

THE DUNSFOLD COLLECTION A LANDIE LEGACY



A multitude of Midland's manufacture all waiting for the summer show. Each vehicle has a tale to tell and is a credit to the Collection.

On Sunday, November 20, the founder of the Dunsfold Collection and lifelong Land Rover enthusiast Brian Bashall passed away, but the results of his endeavours and foresight is assembled in a collection considered the Mecca within the all-terrain fraternity, writes CCB contributor Grant Ford.

During the late 'Eighties Brian's son Phillip looked to increase the Collection from 10 to 30 over the following decade; this summer around 130 rare and fascinating Land Rovers will be displayed at the Collection's biennial show.

During his school years, Phillip Bashall worked with his father on Saturdays. He completed his apprenticeship at their workshops in Dunsfold, Surrey, and continues in the gathering and restoration of the most unique 4x4s that originated from Solihull following the Second World War.

The only opportunity for followers of the Land Rover religion to admire the current Dunsfold Collection in its entirety will be over the weekend of June 10/11. Not only will the show bring together many vehicles of interest, including prototypes, military-adapted and the earliest of road vehicles, but there'll be the chance to meet the engineers that designed and assembled many variants of the Landie.

In 2014, the Dunsfold Collection became a registered charity. Philip is one of the trustees who believes that charitable trust status is key to the preservation of the Collection for future generations, but keeping it together in one place would be impossible, so we travelled

around Surrey visiting various warehouses.

Amongst one such unit sat the oldest Range Rover in the world from 1969 and the 500,000th produced in 2002, which left the line under the control of England and Arsenal goalkeeper David Seaman. One of two Range Rover Trans American Expedition vehicles from 1971, heavily modified for the 18,000-mile journey, including crossing the Darien Gap, made up of previously impassable rainforest, river crossings and swampland, also resides within the Collection.

For those enthusiasts that prefer polish to mud, the 50th anniversary exhibition Defender 90 really stands out from the crowd; its mirror-finished alloy body was assembled for display purposes in 1998. Lara Croft's (played by Angelina Jolie) 3.5-litre V8 Defender from the Tomb Raider film shares space with a 1994 Freelander test mule; to disguise its appearance the pre-production chassis were fitted with Maestro van bodies.

Meanwhile, the military section includes some extreme engineering and special forces transport. Land Rover based vehicles range from a 1975 prototype 101 Forward Control Ambulance to the 1969 Shorlands Armoured Car used by the Royal Ulster Constabulary during the troubles in Belfast. In addition to these are several Special Forces Land Rovers, including the Pink Panthers preferred by certain gentlemen who reside near Hereford. Finally there's the OTAL (One Ton Amphibious Land Rover) first seen by a young Phillip aged just 12 years old. This became his 'Holy Grail'

and a determination to add this totally unique vehicle to the Collection was realised in 2008.

Just one OTAL was built in 1965 for the Australian Military as a potential customer, which declined and the project proceeded no further. Featuring a 97-inch wheelbase and a 2.6-litre Rover six-cylinder engine, this go anywhere commander's radio car has been totally rebuilt to the highest standard.

"While she is running, do you fancy a spin?" was the question. I didn't have to be asked twice. The doors split half way and fold down offering a platform to climb up and in, and as the straight-six roared to life the OTAL took off through the Surrey countryside on a cold December day; a long way from its original destination of the 'paddy fields' and jungles of Asia. It served as the highlight of a brilliant visit.

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Restored to perfection by Phillip Bashall recently, this Series 1 Station Wagon from 1956 is a prototype 88-inch with a 2.2-litre petrol engine.



One of just six 'Half Ton' Lightweight prototypes built for Ministry of Defence evaluation in 1966, it's now been beautifully restored after wading and sea trials had taken their toll.



This fully restored Series 2A from 1967 features a Buick/Rover V8 'shoehorned in'. It was originally built as a test bed for the future Range Rover.



Alaska to Cape Horn began in December 1971 and was completed the following August after 18,000 miles of the Pan American Highway.



By Royal Appointment, the Rolls-Royce powered Ceremonial Land Rover. It's one of 33 built, this one in 1949.



The Defender Wolf 110 WMIK (Weapons Mounted Installation Kit) demonstrator from 2002 enjoyed a 2.5-litre TDI engine, plus front- and top-mounted machine guns.



This 100-inch chassis prototype Land Rover from 1978 was built for the Swiss and French armies to test with a V8 engine and 24v electrics.



The amazing OTAL could cross rivers propelled and steered by its own wheels. Featuring an all-aluminium body and straight-six engine, it's an impressive and totally unique vehicle.

SEE THE COLLECTION

For a chance to view the Dunsfold Collection, the dates of June 10/11 should be noted in your events diary, with ticket details coming soon online at: www.dunsfoldcollection.co.uk



Brian Bashall, 1928-2016, architect of the Dunsfold Collection and preserver of all things Land Rover.