

== GEARBOX ==

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB INC.

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**** WELCOME TO THE CLUB'S NEW YEAR ****



Above - Members enjoying their Club Christmas dinner at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club.



The 'Real' model comp winners for 2022.

First place to Ken, centre; Second to Andrew, on the right; Third went to Bill at left. Congratulations to everyone who entered the competition during the year and best of luck to all members for the 2023 year competitions.

HUNTER MODEL AUTO CLUB – SECRETARY’S REPORT FOR MONTH OF DECEMBER 2022

Christmas Dinner Meeting:

On Tuesday 13 December 2022 we held our Club Christmas Dinner Meeting in the club auditorium at Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club. President Andrew welcomed the members and their guests to our dinner meeting. We had a total of 21 (members and wives) in attendance with 4 apologies. Our numbers were marginally down on what was normally expected. This could be attributed in part to the current flare up of Covid cases reported in the Hunter.

Having ordered our meals from the Bistro, we were able to partake of our dinner in the privacy of our normal meeting room. Here the tables were set up with a Christmas theme thanks to Paul and Diane. With the appetising food and the pleasant company, a relaxing and enjoyable evening was had by all.

Club Venue Hire:

As advised in the December Gearbox we have received advice from Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club that a \$50 charge will apply in 2023 for the use of the Club Meeting Venue on each date. In response I forwarded a letter to the President of the Edgeworth Sport and Rec Club. In this letter we requested that this fee be reduced to \$25 as we are a small club with limited funds but at the same time, we acknowledged that costs had risen in recent times.

We have now received verbal advice that the Club has reduced the meeting fee to \$25 as requested by us. The consensus of our meeting was that this was an acceptable outcome.

Model Competitions:

Towards the end of the evening, Vice President Brian presented Certificates to the overall winners in the 2022 “Actual” model competition (see results below) with Voucher Prizes from Frontline Hobbies to be given out at our January Night out.

We received eight (8) entries for the December “Virtual” Model Competition which is near the average for the year. The “Virtual” Model Competition will continue to be held throughout 2023, with the first for the new year to be held on **Tuesday 10 January 2023** (see details below).

We would encourage those of you who have not already joined the Hunter Model Auto Club Group on Facebook to do so. To date we have 27 members in this Group.

If you have any questions in this regard, please don’t hesitate to contact Paul Campbell or myself.

The next “Actual” Model Competition will commence at our February 2023 meeting.

December “Virtual” Model Competition: “Christmas Theme” – Any scale one (1) model only.

1 st	Brian Blyth	Missing Reindeers.....	15 Points
2 nd	Ernie Williams	Christmas Express.....	14 Points
3 rd	Brian Fairhurst.....	Santa Photos.....	10 Points

2022 “Actual” Model Competition (Overall Winners):

1 st	Ken McGregor.....	131 Points
2 nd	Andrew Vile.....	122 Points
3 rd	Bill Kenchington.....	100 Points

Next Meeting: **We have been invited again to a Private Opening of the Frontline Hobbies Store, Broadmeadow on Tuesday 10 January 2023 from 7.00pm (Club shirts are desirable for a group photo).**

Next “Virtual” Model Category (January 2023): “Handmade Model” – Any scale one (1) model only and one (1) photo only. *(I will send out a reminder email with the entry and voting instructions closer to the deadlines)*

I TRUST THAT YOU HAVE HAD A VERY GOOD CHRISTMAS AND WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES A HAPPY AND COVID FREE NEW YEAR AHEAD IN 2023..... Bill Kenchington, Secretary

Some pics that didn't make it into the Gearbox in 2022.



Above two pics at the Kurri Kurri Festival.



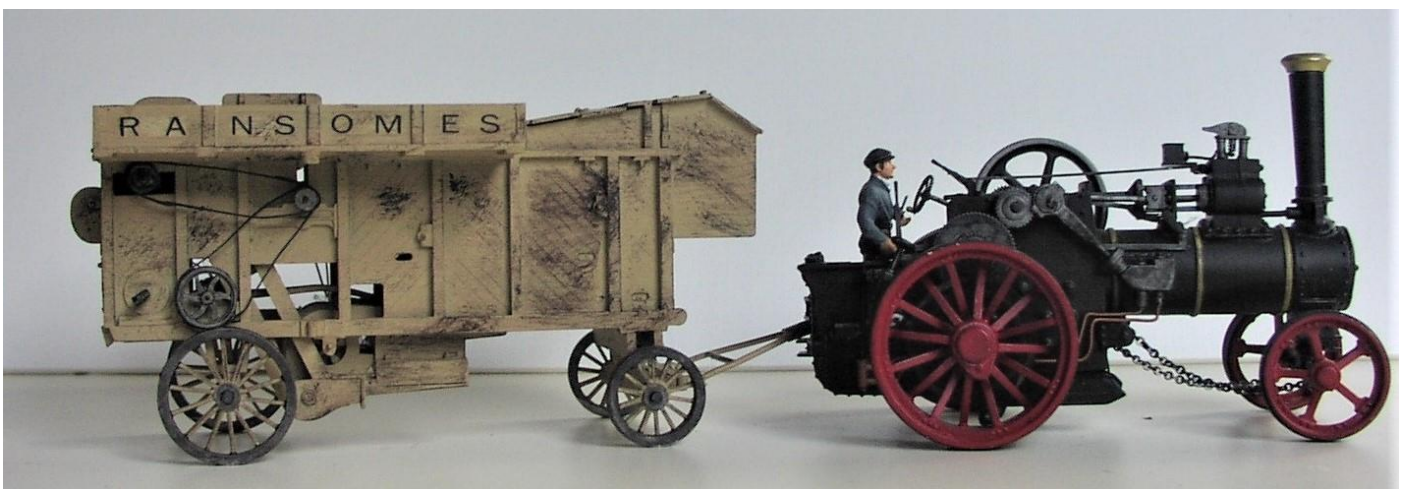
A great entry in the February 'Real' model comp that missed out on a place.



Andrew's Land Rovers entry for the April 'Real' model comp.



Bens 'Real' model comp entry for August, a Ford Falcon XR8 sedan and a HSV coupe.



Brian F submitted this steam tractor entry for the February 'Virtual' model comp.

During the year the club continued on with the 'Virtual' model comp which I have always felt was a great idea. Some of us can't get to the meetings and it helps keep up our interest in being a part of the club's activities. The other thing is that we get to see some excellent models that may not end up on the tables at the 'Real' model comp. I'd like to thank Paul for organising everything relating to the 'Virtual' comp being posted on our Facebook page, Shane for his effort in collating the competition results, as well as for the 'Real' comp, and all the club members prepared to set up and photograph their models to enter them. So, please keep the entries coming in this year as well. *Terry.*

~ BITS AND PIECES - 1957 DESOTO FIRESWEEP ~

Every so often I spot a model car for sale on Ebay or read an article in an on-line motoring magazine that takes my fancy because it is a favourite make or has an interesting story behind it. I have always carried an interest in the DeSoto models as an uncle had an early 50's one, but I was too young to remember what it looked like. Gearbox has featured a story on DeSoto's history previously as well as one article specifically on the 1941 models. This is a short *bit* on the 1957 DeSoto Firesweep after seeing a nice 1:43 scale white metal model produced by **Western Models** up for sale. A quick check found only a few other examples, but there was one in blue and white as shown further on.



We won't go into the history again, but Walter Chrysler finalised the purchase of Dodge a few weeks before the launch of their DeSoto range in 1928. He wanted a product to compete against the 'mid-price' range of GM and Studebaker and launched the DeSoto for the 1929 model year. However, having purchased Dodge, he now had two 'mid-price' brands and placed the DeSoto just below the Dodge range and this proved successful as far as sales went. Then, for some reason in 1933, Chrysler reversed this pricing situation by placing the Dodge below the DeSoto and making DeSoto the more glamorous brand of the two and at the same time used it to test new car concepts, similar to how General Motors used the Oldsmobile brand. Into the 1950's, the DeSoto brand usually came in around 11th place in North America car sales, slightly behind the Chrysler marque, but behind their main competitor, Oldsmobile.

In 1957, the second generation of Virgil Exner's so-called 'Forward Look' Chrysler products were introduced. He had joined Chrysler in the late 1940's and started work in their Advanced Styling studio at a time when Chrysler products were designed more from an engineering perspective, rather than with contemporary body styling approaches. Exner had changed that with his *Forward Look* styling in 1955 that led to a wider, longer and lower body style.

Though most of the DeSoto models were built on the 126 inch wheelbase structure from the Chrysler range, Chrysler's brains trust launched a new DeSoto model line in 1957 and built on the shorter 122 inch wheelbase from the Dodge range. This was the new entry level and lower priced **Firesweep** and it was available in four door sedan and hardtop, two door hardtop and station wagon models. It was a success in 1957 taking just over 40% of all DeSoto sales and DeSoto ended up in 10th place in the sales war, though 1958's financial downturn would be a disaster for all auto makers in North America. **Hemmings** described the 1957 Firesweep as being ... '*new, different, and far more stylistically exciting than anything the other two of the Big Three had cooking.*' **Terry**.



WHAT WAS THE MERCEDES PAGODA ALL ABOUT?



Some time ago, I read about an attractive Mercedes that was sold at auction with the proceeds going to a charity and the story mentioned that this vehicle was called a *'Pagoda.'* Every so often, someone will call a Mercedes 230SL or 280SL, a *Pagoda*. So, getting it's moniker out of the road, these Mercedes sports car models, besides having a soft top, also came with a removable hard top model that had a concave roof. *See Lead-in and next pic.* So, this is where the nickname came from. The reason for this roof design, importantly, was to provide increased structural rigidity.



Attractive 1:18 scale diecast model of the Pagoda by Schuco.

In the *June 2016 Gearbox*, we had a story drawn from a *1956 Wheels Magazine* article about two new Mercedes 300SLR race cars originally destined for the 1956 competition year. However, after the 1955 Le Mans tragedy, Mercedes pulled out of motor sport. Wheels then continued the story and it led into the beautiful Gullwing door 300SL coupe (W198) *seen in the next pic* [introduced in 1954] which ultimately led onto the 300SL roadster.



In the *June 2022 Gearbox*, we ran an article on the 190 series 'Fintail' Mercedes four door sedan (W111) which yielded their next two-door coupe and convertible models. These were followed by the Pagoda models (W113) as the 190 series two-door model replacements which *Road & Track* would say, 'set the template for all future generations of SL, that of a fast, sporty, open-top GT.' They also went on to say that the W113 was an expensive auto, not overly fast or well equipped, but they are still amongst some of the best cars ever made. (See next pics)



Above left – Welly 1:24 scale diecast model of the 230SL coupe and at right, in 1:18 scale diecast is the 230SL convertible by Norev.

In March 1963, the 230SL was released with a 2306cc straight six fuel injected overhead cam engine. It was replaced in January 1967 by the 250SL with the engine upgraded to 2496cc and this was followed in December by the 280SL with a 2778cc engine. The top speed ranged from 118mph (190 kph) in the 230SL to 124 mph (200 kph) in the 280SL models. Initially fitted with disc brakes at front and drums at the rear in the 230SL, all wheel disc brakes became standard with the introduction of the 250SL. The W113 models started off with a four speed manual gearbox and a four speed auto as an option. In 1966 a five speed manual gearbox also became an option.

Most models were sold with both the hard-top and soft top roof, but a few were sold in soft top form only. Interestingly, as a weight saving measure, Mercedes had the bonnet, boot lid and door skins manufactured from aluminium. The interior was well trimmed and had high quality controls, and switchgear. Safety features were prominent with three-point seatbelts, a padded dashboard, a collapsible steering column and a low window line for excellent all round vision. Mercedes stated, 'It was our aim to create a very safe and fast sports car with high performance, which despite its sports characteristics, provides a very high degree of traveling comfort.'

In this era, the Mercedes SL two-door autos were considered a glamorous vehicle and the preferred set of wheels for many celebrities. They were rivals for the popular E-Type Jaguar and 2 litre Porsche 911 models, though they were nearly twice the cost of the Jaguar. They also came up against the Chevrolet Corvette in the U.S. In March 1971, the last 280SL left the assembly line after nearly 49,000 of these two-door models had been produced.



A nice 1970 Mercedes 280 SL convertible.

In my opinion, a Pagoda with the top off, as in *the previous pic* is a beautiful automobile. *Honest John's Classics* wrote that 'the Mercedes-Benz 280SL convertible was one of the few automobiles to combine the performance of a sports car and the comfort of a living room. The 280 SL's 'user friendly' nature broadened its appeal beyond the traditional sports car-enthusiast market, leading many celebrities and film stars to purchase the model.' Terry.

Mark's 31 Class models.

These are 31 class locomotives, but Tri-ang did make colour changes to suit their market hence the 42 class livery. **[Centre loco in next pic.]** If you were watching the Hornby series on TV, this showed how today's model must be accurate right down to the last rivet. So I am making the 31 class into a modern livery as if Tri-ang had continued on beyond 1971.



Two 31 Class locomotives with a 'Blue Pullman' unit on the far right.

The Brush Type 2 (British Railways Class 31) was built by Brush Traction and entered service in November 1957. They were very much an unnoticed work horse used for both freight and passenger service. The first locomotive of the class, 31018, has made it to preservation and can be seen at the National Railway Museum in York. **See next pic.** It was taken out of service in 1976 and went on display in 2004. This is not the only one to stay away from the scrappy's gas axe. There are a further 28 left to keep it company.



Next pic below - This is one of my Tri-ang class 31 locomotives it is in the first livery for this class, British Railways green. **[See the lead-in pic also.]** This model came out in 1962 and Tri-ang later released it in British Railways blue.

It has to be said to their shame, they made it in maroon and tried to pass it off as a NSW 42 class. I have this last incarnation and despite its very good condition, I could not see past this incorrect livery. So I have decided that the maroon colour can stay and it will be made into an EWS (English, Welsh & Scottish) locomotive. **See the second pic below.**

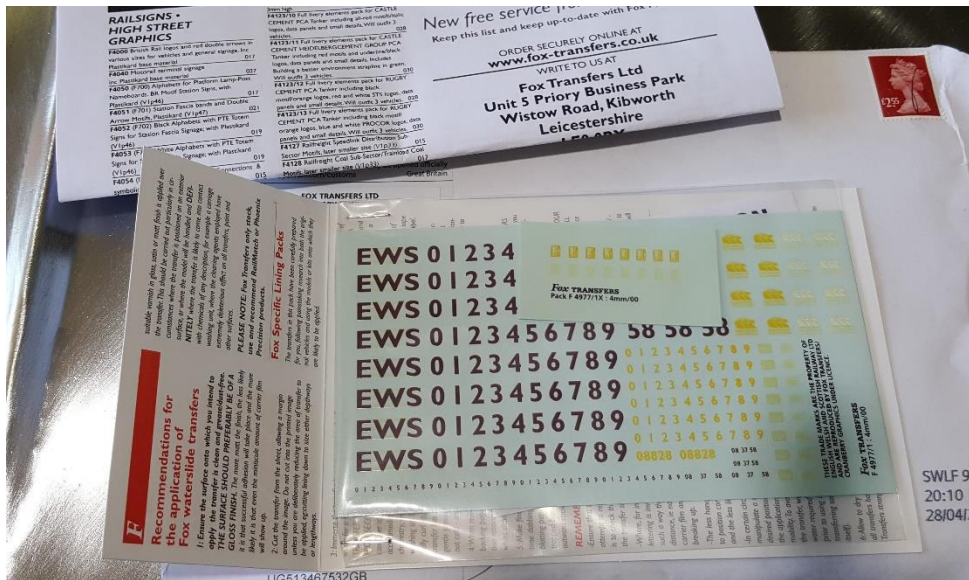


The new livery I will be using for my 31 class.

The only problem being this company did not come into existence until over twenty years after the end of Tri-ang. So to get around this I have decided to say, *“what would Tri-ang have done with their models if they were still around today?”* If you are being pedantic, they are now called Hornby.

The locomotive was taken apart and all the decals were removed. The body and roof were rubbed down and given a coat of plastic primer, 2K grey primer and then 3 coats of 2K EWS maroon. The motor and running gear was cleaned and given a full service. Also the EWS decal kit was ordered from Fox Transfers in the UK





The EWS decal kit set from Fox Transfers posted from England.



Above pic - One in action at Birmingham I can well remember seeing and traveling on these trains, when they and I were much younger!



The finished product with decals added.



The first and last liveries of the 31 Class locomotives together. *Above pic.* This would never have happened in real life, but in my world of Tri-ang anything is possible. This for me this is what the hobby is all about. Your train layout is number 1 for your enjoyment and if someone tries to point out you have mixed up era's or worse, calls it a toy trainset, just remember they are a sad and lonely person and deserve your sympathy. *Mark Jenkins.*

From the editor – As Mark mentioned, in the 1950's the British Rail Board finally decided the future was with diesel traction for British rail. Being relatively new, there weren't many companies leading the field in diesel locomotive production. That being the case, they decided to order small numbers of products from various companies, including products from their own British Railway factories, in order to find the best examples to determine specifications and suitability for British rail networks. One of the companies involved was Brush Traction.

Mark wrote about Brush Traction and they were in fact the Brush Traction Company of Loughborough in Leicestershire, England. Brush, already investing heavily in diesel production facilities, had produced these type of locomotives for Sri Lanka. Their idea was to produce a locomotive based on their successful export versions, but adapted to British requirements. They used the same Mirrlees 12-cylinder diesel engine that was used in the Sri Lankan locomotives, while Brush's own electrical equipment was specified. However, the Mirrlees engines proved unreliable and in the 1960s were replaced with engines produced by English Electric. The new engine provided 1470 HP, an improvement on the 1250 HP of the original Mirrlees twelve-cylinder supercharged engine. I read that these locomotives were originally a Class 30, but the re-engined locos then became Class 31.



The above pic is of a Class 31 Diesel-Electric locomotive used on the North Yorkshire Moors Rail line as one of the heritage tourist attractions that runs through the North York Moors National Park. It is leaving Goathland Railway Station, seen as *Aidensfield* in the Television series, *'Heartbeat.'* This is the EWS (English, Welsh & Scottish) livery that Mark used for his restored Class 31 loco. To sum up, *Rail.co.uk* wrote about the 31 Class, *'They really have been a versatile class and maybe not an absolute success story, they have proved venerable and have been found from Mallaig to Penzance and Pwllheli to Great Yarmouth in a long Railway History of well over 50 years.'* (ed.)

— CATALINA PARK – MEMORIES OF ROARING ENGINES —

*I suppose many members watched the last race in the 2022 Supercars series and saw **Holden** go out with a win. The sad thing for many is that Holden will no longer be represented in our supercar race series, and more importantly, in the 1000 km **'Great Race'** held at Bathurst each year. I thought I'd do a re-hash of an article on an old race track that some members may remember, **'Catalina Park'** in the Blue Mountains of NSW.*

Many members who are Aussie motor racing enthusiasts would remember Katoomba's Catalina Park, or 'The Gully' as it was often known as. It is in the Katoomba Falls Creek Valley and was nestled in a natural amphitheatre where the bitterly cold winds and thick fog could play havoc during winter race meetings. The circuit which began operating in early 1961 under the supervision of the Australian Racing Drivers Club [ARDC] was 2.1 km in length and was quite an undulating track. It was a narrow circuit bordered by Armco railing, hardwood sleepers and solid Earth walls. Major motor racing meetings come to an end in the 1970's though the circuit continued to hold minor events until the 1990's. Catalina Park was in full flight a year before Oran Park opened and six years before the Amaroo Park circuit started up. Their meetings drew large crowds who travelled up from suburban Sydney to watch the top Aussie racing car drivers as well as the motorcyclists. Open wheelers who raced there were the cream of the crop of that period. Names such as Kevin Bartlett, Frank Matich, Leo Geoghegan, Greg Cusack, Spencer Martin and Frank Gardner as well as Touring cars driven by Bob Jane, Norm Beechey, Ian Geoghegan, Brian Foley and Peter Manton, just to name a few.



One of the most famous incidents, and subject to many commemorative photos and art works was the Bob Jane crash in 1965 where his Mustang ended up flipping over the Dunlop fence. Bob miraculously escaped injury. In the early 1970's Rallycross, which had become very popular, arrived at Catalina Park. It actually re-invigorated the track as it had become so popular on TV through the Calder Park events. Channel 7 were telecasting half-day events from both Catalina Park and Calder.



The likes of Peter Brock driving for the Holden Dealer Team in a supercharged Holden Torana GTR, *[Previous pic at left]* George Ferguson, Barry Shepherd and Larry Perkins were some of the stars. The Rallycross circuit included part of the bitumen racetrack as well as the inner field dirt sections. However, fans of Rallycross seemed to vanish after a few years and by the 80's Catalina Park was only being used for single-car lap dashes before being closed for good the following decade. *The previous pic at right shows how it is today in places with some of the old track still there.*

My understanding is that the circuit, although gradually being swallowed up by nature, is still accessible from the Katoomba Sports & Aquatic Centre car park. Though much of the circuit has become overgrown and parts have collapsed or washed away, visitors say some of the old race infrastructure is still visible.

Other memories of Catalina Park.

There may be only a few left who would have memories of an earlier era in the Gully where it became known as the Frank Walford Park. In the mid 40's it was an undeveloped area and home for both Aboriginal and White families. A section of this land was owned by Horace Gates who had a guesthouse there. In 1946, in order to bring tourists back to the area after the Second World War, he dammed Katoomba falls creek creating an artificial lake where he constructed an amusement park.

In 1948, the shell of a Catalina flying boat was dismantled and brought to Katoomba by truck where it was re-assembled and anchored to a submerged concrete block in the middle of the lake. To the delight of many visitors, the park now had many fairground style attractions and included a swimming pool, tea-rooms and a picture room showing Charlie Chaplin films.

The Catalina proved a great attraction and passengers would pay two shillings to be taken out to the flying boat in a punt. Inside they viewed a film of a flight over the Sydney area and were told about the flying boats history. During the film, an assistant would stand on the wing rocking the plane to simulate the sensation of being flown in the aircraft. At the same time, a motorboat would circle the lake providing waves and engine noise. Amazing!

The lake was used as Katoomba's official swimming pool and each New Year provided the venue for a spectacular fireworks display. However, in time it became run down and the water became polluted. The area also earned a reputation for being a 'not too pleasant place' to visit. This led to the Council purchasing the land in 1952 with the intention of turning it into a large park with a swimming pool.

In 1954 the old Catalina aircraft was showing signs of deterioration and was pulled over onto the lake's edge and subsequently broken up and sold for scrap in 1958.

Though today it seems there is only an echo of a past fun park and a long forgotten motor racing venue, there is in fact a more ancient memory for many inhabitants of the Katoomba area.

Prior to white settlement in the Sydney basin, the Gundungurra and Darug Aboriginal tribes used 'The Gully' in the warmer months. With the expansion of the populace further west towards the foot of the Blue Mountains, the Gundungurra and Darug people had to move up into 'The Gully' well before 1950. After the Burratorang Valley was flooded in the 1950s as part of the Warragamba Dam project, they were forced to settle there permanently. Unfortunately for these people, 1957 saw their somewhat peaceful existence up in 'The Gully' being shattered when they were forcibly removed to make way for a racetrack. The rest is history as they say.

Time marches on and 'The Gully' was declared an Aboriginal Place on 18 May 2002 after a study and submissions under the National Parks and Wildlife Act of 1984. The relevant Government documents state, 'The Aboriginal Place comprises three areas in the upper Kedumba Valley, and forms a nearly continuous green corridor between the Great Western Highway in the north and the escarpment at Katoomba Falls in the south.'

The Gully area, though the smallest in size of the three areas and which contained the old Catalina race track, is considered very significant for the Aboriginal people. Several substantial Aboriginal artefacts were found when the old race track environs was being surveyed during the field investigations. One of the report's recommendations states that the local Aboriginal people should have full access to all information concerning their heritage and that the main means of protecting the significance of the Gully is through ongoing consultation between the Traditional Indigenous Owners and the Blue Mountains Council, who are required to ensure the protection of the heritage values of the Gully on a day-today basis. *Terry.*

.ASTON MARTIN DBS - *FOR A PRE-V8, IT'S STILL A SHARP LOOKER.*



I have written about the striking four litre six cylinder 2+2 **Aston Martin DBS** previously in Gearbox, however, a recent **Petrolicious** on-line article interested me as it was about a newly restored pearl black model that one of their journalists was driving around the English countryside. From the pics, it was simply a gorgeous looking automobile. [The **pics here** are courtesy of **Petrolicious**.] In the previous Gearbox article I said that the Aston Martin DBS is amongst my favourite British sports cars and a yellow DBS was driven by future James Bond star, Roger Moore, in the now vintage BBC TV series '**The Persuaders**.' Moore played Lord Brett Sinclair alongside Tony Curtis who drove a red Ferrari in the show that ran for two years, 1971 and 1972. Interestingly, Moore's DBS was modified to appear as a V8 model for the show and was later restored back to original and is still being displayed at motor shows.

Australian actor George Lazenby drove a dark olive green 1969 DBS in the James Bond movie '**On Her Majesty's Secret Service**.' It was a six-cylinder model and it too is 'alive and well' today. Oddly, there were no gadgets used on this Bond car during the movie as in the Sean Connery DB5. This DBS is modelled in the James Bond series of 1:43 scale vehicles and though I don't have it, I have the '**Persuaders**' DBS model by Corgi in close to 1:38 scale.

On reading the DBS article, I picked up that the **Petrolicious** journalist said he was often asked what 'number' DB this 'DB' was. Apparently, most passers-by who knew something about cars, would easily recognise that it was an Aston Martin by the iconic grille shape, yet assumed that all Aston Martins had a number after the 'DB' designation such as DB4, DB5 and DB6. This model, under normal circumstances, would have been a DB7 as it was the replacement for the DB6. The story goes that the Italian design studio, Carrozzeria Touring, had been responsible for body styles on the DB4, DB5 and DB6. In 1966 they submitted designs and a prototype for a **two-seater** version of the DB6, and possibly intended as a replacement for the DB6. It had been designated as the 'DBS' but was not produced.

Upon display, the prototype DBS was acknowledged as being of a splendid design by the press and generated plenty of interest in the motoring world. So when introduced in 1967, the next iteration of the 2+2 Aston Martin model was designated as the 'DBS.' Another point is that it was not designed by Carrozzeria Touring, but in-house by William Towns. He had started at the Rootes group with minor assignments such as seats, then worked his way up to designing the Hillman Hunter. Towns joined Aston Martin, again at less important tasks, but worked his way up to chief designer. Though Carrozzeria Touring had turned out some beautiful body styling efforts, by the end of 1966, they were almost broke and ceased operations with their Italian factory closing up.



The DBS had sharp body styling with dimensions similar to the U.S. coupes of that era, such as the Mustang.

I love the design of the DBS and will finish off with how it was described by **Petrolicious**. '**Its full-width grille that incorporates the four headlights; the chromed wire wheels that should be anachronistic but somehow work with the body lines; the gentle rake that disguises the interior's 2+2 layout, making the roofline low and long. Then there is the power bulge on the hood, and the trademark Aston Martin cooling outlets that pierce the front wings...**' **Petrolicious** also stated that it looked very much like a British pony car and, '**It's not like you could mistake it for a Mustang Fastback, but it shares the proportions and the generally adventuresome attitude.**' **Terry.**