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## Aston Martin DB4: 50th Birthday Celebrations

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...were DB4 designer Harold Beach's words when the company's owner, David Brown, gave his new car the seal of approval. Beach was at Newport Pagnell today, 21st June 2008, to see many examples of his timeless creation celebrate its birthday.

The **Aston Martin DB4** was a stunning motor car when shown at the **London Motor Show** in 1958. Powered by an all-new, all-aluminium, 3670cc straight-six designed by **Tadek Marek**, the **Touring of Milan**-styled generous 2+2 was not only one of the fastest, most desirable cars in the world - it was expensive, an **Aston Martin**, and British too.



Watch out **Ferrari** and **Maserati**, at last there was a non-Italian, big-capacity, 140mph competitor for the international jet-set.

The new car wasn't without its foibles: the alloy engine took some development to ensure main-bearing longevity, while steady increases in sump capacity and cooling meant later cars could be driven to the maximum in **Italy** and the **Côte d'Azur** - not something you could say about early production...



The short wheelbase **DB4GT** was offered as a sportier alternative from 1959-on, of which only 75 examples were produced. Even rarer was the **Zagato**-bodied version, meant for racing with an even hotter twin-plug head motor and an extensively lightened chassis.

With the final **Series V** cars carrying the longer boot and (mostly) faired-in headlamps, the car became, in essence, a **DB5** with a small engine and 4-speed 'box. Over 1000 cars were manufactured during the **DB4**'s life - a significant achievement for the now **Newport Pagnell**-based company.



And it was at the small **Buckinghamshire** town that many owners congregated today, as the first part of a weekend-long celebration of one of motoring's classic designs. Under the careful eye of **Kingsley Riding-Felce, Aston Martin Lagonda's Director of Works Service and Customer Relations, Works Service** organised a wonderful welcome to **DB4** owners from far and wide.

**Kingsley** himself made an entertaining and informative address, while one of the highlights was some words from a sprightly **Harold Beach**, recalling some of the stories of the model's gestation, working under the legendary **John Wyer**, for **David Brown**.



The **DB4** was the first totally new post-War **Aston**, it spawned the **DB5** and **DB6**, and its lines can be seen in the company's hi-tech 21st Century 'Gaydon' cars. Would **Aston Martin** be still around today without the DB4?





I doubt it. Roll on the next 50.



Text - Steve Wakefield

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