

JOINING THE BOARD

Growing the hands-on team at the Dunsfold Collection has become a key priority since the museum opened last summer...



LRM CLASSICS

SINCE opening its new museum building last summer, the workload at the Dunsfold Collection has increased exponentially. As well as maintaining the vehicles, website and the social media channels, the volunteers and trustees (all unpaid) now have to organise, manage and host the public open days, private open days, private tours and the new 'An Evening With...' events, while managing and developing the site and the never-ending work inside the museum itself. And then there's all the admin, accounts, form-filling and so on that goes with running a charity.

Strengthening the team has therefore been a priority, and that's why the Collection recently appointed Andrew Munden as a trustee. Andrew is, as you would expect, a committed Land Rover fan and since he retired from a successful career as a railwayman, he has also become very active on the club scene: he is secretary of the Land Rover Register 1948-1953 and the Norfolk area representative for the Land Rover Series One Club. He is also a board member and volunteer on the North Norfolk Railway, having been its general manager from 2017 until 2022, and he is involved in other local charities.

Andrew breaks the ice: "I'd love to find my first Land

Rover," he tells me with a chuckle, "but I'm not even sure what it was. I'm convinced it was a Tonka-like short-wheelbase Series I with no roof and painted Bronze Green. I played with it all the time as a child, making off-road courses through the flower beds.

"The interest in Land Rovers never really left me, but it wasn't until the late 1990s that I started to look for a real one in earnest. My wife Jo and I had enjoyed a 1934 Austin 10/4 saloon that we'd bought just after we got married in 1987, but with a growing family it became less practical, and a Land Rover was the perfect solution.

"After a lot of research and deliberation, in 2000 we



Andrew's daily driver and workhorse is one of the last 300Tdi models

bought a 1977 Series III 88in hardtop. We sent it to a specialist near Hertford who converted it to something approaching County spec, and over the next few years we steadily improved it and brought it up to a good standard. It was the vehicle in which I really learnt to drive off-road, being trained by David Harmes who at that time was running Overland Pursuits Ltd in Surrey.

"On one occasion the vehicle was being returned to the garage in Hertford for some work when I managed to blow the engine travelling too fast – for a Series III at least – around the M25 and I arrived at the garage trailing a thick cloud of grey smoke. More unplanned rectification work followed.

"The Series III was used for my daily commute to work in Croydon and as my 'rapid response' vehicle when I was on-call at work. During this time, it attended several railway incidents and was used to ferry various members of the emergency services to incidents away from roads that their vehicles couldn't reach.

"In autumn 1999 the south of England was hit by flooding which badly affected the main line from London to Brighton, especially around the South Downs. I was given the use of a hired Defender 110 and Discovery 2 as none of Railtrack's van fleet could navigate the deep water around Pangdene. It was great fun driving these and a lot more comfortable than the Series III, which started to plant a seed in my mind.

"In March 2005 cracks appeared in various parts of the already tired chassis, almost certainly resulting from some rather over-enthusiastic off-road driving in the Surrey Hills. A discussion with Philip at Dunsfold DLR concluded the only sensible way forward would be to fit a replacement galvanised chassis. This would be a costly job and we'd already realised the space limitations of the



Andrew's first SIII, a 1977 hard top that was refurbished and converted to a station wagon

88in, and I was still thinking about just how comfortable that 110 had been, so the decision was taken to replace the Series III.

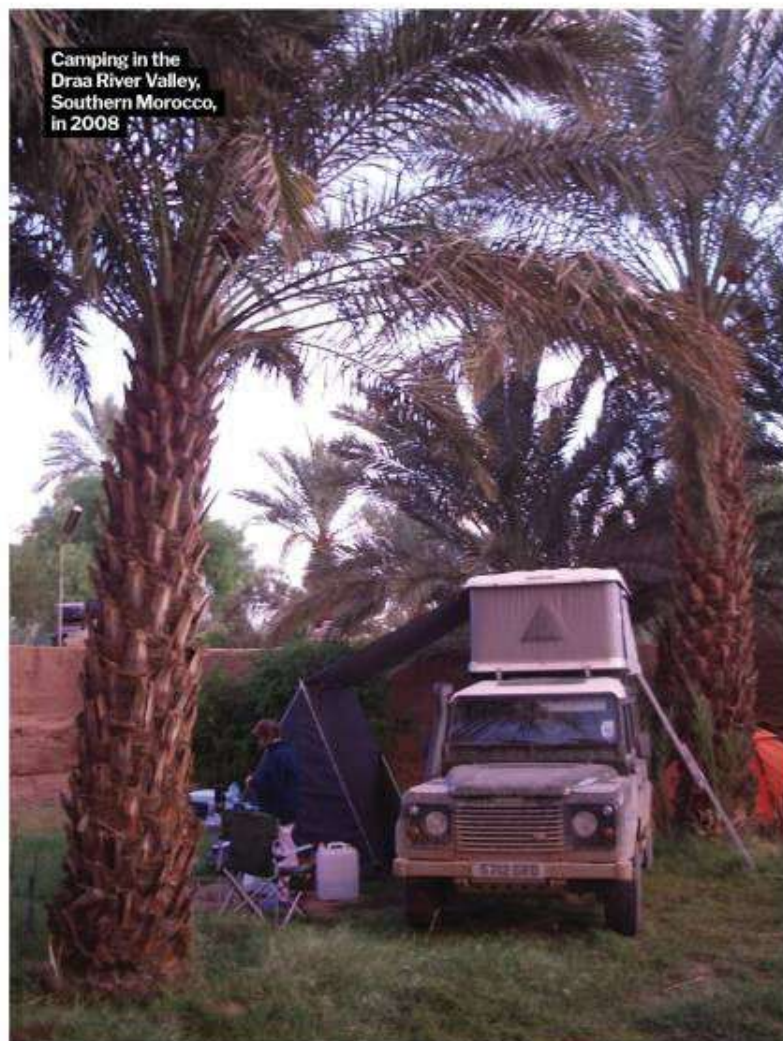
"I found a 1998 300Tdi 110 County Station Wagon at a garage in West Sussex for the right price and traded in the SIII in April 2005. Over the next couple of years, the Defender became an indispensable part of the family and Jo went to see David for her own off-road driver training.

"In October 2008 along with a group of friends we drove across Morocco to the Sahara Desert and had a great time. We fitted a Maggolina roof tent which proved easier and quicker than trying to erect a ground tent in

1998 300Tdi was refurbished by D & C Roberts in 2021

"The Defender became an indispensable part of the family"





Camping in the Draa River Valley, Southern Morocco, in 2008



Greenlaning in the Yorkshire Dales in 2013



Stuck in a gully in deepest Pembrokeshire in 2010



The famous ford on the Strata Florida, 2011



Unseasonal snow on a greenlane above Bainbridge in the Yorkshire Dales in 2013

the stony conditions of the Atlas Mountains and the whole trip was a huge success. The only problem occurred on the edge of the Erg Chebbi dunes when the alternator decided to fail.

"Needless to say, that wasn't one of the spares we had taken, but the owner of the camp where we were staying contacted some mechanic friends. They drove to the nearest Land Rover dealer in Tangier, collected a replacement part, drove nearly 500 miles to our desert camp, and worked through the night in a rainstorm under a canvas sheet to fit it for us. The total charge? The equivalent of approximately £160.

"We made some good friends on that trip and since then have been on off-road jaunts across Europe and in the UK with a small group that includes couples from the Netherlands. The off-roading could be quite extreme at times, and we made further upgrades such as rock sliders, after losing our side steps in the Auvergne.

"We had started attending Dunsfold Collection open

weekends in the late 1990s, even before we'd bought the SIII, although those early visits meant that we suffered the indignity of being siphoned off into the socially embarrassing 'car parking area for non-Land Rovers'.

"Seeing the vehicles on display every two years at Dunsfold, volunteering to help out at the open weekends, reading and researching about the different models, remembering my childhood toys and, after we got the Series III, taking part in rallies such as the late lamented South London & Surrey Land Rover Club's London to Brighton run, finally ignited the desire to own a Series I.

"Fifteen years ago, prices weren't quite as silly as they are today and there was still a good selection around, if you knew where to look. I had discussed various vehicles with Philip and had made up my mind to look for a good 86in or 88in vehicle as being more practical as an everyday drive than an 80in, especially around the southern edge of London where we lived.

"Eventually, in April 2009 Jo became so fed up with





1957 88in Series I outside Holt Signal Box at the North Norfolk Railway, where Andrew spends many happy hours

the piles of magazines, my wistful sessions in front of the computer, and the constant talk of Series I ownership while not actually doing anything about it, that she booked a day's holiday and announced that we were going for a 'proper talk' with Philip.

That conversation ended with Philip introducing us to someone who was selling a low-mileage, almost original 1957 88in and by the end of the day we were the proud owners of XYB 552. Jo for some reasons seems to place all (well most, anyway) of the blame for everything that has followed firmly at Philip's door!

"Although XYB was indeed largely original, it did need some mechanical work and the engine has now been out to replace the rear bearing oil seal and DLR undertook a complete rewire in 2012 before it went up in smoke. It has been used as a daily driver ever since although the mileage has only increased to 37,000.

At the start of 2017 I left the mainline railway after 36 years to join the heritage sector as General Manager of the North Norfolk Railway. I was very fortunate to discover that Peter Jolly, who looks after the LRSOC website and forum, lives nearby and he very kindly

introduced us into the local Series I scene.

"Having spent eight years getting to know every nut and bolt on XYB, I decided that I really wanted an earlier vehicle, and as our new home came with a three-car garage, it seemed possible. In early 2018, Peter decided to sell the 1950 80in that he had owned for 15 years because he had managed to find a genuine Norfolk-registered 80in.

"I didn't hesitate and JAS 766 joined the fleet in Sheringham. The day after I collected it from Peter it was at work on fire-watching duties in the fields and on the heathland alongside the railway at Weybourne during that hot, dry, summer.

"JAS had been found in a Suffolk field by the late Norman Peart of Ipswich in the early 1980s and put back on the road using parts from Norman's accumulated stock of Series I spares. He used parts from two other vehicles when he reassembled JAS, and some of these parts came from one of the first two 1949 80in fire appliances built by the Essex County Fire Brigade at the brigade engineering headquarters in Colchester.

"One of the doors still has Essex County Fire Brigade just visible underneath the green paint and the windscreen frame still carries traces of red paint today. Other parts came from a very early vehicle, with the radiator dated July 1948 and the speedometer coming from one of the first 1300 vehicles. Fascinating engineering history.

"In 2002 just before Peter Jolly bought it, the original registration number KDD 19 had been sold by the previous owner to a registration dealer, which is when the DVLA issued the age-related plate JAS 766. In early 2020 I discovered that the dealer still had the number for sale some 18 years later. He tried to convince me that it was a valuable and highly sought-after set of initials, but I suggested that this was probably not the case, given



The 1957 88in at Koksijde air base, visited during the 2014 Minerva Register Westhoek Amble II rally



Fording in the 1950 80in
during the annual Needle
Drop run around North
Norfolk in January 2023



"The Land Rover bug has also
been caught by our son Peter,
without whom we couldn't
keep the fleet going"



Bronze Green respray extends to the wheels



Andrew keeps the interior in splendidly clean condition



Local D & C Roberts handled the refurb

he'd had it in stock for 18 years... A sensible price was agreed and the 80 and its original registration were finally reunited.

"But life is not all about Series Is, and in 2021 the trusty Defender was starting to show its age. It was despatched to our local independents, D & C Roberts in Swaffield, for a complete overhaul which included new doors all-round and a full repaint. The original Woodcote Green with white roof gave way to all over Bronze Green, inspired by the finish of the 40th anniversary 90 built by Land Rover in 1988. It looks very smart, although I am regularly asked whether it is Prince Philip's hearse.

"The Land Rover bug has also been caught by our son Peter, without whom we couldn't keep the fleet going. Yesterday he decided it was time to fix the persistent oil leaks on the Defender, which meant a replacement rear diff pan cover after he discovered the tapered thread filler plug had been wound in too far at some point, wrecking the threads.

"The sump was removed as the liquid gasket sealant applied by Land Rover 26 years ago had failed, and when Peter checked underneath the front diff guard fitted before our desert trip 16 years ago, he found that corrosion had set in and caused three small holes in the pan. Being a dab hand with a welder, they were swiftly repaired. As always with old Land Rovers, there's never any shortage of jobs to do.

"I'm really looking forward to working with the Dunsfold Collection. I've admired it for many years and have huge respect for the pioneering preservation work done by Brian and Philip. The Collection really is a national treasure that we should all be proud of, and I'm pleased and honoured to be able to help."

