



STORY BY GARY PUSEY PICTURES BY CRAIG PUSEY



# The Italian Job

Another pre-production One Ten surfaces in Italy and is repatriated to the UK by the Dunsfold Collection

**T**HIS pre-production One Ten arrived at Dunsfold on a trailer, bought sight unseen from Signor Teodoro Crucitti in Bologna, Italy, on the basis of a few low-resolution photographs and an interesting chassis number. As Philip Bashall says, "sometimes you've just got to take a punt and hope it all works out for the best."

The chassis number, SALLDHMG8AA174744, is very low for a One Ten. So low, in fact, that at the time he was offered the vehicle by Teodoro, Philip thought it might be the earliest surviving pre-production example. Teodoro, who'd acquired it in 2021, also knew that it was an early vehicle, which is why he contacted the Dunsfold Collection with the suggestion they might like to buy it.

"After a bit of price haggling we came to a deal," says Philip, "and money was transferred and collection and transportation arranged. Post-Brexit, bringing a vehicle into the UK is much more complicated and it must be imported, all duty paid, and a NOVA completed, prior to getting a registration number. I still find it hard to believe but the One Ten is considered to be a classic vehicle, but then it is nearly 40 years old. Next year it will be MoT- and tax-exempt. And it was a nice surprise to find out that because it's old and built in the UK, no import duty was required."





**“The consensus is that it was sent to Italy as an homologation vehicle ahead of the production versions arriving for sale”**



One Ten is in sound condition overall but is a classic '20-footer' with overspray of epic proportions





Plenty of special pre-production features: both windscreen hinges have casting numbers on them

Teodoro's left-hand drive red 2.25 diesel non-County Station Wagon was built on 2 November 1982, and Land Rover's records show that it was delivered to British Leyland Italy. The general consensus is that it was sent to Italy as an homologation vehicle ahead of the production versions arriving for sale on the Italian market.

"It seems that BL Italy sold it in 1983 to a laboratory company which kept it until 1986," says Philip, "but its subsequent history is pretty vague. We know that at some point it was owned by a hunter who painted it green inside and out. When he sold it, the new owner decided to reinstate the original red and white colours, but the back street painters who did the job can't have bothered with masking tape or newspaper, because the extent of the overspray is unlike anything we've ever come across before! It's everywhere: on the door seals, spattered across the interior and all over the engine bay. It's a typical 20-footer. It looks okay from a distance but once you get close it's not pretty.

"The underside is spot-on, though, with barely any rust, and the rear crossmember has been tidied up quite neatly. It still has its original axles and even the red dampers are there. It looks like it's had a front propshaft break-up at some point, because the right-hand floor has evidence of being hit and there is damage to the gearbox wiring loom.

"The interior is scruffy but it's all there, and generally the vehicle is very original. There are many early Stage 2 features that are generally unique to the pre-production vehicles, such as smooth dash parts, early front grille fixings on the bottom, wiper motor cover switches recessed but no three-hole screwed-on plate, windscreen hinges with casting numbers on them, open top bulkhead outriggers, a hinged rear toolbox lid, rough fibreglass heater air intake, aluminium inner wings, and no black plastic headlamp tea trays. Note that it is fitted with headlamp washers and side repeaters specific to the Italian market as well. It also has the very rare selectable four-wheel drive.

"These are all the fascinating little details and differences that make these early coil-spring vehicles so interesting. They have a serious and growing following as well, with a







No plastic tea trays around the lights, but black trims similar to the Stage 1 V8



Aluminium inner wings. A closer look reveals axles are all original

**“Demonstrating its hot-blooded Latin temperament, the One Ten showed its displeasure in being sidelined by eating its gearbox”**

good Facebook club called The Stage Two Register '76-'84. Many people still don't know what Stage 2 is all about, although everyone is familiar with Stage 1.

“There was an exciting moment when I spotted the holes in the nearside rear panel where a UK-sized registration plate appeared to have been fitted, and we wondered whether it might have been registered in the UK before it was sent to Italy. We spent some time at the British Motor Museum poring over the Land Rover factory vehicles records to see if we could find it, but there is no record of it having been registered by the company. We therefore had to apply to the DVLA for an age-related plate and that's why it now carries CVN 818Y.

“Preparation work for the MoT was reasonably straightforward. We fitted UK headlamps, a new brake light switch, swapped over the positions of the fog lamps, sorted out the washer jets and the horn, adjusted the steering box, fitted a new rear axle ball joint and drop arm joint boot, added a battery clamp and carried out a general service. We removed the lamp guards that were on it when it arrived, because I think they were a later fit and didn't look right. I think we will have to fit new door and vent seals as the present ones are red because of the horrible overspray.

“As much as I'd like to pull it apart and repaint and restore it completely, I don't have the time or the funds to do so. For the time being I intend to leave it just as it is but make it road legal, although a 2.25 diesel with manual steering and left-hand drive won't be something we'll be driving very often.”

Just as all the work for the MoT was coming to an end, the chance discovery in Hampshire of an even earlier pre-production One Ten, a 3.5 V8 Hi-Cap with chassis number SALLDHAV1AA173075 and factory registration CKV 569Y dating from October 1982 (see LRM March 2022 for the full story) meant that Philip's attentions were inevitably diverted away by the new project. The Hi-Cap is, after all, the oldest





surviving pre-pro One Ten, at least for the time being, and Inca Yellow trumps Masai Red any day of the week.

Once the Hi-Cap was recovered to the workshop it was inevitable that the Italian One Ten would find itself pushed into the shadows to allow work to be carried out on the Hi-Cap. Demonstrating its hot-blooded Latin temperament, the One Ten showed its displeasure in being sidelined by eating its gearbox as Philip was reversing it off the ramp. It would now only allow itself to be driven in forward gears, which is, of course, an interesting thing to contemplate for any connoisseur of corny old jokes about Italian Army tanks...

It now needed rather more dramatic work than the tinkering and servicing it had been receiving, and The Italian Job, as it had now been christened, was pushed back into its corner and left in disgrace. Once the Hi-Cap had been sorted out, Philip had time to turn his attention to the gearbox.

"In the midst of everything we are doing to repurpose the old Dunsfold DLR buildings for the Collection, I could have done without having to replace the gearbox," he says ruefully, "but it was made a little easier after I found a replacement in good condition that we could drop straight in. We'll keep the original box and in due course will have it overhauled and rebuilt, but in the short term the priority is to ensure the vehicle has a reverse gear that works. Any Land Rover in the Collection's storage units that cannot be manoeuvred under its own power is a huge inconvenience when it comes to shunting vehicles around."

Nothing happened for a while because there just wasn't enough time. Several weekends were taken up with working parties of volunteers who gave up their Sundays to complete the relocation of the Dunsfold Collection archive. LRM subscribers John Mill and Roland Beverley, who kindly volunteered after reading an appeal for help in the magazine, joined Greg King, Philip and I for an excellent day spent moving over 2200 Land Rover models, part of the late John



Hinged rear toolbox didn't make it into the production vehicles



VIN plate on pre-pro is mounted on the bulkhead rather than the pedal box







Crude dashboard with holes for heater controls that never made it into production, and handmade fibreglass hockey stick dash trim



Smooth gaiters on handbrake and rare 4x2 transfer lever knob



Smooth plastic around column and switches fitted direct to lower heater duct are non-production items. Keys are original

Parker's amazing collection which is on permanent loan to Dunsfold, down from a first floor storage room into the new purpose-built reception area, complete with its bespoke glass-fronted shelving.

Both were major milestones in the programme to turn the old Dunsfold DLR servicing and restoration workshop, together with the vast parts storage area, into a museum and display building that will allow the Collection's vehicles to be available for enthusiasts to visit.

And then there was the heavy-duty demolition work and re-wiring, which involved cherry-pickers and assorted experts and specialists removing and replacing stuff, installing insulation and carrying out re-panelling work, together with a host of other tasks. All this took up vast amounts of time, and there was none to spare for The Italian Job.

Finally, Philip decided that he needed a more relaxing day than many of those he had been enjoying seven days a week since well before Christmas, and time was set aside at the end of April for the gearbox transplant. All was completed without any difficulties and The Italian Job is now more than happy to travel backwards as well as forwards, although whether it will ever recover from losing its crown as the oldest surviving One Ten is another matter.