading the notes and wrote in the correspondence about oil filtration in 1978. At last I have obtained such a filter, Unilube, and this has been fitted. It is too early to confirm the maker's claim that the sump never needs changing, merely topping up at intervals. Away with the mess of draining oil and the difficult task of changing the standard filter. At oil change intervals a new filter element is put in, this is a simple job and cheaper than changing the oil.

**WHAT NEXT?** I intend to fit an oil bath filter, which was supplied for export DJ254s. Finally, the trim and carpets will require attention to bring the interior up to the standard of the exterior.

All these troubles and changes has taught me a lot about cars and Daimlers in particular and lead me to more general reflections.

The first is that, unless you are a car professional, it is little use aiming for first class results however much or little you can do yourself unless sufficient funds are available. The cost of outside work for changes described in the articles is close on £2,000. If this seems a lot of money one must reflect on the cost of new cars these days and the fact that Dotty is now a unique car.

Then one is liable to be hypnotised by the accounts in the specialist motor journals of beautiful restorations done by firms based far away and neglecting local press possibilities. The obtaining of the first casting was a long and involved process, eventually a local firm, employing about six men, did a precision job quickly and one could talk to them.

I live practically in the country and yet the local garage man employing two young men in a tin shed took out the engine, modified the pulleys, made new gearbox mounts and selector arms, all at a reasonable cost and quickly. Two miles the other way another garage man is interested in old vehicles and owns three splendid examples. He and one of his assistants made a perfect job

of Dotty's doors, which had previously baffled a larger coach builder. The moral is to seek local skills first, not last.

Finally, it has been abundantly plain that it would have been impossible to complete this reconstruction project without support at home. Apart from the need to eat and the sustaining cups of hot coffee, the taxiing to and fro taking the car for attention, there were many tows home needed when troubles overcame Dotty's self-propelling ability. In my case the support has been supplied over five years by my long suffering wife, I dare not ask her real opinion of the car but she should be made an honorary member!

Gerald Ramage.



Photo

D. J. Stanier

The 1972 Daimler Fleetline tree lopping unit.

### A DAIMLER LORRY — 1980's STYLE!

Daimler lorries were not particularly common in transport history, probably reaching a peak during the 1920's or 1930's. Any that have appeared subsequently have generally been built on converted bus chassis as special purpose vehicles from new, or have been converted for specialised work after completion of a passenger carrying career.

The subject of this brief article is a 1972 vintage Daimler Fleetline which was new to Trent Motor Traction. It was one of nineteen delivered in the summer of that year (straddling the K/L registration year) with bodywork built by Eastern Coachworks of Lowestoft.

Sadly, this batch was ill-fated. In July 1976, seven of the vehicles were destroyed by fire at Trent's Derby bus depot. This one, 558 (OCH 558L) sustained roof damage under a low bridge in 1980, and instead of carrying out

Aug 1982

## A DOTTY REPORT

For a long time we have all been fascinated by the regular reports from Gerald Ramage on the alterations he has made to his new drop head coupe. Gee has always wanted a second opinion and our Chairman drove the car. He was much impressed but pointed out that as he had no experience of the DJ 254/5 he was not in a good position to comment.

When attending the A.G.M. and Rally my wife and I were invited to stay with Gerald and Effie, his charming lady, at Coppenhall. We arrived late on Thursday and at once, to the consternation of the ladies, Gee and I started to talk Daimlers. We did so throughout the stay and by the end the ladies were making threatening noises about writing to the magazine under the heading "Damned Daimlers". I do hope that they do so.

On Friday I was invited to drive Dotty from Coppenhall to Mere for the A.G.M. This is a distance of forty-five miles and is adequate for an assessment of performance in relation to the "strict" variety of car as is my own DJ 254.

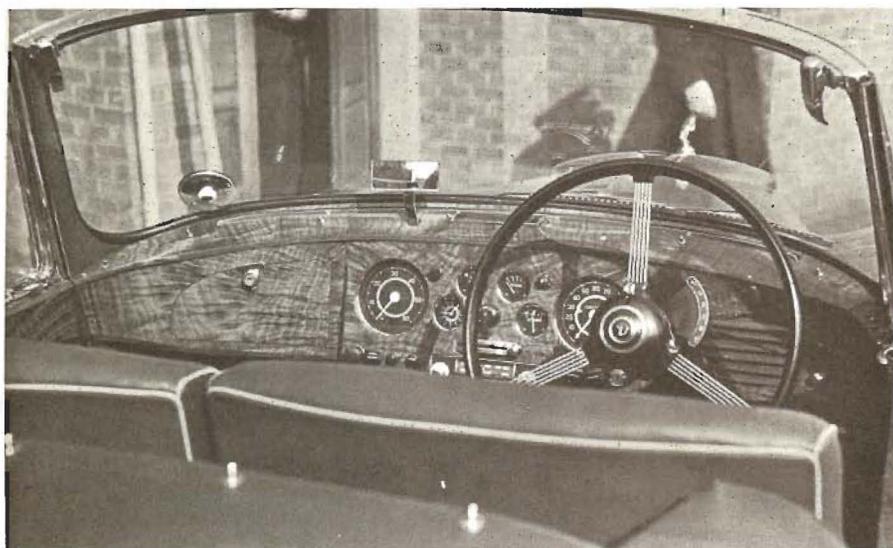
Before giving my impression I will refresh your minds. Dotty has raised compression, an alternator, electronic ignition of the photo electric cell type, a Petrol King which regulates the pressure of fuel from pump to carburettor reducing it to prevent flooding and smoothing out the flow to give economy, the Unilube system whereby oil is never changed only the filters and finally Dotty has overdrive. Radial tyres have been fitted but these would have no appreciable effect on road holding, cornering or economy. The drive was to be for a couple of miles or so on country roads followed by some forty miles of motorway and ending with about two miles of "A" roads. A good mixture for a test.

The country road was taken at a steady thirty and Dotty ran smoothly and quietly. On reaching the motorway speed was increased easily to a steady seventy. Needless to say the car was being overtaken with monotonous regularity by the normal motorway drivers. Keeping a wary eye on the mirror as well as ahead I applied a small amount of throttle. Dotty immediately responded with ninety and with great ease. There was plenty of throttle left. Motorway repairs caused reductions of speed down to fifty and even to thirty over some stretches. In other words, the car was tested properly over some forty-five miles and under varying conditions of traffic and circumstances. At all times Dotty was smooth and responsive, never hesitating to do what was required. Road holding was normal even with crossply tyres. The silence was impressive. Gee has a "thing" about noisy cars and has obviously improved upon the normal straight through that is standard.

To appreciate the performance it is necessary to monitor consumption and to this end Gee has fitted an electronic device in front of the driver to give immediate information on consumption and at the touch of a button the actual amount of fuel used. The little red figures were flashing from twenty-eight to thirty-four with the varying pedal pressure. Over ninety miles, both outward and return journey, the consumption was exactly three gallons. No oil was used. The water level remained constant. At ninety miles per hour the tachometer registered 3,400 as against the normal 4,500. The



**Photo** **R. Whyte**  
This car was spotted at the 1977 Jubilee Rally at Harewood House, does anyone know it's history?  
Is it a Roadster or a New Drophead Coupe.



**Photo** **Daimler/Jaguar**  
Another mystery DJ254 with a rather splendid wooden dashboard and door cappings.  
Anybody know the history of this one?

speedometer has been tested thoroughly and is exactly six miles per hour out, allowance was made for this in the figure quoted.

There is no doubt that the car performs far better than any DJ 254/5 that I have driven — I have driven them regularly for the past six years. How much of the improvement is due to each of the modifications is a matter for conjecture; no doubt they all play their part. The performance is far better than it could possibly have been when the car was new.

Gee has never pretended that the car is "strict" and although purists may regard the modifications with scorn they meet with Gee's wishes for optimum performance with the minimum of noise and expense. The removal of the silly sideways seat behind the driver and the fitting of a luggage and tool compartment is a vast improvement. It enables the car to be used for continental touring with an adequate wardrobe. Male readers will appreciate how difficult this can be!

Finally, I would say that had Daimler thought of some of these modifications when designing and building the car they would have been incorporated as standard. A much better car would have been the result. The model is first class as it was produced but all things are capable of being improved.

Peter J. Pusey.

### **SOCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT ON THE NATIONAL RALLY**

Although it was a cold day for June, the National Rally this year was attended by over two hundred cars. This was a record, and I was most gratified with the warmth and help our north western members gave to us during the day.

The SP 250's were there in record numbers. Barry Thorne tells me that he has had over 60. I was too busy to count, because I ran thither and yon trying to get the cars lined up for the cavalcades. Next year I will need some cavalcade volunteers who can help organise this.

There were some complaints about the lack of activity and no driving tests. Both John and I thought carefully about having tests, and as each of us did not want to administer them, and the field was a little too bumpy, we did not have them. We would like to ask you if there is anyone who will administer the driving tests for next year; please come forward now to me, or write me a letter.

On the lighter side, the bus ride idea from David Adcock was an instant success; even strange kids got on the bus. Marie Adcock was the famous Natasha Rustymover, and two kids got prizes of tee shirts. Mrs. Lanchester presented the cup, made coffee, shined silver, with Brenda Ridley, and Gaynor Veal. Anne McCafferty helped along with the ladies. Let me thank all the judges, marshalls and anyone else John forgot in the Manager's article.

The buffet at Mere was overwhelmed, every half-hour I had to yell for more food. We ended up with over 60. Three people were turned away. My apologies go to Roger Wackett and friends who had to be turned away at the last moment. Next year, please book in advance. I published in the Rally programme that we will have next year's rally in London. Then I went

Feb 1984

## DOTTY DEVELOPMENTS

(not for Purists)

Since the fitting of the overdrive gearbox and the other changes made in 1981 (described in the DM, January, 1982), the car has been in almost daily use and two long tours in Europe were undertaken; so its behaviour under all conditions was fully tested. During this time it was completely reliable, although a few maintenance jobs were required. Its performance was the subject of a report by Mr. Pusey in the DM for August 1982. The car was then much nearer to my requirements, but improvements were needed to:

1. avoid, or minimise, the need to use second gear.
2. secure a reliable return to tick-over speed.
3. obtain a dependable gear selection.
4. the appearance of the interior of the car.

### GEARING

The inconvenience of the big drop from top to second gear was mentioned in the last article and is inherent in using the overdrive box. On the other hand the advantages of that box are so great that it is a small price to pay.

In the relatively flat country where I live, the disadvantage is not noticeable; indeed it allows the car to be used in town as a two gear car. But climbing an alpine pass of one in ten is quite different, for the hairpin bends (or being baulked by a horse etc.) bring the car out of top gear. To regain top requires a run up to 3,000 rpm—just in time for the next bend!

Obviously, the longer one can stay in top the less the inconvenience—ergo, increase engine power and torque. The ideal solution would be straight supercharging at, say, 3-4 lbs., but the very limited bonnet space prevents this being done. The popular turbocharging was a possibility and would have helped silencing. However, insuring a low rev. improvement would have not been easy, and I have noted that they are not free from troubles.

Petrol injection was fully investigated with the help of Messrs. Lucas. This idea was abandoned on account of the difficulty of obtaining a drive for the metering distributor drive and the ensuing loss of the existing rev counter drive.

The remaining choice was to improve the carburettor arrangement and, there being no point in half doing the job, three double barrelled Delortos were selected. They are claimed to give a good "bottom" end torque. The adaption was carried out by Rob Pendleton Motors, Stafford, and is a remarkable achievement, as the photograph shows.

Alas the waterheated inlet manifold had to be abandoned and three short manifolds were made to attach the carbs. to the block. To clear the steering column the engine was slightly tilted. The carburettor intakes are joined in an air chest and the air is drawn from the aperture on the front of the wing, which is part of the standard bodywork of the DJ 254. Under the nearside wing is a large air filter through which the air is drawn.

The former carb. controls were removed, including the cross shaft, and replaced by a short cable. This has eliminated one source of the irregular return to tickover by the engine.

Having done away with the standard air intake silencer the valve cover was more accessible and, so as to completely free it, the heater pipes were retracked. Now the valve cover is completely free for removal when the valves need attention.

### **GEAR SELECTION**

Members may recall that the overdrive box has the selector arm on the o/s of the gearbox, so an extension from the normal arrangement is necessary. This involves a two-bearing cross shaft and two additional ball joints. Also, the selector lever on the overdrive gearbox is shorter than on the standard one, so small wonder that gear selection is rather erratic.

Removing the cross shaft for the carb. control made space for a direct linkage from the steering column down to the box and eliminating the extra joints and bearings. It is now much better and lengthening the selector rod will give complete accuracy.

### **BODY INTERIOR**

After five years use parts of the seats had worn and become discoloured, these were renewed, as was the carpeting.

The original leather covered dashboard and door tops had, in my opinion, let the car down, the exterior is so pleasing and I have noted people's faces fall on looking inside the car. The remedy was obvious but required the patience of facing another major upheaval.

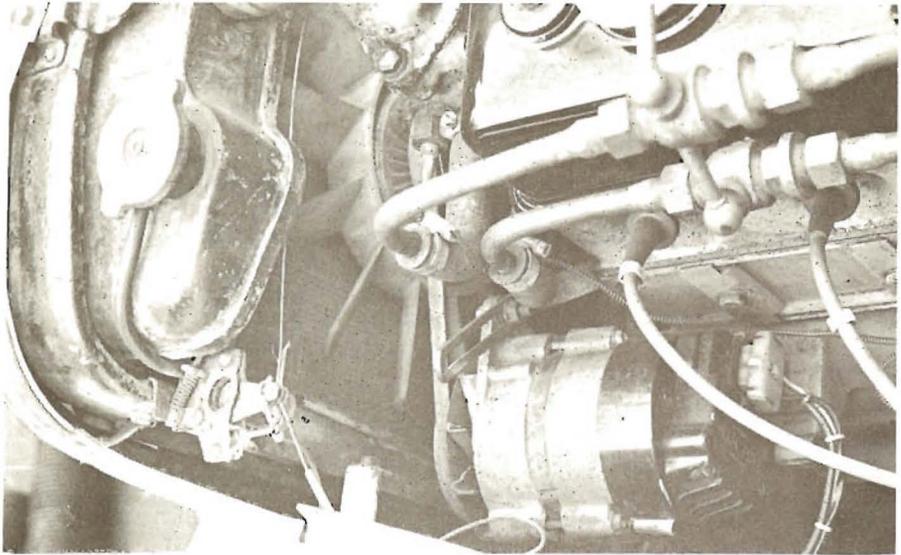
The replacement dashboard was started whilst castings were being made for the carbs, and the layout was modified (I think "improved" is the proper word). The heater controls attached to the lower edge of the dashboard were taken off and replaced by two pull-push controls (water and air). The space they had occupied was used for a much needed map pocket.

As modern anti-mist solutions are so effective the air supply to the windscreen, with its attendant pipes, was not refitted. Apart from its ugly appearance the information supplied by the Mobilec Miles Per Gallon had been found to be of little value so a vacuum meter has been added to the dashboard furniture.

The use of a wireless with loudspeakers in an open car may well be questioned. I have often had words, usually unpleasant, with youthful carriers of portable radios battling out jazz. Never-the-less while the dashboard was out and the wires and pipes miserably hanging loose, I fixed two speakers to the interior sides of the "cockpit". After the new dashboard was in a small L, M, FM stereo set on the driver's side.

Probably because of the low position of the speakers, it has proved possible to use the set without creating an accoustic nuisance. There are no restrictions on unfrequented country roads, and town use is limited to quiet speech. In all it has added to the enjoyment of using the car; that is at under 40 mph after which the wind takes over.

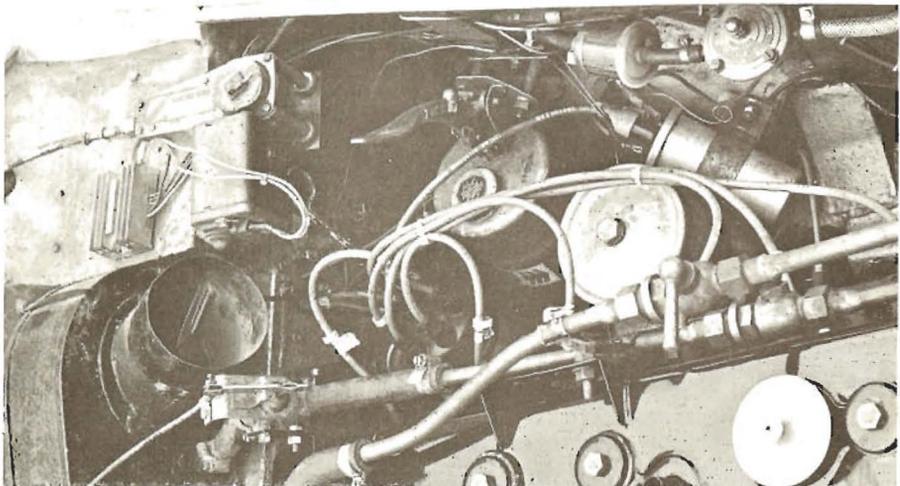
The main part of the dashboard containing the instruments is multiply topped with mahogany; while the door cappings and the corner pieces are solid mahogany. The finish is best yacht varnish, which will stand any weather. The locker tops have been finished in mahogany for a long time, so it all matches.



Photo

R. W. Ramage

Looking forward along the nearside of the engine showing the alternator.



Photo

R. W. Ramage

Looking aft along the nearside of the engine bay; to the right of the coil is a petrol pressure limiter with a petrol filter leading into it. Left of the coil is the oil filter and above the one shot oil lubrication system.

## APPRAISAL

The main object of increased torque at low revs and an improved performance has been achieved—after nine months trial and error in the carb. settings.

There are so many variables with each of the six choketubes (idle jet, holders, main jet, pumps, emulsion tubes and air jet) that I am lost in the permutations. Each single change required half a dozen of that item and the carbs. bristle with adjusting screws and openings. Once set up the carbs. are completely reliable providing modern petrol filtration is employed and there are no moving parts or engine drives, the latter is a very favourable factor compared with the alternatives mentioned before and no special care in use is required. There is less to go wrong than with SU carbs., we had a holiday spoiled by a sticking piston in another car.

I have been mindful that an increase in engine power can cause transmission and brake difficulties and I hope I am right in my conclusions. Braking is a function of the method of driving and not the power of the engine. Incidentally the replacement of the standard flexible pipes to the front brakes by Aeroquip metal bound flexes has definitely sharpened braking. If I avoid full throttle in bottom gear the back axle should not be at risk.

There remains the gearbox. The "Holy" overdrive gearbox was from the Bishop's Special Sports (2½ litre), but I believe that the same box was employed on the 3½ Regency, which developed 107 hp and weighed 37 cwt. Rumour has it that the 4½ litre engine was too much for the box and trouble was experienced with the planet wheels. Smith's Daimler Tradition indicates that it was fitted to the Regency Sportsman, which developed up to 130 hp.

Dotty weighs about 26½ cwt., if the engine is now putting out 102 hp the work undertaken by the gearbox must be considerably less than the Regency series—so far nothing untoward has happened and it has served over many mountain passes. Will the experts let me know if my amateur logic is engineering nonsense?

The choke system is very effective and the car starts instantly and the choke can be put in very quickly. The car runs as smoothly and quietly as formerly if it is allowed to gain speed gently. If a greater throttle is employed either for acceleration or hill climbing then the six trumpets signal that they are at work. Full throttle at 2,000+ revs produces an impressive roar and an equally impressive push in the back.

Now the overdrive gives as good a performance as formerly did top gear and the latter acts as a high third.

The car's merit as a high speed tourer (when required) was demonstrated on a recent trip along the Pyrenees and returning up through France. The main passes could have been taken in direct top but for the hairpin bends. Top speed is not limited by power but by the amount of wind buffeting and noise the occupants can stand. Petrol consumption with the performance available from the original SUs was 30-32 on a long tour. This last trip was 26½ mpg, but this included three passes over 5,000 feet and Toulouse traffic.

So this conversion has been a great improvement, but is this the end? When the Century engine was developed from the Conquest additional hp was gained by (amongst other factors) by increasing the valve overlap and raising the lift by 25 thou. This resulted in the maximum torque being raised to 2,500 rpm. This engine speed on Dotty represents 65 mph on overdrive and 46 mph on top—excellent for the motorway but not so good on a hill limited to 15 mph! I think a modified cam needs investigating!

## **CAR INTERIOR**

This change strikes the eye immediately and it was described by the Editor as “definitely in the Daimler Tradition” when he photographed the new dashboard at this year’s Annual Rally. At that time the door cappings and corner pieces had not been completed.

In the early articles on Dotty, I described the Century as the car which Daimlers produced when they had descended the car social scale ladder. In my view the interior of the DJ 254s was the nadir. Dotty has climbed back. In nearly ten years of altering Dotty, the only change I have made which has not been done before by someone else is the luggage locker—well, I never!

G. Ramage.

*(On the subject of dashboards, on page 63 of the August 1982 DM there was a picture of a DJ 254 with a veneered dashboard. The new owner of the car turned up at the Club stand at Brighton last year. The car was in fact owned by Norman Wisdom and is strictly speaking a Roadster, although the bodywork aft of the front seats has been modified (by Hooper?) and is a sort of midway point towards a New Drophead Coupe. I trust that an article is forthcoming!*

*The gearbox ratios of the Dolphin and the Special Sports were both 3:1 for first gear, 1.64:1 for second, 1:1 for direct third and 0.73:1 on overdrive gear. The ratios quoted for the 4½ litre are 3:1 for first gear, 1.62 for second, 1:1 for top and 0.709:1 for overdrive. Does this suggest that they had similar ratios but were not the same sized gearboxes? Even if the ratios were the same could not the actual gears be larger and thus stronger? B. W.).*

## **DB 18**

In the Companion I wrote that the DB 18 range began with chassis number 45,050 because this was how it was detailed in the Company’s list of annual chassis allocations, the problem was that the list also assigned this number and the following ones to the DB 17s. However, now I have seen the chassis number books, which list all the individual chassis, I can say that 45,050 must be a misprint and that in October 1939 work commenced on chassis 49,050. The allocation of numbers went up to 49,549, indeed all 500 numbers were written in the book but not surprisingly only 66 of these chassis were actually built, the last in January 1940, and several of them were destroyed in the April Blitz.

However, as seems to be usual with Daimler records, a small mystery arose. On the 24th of June 1939 two Show Chassis were started, 49,523 and 49,524. During the next few months, until February 1940, another 21 chassis were built. After each entry the word chassis was written, this usually meant

May 1985

### FIRST BUY THE BOOK

One fine Australian day in 1983, whilst strolling through the stalls at an Autojumble, my friend and fellow Member, John Hurst, came across a Majestic Handbook. We had temporarily lost touch at this 'British Day' event where cars of all periods from Britain assemble once a year in Sydney. However, we eventually met up and he urged me to buy this handbook along the lines of "one day you may have one".

Soon after reading this book I decided that he was right, I should have one, but where was I to acquire one from, Majestics being a reasonably obscure model, in Sydney at least? Well, a former Club Member had one in his shed at Windsor that had suffered a "front ender", you know, bent wing, crumpled grill, broken headlight but underneath quite all right. There was also minor damage at the rear.

I made him an offer. It was refused and so I thought the end of it. Twelve months later a telephone message came through, the car was available at my original offer price.

So I now possessed a maroon over Tudor grey, 53,000 original miles 1959 Majestic. It had not run for three years and required the brakes being attended to, the reason for the crash. I had to remove the engine to attend to a little end but that was bad luck and not apparent when I bought the car. However, the engine slips out easily (less gearbox) and so I was able to fit new rings, big end shells and valve grind it whilst it was out. A coat of specially mixed Daimler grey engine paint really makes it an attractive power unit.

Soon the car was home and refurbishing commenced, the mudguard, grill and stone guard at the front being very hard to replace, all being beyond economic repair. Friends were pressed and up from Melbourne came a new mudguard complete with part number. The tripod type Lucas P700 lamp units are out here very scarce as are Lucas SLR-SFT 576 Foglights but eventually all turned up.

Now I believe the Daimler Company's sales brochures are a big help in making the car original and so I called upon the "Daimler man", Mr. V. Boyd-Carpenter and eventually he found me one, together with a paint chip for the maroon paint colour required, the Tudor grey shade being easy to match. The car is re-sprayed in Dulux Dulon Enamel. How lucky we are as Members to have access to his knowledge and services. The car is now being painted and all the re-polished pieces are being re-fitted to it. I have only had to re-chrome plate the side-lights, the remainder of the chrome is excellent and speaks well of the Daimler finish.

The facia has yet to be re-polished and new carpets fitted and in a later article I hope to relate registering and bringing the car into service.

John Steel.

### A DOTTY TALE—FURTHER PROGRESS

**COOLING.** The last article in February, 1984 issue, recounted the fitting of the Delorto carburettors and the car's performance in the Pyrenees. The water temperature on the passes was not mentioned, but it remained about 100°C for sometime on the highest pass. There was no observable damage from this but it is too high and required a remedy. A little thought suggested that while the

increased output in h.p. was a contributory factor, the probable reason was the viscous cooling fan. The multiblade fan undoubtedly has a stronger "pull" than the original two blader, but it is offset by having a large diameter central boss. This, placed very close to the radiator core, had the effect of blocking off a large part of the core.

I have become increasingly sceptical about any saving in the power needed to drive a viscous fan compared with a fixed blade one in Dotty's engine. I am told they are solid up to about 3,000 rpm, as this engine speed represents 80 mph, the fan must be solid for most of the running time in my car. An electric fan provides the ideal solution but suffers the great disadvantage of the sudden start of a loud "vacuum cleaner" noise mostly when the car is running at its quietest. Necessity being the mother of invention, I found an ideal solution.

In addition to the thermostat switch a manual switch with two positions was added. The first position passes the current via a heavy duty resistor which drops the voltage sufficiently to run the fan at half speed. The second position gives the full voltage. The positions of the switch are shown by the indicator lamps attached to the gearchange quadrant.

The "Clova" fan is very shallow and fits without being visible between the radiator shell and the core, and at half speed it is inaudible in the car but this provides sufficient air flow to keep the engine at a normal temperature when ticking over so, when entering a traffic area, half speed is switched on and left on until the country is reached again. In winter the fan is rarely used. The full on position is very useful in anticipating very hard conditions such as a one-in-four on a hot summer's day.

To ensure that the battery does not suffer the alternator pulley was changed for a smaller one and now full charge is available at 600 rpm.

**WATER LEVEL.** For a long time Dotty had been using too much water and it was difficult to keep any water in the header tank. A reasonable level became a necessity when the Clova fan was fitted in order to cover the bulb of the thermostat switch control. This need coincided with a marked increase in water consumption. Alec Norman diagnosed this trouble as due to corrosion of the head. So two troubles were tackled at the same time. The head was removed and restored to new by a wizard produced by Alex Stewart and the original expansion loss cured by the fitting of an expansion bottle. The result is a full header tank at all times for the first time in eight years!

**PAINTWORK.** During my ownership three paint shops have "done their stuff" to the bodywork—predictable results occurred a year ago, crazing. The plunge was taken and the paint ground off to bare metal, followed by a two pack in the same light cream which has given a beautiful finish. A few body imperfections were corrected at the same time.

**GEARBOX.** The overdrive "Holy" box began to use oil at a high rate and the rear seal was found to be defective. This was replaced and this made it practical to use a thin transmission oil (Silkolene Transmission Oil 'E'). Besides providing better lubrication this greatly reduces the box drag.

**WINDSCREEN WIPERS.** These have been unsatisfactory for years, in spite of several attempts by experts to get them right. Even with a 95° driving wheel the blades would lock under the windscreen rim in a high wind. As 95° is the

smallest arc provided by Lucas my local garage suggested changing the wheelboxes to the pattern with the larger driving wheels. These obviously give smaller arcs with the same driving wheels and now with a 120° wheel the blades remain on the screen at all times. The new wheels provide more leverage to the wipers. Now I have the comfort of a clear screen at all times and the confidence of having a new system.

**RESULTS.** After these changes the car was taken in the autumn to Italy, as far as Rome; returning via the Italian lakes, Switzerland and, obviously, Mulhouse to visit the Schlumff museum. This was quite extraordinary—as was the reception given to Dotty in Italy. On one day two separate wedding parties invaded the car wanting the bride and bridegroom to be photographed sitting in it!

The car ran faultlessly and needed no attention. The cooling was particularly satisfactory, the water temperature never exceeded 84° even when crawling behind slow traffic on long passes. The gearbox was not topped up during the trip, which was over 2,000 miles.

The disadvantage of the big drop from top to second gear remains. I have enquired about fitting a modified cam, but cannot get any expert to give a reasonable assurance that any noticeable improvement in torque at lower revs would result. Anyone listening out there?

There remain a few improvements to the electrical system to be completed and, should I ever find a H4 differential, a limited slip would be welcome. Meanwhile Dotty gives constant satisfaction as a lively, reliable, longlegged tourer.

G. Ramage.

## RADIALS

Some years ago R. A. Thomas of Locks Heath wrote to the Michelin Tyre Company regarding radials for his Conquest Century, the following is the reply he received which he has allowed me to publish.

“The question of trying radials as an experiment does not really arise since I was, in fact, involved with the 6.70-15 X (tubed) stability tests that were conducted when the car was first produced, and this is still our recommended fitment. Pressures should be, Front 23 psi, Rear 26 psi and front wheel alignment set to parallel, Tube Code 15F9.

It was found that this fitment showed up to advantage where the car concerned was driven fairly hard and as a result tyre wear was the dominant problem. On the other hand the Daimler owner who drives in what some would call a more civilised manner, where comfort is the number one priority, might possibly comment on a greater awareness of cat's eyes, joins in the road and a slight increase in steering torque at parking speeds.

Our ZX radial which would provide the right sort of tread wear for the conditions described and more than likely, without any comments regarding comfort, is not made in the 6.70-15 size unfortunately. The nearest size would be our 175SR15 ZX which compares as follows:—

Tyres Size	Static Laden Radius		Revs. per Mile	Carrying Capacity Kgs.
	mm.	ins.		
6.70-15	318	12.6	745	1100
175SR15 ZX	301	11.9	793	1010

As you can see from the static laden radius, ground clearance would be reduced by 0.7 ins., the overall gear ratio would be reduced by some 6.7% and the tyre carrying capacity reduced by 90lbs.

On the question of tread life there is no doubt that, under similar conditions, the 6.70-15 X would double the mileage compared to crossply tyres, and give a 25% improvement over textile braced radials. Fuel economy due to the lower rolling resistance of the X would improve by some 6% compared to crossply tyres and up to 3% compared to textile braced radials.

Certainly general adhesion, cornering ability and overall vehicle control would improve but it must be said, only without comment on the slight change to low speed vibration, if the driver concerned has a need to improve tyre performance to accommodate a rather "hot foot" driving style.

So, as you see, the choice depends on the driver concerned, anyway, I hope this information will help".

R. W. Dowell,  
Technical Liaison Manager.

### ANNUAL JUDGING OF MEMBERS' CARS

Following some comments, and a request by your Board of Directors, the rules for the annual judging of Members' cars have been revised and approved, they are printed below. The revisions are intended to refine and clarify the previous rules, thus improving the basis for judging.

George Stapley.

### CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

**ELIGIBILITY.** Vehicles must have travelled to the event under their own power and be owned by a Member. The Member should be able to show that the vehicle has a current road licence and Department of Transport test certificate.

Every entry must be received by the nominated Club Official before the closing date for entries (Sandy Marcus, Social Secretary, by Wednesday, 15th May, for 1985).

**DIRECTIONS TO JUDGES.** The system of scoring is primarily intended for cars. Judges may amend this for other vehicle types, such as ambulances, passenger service vehicles, etc.

### SYSTEM OF SCORING

Maximum  
Points

#### 1. OVERALL APPEARANCE AND ORIGINALITY

- (a) The highest standard of presentation is sought, judges will not penalise unrestored vehicles.

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