


aSPire 250

The newsletter for SP250 enthusiasts




laurence@SP250.net

November 2026 | Edition

Dear All,

Here in the Northern Hemisphere, the clocks have been turned back, our cars entrusted to their garages for the winter, but hopefully with weather permitting the odd skirmish out and about to air them and us!



Which means, all our attention is drawn towards this month's NEC Classic Car Show, on the **13 – 15**, we will be found in **Hall 3 stand 380.** I confess I was somewhat ambitious in trying to showcase 5 SPs whereas the most sensible option being 4 – we gave up some space to an adjacent club. This sensible choice allows the *swing factor* that people can move safely around the stand.

If you have not as yet purchased tickets the discount code is: - **CCTDLOCN6** thus saving a few pounds and for us an acknowledgement.

Alan Mason will have on sale, the 2027 SP250 calendars cash or card is very acceptable or if you are not able to attend send Alan an email soaring.ace@btinternet.com and arrange your copy via post.

I have had bespoke baseball caps made with the **aSPire** logo as above, these will be on sale at the NEC at £15 or plus postage if ordered that way

Alan Mason is most pleased with the advanced bookings for next years' Spa Classic over the dates of the **May 21 – 23.** Alan has already taken the entire hotel and there is a waiting list, which hopefully can be accommodated in hotels close by the village of Waimes. No conclusive cost of entrance tickets is known yet, however, the expected pricing is in the order of €40 for the three days – not too shabby!

A number of owners extend the trip by a few days and take in the sounds, sights and sites of the battlefields of WWII and/or the historical buildings close by in the Ardennes Forest. The drain (Channel Tunnel) is the favoured route with the ferry from Dover – Dunkirk another option.

Then a little later the following month in **June** there is the opportunity for a 5-day or more trip to Luxemburg for the DLOC's National Rally.

Well, it seems many of the Classic Car scene are chasing our cash by announcing next years' events very early to attract us to their fold, such as Goodwood, with its members meeting on the **10 – 11 April;** its Festival of Speed on the **15 – 18 July** and the Revival on the **17- 19 September**. The hotel industry having been warned have adjusted the pricing structure already! Whilst in the Midlands at the Towcester Silverstone circuit the Chris Evans Car festival is being held on **22 – 24 August** whereas in the preceding month **23 -25 July** the **BRDC** will host its own classic car affair with an historic Formula 1 race together with a supporting program of Le Mans giants and touring car races together with a plethora of car clubs in attendance - this might be the larger event of the two – only time will tell.

Diary date next year's SP250 day which is to be held at the Shuttleworth Collection in Bedfordshire. on **Saturday 24 July 2027**. https://www.shuttleworth.org/visit/before-you-visit/car-clubs .

I was somewhat horrified to read in the October Driving Member magazine cases of engine failure caused by over engineering the valve stems with non-compliant seals, this limits the essential oil flow to the valves themselves thus snatching and bending the push rods and thereby damaging the engine. There were stem

seals fitted to the valve collets, later, as a modification. Daimler engines were designed to burn oil – cheaper that to re-build an engine, Daimlers traditionally always trailed a 'blue smoke haze'.

The SP250 initially consumed about a pint of oil every 250/300 miles, however, with modern oils and quality rebuilt engines it is possible that oil is consumed at about ¼ pint every 4000 miles. An SP owner did just that recently with a tour of continental Europe, his engine had been rebuilt and balanced by Darren Burwash, who learnt his trade building race car engines and now works for Robert Grinter https://www.robertgrinter.co.uk/

Darren, also, built my engine a few years back and I too use little or no oil in the course of a year, his intense method is to methodically clean the block with a high-pressure heated water lance, thus cutting /cleaning out any casting debris left inside the block by the initial engine manufacture – helps the coolant process also. (the rear most cylinders)



Whilst on the subject of overhauling and maintenance, I was asked how to keep the rear springs free of dirt etc. Here is the solution, clean & lubricate the rear springs and then bind them with plumbers' tape, keeps the lubricate in and the dirt out. Ideally the springs should be off the car otherwise a tight job wrapping the tape around the cart spring

Just as I was doing the back end, I thought I would rehash the front end...



… from last months' newsletter, the anti-roll bar/sway bar set up from Dave Pooley email davepooley53@gmail.com

The cost of this bespoke kit, is now £500 due to the increase in the speciality steels used.

A neat set up as it passes through the front cross tube.

I have had an exchanged of emails recently with Neill Bruce who was the instigator of the SP250 section within the DLOC – he had petitioned the club to allow the SP as a model section within and this was achieved at a DLOC committee meeting on the 4 June 1970 whereby the SP250 section was formally sanctioned.

Within months the SP section grew considerably and the SP250 Owners' Club set up by Derek Jolly in 1964 folded its members into the DLOC's SP section and over the years it has proved advantageous to both.

However, Neill's business as a professional photographer grew exponentially so that he needed to hand over the section to ……Barry Thorne which he did in November 1971. Neill became the sought-after photographer for the car industry and his name appeared on many a car calendar



This is Neill's SP 100 FLH trackside at Silverstone (see article below) with its detachable windscreen and hard top - here sustainability in its early stages, an old oil drum - a useful prop!

Neill writes……

" In the 1960s, a dear friend of mine David Roscoe, who lived in Merrow near Guildford, had a grey SP250, which I much admired. David took many motoring club films - Roscoe Films - including the VSCC, and I once had a truly epic ride on the back 'shelf/ledge/seat' of this car all the way to Oulton Park, to help him record the sound track, and I clearly remember us cruising - 3 up - on the motorway at over 100mph.

I never seemed to keep any car for long, and after my second HRG 1500 sold to a Canadian for £650 at an auction in March 1969, I looked for a good SP250, which I found on April 5th. 1969. I paid £600 for a nice 1963 'C' Spec SP250 in gunmetal grey, exactly the same as David's, registration no: 100 FLH, which I bought from a Paul Tucker, in Fleet, Hants. I loved the superb Edward Turner designed 2.5 litre V8 engine, which made a lovely noise, and would do 70 mph in 2nd gear, and 100 mph in 3rd. Gear. Magic. The only problem was that they were sold with Dunlop RS5 tyres, which mine still had, and one could easily get wheel-spin in the wet at 50 mph in 2nd., which wasn't advisable, as they were very tail-happy. David was an account executive at Dorland Advertising agency, and I was by then at Channel TV's London office, and one of David's accounts was Michelin Tyres.

In those days there was promotional money to spend, and Michelin announced a press day at Brands Hatch circuit. Before the event, David - and I assume all the invited press - were sent a form to complete, giving details of their cars. So, David wrote 'Daimler SP250', and duly had a set of their new Michelin XAS tyres fitted, in place of the RS5s that adorned his car as well. He said they completely transformed the car.

A year later, the phone rang, and David said "Still got the RS5s?" I confirmed I had, to which he then invited me over to Merrow for a quick wheel change that evening - I took a bottle of whisky for him! And lo and behold - at another Michelin day - he had another set of XAS fitted, and I had as good as a brand-new car! I have never experienced quite such a staggering change in performance and road holding through a simple change of tyres before or since. If anyone from Michelin reads this, don't feel cheated, as the word was rapidly spread around the DLOC, so you will have sold a number of sets, fear not. The best move you innocently made!

David tells a lovely story of his first time at the Michelin experience at Brands. It was rather cold, and the track had frosty areas on it. "What it needs is a little driving on it, to thaw it out" said brave David - to a Michelin 'suit'. So, with his - still RS5 shod SP250 - and the 'Michelin suit' on board off they went. Inevitably he got it very crossed up - to put it mildly - and remembers the 'Michelin suit' shouting "Well held Sir", as he got it pointing straight again. "Not finished yet" shouts David, and off they went on part two of their massive slide.... I imagine the suit retired to the bar for a very stiff drink, as David remembers it as being more exciting than anything he ever achieved in his Cooper 500 racing days!

Later in 1969 I entered it in the VSCC Pomeroy Trophy, where it was explained to me, by a very patient scrutineer, that the screen didn't comply, and the only way I could participate was to remove it, which in fact is an easy job, so with tonneau cover over the passenger side I had some fun, although the hub bearings were probably a bit worn, as I had to do a lot of pumping at the 200 mark before corners! However, it did quite well on the standing ¼ mile, and was lapping the Club circuit in about 1 min 39 sec. What I just cannot understand is in Mike Bowler's super photo, there it is - I think at the start of the one-hour reliability trial - with the screen & hardtop on!

It was also in 1969 that my paternal great uncle wrote offering me his 1950s twin lens Rolleiflex camera, which is one of the two things that got me into photography, finding that if you actually focused and took a light reading, the pictures seemed sharper! Anyway, he was in a nursing home in Somerset, so - as I had just been made redundant by Channel TV - I would sometimes go down

midweek, in the morning, take him out for a pub lunch, and burble round the lanes chatting about his Royal Flying Corps days, until I could see he was drowsy, then return him home.

On one occasion in mid-summer '69, I had the mad idea that I would 'see what this beauty could do.' I can still see the speedo showing 135mph, hood down, on the two-way A303 just before Stonehenge, and there just being no traffic, so I felt I could do what I liked. I remember the wonderful smell of new-mown hay as well.

After 9 years in TV advertising, I ended up in a dead-end job at Woman's Own magazine (!!). I clearly remember at the interview for the job, the chap asked if I had a car, as they were offering a company car. "Yes" I said, "I do."
"Oh? what have you got?"
"A Daimler" The interviewer nearly fell off his chair… I stayed until August 1970, when we agreed I was a square peg in a round hole - what a hole - and left.

In 1970, after a lot of haggling, I started the SP250 section in the (DLOC) and when I finally had to reluctantly sell the SP, I handed over the secretary-ship to Barry Thorne, who subsequently re-named it the SP register and who eventually became secretary to the DLOC.

I really enjoyed that car, and I remember one could stand a 5-gallon oil drum in the cavernous boot, and easily shut the lid. I fitted a Witter Mini tow bar, and it made a super towing car. In January 1971 I set out to be a pro snapper, and in-between cars I shot a lot of houses for estate agents. I had to do interiors and so had some expensive 1000W lights. One trip I was late, and didn't brake enough for a hump back bridge, resulting in all the bulbs breaking, which set me back a huge sum, so I decided the poor thing would have to go. I was not earning much, so bought a dreadful Austin 1100 Estate, which soon ate its front UJs.. Ho Hey……"



!

……. The iconic shot of Neill Bruce, the first SP 250 registrar, in 100 FLH in full flight and trim - hard top, spot lamps and bumpers et al - at the start of the 1969 VSCC Pomeroy Trophy. And just take a nostalgic look at the Silverstone start/finish straight. You cannot get that close to the action nowadays. The picture was taken by the late Mike Bowler who with Lionel Burrell conceived the magazine *Classic Cars* back in 1973 later *Thoroughbred & Classic Cars*, and for which Neill Bruce took its first cover short. (Neill took the picture as the Magazine was hush hush) No doubt this concept led to a number of similar themed magazines in the Classic Car field.



Neill sold the SP in late 1971 to another SP stalwart Ian Slade who continued its racing career.

Ian is currently living in the sunny climes of Cyprus. Hope Ian will write up further exploits of 100 FLH.

It is after all the original background of the SP250 story/register and is currently undergoing a process of restoration in the West Country

And finally….

…… ..I acknowledge the copyright of Autocar to/for this picture



I know we should not speak ill of the dead however, are we watching the death throes of that great brand Jaguar, conceived by Sir Willaim Lyons.

Sir William would surely turn in his grave if he saw this new ***BBC*** Jaguar as his motto of Grace, Space & Pace has now evolved into a

Boxed,
Battery
Contraption

Yours Sincerely

Laurence & Ann

Thought for the day: Whatever the problem, be part of the solution!