

A COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

THE MERCEDES-BENZ

since 1945



Volume 1: The 1940s and 1950s
including 300SL, 190SL and Ponton models

JAMES TAYLOR

The Ponton saloons

The four-cylinder models

The year 1951 was a turning-point in the history of the modern Mercedes-Benz, for not only did it see the introduction of the prestigious 220 and 300 models, but it was also the year when development work began in earnest on the next generation of medium-sized cars. Where the 170, 220 and 300 models had all been based on the cruciform backbone frame of 1930s origin, the new models were to put Daimler-Benz in the avant-garde of motor manufacturing once again by featuring the unitary construction which had already begun to supersede the older separate body-and-chassis designs.

The engineering teams under Fritz Nallinger worked like demons to get the first of the new range – the 180 saloon – into production for July 1953, and it would be surprising if they had not learned all they could from examination of existing German unitary vehicles like Opel's Olympia Rekord, Ford's Taunus 12M and Borgward's Hansa 1500. Yet they also drew on their own experience, and the main strength of the new unitary bodyshell lay in the deep pressings which formed its transmission tunnel and bore more than a passing resemblance to the deep oval tubes of the old backbone frame; but now a sheet steel floor section braced these pressings to closed box-section side-members. To this frame/floor construction was welded the body itself, consisting of sheet and closed steel pressings, plus a roof panel. The resulting structure enjoyed an even distribution of stresses and had great torsional rigidity, which ensured almost total freedom from the squeaks and rattles so familiar in separate body/chassis structures after high mileages had loosened up their joints.

At the front of the bodyshell, the central frame pressings

bearing the inner wing panels reached forward to meet a front cross-member, and bolted to these box-sections by one sound-deadening metal-rubber bush ahead of the axle and two behind was a fabricated box-section pressed-steel subframe which carried the engine, suspension and steering assemblies. In the eyes of one German motoring journalist, this so resembled a pontoon bridge slung between the front wheels that he christened the new Mercedes-Benz cars Ponton models, after the German for pontoon. That name rapidly gained currency and was even adopted by Daimler-Benz themselves, so that the range of cars which grew from the 180 of 1954 is now universally known as the Ponton series.

Nallinger's engineers, of course, had not adopted unitary construction because it happened to be fashionable, but because it offered a number of advantages. The absence of a full chassis-frame saved weight and permitted lower body styling, as well as offering new opportunities to minimize road noise transmission. Costs were saved by the ease with which the subframe could be mated on assembly to the engine and front suspension components, and the whole unit then simply wheeled under the bodyshell and bolted up. Conversely, if major work was needed on any of these components, repair costs could be saved by the ease with which the subframe could be dropped from the bodyshell to give first-class all-round accessibility.

Styling as well as structure was new on the 180. It was a low-built, slab-sided design in the contemporary idiom, with the integrated wings suggested only by pressing-lines on the body sides. Yet it was dumpy and homely rather than svelte and streamlined to look at, and the retention of the upright



The arrival of the 180 Ponton in 1953 marked the entry of Daimler-Benz into the manufacture of unitary-construction saloons. However, the 1,767cc engine was an only slightly updated version of that of the superseded 170Vb, resulting in a relatively modest performance. This is a 1955 model.

This early 180 was photographed by Colin Peck at an enthusiasts' gathering in West Germany. The foglights were not part of the basic specification and the whitewall tyres would not have been available when the car was new.

Mercedes-Benz radiator grille (actually a dummy which lifted up with the bonnet) made the styling look older than it was. Sensibly, the slab sides had not been adopted to the customer's disadvantage, and the wing panels were bolted rather than welded to the main shell in order to minimize accident repair costs. There were practical benefits associated with the new idiom, of course, and interior space actually increased by 22% as compared to the 170Sb, largely because the body was now full-width and the running-boards had disappeared. The three-box styling which had become popular after the Americans took the lead with the 1946 Studebakers also ensured that a large boot was available, in this case some 75% bigger than on the 170/220 models. Both boot-lid and bonnet were counterbalanced for ease of operation, while all the doors were hinged at their leading edges and had pushbutton handles. By later standards, the windows may have been small and the waistline high, but the Ponton body offered a very significant increase in glass area of some 40%.

The 180

The 180 saloon was both the first of the Pontons and – in its final development as the 180c and the 180Dc – the last. As launched in September 1953 to replace the 170Sb model, which it actually undercut in price, it was powered by an improved version of that car's 1,767cc engine. If the fitting of the old side-valve power unit demonstrated that neither the time nor the money had been available to develop a more sophisticated engine, the modifications at least were worthwhile. Tuned for economy rather than power, and capable of running on low-octane fuel, the 180 engine with its higher compression ratio and new carburettor was actually more economical than in 170Sb guise, and could give a remarkable 32mpg as well as a 78mph top speed.

Its 52bhp was transmitted through the same four-speed all-synchromesh gearbox as had been used in the 170Sb, albeit with changed second and third speed ratios, and gear-changing was effected by a similar column-mounted lever. A light and



The front compartment of the 180 on its announcement in 1953. A large-diameter steering wheel has been a characteristic of Mercedes-Benz cars for many years.



One of the first 180 saloons to be supplied with right-hand drive. From 1954 the 180 was also offered in diesel-engined form as the 180D, and although the engine was almost identical to that previously fitted to the 170S-D, the lighter weight of the newer car meant that higher gearing could be used.

smooth-acting clutch took the drive through a divided propshaft to the high-g geared hypoid-bevel rear axle and, as usual, top gear was effectively a cruising gear in which acceleration was leisurely. The familiar double-pivot swing-axle rear suspension was employed, with the differential housing this time mounted to the bodyshell by a single sound-deadening rubber block, while rubber-bushed radius arms between the bodyshell and axle casing controlled the latter's movements. This was probably the worst of all the Mercedes-Benz swing-axle designs, but the 180's performance was fortunately not exciting enough to provoke the infamous rear-end breakaway in fast corners very often! Front suspension was essentially inherited from the 170Sb, with unequal-length wishbones and double-acting telescopic dampers running through rubber-mounted coil springs.

As for the brakes, Nallinger's men really had tried to improve on the 170/220 set-up with wider twin leading shoes in the front drums and leading-and-trailing shoes at the rear, but unfortunately the 13in wheels brought with them smaller-diameter brake drums and consequently less opportunity for

heat dissipation, with the result that the 180 was very prone to brake fade. Worse, high pedal pressures were still necessary and contemporary road-testers complained of a tendency for one wheel to lock. Steering was no great improvement on earlier practice, either, for although the recirculating-ball system was lighter than before, it was also noticeably vague about the straight-ahead position.

The central lubrication system had finally gone, to be replaced by an instruction to grease 19 points on the car every 1,250 miles – something which motorists in the 1950s were quite prepared to tolerate. They were no longer prepared to do without heating, however, and the 180 had independently controlled driver's and passenger's heater units as standard. Demister nozzles at the ends of the dashboard were intended to clear the side windows, but were barely effective without the optional blower. Instruments and controls were neatly laid out, with a large round speedometer directly ahead of the driver, which also offered a conservative guide to maximum permissible speeds in the indirect gears. Flanking this were smaller rectangular gauges for water temperature, oil pressure

and fuel level, but other functions were reduced to simple warning lights, among which was a low-fuel light to warn the driver to switch to the 1¼-gallon reserve tank. The two-spoke steering wheel still bore the chromed horn ring which operated the turn indicators, and these were still not self-cancelling, while the handbrake had hidden itself, American-fashion, beneath the dashboard. Self-parking windscreen wipers were perhaps a modern touch, but the 6-volt electrical system on which they depended was an anachronism by 1953, and the combined indicator/parking lights perched on the front wings just ahead of the windscreen pillars certainly suggested that the principles of modern styling had not been fully assimilated at Stuttgart.

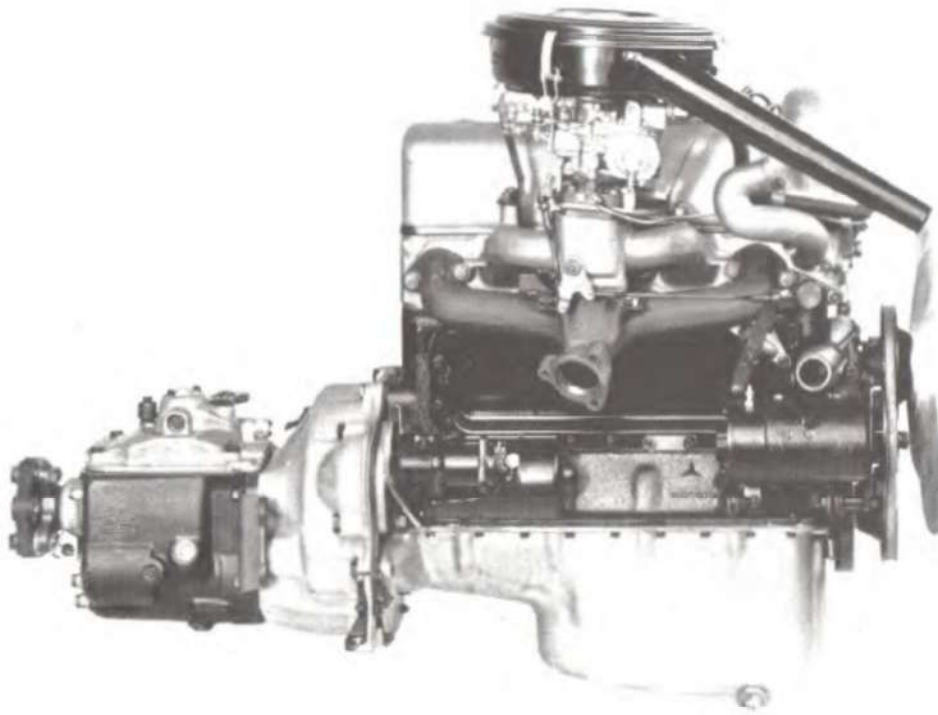
The 180's interior was in general an odd mixture of high equipment levels and spartan finish, and its clock, anti-dazzle mirror, cigarette lighter, three ashtrays and armrests on all four doors were in striking contrast to the heavyweight moulded rubber floor coverings and the absence of either a passenger's sun visor or a lock for the glove box. Upholstery came in wool-cloth or grained leathercloth, and the standard 180 was

delivered as a four/five-seater with individual front seats, but a front bench seat could be specified at no extra cost to make it into an acceptably spacious six-seater, and reclining front seats were available at a price. In the boot, provision was made for carrying a second spare wheel, and a comprehensive tool-kit was standard. A four-piece fitted luggage set was made available in traditional Mercedes-Benz fashion, and other extra-cost options were twin fog-lights, a radio and a fabric sunroof.

Despite such attractive options, the 180 was available only in five sober colours, which reinforced the 'workhorse' image with which it appealed to fleet buyers. In Great Britain, it nevertheless had something of a quality image, which was just as well since it was fearsomely expensive for a medium-sized family saloon at £1,694 0s 10d inclusive of Purchase Tax in 1954. Yet exports were a vital part of its success, and it proved especially popular in countries with poor roads, where its robust construction was highly prized. By the time it was replaced by the 180a model for the 1958 season, 52,186 had left the production lines in Stuttgart – many in component form for final assembly at overseas plants in countries as diverse as India

The arrival of the 190 saloon in 1956 was the result of fitting a detuned 75bhp version of the overhead-camshaft 190SL engine into the Ponton bodyshell. The car was equipped with the single-pivot swing-axles, which became standard throughout the Ponton range at the same time. The trim strip below the windows was always a recognition point for the larger-engined four-cylinder Pontons.





The 1,897cc overhead-camshaft engine as fitted to the 190 saloon with a Solex downdraught compound carburettor. Maximum power was obtained at 4,600rpm and maximum torque at 2,800rpm.

and the Republic of Ireland.

1954: The 180D

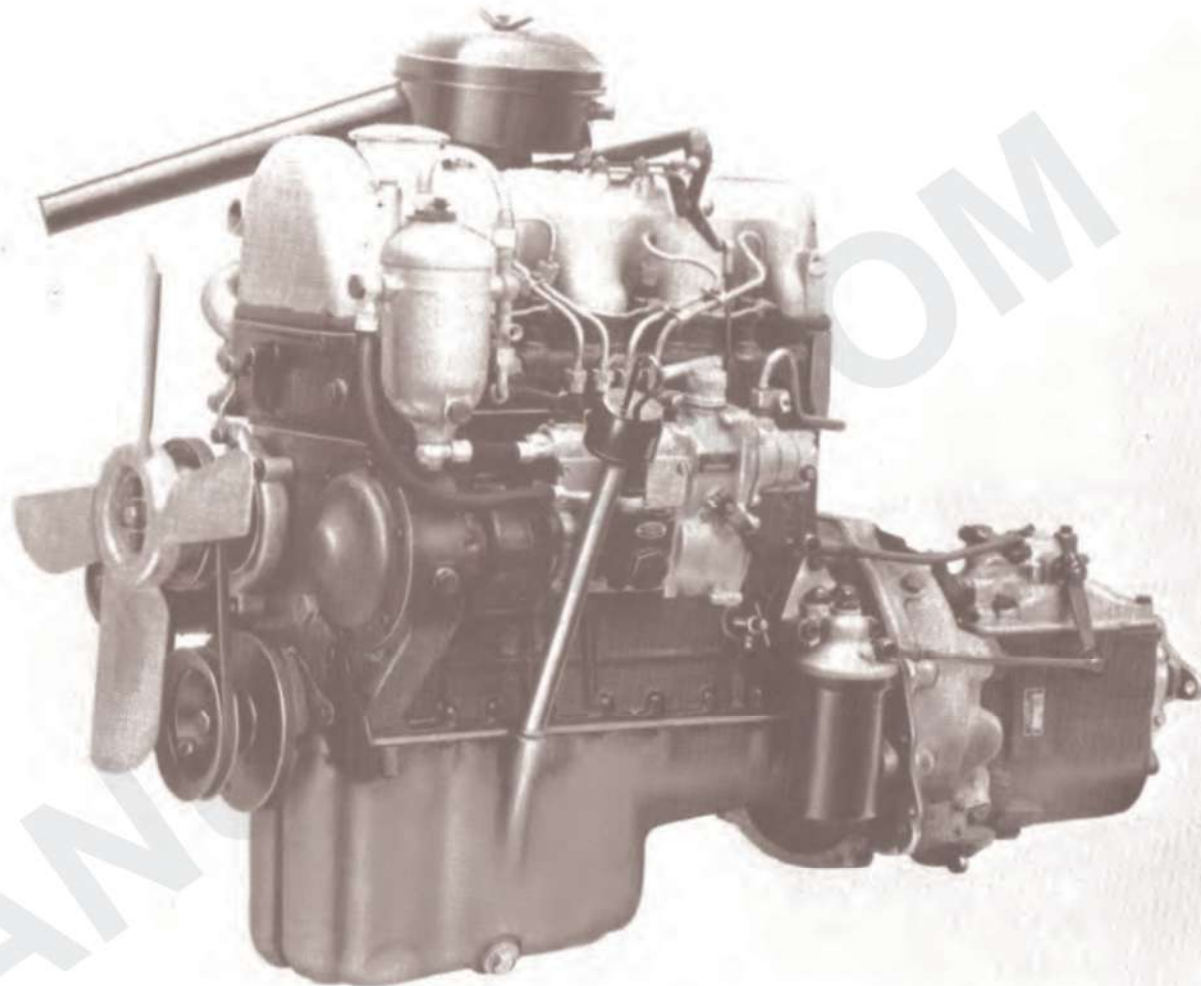
Right from the beginning, Stuttgart had intended to use the Ponton bodyshell as the basis of more than one model, and since Mercedes-Benz were the undisputed world leaders in diesel-powered passenger cars it was obvious that diesel Pontons would be on the cards. The company did not wait until the 170S-D models had outlived their usefulness before introducing the first of these, but launched the 180D as soon as they could. Thus from March 1954 the OM636 diesel engine could be bought in a car which in every other respect resembled the new 180.

The 1,767cc three-bearing engine differed from the 170S-D unit only in its use of tougher bearing material to increase the already legendary durability. However, the 180D was lighter than its diesel predecessors, and so Stuttgart's engineers had been able to mate the engine to high gearing – higher in fact than in the petrol models – without loss of acceleration and with

benefit both to maximum speed and fuel consumption. Indeed, the 180D could return astonishingly good figures in this last respect, 44mpg being a not unrealistic claim. Of course, it *was* slow, taking all of 37 seconds to haul itself up to 60mph from rest and running out of steam at 68mph. It was also noisy, but its combination of low running costs with modern styling and generous interior accommodation made it irresistible to fleet buyers (especially taxi operators) and private buyers alike. To say it was an instant success would be an understatement: in its first year, the 180D accounted for 44% of *all* Mercedes-Benz passenger car production!

For a single season, Stuttgart was content to sit back and watch the booming sales of their three Ponton models – for the introduction of the 180D had been accompanied by the arrival of the 220, the first of the six-cylinder range which forms the subject of the following chapter. The 180D's engine output was then put up by 3bhp for 1956 as the result of an increase in the governed engine speed; but the real improvement to the two four-cylinder models was held over until the 1956 season was

The diesel engine for the 190D was also a new overhead-camshaft unit. It was introduced into the Ponton range in 1958 with Bosch injection equipment and offered 50bhp at 4,000rpm.



already well under way. The 220 had been introduced with an improved version of the swing-axle rear suspension, and from January 1956 this was fitted to both the 180 and 180D models as well.

The single-pivot swing-axle, as the new rear suspension was called, was a development of the set-up first seen in the 1952 W196 Grand Prix car. Where the old system had used a rigidly-mounted differential from which both axle halves pivoted, the revised system had the differential housing mounted flexibly to the underside of the body so that it could swing with the right-

hand half of the axle. A single universally-jointed pivot lay low down on the other side of the differential housing, and the left-hand axle half swung from this. The results were a marked reduction in camber change under cornering forces, and a more gradual transition to oversteer which gave the driver more chance to deal with rear-end breakaway, as well as an improvement in rear tyre wear characteristics. If the new system did not completely eliminate the oversteer which a careless driver could provoke from the swing-axles, it certainly protected him from disaster a great deal better than the earlier

system had done.

1956: The 190

With sales of the Ponton models booming, Stuttgart was confident enough to introduce three new Ponton models at once in 1956, of which one was a four-cylinder model additional to the 180 and 180D. The arrival of the 190 in May 1956 was accompanied by a cunning piece of price-cutting, for in fact the new car sold at the former price of the 180, and the price of the existing model was lowered. Since the 190 was a better-equipped model, with a larger engine and a number of trim and cosmetic improvements, this meant that both models were extremely competitively priced.

The 190 was sufficiently altered from the 180 to merit the new type designation W121 (the same as that of the 190SL sports car), but it was basically a 180 bodyshell with a detuned version of the 1,897cc overhead-camshaft engine used in the 190SL. In terms of design this was really a four-cylinder variant of the 300 series' M186 engine, and so traced its ancestry back to the early 1950s. With a lower compression ratio than in the 190SL, a milder camshaft and valve timing, different valves and manifolding, and a single Solex carburettor instead of the twins, the 190 engine put out 75bhp. Fuel economy had been one of its design aims, but it nevertheless gave the 190 quite respectable acceleration, plus a maximum speed of 86mph. Like the now superseded 220, the 190 was stopped by finned cast-iron drum brakes, which were additionally cooled by ventilating slots in the wheels (although 180-size wheel trims with a larger central star motif were used), and its improved performance was matched by the single-pivot swing-axles, which would henceforth be standard on all the Ponton models.

A more liberal sprinkling of brightwork helped to distinguish the 190 from its cheaper sister, though fortunately this had been applied with taste and discretion. The car looked wider at the front, thanks to its broader radiator grille, which was flanked by unequal-length bright strips on the air intake vents, with the bottom strip butting against the wing. As on the six-cylinder 220, a slim bright band under the windows and bright rain gutters gave the side elevation a less squat appearance, while front quarter-lights were an addition to the 180's specification. From the rear, bigger tail-light units and huge chromed

number-plate lamp housings on the boot-lid made the car recognizable to those not close enough to read its 190 badge. Equipment levels were also up on the 180, with a key lock on the front passenger door and a Sigla laminated windscreen as standard (the 180 now had a toughened-glass screen, the laminated type having been deleted as a cost-saving measure when 180 prices were cut). Interior appointments included a heater blower, a reading light, twin sun visors and coat hooks, while the interior door handles with a small curved pull to release the lock were a further welcome improvement. A headlamp flasher was also standard.

Sales figures rapidly proved that the introduction of the 190 had been a sound move. In addition to notching up substantial home sales, the model proved a resounding export success at a time when success overseas was what Daimler-Benz wanted most. Something over half of all 190s produced were sold outside Germany, and it would be wrong to underestimate the importance of the model in Daimler-Benz's postwar recovery.

1957: The 180a

A whole series of revisions to the existing Pontons were introduced in 1957 for the 1958 season, while prices were kept at their previous levels. In terms of actual production, the 190 was the first car to benefit, although as far as the customer was concerned the revised models all appeared together in the autumn of 1957, details being announced a month before the Frankfurt Show, which opened on September 19.

The major change was to the 180, which was redesignated a 180a when its ancient side-valve engine was pensioned-off and replaced in the 1958 models by a detuned version of the larger-capacity overhead-camshaft unit from the 190. With a lower compression ratio and a single-choke instead of a compound carburettor, 65bhp was available from this 1,897cc unit as against 75bhp in 190 form. This power increase – from 52bhp with the original 1,767cc engine – went a long way towards alleviating the 180's lack of performance, and the 180a was nearly as quick as a 190 while remaining more economical and able to run on cheaper low-octane petrol.

The engine was not the only 190 feature inherited by the 180a, for its broader radiator grille, larger rear lights and overrider-mounted rear number-plate lamps all came from the same

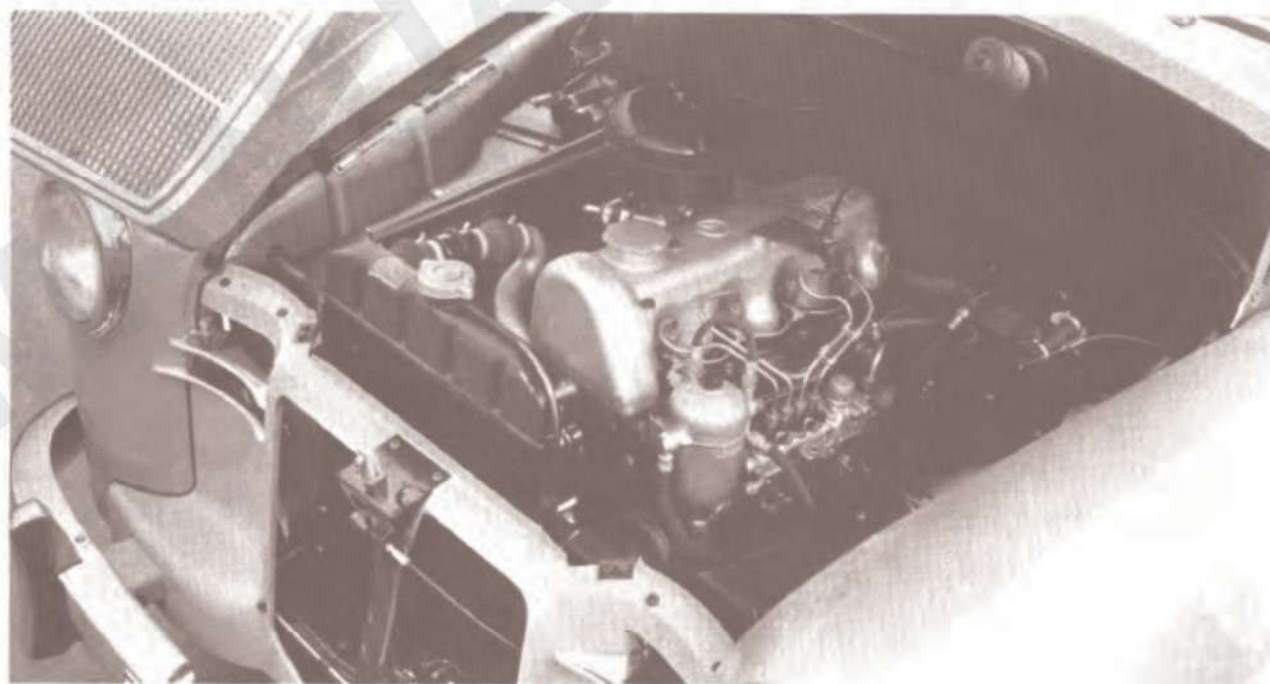
source – and in April 1958 the 180a also gained the 190's front quarter-lights – but it was always possible to distinguish the two models because the cheaper car retained the older wheel trims with their small central motif and did not have the 190-type bright trim on its front air intakes. Brighter interior colours and improved seat contours also arrived for the 180a as part of a cross-range policy which took in all the existing Ponton saloons – 180Da (so renamed to keep step with its petrol-engined sister), 190 (which was never renamed a 190a), 219 and 220S – and options now included a key lock on the passenger door, a reversing light, a heater blower, a headlamp flasher, leather upholstery and a fabric sunroof.

By 1957, petrol quality had stabilized in Europe once more, and Daimler-Benz felt able to delete the dashboard-mounted 'octane selector', which had permitted simple retarding of the ignition to cope with poor-quality fuels in the petrol-engined cars. Yet, as many Pontons were sold in export markets where petrol was *invariably* of low octane level, some means of ignition adjustment had to be retained, and so 1958-season models had a vernier adjustment on the distributor itself.

1958: The 190D

The Frankfurt Motor Show had become the traditional launch time for new Mercedes-Benz models, and *aficionados* of the marque were not disappointed when two more Ponton variants were introduced at the 1958 show. The 220SE described in the next chapter was a new top-of-the-range model, destined to be for an exclusive clientele, but the other car was an additional diesel model.

By 1958, although the Daimler-Benz lead in the diesel passenger car field remained undisputed, sales figures had begun to drop, and the 180D now represented only 35.7% of total Mercedes-Benz car production – a substantial figure still, but markedly lower than it had been a few years earlier. It was pretty clear that this decline in market interest could be attributed to the model's distinctly lethargic performance. So a decision was taken to supplement the 180D by a higher-performance diesel model, and Heinz Hoffmann was given the job of developing a diesel unit from the 1,897cc overhead-camshaft petrol engine of the 190SL, in exactly the same way as he had developed the 180D's 1,767cc unit from the old side-



The engine compartment of a 190D with the diesel injectors and pump readily accessible. The lift-up radiator grille forming an extension of the bonnet was to become a standard feature of most Mercedes-Benz models from the 190 onwards.



A 190D demonstrating the slogging performance of its diesel engine. Note the fitment to this 1958 car of the optional folding roof.

valve petrol engine of the same dimensions.

The finished article was known as the OM621 engine. Its block was exactly the same as that of its parent petrol engine, with an oil cooler in the water jacket and an external oil filtration system, but although its overhead-camshaft arrangement was unchanged, the cylinder-head was cast-iron rather than light-alloy and contained the pre-combustion chambers and glow plugs of an indirect-injection diesel engine. The OM621 could muster 50bhp at 4,000rpm, or 7bhp more than the contemporary 180D power unit. Dropped into the Ponton 190 shell as the motive power for the new 190D model, it could hardly be described as a transformation of the diesel-powered Ponton, but it did put acceleration up to levels approaching those of the petrol 180 (itself no road-burner), and it was both smoother and quieter than the smaller diesel power unit.

Generally speaking, the 190D was otherwise quite simply a 190 with a diesel engine. It had a key starter switch with a glow



This photograph by Colin Peck of a 180Dc shows the fatter bumpers and broader grille of the b-suffix and c-suffix cars, which were introduced in 1959 and 1961, respectively.

A four-cylinder Kombi dual-purpose vehicle with bodywork by Binz photographed by Colin Peck at a Mercedes-Benz gathering.



The same camera captured this line-up headed by a Miesen high-roof ambulance based on one of the later broad-grille models.



plug position instead of the separate ignition and starter switches found in the 180D, and it had the 3.7 axle of the 180D, together with that model's plain brake drums instead of the contemporary 190 items. In its original form it only lasted a single season, but as the sales figures of 20,629 show, it was a considerable success.

1959: The 180b, 180Db, 190b and 190Db

Although the six-cylinder Ponton range was cut back to a single model at the close of the 1959 season to make way for the new W111 models, the full four-cylinder range of 180 and 190 in both petrol and diesel forms remained available. All four models benefited from substantial improvements for 1960, and from the autumn of 1959 they were given new designations, all with a b-suffix.

This b-suffix – only the 180a had ever borne an a-suffix – denoted cars with a lower bonnet line and the broader radiator grille of the W111 model 220b, which was introduced at the same time. The fatter bumpers of the new Pontons were also



This time Colin Peck has aimed his camera at a hearse variant of the Ponton theme, alongside which the 190SL looks diminutive.

clearly designed to resemble those of the new W111 model. The 180 and 180D now gained the larger wheel trims of the 190, and all the four-cylinder models were given enlarged rear light clusters, which now incorporated the rear reflectors formerly slung beneath the bumper overriders.

As the W111 models showed, vehicle safety was Stuttgart's latest preoccupation, and the b-suffix Pontons had benefited to some degree from that aspect of the Daimler-Benz research programme. Thus the dashboard now had extra padding and deformable plastic switch gear, while a W111-type steering wheel with padded boss was fitted. This signalled the demise of the familiar horn ring which doubled as a turn indicator control, and now the horn ring operated only the horns, while the indicators were operated by a stalk-type control mounted on the steering column, which also did duty as a headlamp flasher. Doors on all models could now be locked from the inside, and the 180 and 180D were upgraded with neater seat and door trims, and a screen washer was standard (operated by a pedal, which also switched the wipers on if fully depressed). Even the optional extras came in for attention, and what had been a four-

piece fitted luggage set became a five-piece through the addition of a matching hat-box!

The diesel engines of the 180D and 190D remained unchanged for the b-suffix cars, but the engines of both petrol variants were modified. A new carburettor added 3bhp to the 180, while a higher compression ratio for the 190 added 5bhp and around 3mph to the top speed. Although the 180's improved performance scarcely warranted better braking, the stopping ability of the four-cylinder Pontons had always been so poor that it seems unlikely any customers complained about the fitting to the two cheaper models of the finned front brake drums from the 190s – and their addition to the 190D contributed to standardization if nothing else. On the two petrol-engined models, it became possible to specify vacuum-servo assistance as an optional extra, although the insufficient vacuum available on the induction side of the diesel engines denied that option to the 180D and 190D, where it was admittedly less necessary.

During the two seasons of b-suffix Ponton production, sales figures of the petrol-engined versions showed a marked swing

towards the cheaper 180, which was a clear reversal of the earlier position. Actual production figures of the 190b at 28,463 were only marginally lower than 180b totals, but averages of 14,000 a year were very much down on the 20,000 or so average of the original 190. The fact was that the 1960 and 1961 model petrol 190s simply did not offer enough over the upgraded 180 to justify the extra initial cost and higher running costs, and so there were no doubt sighs of relief in the sales and marketing department at Stuttgart when the W110 model 190 came along in August 1961 to replace the elderly Ponton. None of that, however, prevented the 190D in its b-suffix form being a great success, selling 61,309 units in the two seasons of its production as against 24,676 of the contemporary 180D. In earlier years, the 180D had actually sold some 25% more annually than its more expensive sister, but by the standards of 1960 it had become a desperately slow car, while the 190D offered both tolerable performance levels and a higher level of equipment, and in fact represented an extremely good buy.

1961: The 180c and 180Dc

Changes made for the 1962-season Pontons were less significant than usual when a new model designation was allocated, but the 180 sold during the final year of production was known as a 180c. Perhaps the c-suffix was intended simply to parallel the re-engined but otherwise similarly barely altered 180Dc, or – possibly – the ‘c’ was meant to show that the car was a contemporary of the new befinned 190c W110 model. One way or the other the swansong of the petrol Ponton won no new market, and only 9,280 were made in its single season of production. Visually indistinguishable from the 180b models, the cars nevertheless enjoyed better roadholding through widened rear tracks, and better fuel economy from a new camshaft accompanied by valve-train changes and a new carburettor.

The diesel version, however, sold better until the last, and

11,822 of the 180Dc model were built between June 1961 and October 1962. Like the 180c, it was visually indistinguishable from its predecessor, but it did have an extra 5bhp from its new engine, which was essentially a detuned version of the 1,988cc unit offered in the W110 190Dc and described in Volume 2 of this book. The 180Dc was still no racing car, but the new diesel engine offered further gains in flexibility, and the 180Dc retained its traditional pre-eminence among taxi operators in spite of a price increase, for it was still 1,000 Deutschmarks cheaper than the new 190Dc.

The kombi models

Before passing from the story of the four-cylinder Pontons to that of their six-cylinder brethren, it is worth taking a look briefly at the kombi models – the word means dual-purpose vehicle or estate car – built by independent manufacturers. No small degree of expertise went into the adaptation of the unit-construction frame-floor unit, although Binz, of Lorch, had at least had the experience of performing similar transformations on the separate-chassis 170 models. Christian Miesen, of Bonn, however, was new to the game, at least as far as Mercedes-Benz were concerned. The conversions offered by both firms were approved by Stuttgart, and were sold and serviced through the Daimler-Benz network.

Most of the conversions were fitted out as ambulances, but there were also hearses and a few vans, and prices were between 30% and 50% higher than those of the saloons, depending on the type of body and the internal fittings specified. Production began in 1955 by Binz, but their version was soon joined by Miesen's, which offered a higher roofline and was thus instantly recognizable. Assembly of both versions stopped in 1959, but unfortunately exact production figures are not available. On the bases of figures available for the delivery of frame-floor units from Stuttgart, it would seem that around 4,000 were made. The vast majority stayed within the borders of West Germany.

Extended Pontons

The six-cylinder models

The first six-cylinder Ponton appeared in 1954, only a year after the range's introduction with the 180, and more or less concurrently with the 180D. The new model 220, known technically but never by badging as the 220a, was launched at the Geneva Show in March 1954; full-scale production began in June, and the cars replaced the old W187 separate-chassis 220 saloons in the showrooms for the 1955 season.

Although the 220a shared the construction of the four-cylinder Pontons and resembled them closely in styling, it was in fact a rather better-proportioned car with a longer wheelbase and bonnet. These differences of size earned it the new type designation W180. The extra bonnet length, of course, was to accommodate the six-cylinder engine, while the extra length in the wheelbase was given over to the rear passengers' legroom, and was reflected in the body by wider rear doors. In addition, the rear passengers benefited from a larger rear window than was fitted to the four-cylinder cars.

As they would later do so often, Daimler-Benz used brightwork to help identify the prestige model of the range. Chrome indicator housings on the front wings picked up a theme from the older 220 model (they replaced the ugly indicator housings of the four-cylinder cars), and chrome was used for the drip mouldings, a band below the side and rear windows, and a strip on the rear wing pressing line. These were matched by twin aluminium strips on the sills and an aluminium stone-guard at the leading edge of the rear wing. The radiator grille was broader and more raked, while new full-size wheel trims with slotted rims bore a larger Mercedes-Benz star emblem. At the rear, there were larger light clusters and a bigger

chromed boot handle at the bottom of the lid. Twin fog-lights fitted as standard concealed the new air intakes at the front, which were now just above the bumper valance (where they picked up exhaust fumes, dust and mud – which was certainly not the intention!). Front and rear doors all had quarter-lights, those at the front swivelling to give draught-free ventilation, while the fixed panes at the rear enabled the smaller winding windows to retract fully into the doors. The 220a came in five standard colours, of which black was probably the most popular.

If the body of the old 220 had been outmoded, its engine was certainly not, as it had only been introduced in 1951. So the 2,195cc overhead-camshaft unit was taken over for the six-cylinder Ponton model with a few modifications, which added 5bhp and put the safe crankshaft speed up by 20% to 6,000rpm. The major changes were the new light-alloy cylinder head accompanied by new pistons and a higher compression ratio, but there were also a new carburettor and distributor, plus a new camshaft and altered valve timing. Durability had received attention, and a paper-element oil filter was fitted, which had the additional benefit of lowering service costs by nearly trebling the mileage between oil changes. A more powerful water pump ensured that the increase in operating temperatures brought about by the higher engine speeds would be kept under control, and as petrol quality was still very variable in certain parts of the world, a dash-mounted octane selector was fitted. The 220a could run without misfiring on the very lowest grade commercial petrol with its ignition fully retarded, but it could not then be expected to attain the near-100mph maximum speed



Introduced in 1954, a year after the announcement of the 180 Ponton, the 220a was built on a longer wheelbase, offering extra space both for the six-cylinder 2,195cc engine and for rear passengers, as well as achieving better-balanced styling.

possible under optimum conditions.

Like the 180, the 220a had dispensed with central lubrication and now had 24 greasing points in the running gear. The 220a also scored two notable 'firsts', being the first petrol-engined Mercedes-Benz to follow the European trend with a 12-volt electrical system (the diesel models already had them to cope with heavier starting loads), and the first Mercedes-Benz road car to use the single-pivot swing-axle rear suspension already described in the previous chapter. Its clutch and gearbox were identical to those of the 180, although the 220a had higher ratios in the indirect gears and a slightly lower axle ratio. The column shift was also retained, although in the six-cylinder car it always seemed rather more positive. As for the brakes, which were without any doubt the 180's weakest point, the 220a had finned drums all round, supplemented by cooling slots in the wheels and wheel trims, and twin-leading-shoe brakes with their inherent self-servo effect at the front.

To complete its prestige package, the 220a had a higher-quality interior than that in the four-cylinder cars. There was wood on the dashboard and on the door cappings, and a grab rail

with coat hooks like that in the 300 series was fitted above the side windows. Rear interior lights and twin sun visors were standard, and the remodelled instrument panel featured a strip speedometer in place of the 180's conventional round dial. The clock in the centre of the dash was now an electric one, and the driver was given an extra lidded glove box on his side of the fascia. Options included a screen washer, twin blowers for the heater, a radio (the expensive Becker Mexiko set), a fabric sunroof and the usual set of fitted luggage.

If the improvements introduced during 220a production are any guide to the car's faults, it would seem that the first examples had both stopping and starting problems. From spring 1955, some production cars were fitted with what was described as an experimental 'brake booster', and then, after the Frankfurt Show, an ATE vacuum servo became standard equipment, together with Alfin iron/aluminium drums at the front, which greatly improved both cooling and anti-fade properties. A bigger battery was also introduced for the 1956 season. Though the 220a lasted only one more year – for even better models were waiting to go into production – annual sales



The sleeker lines of the 220a as compared with the 180 are clearly evident here. The foglamps were a standard fitment and the six-cylinder cars could also be identified by the indicator light housings above the headlamps.

Inside the boot of a 220a, a model which set new standards for medium-sized saloons and was widely influential. This picture came from the archives of the Rover Company, who had a 220a for evaluation in the mid-1950s.

averaging nearly 13,000 during the two years of its production were ample demonstration that Daimler-Benz had already produced a winner. These figures were closely similar to annual averages for the 180, which meant they were extremely good for a car in the 220's more elevated market sector.

1956: The 219 and 220S

When the 220a stopped production, it was replaced by not one, but two new six-cylinder Ponton models, which arrived for the 1957 season along with the four-cylinder 190. The point of launching two replacement models was to cater more exactly for the requirements of what Daimler-Benz had identified as the two main types of 220a customer, and thus to broaden the market for the six-cylinder Pontons. The 219 was aimed at the buyer who wanted six-cylinder performance rather than prestige and refinement, and was targetted specifically at Opel's successful Kapitän model; the 220S, on the other hand, was aimed at those who were prepared to pay extra for luxury features and expected a six-cylinder engine as part of the package. Although the 220S was based closely on the





The overhead-camshaft six-cylinder engine installed in the 220a being assessed by Rover. Maximum output of 85bhp was achieved at 4,800rpm.

superseded 220a and retained its W180 type-designation, the 219 was very much a different car and was given the special type-designation W105.

The main reason for this was that the 219 was actually a hybrid, combining the short 180 body with the longer bonnet of the six-cylinder models. Thus although its wheelbase was longer than that of the four-cylinder cars, that extra length lay between bulkhead and front axle, and rear legroom was to four-cylinder standards. Since the engine was the same 2,195cc overhead-camshaft unit as in the 220a and the car was a few inches shorter and therefore lighter than the superseded model, its acceleration was somewhat enhanced, although maximum speed remained more or less the same. However, the smaller petrol tank of the four-cylinder models came with the 180-type bodyshell, and so the car's touring range was less than that of the larger-tanked 220a.

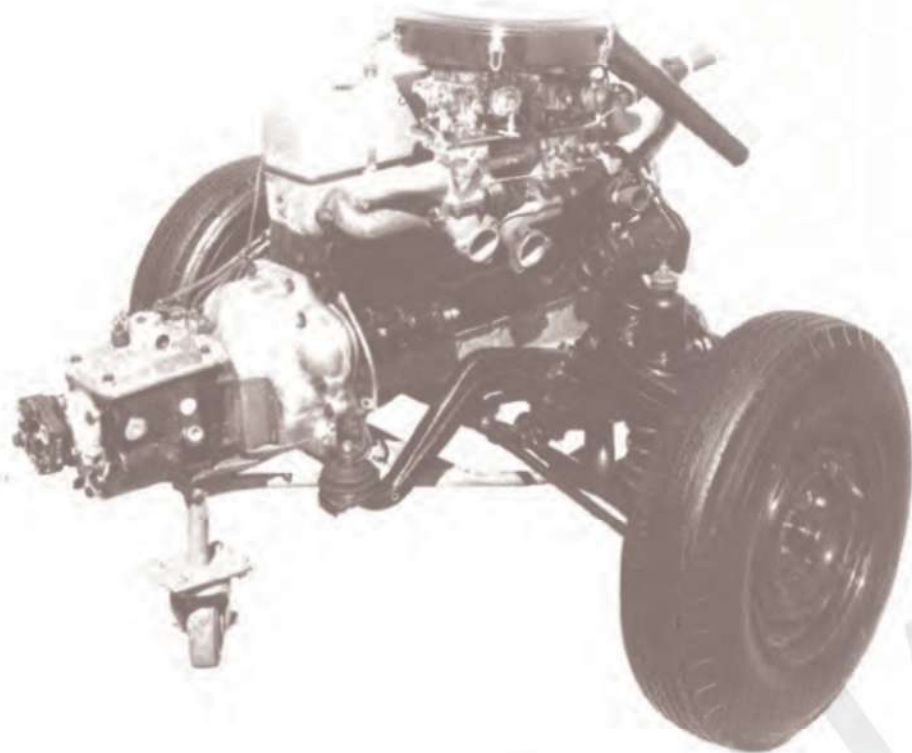
It was not difficult to spot a 219, as it looked rather like a stretched 190, with the same discreet levels of bright trim, and it lacked the twin fog-lamps of the 220a unless these were specified optionally; but the 220S was even easier to recognize,



The interior of the 220a, the dashboard of which, incorporating a ribbon-type speedometer, was to be shared with the coupe and cabriolet models which arrived later. Rubber floor matting was a typical Mercedes-Benz feature at the time.



Broad-band whitehall tyres give this 220a a transatlantic flavour although the car is in fact a right-hand-drive example and UK-registered. Although known as a 220a, this model always carried the '220' nameplate without suffix.



The twin-carburettor 100bhp version of the 2,195cc engine as fitted to 220S models installed in the front subframe from which this series of cars derived their Ponton name.

as it added to the long-wheelbase 220a body a chrome strip picking out the front wing pressing line. Its principal difference from the old 220a lay in its engine, which was now equipped with twin Solex carburetors and put out 100bhp – ‘more power than you need’, as Mercedes-Benz advertisements had it. The peak of the torque curve had risen by 900rpm, and the engine was both more flexible and more economical than the single-carburettor 219/220a unit. In addition, smoother running was ensured by a new four-point mounting between engine and subframe.

The 220S was a very quick car by the standards of the day, with a genuine 100mph capability in the right conditions. Yet Daimler-Benz had followed the American example for their prestige Ponton model, and its soft springing gave a boulevard ride at the expense of handling. The 220S rolled prodigiously on corners and dipped its nose markedly under braking. Fortunately, wider tyres than on the 219/220a models kept roadholding at a high standard within the limitations of the single-pivot swing-axle. Equipment levels were as for the 220a, plus a headlamp flasher as standard, but the options now included a central rear armrest, 21 special order colours in addition to the five standard paint finishes, and 26 two-tone



The 220S saloon is immediately identifiable from its 220a counterpart by the use of additional chrome to emphasize the double curve of the front wings.



The excellent proportions of the 220S are seen to good effect in this side view. The narrow-band whitewall tyres compare favourably with those fitted to the car pictured on page 94.

An interesting picture by Colin Peck showing the post-1957 rear lamps on a 180c alongside the pre-1957 type on a 220S. By the time the 180c was built the four-cylinder Pontons had inherited the larger rear windows originally confined to the six-cylinder models.

colour combinations. In spite of its undoubted faults, the 220S was pretty well without rivals in its class, and it rapidly became acknowledged as the standard by which all other medium-sized six-cylinder European cars were judged. Meanwhile, the 219 enjoyed immense success in overseas markets, and between them, the 219 and 220S put up sales of the six-cylinder Pontons by an average of around 17% annually.

Like the four-cylinder models, the 219 and 220S benefited from a series of improvements in autumn 1957 for the 1958 season. New seats and trim colours arrived, plus a collection of new options already detailed in the last chapter, and the octane selector disappeared from the dashboard to be replaced by a vernier adjustment on the distributor. Paralleling the changes to the 180, both six-cylinder models were also given uprated power units. Higher compression ratios put the 219 engine's output up from 85bhp to 90bhp and the 220S unit's from 100bhp to 106bhp, though Daimler-Benz followed their usual conservative policy and declined to mention the increased maximum speed of the 220S in their publicity literature. The 219, however, was given the higher 3.9:1 axle ratio of the 190SL sports car and altered gearbox ratios to produce not only more speed in keeping with its role as the sporting six-cylinder Ponton, but also improved fuel consumption. Both the six-



In 1956 the Ponton range was extended by the introduction of the 219, a hybrid model combining the shorter passenger compartment of the 180 with the longer front section necessary to accommodate the six-cylinder engine. The low-mounted air intakes flanking the grille can be seen in this picture, although often they were masked by foglamps.



cylinder models had uprated rear dampers, and both could be fitted with the new Hydrak automatic clutch.

The Hydrak was a device made by Fichtel and Sachs which gave the benefits of two-pedal control while retaining the standard four-speed manual gearbox. As such, it was typical of European attempts in the late 1950s to eliminate the clutch pedal on cars whose engine characteristics were not suitable for the fully-automatic transmissions then available. Basically, the Hydrak consisted of an orthodox clutch, which was operated by a vacuum servo as a consequence of pressure on the gear-change lever. This in itself was nothing very new, and indeed the first American automatic transmission developed by Chrysler had followed similar principles; but what was interesting was the use of a torque convertor to take up the drive progressively, plus a switch on the flexibly-mounted final-drive unit which controlled the rate of clutch engagement according to whether the car was accelerating (when the final-drive would move backwards) or decelerating (when it would move forwards). A freewheel in the driveline turned back-to-front also locked-up on the overrun to give engine braking. The concept of the

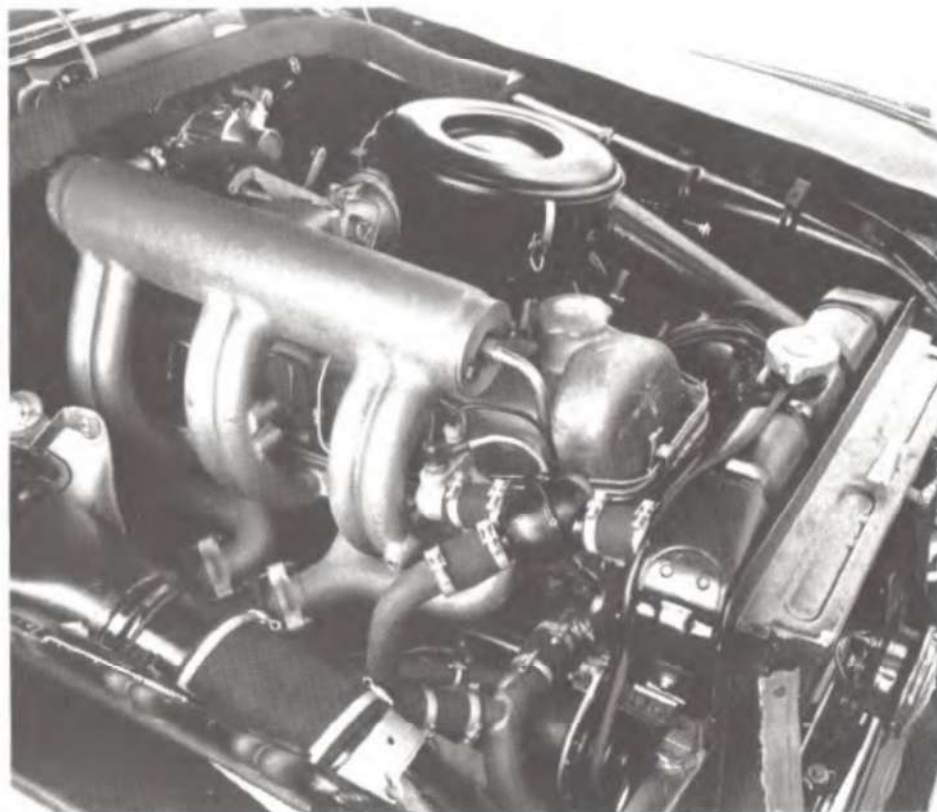
Hydrak was fine, and the use of the torque convertor did not harm performance too much through the inevitable slip, but unfortunately the Stuttgart engineers had not counted on the driving habits of the average owner. It was important to remember to lift the foot from the accelerator pedal when changing gear, just as in a normal three-pedal car, and failure to do so could produce some interesting kangaroo effects and rapid wear on the clutch friction lining. Likewise, a hand carelessly left on the gear-lever would actuate the clutch, with similarly undesirable effects, and although the Hydrak was a popular option on its introduction, cars fitted with it were difficult to sell on the secondhand market in later years.

1958: The 220SE

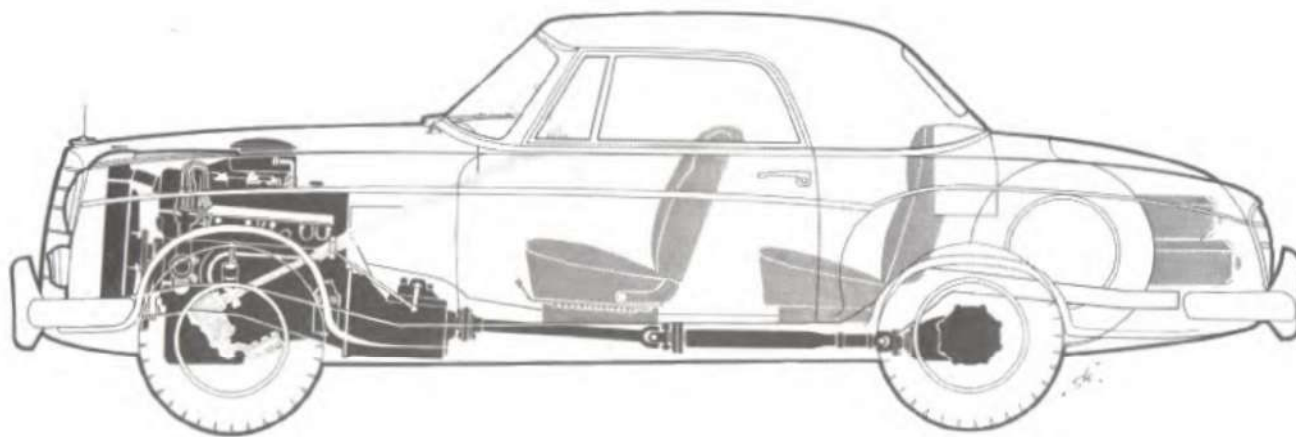
Capitalizing on the sales success of the 219 and 220S, Stuttgart launched a new top-of-the-range six-cylinder model at the 1958 Frankfurt Show. Called the 220SE, it survived only a single season, but it was intended at the outset as a low-volume prestige model and to test the market for the planned W111 220SE model. Total sales figures of 1974 – less than 10% of

190D figures over the same period – were consequently no disappointment. In itself, the 220SE marked a notable achievement by Stuttgart, for it was the world's first *everyday* production car to use fuel injection (hence the E in its name, which stood for Einspritzmotor, or injection engine). Allegedly, the Mercedes engineers had turned to fuel injection when all other methods of uprating the 2,195cc 220S engine had failed.

The Ponton 220SE was introduced almost subtly, being an unheralded surprise at the 1958 Frankfurt Show and bearing no outward changes apart from badging to advertise its injected engine. In fact, apart from the engine and a slightly smaller fuel tank, it exactly paralleled the 220S in every way, although the engine differences were enough in Stuttgart's eyes to merit the new type-designation of W128. Fuel injection, of course, was not new to Mercedes-Benz cars, for the technology traced its ancestry to the diesel injection experiments of the 1930s, and through the 300SL of 1954 to the 300Sc and 300d prestige models. Yet, this time, it was applied to the engine of what was basically an upper-crust family saloon to give it a significant performance boost. It was a newer system than those used by Daimler-Benz before, with twin injection pumps working through a distribution system instead of a separate pump for each cylinder. There was also a special control system which



Bosch fuel injection was added to the 2,195cc engine enabling the 220SE model to be announced in 1958 with a power output of 115bhp at 4,800rpm.



Cabriolet and coupe versions were an inevitable development of the Ponton theme, although the extra weight of the two-door bodies made them more suitable for the 220S engine than for the 220 for which they were originally intended. This is the cabriolet A/C layout, which was offered with a choice of bench or individual front seats and either token or proper rear seats.

took such factors as outside temperature into consideration when regulating petrol flow; and in addition there was an overrun shut-off, which helped the specific fuel consumption of the injected engine to be better than that of the lower-powered 220S unit.

Power was increased by no more than 9bhp to give 115bhp at the same 4,800rpm power peak as the 220S, but there were significant gains in flexibility through the massive torque increase from 127lb/ft at 3,500rpm to 152lb/ft at 4,100rpm. Maximum speed was up to 103mph, while through-the-gears acceleration was improved as well. As the performance image of Mercedes-Benz cars in the North American market was a significant asset (the Americans had never quite got over the 300SL gullwing), 220SE models for that market were given even better acceleration through lower ratios in the indirect gears, although the axle ratio remained unchanged. Nevertheless, the Hydrak clutch option was often specified on the 220SE, and this did take the edge off its new-found performance.

The six-cylinder Ponton saloons all disappeared at a stroke with the close of the 1959 season, to be replaced by the W111 six-cylinder models which are dealt with in Volume 2 of this book; 219 production came to an end in July 1959 and 220SEs

stopped coming off the lines a month later, although the rather more popular 220S soldiered on until October. Although the four models of the four-cylinder range remained in production, the only six-cylinder Ponton derivatives which survived into the W111 era were the 220SE versions of the two-door models.

Cabriolets and coupes

The two-door Pontons made their first public bow at the Frankfurt Show in September 1955, the open models based on the old separate-chassis 220 having been withdrawn a month earlier. Two versions were announced: the 220A with either bench or twin bucket front seats and an occasional rear seat, and the 220C with a real rear seat. The Stuttgart engineers were no doubt delighted that it had taken such a short time to overcome the problems of making a unit-construction saloon into an open model, for this was the first time they had attempted such a task. To their intense embarrassment, however, the standard 85bhp engine endowed what the catalogues called the 220A/C cabriolet with a performance which scarcely did justice to the car's prestige image. The problem was that the extra reinforcement necessary in the open body had helped to put the car's weight up by 300lb over the equivalent saloon. Despite a flood of orders, management decreed that the model should not be made



A 1955 220 cabriolet with chrome strips accentuating the wing-line and the lower edge of the bodywork including the wheelarches.



Not many 220S cabriolets were made in right-hand-drive form, but this one has survived; it was originally owned by the comedian Max Wall.



A 220S cabriolet with the top up is still an elegant-looking car, as this picture by Colin Peck reveals. Four additional badges attached to the radiator grille testify to the owner's enthusiasm.



The 220 cabriolets were almost invariably supplied with contrasting-coloured hoods, this lighter-top example making an interesting comparison with the car illustrated on the opposite page.

Series production of the 220 cabriolet in 1956 was followed three months later by the first of the coupe versions featuring a higher roof-line which terminated in a wraparound rear screen. Another example of a radiator grille indicating enthusiastic club membership. Photograph by Colin Peck.



available to the public.

Nevertheless, the company saved face as quickly as it was able by starting production of the open car with the more powerful 220S engine about four months after production of the 220S itself had begun. Assembly of a parallel fixed-head coupe began three months after that, in October 1956, with the effect that both models were available as part of the 1957 programme. Two years later, 220SE versions were also introduced alongside the 220S models.

The coupes and the delectable cabriolets were always intended as limited-production vehicles, and were hand-built at Sindelfingen to the very highest standards in the great tradition of the Mercedes-Benz prestige models. There were, of course, differences from earlier practice, for now the craftsmen's skills were devoted to fitting-out and finishing a body which had been mass-produced. Nonetheless, panels were individually fitted to cars in true coachbuilder's style, and this went some way to explaining why the 220S cabriolets and coupes cost nearly 75% more than their saloon equivalents, or nearly as much as a 300c



A sensible design feature of this 220S coupe is the fold-flat rear seat, which offers substantially more luggage accommodation when only two people are being carried.

luxury saloon and more than twice as much as a 219! The 220SE models were slightly cheaper in relation to their equivalent saloons, but were very definitely cars for the wealthy connoisseur, classic luxury machines rather than the sporting machines their appearance might have suggested.

The history of the cabriolet and coupe designs can be traced back to 1953, when proposals were drawn up for open models based on the four-cylinder 180. Two variants were considered: a four/five-seater cabriolet B, and a two/three-seater cabriolet A using the same short wheelbase (94½in) as the 190SL sports car, which was then under development. Body styling was essentially that of the saloons, but clearly it was felt at Stuttgart that there was room for improvement and by 1955 there had been radical changes. Quite apart from the fact that the two-doors would now only be made with six-cylinder engines, only one wheelbase length was available. This was nearly 5in shorter than that of the saloons, while the rear overhang had been extended by a couple of inches to give the bigger boot necessary in a touring car and better balance to the overall styling. As far as construction went, the floorpan had been reinforced to help

compensate for the absence of a roof in the cabriolet versions, and of course there were only two doors, which were much longer and heavier than those of the saloons, though their steel skins were stretched over lightweight aluminium frames.

The general lines of the two-door Pontons were similar to those of the four-door models, but there were distinct differences. Unlike the saloons, they had a wraparound windscreen, while front and rear wing lines were different, with heavy chrome trim for emphasis, which would be supplemented by an extra fillet ahead of the front wheelarch if two-tone paint was specified. Bright trim also ran around the wheelarches and along the sills, as on the contemporary 300Sc. The rear overhang was noticeably larger than on the saloons, and the wings terminated in huge tail-light clusters similar to those of the contemporary 300d limousine. The cabriolets had a fully retracting hood, which was easy to operate despite its immense weight and looked good either up or down; but the coupe roof was not an aesthetic success, its abbreviated form contrasting incongruously with the otherwise sweeping lines of the body. It was possible to specify the coupe with a sunroof, and many customers did. Interiors were beautifully put together with leather and wood, of course, and for the cabriolet it was possible to order the A (token rear seat) or C (proper rear seat) specification. Front seats on coupe and both cabriolet models could be bench, individual, or individual reclining type.

The extra weight of these prestige vehicles meant that their performance was not quite up to that of their saloon counterparts, and fuel consumption was also worse for the same reason. The cabriolets were the heaviest of all, thanks mainly to their massive hood frame and mechanism; but none of this deterred the buyers, who after all were interested primarily in the quality and exclusivity of the cars rather than in maximum performance. The best sales year was 1959, in which 1,414 220S and 220SE cabriolets and coupes went to their lucky new owners. A total of 3,429 two-door 220S models had been built by the time production ceased in October 1959; 220SE production continued until November 1960, and the 1,200 coupes and cabriolets built in this final season had the 120bhp fuel-injected engine of the new W111 220SEb model (described in Volume 2). A final production figure of 1,942 for three seasons, demonstrates the exclusivity of these models.

Buying an early postwar Mercedes-Benz

The choice and the examination

No reader of this book will need to be reminded that durability is one of the essential qualities of all Daimler-Benz products. Nonetheless, it is a sobering thought that the oldest postwar 170 models are now rapidly approaching the age of 40 – which may herald the beginning of life in human beings, but is more likely to bear witness to the ravages of time in cars. The fact that even a Mercedes-Benz can degenerate into a heap of rust is something which has to be faced; and those splendid long-lived diesel engines can eventually burn more oil of the lubricating kind than they do of the fuel kind. So how does the Mercedes-Benz enthusiast avoid buying an expensive liability?

In the period covered by this volume, there is certainly no lack of variety in Mercedes-Benz passenger cars, for the choice ranges from the humble 170D to the prestigious 300S or the exotic 300SL. Yet despite this wide variety of models, only three basic engine families were built at Stuttgart in the first 15 or so years after the war. It will be as well to begin this buyers' guide with a few words on their strengths and weaknesses.

The oldest family is that of the side-valve four-cylinder engines, originally of prewar design, but carried over via the 170 models and the earliest 180 variants until the mid-1950s. Subsequent engines, however, were all overhead-camshaft designs. The 3-litre 'six' introduced in the 1951 300 saloon was closely related to the later OHC 'four' first seen in the 190SL sports car, while the 2,195cc 'six' which also appeared in 1951 was yet another design which was only related to these by certain basic concepts. All the 'fours' had diesel offspring, the side-valve models updated through pushrod-operated overhead valves, but the OHC units differing from their petrol

equivalents in little more than combustion chamber design and fuel system. No diesel 'sixes' were ever available, but both the smaller and larger petrol designs were found in a number of different versions, with either carburettors or fuel injection.

In terms of durability, there is nothing to distinguish the side-valve 'fours' from the newer OHC units. All seem to thrive on the three main bearings which in higher-stressed engines would be considered distinctly marginal. The secret, of course, is that these engines were designed to run at speeds high up in their rev range on the German autobahn system; in combination with high axle ratios, this meant that they were very rarely subjected to any kind of serious strain, so that major overhauls are unlikely to be necessary before 100,000 miles or so have been clocked. As for the diesel variants, add 50,000 miles to that, although oil consumption will increase in a high-mileage engine and the familiar diesel clatter will certainly not decrease.

The weak point of all of the four-cylinder petrol engines is carburation, however. The Solex carburettors which were fitted to them were subject to problems caused by wear, and poor starting is a common malady which does not necessarily indicate an engine in need of major work. The problem is particularly acute on 190SL engines with their twin carburettors, on which wear around the throttle shafts makes adjustment and tuning difficult, and idling – in bad cases – next to impossible. In many cases, the diagonal brace which supports the heavy air intake plenum chamber has been removed by an uncomprehending owner or mechanic, so that the full weight of that component rests on its attachment bolts and allows vibration to loosen the gaskets between intake manifold and engine. Obviously,

troublesome air leaks are the result. Many 190SL owners have replaced their Solexes with single or twin Weber 40 DCOE carburettors; the twin-Weber set-up certainly gives better performance and trouble-free tuning, but at the expense of higher fuel consumption and more rapid engine wear if the extra performance is used regularly.

The six-cylinder engines are, if anything, even more robust than the 'fours', and should be good for 150,000 miles or so without a rebuild. Solex troubles are, of course, encountered again here, and the alternative fuel injection is not something on which any amateur should attempt to work. Major fuel injection faults are likely therefore to be expensive to rectify. In the 300SL engine, with its higher state of tune, plug fouling and consequent misfiring in traffic are quite common and need not indicate a fault; the trouble should, however, clear itself rapidly with open-road driving.

Turning now from engine types to car types, it is worthwhile to consider availability of the different models as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Anyone who thinks he can go straight out and find a good used 300SL, for example, is in for a shock! Earliest of the cars under consideration here are the 170 and 220 models, which are not plentiful, either in Britain or the USA. There are very few indeed in Britain, although the USA's lack of a dealer network when the cars were current was to some extent offset by returning servicemen who brought examples back home with them from Germany. In continental Europe, however, considerably more will be found, although for the most part they will obviously have left-hand drive. Prices of saloon variants will not be very high, unless a car is in first-class original condition (and even then a seller might have difficulty attracting custom); nevertheless, the desirable cabriolets and coupes will command considerably higher prices almost regardless of condition. In Britain, these are as rare as hen's teeth, but there are far greater numbers in the USA and it is not too difficult to find a choice of examples for sale.

Sadly, it is the two-door models which suffer most in old age, as their wooden body-frames rot and sag, and hold water against the steel body panels, thus promoting rust. Cabriolets are especially prone to rust at the bottoms of their doors, although saloons are far from being immune to the disease. All the 170 and 220 models may suffer from rust at the base of the radiator

shell, and likewise the tinworm is particularly active at the point where the front wings rest on their supports above the wheels. These points apart, though, the cars are generally pretty sound, their backbone chassis and separate body making for a long-lived ensemble.

Generally speaking, the 300 models are also long-lived, although rust at the door bottoms and around the wings (especially on pre-300d cars) can present expensive and unsightly problems. The wood trim suffers badly from sunlight, too, and the chromed exterior parts are liable to lose their plating and eventually disintegrate. Rear suspensions on these heavy cars can also become tired. In general, it is not advisable to buy a 300 which needs a lot of work. This comment applies with added emphasis to the 300S cars, which were expensive playthings in their heyday and are extremely expensive to restore properly now. As for availability, neither the 300 nor the 300S sold in great numbers in Britain, although the latter is rather more common on the other side of the Atlantic. Any enthusiast who *really* wants one of these vehicles is advised to seek one in Germany – where, of course, any available will almost certainly have left-hand drive.

The 300SLs are, of course, both very rare and more expensive to buy than any of the other models covered in this book. In Britain, their appearance on the market is so uncommon that any would-be owner is strongly advised to look abroad for a car – all in any case have left-hand drive. Far more will be found in the USA, where the majority of those produced were sold, but even so the would-be owner will have to be patient in waiting for one to appear in the 'For Sale' columns. As for prices, a first-class specimen is likely to cost about as much as a new Rolls-Royce, and anything significantly cheaper should be viewed with grave suspicion. Repairs to a damaged spaceframe, for example, are a specialist's job, and will probably be hideously expensive.

The Ponton models, rapidly becoming an enthusiast's favourite despite their humble pretensions, are fairly plentiful and reasonably cheap on both sides of the Atlantic. In Britain, diesels and four-cylinder cars are very much less common than the six-cylinder models, and the two-door variants are rare (allegedly only 20 RHD 220S cabriolets were built, for example). By way of contrast, the two-door models – cabriolets

in particular – are not hard to find in the USA. Two-door cars will be expensive, and it is worth remembering that the doors and front wings of these hand-built bodies were often tailored to the individual car, so that replacing panels can present difficulties.

The more mundane saloons suffer primarily from the enemy of all early unit-construction cars, and rust will render them unlovable if not necessarily unserviceable. Fortunately, the sills are not structural, and rust here need not be too much of a worry, although the jacking points ahead of the rear wheels can also rust out, with consequent wheel-changing problems. The structural tube below the radiator commonly corrodes at its extremities, but other rust traps present mainly cosmetic problems – the inner rear wings (betrayed by water inside the boot), the bottom edges of the doors, the tops of the wings in a line parallel to the bonnet, and directly above the headlamps, where mud collects after being thrown up by the wheels. Doors which shut badly are more likely to indicate hinge wear than body sag, and it is worth noting that front hinges are only accessible after the wings have been removed!

As for the underside, rust may cause the rubber-bushed rear radius-arms to pull out of the floor, while kingpin wear at the front – detectable by rocking wheels vertically to check for excess movement after the car has been jacked up – can be rectified with new parts, though these are expensive. The gearbox has no special weaknesses, although its shift linkage may be sloppy. Clutches unfortunately are not long-lived items, and may have been mistreated in Hydrak-equipped cars.

The basic construction of the Ponton saloons is shared by the

190SL, which is similarly prone to rusting. Rust attacks the sills (again not structural), the jacking point holes and, in bad cases, the structural rails behind the sills. The rear radius-arm attachment points are prone to the same trouble as in the saloons, and the rear inner wings and boot are commonly attacked. Rust will also get at the panels below the headlights, the headlight bowls and the surrounds, as well as the battery box.

Fortunately, about 90% of 190SL parts are still available at the time of writing – though not all from the factory – which makes restoration of a poor example an attractive possibility for those with the time, money and patience. Many 190SLs will be found in the USA, and there is no real shortage of examples even in Britain, where the car nevertheless seems to be somewhat under-appreciated. Prices for good examples are likely to be close to those for similar-condition British sports cars of the 1950s and early 1960s, such as Triumph TRs and MGAs/MGBs.

The foregoing should give some idea of the availability of the various Mercedes-Benz models covered by this book, and of their major weaknesses. Obviously, far more *could* be said about each one, but space is unfortunately limited. The potential buyer is advised to consult other owners of the model of his choice before entering into a purchase and, if he can, to persuade such an owner to accompany him when he views possible purchases. If the purchase goes well, the next step for the Mercedes-Benz enthusiast must be consideration of the problems of keeping the car in good condition, and the next chapter is intended as an outline guide to the available sources of assistance.

300Sc, pilot-build September 1955, produced December 1955 – April 1958 (W188)

As 300S, except:

Engine: Compression ratio 8.55:1. Bosch fuel injection. Maximum power 175bhp DIN at 5,400rpm; maximum torque 188lb/ft at 4,300rpm.

Transmission: Gear ratios 3.55:1, 2.30:1, 1.53:1, 1.00:1, reverse 2.78:1. Axle ratio 4.44:1.

Running gear: Single-pivot swing-axle rear suspension with coil springs. Larger brakes.

Weight: 3,924lb.

300SL, racing versions (W194, W197) built 1952; (W198) coupe, produced August 1954 – May 1957; roadster, pilot-build February 1957, produced May 1957 – February 1963

Construction: Steel tubular spaceframe with separate body of light sheet steel (aluminium body available to order).

Engine: Type M198 6-cyl, 85mm bore × 88mm stroke, 2,996cc OHC (last 229 built with all-alloy block). Compression ratio 8.55:1 (9.5:1 on US roadster models). 7-bearing crankshaft, Bosch direct fuel injection. Maximum power 195bhp DIN at 5,800rpm (US roadster models and others with optional sports camshaft and high compression head 215bhp DIN at 6,100rpm); maximum torque 217lb/ft at 4,800rpm (US roadsters, etc, 228lb/ft).

Transmission: 4-speed all-synchromesh gearbox with reverse. Gear ratios 3.34:1, 1.97:1, 1.385:1, 1.00:1, reverse 2.57:1 (later and all roadsters 2.73:1). Single-dry-plate clutch. ZF limited-slip differential. Axle ratio 3.64:1 (3.25:1, 3.42:1, 3.89:1 and 4.11:1 optionally available, 3.89:1 standard on US-market roadsters).

Running gear: Independent front suspension with twin wishbones, coil springs and anti-roll bar. Swing-axle rear suspension with coil springs (roadsters have single-pivot swing-axle with compensating spring and coil springs). Hydraulic telescopic shock absorbers. Recirculating-ball steering, 17.3:1 ratio (lower and higher ratios available to order). Hydraulic drum brakes on all 4 wheels (disc brakes from March 1961) with servo assistance. 6.50 × 15 tyres (6.70 × 15 on roadsters).

Dimensions: Wheelbase 94.5in, front track 54.5in (roadsters 55in), rear track 56.5in (roadsters 57in), length 178in (roadsters 180in), width 70.5in, height 51.2in, ground clearance 5.1in. Weight 2,890lb (roadsters 3,130lb, 3,220lb with hardtop). Turning circle 37ft.

180, produced July 1953 – June 1957 (W120)

Construction: All-steel unitary body with separate front subframe.

Engine: Type M136 4-cyl, 75mm bore × 100mm stroke, 1,767cc. Compression ratio 6.8:1. 3-bearing crankshaft. Solex 32 PICB downdraught carburettor. Maximum power 52bhp DIN at 4,000rpm; maximum torque 82.5lb/ft at 1,800rpm.

Transmission: 4-speed all-synchromesh gearbox with reverse. Gear

ratios 4.05:1, 2.38:1, 1.53:1, 1.00:1, reverse 3.92:1. Axle ratio 3.89:1.

Running gear: Independent front suspension with coil springs; swing-axle rear suspension with coil springs (single-pivot swing-axle from September 1955). Recirculating-ball steering, 18.5:1 ratio. Hydraulic drum brakes on all 4 wheels. 6.40 × 13 tyres.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 104.3in, front track 55.9in, rear track 58.1in, length 176.4in, width 68.5in, height 61.4in, ground clearance 7.3in. Weight 2,596lb (2,640lb from September 1955). Turning circle 38ft.

180D, pilot-build October 1953, produced February 1954 – July 1959 (W120)

As 180, except:

Engine: Type OM636 4-cyl diesel, 75mm bore × 100mm stroke, 1,767cc. Compression ratio 19:1. 3-bearing crankshaft. Maximum power 40bhp DIN at 3,200rpm (43bhp at 3,500rpm from September 1955); maximum torque 75lb/ft at 2,000rpm.

Transmission: Axle ratio 3.7:1.

Dimensions: Front track 56.3in. Weight 2,684lb.

180a, produced June 1957 – July 1959 (W120)

As 180, except:

Engine: Type M136 4-cyl, 85mm bore × 83.6mm stroke, 1,897cc. Compression ratio 6.8:1. 3-bearing crankshaft. Solex 32 PICB carburettor. Maximum power 65bhp DIN at 4,500rpm; maximum torque 94lb/ft at 2,200rpm.

Transmission: Axle ratio 3.9:1.

Weight: 2,662lb.

180b, produced July 1959 – August 1961 (W120)

As 180a, except:

Engine: Solex 34 PICB downdraught carburettor. Maximum power 68bhp DIN at 4,400rpm; maximum torque 96lb/ft at 2,500rpm.

Running gear: Brakes with larger swept area and optional vacuum servo assistance.

180Db, produced July 1959 – August 1961 (W120)

Technical specification identical to 180D.

180c, produced June 1961 – October 1962 (W120)

As 180b, except:

Engine: Improved valve gear.

180Dc, produced June 1961 – October 1962 (W120)

As 180Db, except:

Engine: Type OM621 4-cyl diesel, 87mm bore × 83.6mm stroke, 1,988cc. Compression ratio 21:1. 3-bearing crankshaft. Maximum power 48bhp DIN at 3,800rpm; maximum torque 80lb/ft at 2,200rpm.

Brakes: Larger swept area, as 180b.

190, produced March 1956 – August 1959 (W121)

As 180, except:

Engine: Type M121 4-cyl, 85mm bore × 83.6mm stroke, 1,897cc OHC. Compression ratio 7.5:1. 3-bearing crankshaft. Solex 32 PAITA downdraught carburettor. Maximum power 75bhp DIN at 4,600rpm; maximum torque 101lb/ft at 2,800rpm.

Transmission: Axle ratio 4.1:1.

Running gear: Single-pivot swing-axle rear suspension with coil springs. Larger brake swept area (as 180b), servo assistance optional.

Dimensions: Front track 56.3in. Weight 2,728lb.

190b, produced June 1959 – August 1961 (W121)

As 190, except:

Engine: Maximum power 80bhp DIN at 4,800rpm; maximum torque 103lb/ft at 2,800rpm.

Dimensions: Length 177.2in.

190D, produced August 1958 – July 1959 (W121)

As 190, except:

Engine: Type OM621 4-cyl, diesel, 85mm bore × 83.6mm stroke, 1,897cc OHC. Compression ratio 21:1. 3-bearing crankshaft. Maximum power 50bhp DIN at 4,000rpm; maximum torque 79.5lb/ft at 2,200rpm.

Transmission: Axle ratio 3.7:1.

Weight: 2,750lb.

190Db, produced June 1959 – September 1961 (W121)

As 190D, except:

Dimensions: Length 177.2in.

219, produced March 1956 – July 1959 (W105)

Construction: All-steel unitary body with separate front subframe.

Engine: Type M180 6-cyl, 80mm bore × 72.8mm stroke, 2,195cc OHC. Compression ratio 7.6:1 (8.7:1 from August 1957). 4-bearing crankshaft. Solex 32 PAATJ dual downdraught carburettor. Maximum power 85bhp DIN at 4,800rpm (90bhp from August 1957), maximum torque 116lb/ft at 2,400rpm (123lb/ft from August 1957).

Transmission: 4-speed all-synchromesh gearbox with reverse. Gear ratios 3.52:1, 2.32:1, 1.52:1, 1.00:1, reverse 3.29:1. Axle ratio 4.1:1 (3.9:1 from August 1957). Hydrak automatic clutch optionally available.

Running gear: Independent front suspension with coil springs; single-pivot swing-axle rear suspension with coil springs. Recirculating-ball steering, 21.4:1 ratio. Hydraulic drum brakes on all 4 wheels. 6.40 × 13 tyres.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 108.3in, front track 56.3in, rear track 57.9in, length 184.3in, width 68.5in, height 61.4in, ground clearance 7.3in. Weight 2,838lb. Turning circle 38ft.

220a, pilot-build March 1954, produced June 1954 – April 1956 (W180)

As 219, except:

Transmission: 1st gear ratio 3.40:1, later 3.52:1. Axle ratio 4.11:1, later 4.10:1.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 111in, length 185.6in. Weight 2,860lb.

220S, produced March 1956 – August 1959 (saloon); produced July 1956 – October 1959 (cabriolet); produced October 1956 – October 1959 (coupe) (W180)

As later 220a, except:

Engine: 2 Solex 32 PAJTA carburettors. Maximum power 100bhp DIN at 4,800rpm (106bhp at 5,200rpm from August 1957); maximum torque 119lb/ft at 3,500rpm (127lb/ft from August 1957).

Running gear: Servo-assisted brakes standard. 6.70 × 13 tyres.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 111in (saloon), 106.3in (coupe and cabriolet), length 187in (saloon), 183.9in (coupe and cabriolet), width 68.5in (saloon), 69.5in (coupe and cabriolet), height 61.4in (saloon), 60.2in (coupe and cabriolet). Weight 2,970lb (saloon), 3,102lb (coupe), 3,219lb (cabriolet). Turning circle 38ft (saloon), 37ft (coupe and cabriolet).

220SE, pilot-build April 1958, produced October 1958 – August 1959 (saloon); pilot-build July 1958, produced October 1958 – November 1960 (coupe and cabriolet) (W128)

As contemporary 220S, except:

Engine: Bosch fuel injection. Maximum power 115bhp DIN at 4,800rpm (120bhp from August 1959); maximum torque 152lb/ft at 4,100rpm.

Transmission: Gear ratios, US-market cars only: 3.65:1, 2.36:1, 1.53:1, 1.00:1.

Weight: 3,014lb (saloon), 3,146lb (coupe), 3,234lb (cabriolet).

190SL, pilot-build January 1955, produced May 1955 – February 1963 (W121)

Construction: All-steel unitary body with separate front subframe.

Engine: Type M121B 4-cyl, 85mm bore × 83.6mm stroke, 1,897cc OHC. Compression ratio 8.5:1 (8.7:1 from August 1957, 8.8:1 from September 1959). 3-bearing crankshaft. 2 Solex 44 PHH dual downdraught carburettors. Maximum power 105bhp DIN at 5,700rpm; maximum torque 105lb/ft at 3,200rpm.

Transmission: 4-speed all-synchromesh gearbox with reverse. Gear ratios 3.52:1, 2.32:1, 1.52:1, 1.00:1, reverse 3.29:1. Axle ratio 3.7:1 (changed very early to 3.9:1, 4.1:1 optional).

Running gear: Independent front suspension with coil springs and telescopic dampers; single-pivot swing-axle rear suspension with coil springs and telescopic dampers. Recirculating-ball steering, 18.5:1 ratio. Hydraulic Alfin drum brakes on all 4 wheels with optional vacuum servo assistance (servo standardized for 1957). 6.40 × 13 tyres.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 94.5in, front track 56.2in, rear track 58.1in, length 166.1in, width 68.5in, height 52in, ground clearance 7.3in. Weight 2,552lb (roadster), 2,596lb (coupe). Turning circle 36.1ft.

APPENDIX B

Chassis number sequences and production figures

Chassis number sequences and production figures

During the period covered by this book, 4 different chassis numbering systems have been employed on Mercedes-Benz cars:

1946-1950

11 digit numbers, broken down as follows:

First 3 numbers: Type (as W number)

Next 3 numbers: Body type (e.g. saloon, cabriolet, etc.)

Final 5 numbers: Serial number

1951-1952

13 digit numbers, as 1946-1950, but:

Last 2 numbers: Production year (e.g. 51 = 1951).

1953-1959

14 digit (LHD) and 15 digit (RHD) numbers, broken down as follows:

1st digit: R (RHD models only; LHD models have no identifying prefix)

Next 3 digits: Type (as W number)

Next 3 digits: Body type

Next digit: N (standard transmission) or Z (Hydrak clutch)

Next 2 digits: Production year in reverse (e.g. 35 = 1953, etc)

Final 5 digits: Serial number.

1960 and later

14 digit numbers, broken down as follows:

First 3 digits: Type (as W number)

Next 3 digits: Body type

Next digit: 1 (LHD) or 2 (RHD)

Next digit: 0 (standard transmission), 1 (Hydrak clutch), or 2 (automatic)

Final 6 digits: Serial number.

Type and body type numbers

Model by model, these numbers list out as follows:

W136 models (170V, Va, Vb, D, Da, Db, S, S-V and S-D)

	170V	170D	170S	170Va/ Vb	170Da/ Db	170S-V	170S-D
Saloon	136.010	136.110	136.040	136.060	136.160	136.081	136.181
Saloon w/sunroof	-	-	136.049	136.072	136.172	136.082	136.182
Cabriolet A	-	-	136.042	-	-	-	-
Cabriolet B	-	-	136.043	-	-	-	-
Ambulance	136.014	136.114	136.044	136.070	136.170	136.083	136.183
Delivery van	-	-	136.046	-	-	-	-
Pick-up	136.016	136.115	-	136.074	136.175	-	-
Police patrol car	136.017	-	136.047	-	136.174	-	-
Police radio car	-	-	136.048	-	-	-	136.187
Ditto w/sunroof	-	-	136.050	-	-	-	136.188
Taxi	136.019	-	-	136.069	136.169	-	136.184

W191 models (170Sb and 170DS)

	170Sb	170DS
Saloon	191.010	191.110
Saloon w/sunroof	191.018	191.113
Ambulance	191.013	191.111
Delivery van	-	191.112
Police patrol car	191.015	191.116
Police radio car	191.016	-
Ditto w/sunroof	191.017	-

W187 models (220)

Saloon	187.010
Cabriolet A	187.012
Cabriolet B	187.013
Saloon w/sunroof	187.014
Police radio car	187.017
Police patrol car	187.018
Coupe	187.020

W186 models (300, 300b, 300c)

	300/300b	300c
Saloon	186.000	186.016
Cabriolet B	186.013	-
Cabriolet D	186.014	186.033
Saloon w/sunroof	186.015	186.017

W189 models (300d)

Saloon	189.010
Saloon w/sunroof	189.011
Cabriolet D	189.033

W188 models (300S, 300Sc)

	300S	300Sc
Cabriolet A	188.000	188.013
Coupe	188.011	188.014
Roadster	188.012	188.015

W198 models (300SL)

Coupe	198.040
Roadster	198.042

W120 models (180, 180D; all suffix letters)		
	180	180D
Saloon	120.010	120.110
Ambulance, 4-door	120.000	120.100
Special body, 2-door	120.001	120.101
Special body, 4-door	120.002	120.102

W121 models (190SL, 190 and 190D; all suffix letters)			
	190SL	190	190D
Coupe	121.040	—	—
Roadster	121.042	—	—
Saloon	—	121.010	121.110
Saloon w/sunroof	—	121.011	121.111
Ambulance	—	121.000	121.100
Special body	—	121.002	121.102

W105 models (219)	
Saloon	105.010
Saloon w/sunroof	105.011
Ambulance	105.000

W180 models (220a, 220S)		
	220a	220S
Saloon	180.010	180.010
Saloon w/sunroof	180.011	180.011
Ambulance	180.000	180.000
Cabriolet	—	180.030
Coupe	—	180.037

W128 models (220SE)	
Saloon	128.010
Saloon w/sunroof	128.011
Cabriolet	128.030
Coupe	128.037

Production totals

Note: Figures are for calendar year, not model-year.

170 models									
Year	170V	170D	170S	170S Cabriolet	170Va	170Da	170DS	170Sb	170Vb
1946	214								
1947	1,045								
1948	5,116								
1949	13,101	907	3,370	39					
1950	(+)	5,609	14,735	1,686	11,876 (+)				
1951			10,333	708	12,687	14,622			
1952			326		3,692	8,115	6,734	4,580	
1953							6,251	3,514	1,636
Total	19,476 (+)	6,516	28,764	2,433	28,255 (+)	22,737	12,985	8,094	1,636

Year	170Db	170S-V	170S-D	Annual total
1946				214
1947				1,045
1948				5,116
1949				17,417
1950				33,906
1951				38,350
1952				23,447
1953	4,570	2,102	6,494	24,567
1954		880	5,992	6,872
1955		140	2,401	2,541
Total	4,570	3,122	14,887	153,475

Notes: (+) The figure of 11,876 for 170Va production in 1950 also includes those 170V models built between January and May 1950. A breakdown is not available.

170V/Va/Vb production figures may be broken down as follows:

Saloon	44,251	Van	1,685
Sd	1,489	Chassis	275
Ambulance (V)	600		
Ambulance (Va/Vb)	1,067	Grand total	49,367

220 models			
Year	Saloon	Coupe/Cabriolet	Annual total
1951	3,453	368	3,821
1952	9,165	1,178	10,343
1953	3,322	403	3,725
1954	214	259	473
1955		152	152
Total	16,154	2,360	18,514

300 models							
Year	300/300b Saloon	300/300b Cabriolet	300c Saloon	300c Cabriolet	300d Saloon	300d Cabriolet	Annual total
1951	47	2					49
1952	2,659	262					2,921
1953	1,776	181					1,957
1954	1,185	87					1,272
1955	547	59	330	3			939
1956			885	48			933
1957			217		144		361

1958					1,165	3	1,168
1959					607	23	630
1960					581	22	603
1961					535	16	551
1962					45	1	46
Total	6,214	591	1,432	51	3,077	65	11,430

300S models

Year	300S	300Sc	Annual total
1951	2		2
1952	113		113
1953	353		353
1954	37		37
1955	55	5	60
1956		140	140
1957		52	52
1958		3	3
Total	560	200	760

Type breakdown:

	300S	300Sc
Roadster	141	53
Cabriolet	203	49
Coupe	216	98

300SL models

Year	300SL Gullwing	300SL Roadster/Coupe	Annual total
1954	146		146
1955	867		867
1956	311		311
1957	76	554	630
1958		324	324
1959		211	211
1960		249	249
1961		250	250
1962		244	244
1963		26	26
Total	1,400	1,858	3,258

180, 180D, 190 and 190D models

Year	180	180a	180D	180b	180Db	180c	180Dc	Annual total
1953	4,362		11					4,373
1954	20,306		15,532					35,838
1955	17,704		20,345					38,049
1956	8,464		21,013					29,477
1957	1,350	4,656	22,910					28,916
1958		15,967	26,693					42,660
1959		6,730	9,981	7,314	8,076			32,101
1960				14,384	11,151			25,535
1961				7,717	5,449	4,980	4,822	22,968
1962						4,300	7,000	11,300
Total	52,186	27,353	116,485	29,415	24,676	9,280	11,822	271,217

Year	190	190D	190b	190Db	Annual total
1956	16,001				16,001
1957	22,578				22,578
1958	15,791	5,469			21,260
1959	6,975	15,160	6,613	13,709	42,457
1960			12,986	29,116	42,102
1961			8,864	18,464	27,328
Total	61,345	20,629	28,463	61,309	171,746

220, 220S and 220SE models

Year	220a	220S	220S Cabrio/Coupe	219	220SE	220SE Cabrio/Coupe	Annual total
1954	4,178						4,178
1955	19,348						19,348
1956	2,411	10,525	297	5,474			18,707
1957		15,459	1,066	8,505			25,030
1958		20,181	1,280	9,296	201	114	31,072
1959		9,114	786	4,570	1,773	628	16,871
1960						1,200	1,200
Total	25,937	55,279	3,429	27,845	1,974	1,942	116,406

Overall totals, Ponton models

Year	4-cylinder	6-cylinder	Total
1953	4,373		4,373
1954	35,838	4,178	40,016
1955	38,049	19,348	57,397
1956	45,478	18,707	64,185
1957	51,494	25,030	76,524
1958	63,920	31,072	94,992
1959	74,558	16,871	91,429
1960	67,637	1,200	68,837
1961	50,316		50,316
1962	11,300		11,300
Grand total			559,369

190SL models

Year	Total	Year	Total
1955	1,727	1960	3,977
1956	4,032	1961	3,792
1957	3,332	1962	2,246
1958	2,722	1963	104
1959	3,949		

Grand total 25,881