



# Early DB2 Build Records

**T**OM Barnard's feature in our last issue on the early DB2 Aston Martins was clearly the result of a great deal of research. This was over a considerable period of time and from numerous sources on both sides of the Atlantic. Submitted with the manuscript was a comprehensive dossier of data from a great variety of people, institutions and magazines. To reproduce it would have filled more than a complete issue of 'AM' Magazine. However we felt that we could not omit details of the build records of these cars which, after all, were the pioneers of the David Brown Astons and reaching the four corners of the globe for the first time in the history of the marque. The originals of these build records are now held by Aston Service Dorset to whom Tom and the Editor are most grateful for allowing the information to be extracted.

The data in the table should however be treated with some caution, as subsequent changes will in many cases have taken place. The engine numbers quoted are those of the engine first fitted to the car. Quite often another uprated engine was fitted soon after, especially where the chassis was used in competition. These are given on the build sheet if the new engine was fitted by the works (as with the team cars). Registration numbers are again as first registered and the overseas ones could well have since changed. Luckily the English registered cars (with Feltham numbers) still carry their original plates which certainly helps identification. The colours are those in which the car left the factory and in repainting often the colour is changed. This has certainly happened with LML/50/19 which is no longer red but white. The first owners name is that of the first private

owner who in the case of the team cars took over ownership quite some time after the car was built. Where the name David Brown appears the car is effectively a company car still. Usually these cars were passed on to someone else fairly quickly and the name appears on the build sheet as the second owner. Likewise the date delivered is the date (where known) that the chassis was passed to the new owner by the Selling Agent. It is NOT the date the car was actually completed. Usually this is also recorded on the build sheet. It can be assumed that the order of build is very close to the numerical order of chassis numbers.

In illustrating Tom Barnard's story of these Astons it was inevitable that most pictures would be of the cars used in competition—this time we have the opportunity to illustrate some of the others in the early build programme, such as the



The fourth chassis to be built in 1949 directly after the three team cars.



The fifth chassis was used for the Press launch in May 1950 and by David Brown.



Chassis No.	First Engine No.	Registration Number	Body Type	Body Colour	Interior Colour	First Owner	Selling Agents	Date Delivered	Remarks
LML/49/3	LB6/49/20R	UMC 66	Fixed Head Coupe	Almond Green	Green	John Sykes	ex-works	1951?	1949 Team Car
LML/49/4	LB6/49/27R	UMC 272	Fixed Head Coupe	Maroon	Beige	David Brown	ex-works	May 1949	Development Car
LML/50/5	LB6/49/79	VMG 606	Saloon	Blue	Grey	David Emmett	Brooklands	20-10-50	Press Launch Car
LML/50/6	LB6/49/80	—	Saloon	Scarlet	Beige	Robert Yung	Hoffmans	20-3-50	1950 N.Y. Show Car
LML/50/7	LB6B/50/141	VMF 63	Saloon	Cadillac Green	Beige	Eric Thompson	ex-works	1952?	1950 Team Car
LML/50/8	LB6B/50/142	VMF 64	Saloon	Cadillac Green	Beige	Gerald Lascelles	ex-works	1957?	1950-51 Team Car
LML/50/9	LB6B/50/144	VMF 65	Saloon	Cadillac Green	Beige	Rob Walker	H.W.M.	8-6-51	1950 Team Car
LML/50/10	LB6B/50/104	VMF 37	Drophead	Cadillac Green	Rust	David Brown	ex-works	28-9-51	Drophead demonstrator
LML/50/11	LB6B/50/103	—	Saloon	Black	Grey	George Schrafft	Hoffmans	10-50	First to race in U.S.A.
LML/50/12	LB6B/50/117	—	Saloon	Alpine Blue	Beige	A. J. Cosmetto	Hoffmans	10-50?	No racing history
LML/50/13	LB6B/50/116	9586V	Saloon	Black	Grey	Trident Motors	Trident	9-50	First car to Canada
LML/50/14	LB6B/50/132	—	Saloon	Cadillac Green	Beige	Briggs Cunningham	Hoffmans	27-10-50	Raced in U.S.A.
LML/50/15	LB6B/50/131	21207	Saloon	Moonbeam Grey	Blue	D. H. Knight	Trident	2-11-50	2nd car to Canada
LML/50/16	LB6B/50/173	XPG 833	Saloon	Almond Green	Beige	W. H. Luxton	Brown & Dureau	14-12-50	First car to Australia
LML/50/17	LB6B/50/135	—	Saloon	Moonbeam Grey	Rust	D. Cameron Peck	Hoffmans	12-12-50	Centre gear change
LML/50/18	LB6B/50/172	—	Saloon	Silver Green	Beige	Assognon Lea	Est. R. Mannes	30-1-51	First car in Belgium
LML/50/19	LB6V/50/240	SPOO 599	Saloon	Red	Rust	Bill Spear	Hoffmans	8-12-50	Race specification

Press launch and demonstrator cars for the saloon and the drophead, as well as early production versions delivered for private use on the roads. One key car which is at present missing is LML/50/6 built with left hand drive especially for the New York Motor Show in April 1950. Does anyone know where it is now? Finally we are able to include a few comments on Tom's article by Ted Cutting who in 1949 had just started work at Aston Martin. Even at that early stage he was involved in developing and building the competition versions so his views are very relevant to the story.

**T**ED writes: "Regarding Tom Barnard's really excellent article on the early DB2 Astons in the Summer edition brought back many memories for me. I joined Astons in March 1949 after two years with Sidney Allard working on the Allard cars. The cars for Le Mans were in an advanced stage of construction when I arrived; the chassis and running gear owing much to the "DB1" car and being the work of Claude Hill and Roy Lunn.

"Claude Hill had already left by then, and Roy Lunn was to follow a few months later. The bodies for these prototype DB2s for the '49 Le Mans were designed by Frank Feeley with help from his then body draughtsman A. Jacobs. The chassis frames were heavy, of the "ladder" type and formed of large rectangular tubes and rolled steel channel section cross-members. As Tom Barnard notes, the fuel tanks were huge, 48 imperial gallon steel monsters, of riveted, not welded, construction. They were made of "ternplate", steel with a lead-tin alloy coating, and the joints sealed with solder. These tanks were inside the car, right behind the driver's head, but did allow the interior mirror a reasonable view of the road behind.

"Frank Feeley's body form provided the basis for the production car. Indeed, the "egg-box" jig was re-worked for the purpose. The basic shape hardly changed, but the detail clean-up was extensive. The headlamps were raised to meet the changed law on height which came in in 1950.

"The chassis frame was completely re-designed and this was my first major design task for Astons. The interior room was improved by deleting the "ladder" construction and all of the channel section cross members and substituting a cruciform made of rectangular steel tubes which were lowered relative to the ground and the car roof so as to provide increased interior head room. This also very much lightened the chassis frame and increased its torsional stiffness—lacking in the previous (UMC66 type) design. The production car's spare wheel and fuel tank were, of course, entirely different to the 1949 racers, both for comfort and security.

"For 1950 the three team cars (VMF 63/64/65) were again fitted with fuel tanks inside with the drivers. These were of 40 gallon capacity and of welded aluminium, especially made by Delaney-Galley of Cricklewood from my drawings. The filler caps were flush-fitted into the roof and operated by the driver pulling a ring fixed to wires which released the caps as he got out of the car. In 1949 and 1950 Le Mans drivers had to be prepared for three hour stints and fuel tanks were accordingly large.

"Tools and spares had also to be carried then, and the Le Mans rules required that

only those tools and spares could be used. Great ingenuity by the mechanics resulted and most teams had "arrangements" whereby unusual spare parts miraculously appeared on the cars, when required.

"Congratulations to Tom Barnard for a most enjoyable article. Incidentally, in the photo on page 22—the young man by the headlamp is Ken Lowe—who went on to found the well-known car electric cooling fan and accessory company. Next to him is the then young apprentice sheet metal worker John Biggs, who later on built much of the team DB3s, DBR1, 2 and GP bodies. At the top of page 23, the white boiler-suited mechanic is John King, later to be one of the least noticed, but most efficient of our race mechanics.

"The gearbox designation "DBR" meant "David Brown Remote" control, not "racing". The racing boxes used the DBCW or DBCC followed by a code number to describe the design level and then a suffix as the serial number. The Lagonda LB6 car used the steering column control version and David Brown was very keen to retain this on the DB2, probably for export, but (unbelievably today) such layouts found favour at the time on almost all large or expensive cars."



So keen was David Brown to have a drophead the first was built on chassis number 10. Here it is brand new.