

I really do think it is totally unique among the country's numerous Land Rover shows, although as a trustee of the Collection I will happily own up to being a little biased! But looked at objectively, there is no escaping the fact that it is the only event in the UK, or anywhere else, for that matter, that has at its heart the world's most significant collection of Land Rover vehicles. No one has better, or more varied, or more interesting, than the Dunsfold Collection.

It also has its roots in one man's passion for Land Rover history, his foresight in seeking to preserve vehicles, documents and artefacts long before anyone else was doing so, and his willingness to share his collecting habits with others. Brian Bashall acquired the first vehicle for what became the Dunsfold Collection in 1968. His obsession was passed on to his sons Christopher and Philip, and what was now a family affair led to the first Collection open day in 1994. Many who attended those early open days have said that it felt like a personal invitation to a friend's Land Rover party.

And although the event has expanded significantly, and along the way the Collection has become a registered charity, the trustees remain committed to

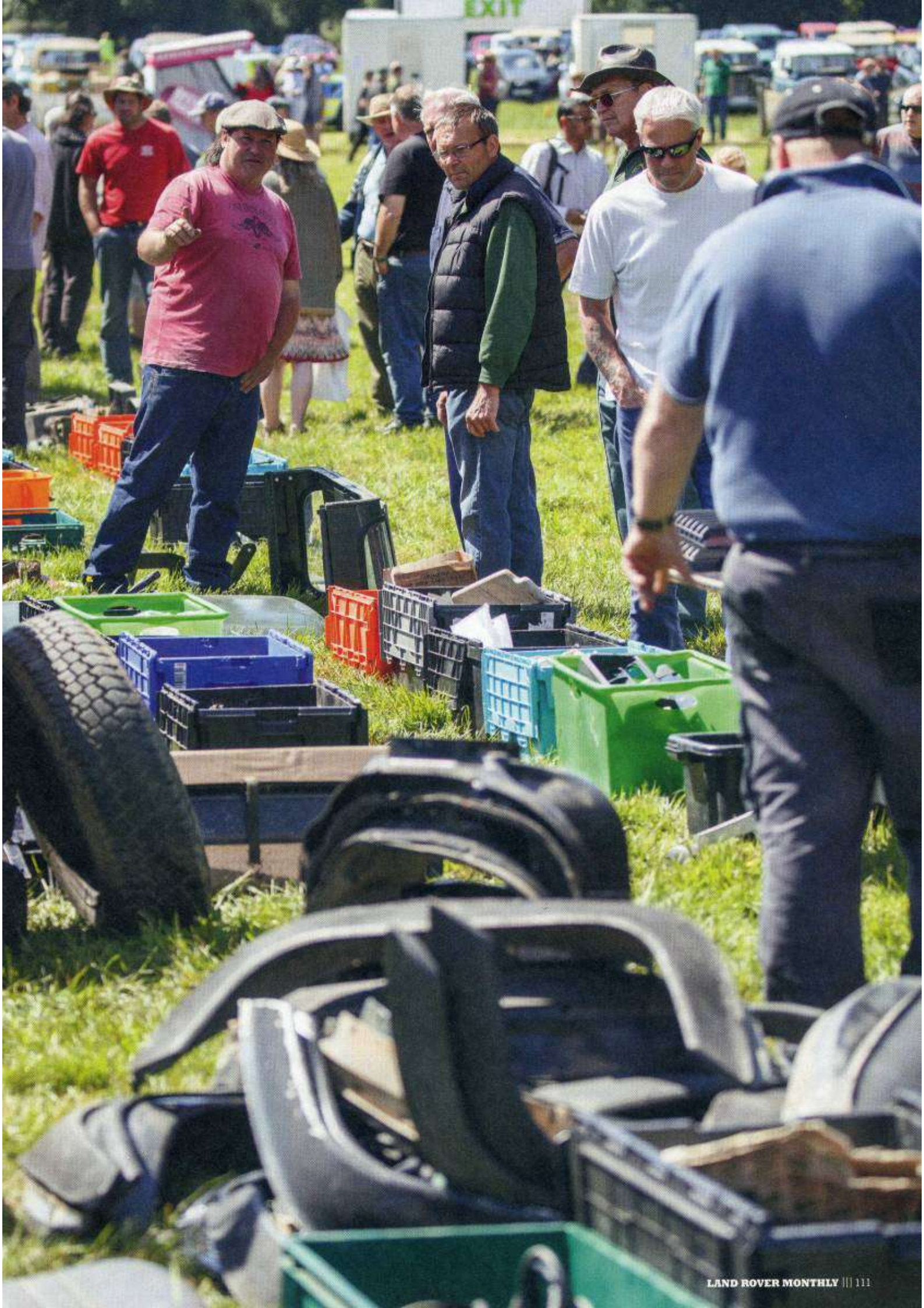
# GREATEST DUNSFORD SHOW EVER...

Story: Gary Pusey Photos: Nick Dumbleby

There really is no other Land Rover event on the UK show circuit quite like this one









## "It is more than a collection, it is a way of life"

the principles, the character and the friendly ethos of the Show that were established by the Collection's founder. My favourite social media comment in the run-up to the show this year was: "It is more than a Collection, it is a way of life".

This year, what is now a two-day show attracted over 20 of the UK's top Land Rover clubs, many of which have participated in the event for years, and who between them exhibited over 250 vehicles alongside the Collection's display of 131 of its vehicles. But each year we also see new exhibitors, and this year we welcomed the recently-formed Freelanders Owners' Club.

From the outset, Brian's intention was to create a relaxed, family-friendly event for enthusiasts of every type of Land Rover, from prototypes and one-offs to factory-spec production vehicles, through every military variant, to the weird and the wonderful and the downright wacky. The Collection has also embraced every new model the factory produces, remaining truly representative of the entire range of Land Rover vehicles and ensuring it never becomes frozen at one particular point in time.

The Bashall family's enthusiasm was met and reciprocated by similar enthusiasm in

others, as well as a great deal of loyalty and ongoing support. And this was as true this year as it has been in the past. Dedicated volunteers from among the Friends of the Collection help prepare the vehicles for display and position them with military precision, as well as manning the Collection marquee throughout the weekend. Many of them have been helping out since the very first open days.

Today, the show still strives to be friendly and intimate. It really is all about Land Rover people coming together to share their enthusiasm, show their vehicles and admire the vehicles of other enthusiasts, eat and drink well, and have a convivial time together in the Surrey countryside. As one show visitor said to me on Saturday evening: "I spend a weekend here with my family away from everything, enjoying our Land Rover, and watching other people enjoy theirs. What could be better?"

A significant number of visitors choose to make a weekend of it, and the campsite is filled with everything from expedition roof tents and caravans to bivvy bags. Staying overnight means enjoying your own barbeque, or supper from the catering village. And patronising the beer tent, of course, which has

also become the location for one of the weekend's undoubted highlights: the Saturday evening charity auction hosted by the indomitable and larger-than-life Richard Beddall, whose ability to persuade people to part with their pennies in the interests of the Collection never ceases to amuse, amaze, astound and entertain, in equal measure.

This year, Richard raised over £5000 for the Collection, in the process selling everything from first editions of Tim Slessor's book *First Overland*, to a selection of G4 clothing and equipment, a couple of highly-desirable G4 bikes, brochures, spares, JLR publicity material, and a Range Rover L322 rear door, autographed by a very large number of movers and shakers in the Land Rover world! This year's top lot was possibly the day out near Gatwick flying the British Airways Airbus simulator. I would have happily put in a bid for this myself if it were not for my previous experience in a simulator at East Midlands airport some years ago, when I regret to say I destroyed an otherwise perfectly healthy Boeing 737 during a bad weather landing at Hong Kong.

There were over 20 stands in the trade village and autojumble, selling everything from old parts to new parts, scale models,

### Below:

From trade stands to Land Rover clubs and the Collections own 131 vehicles, this year was a real hit







**This page:**  
Every type of Land Rover from prototypes to military and the weird and wonderful were represented



clothing, expedition gear and canvas hoods.

Although the Dunsfold Collection Show has a long history of awards – for the Best Leaf-Sprung vehicle, the Best Coil-Sprung, and so on – this year two important new awards were introduced. The Best in Show Award, which is given to the Land Rover vehicle that most inspires our guest judge, was this year chosen by long-term supporter of the Collection and Land Rover fan Mark Evans of *A 4x4 is Born* fame, vet and petrolhead. Mark scoured the showground before choosing the winner, and awarded the trophy to the Land Rover Optional Equipment Collection, for their superbly-restored Series IIA 109-inch with a factory-approved Harrier backhoe by AirDrive. Commenting on his choice, Mark said: “I was delighted to find this wonderful IIA with the backhoe. The team have done an excellent job of restoring it over the last three years, and it was tremendous to see it being demonstrated. It was a worthy winner!”

The second of the new awards is the Brian Bashall Memorial Award, which will be presented annually to individuals, groups, companies, clubs or other entities that have made significant contributions to the preservation of Land Rover history and heritage. This year, the judges awarded the trophy to the Houben family from Holland. For the very few of you that haven't heard their name before, the Houbens are respected throughout the world for their

knowledge of the marque, their wonderful collection of Land Rover vehicles and their excellent restorations.

JLR arranged a media event on the Friday before the Show, and guest journalists had their first opportunity to sample four of the Collection's vehicles that had never been available to them previously, including classic Range Rover chassis number one. JLR also supported our event by contributing to the cost of our show programme, which this year was the biggest and best we have ever produced, with photographs and information on all of the 131 Collection vehicles on display. JLR's sponsorship of it means that we could provide the souvenir programme free to every visitor to the Show.

JLR also provided a pre-production example of the new Range Rover Velar and this was on display throughout the weekend. Needless to say, it generated a great deal of interest and was much-photographed.

Land Rover Experience London have been supporters of the event for many years. Their demonstration drives in Land Rover vehicles always prove popular, this year especially so because the vehicles they provided were 110 Defenders, and 2017 is the last year these cars will be used by Land Rover Experience centres throughout the country. LRE London also sponsored a VIP hospitality tent that dispensed tea, coffee and cakes to Friends of the Collection throughout the weekend.

The VIP tent obviously proved to be an important attraction, because we signed up around 50 new Friends of the Collection, as well as a number of new Wall of Fame supporters. We were especially honoured when the Defender 50th Owners' Club & Vehicle Register presented us with a donation of £1000 and we are delighted to add them to the Wall of Fame as a Gold Supporter.

Among the thousands of visitors over the weekend, we were pleased to welcome friends old and new from all over the UK as well as Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, New Zealand, Portugal and Switzerland. We were also pleased to see a number of Land Rover employees, both current and retired, whose personal support for the Collection is very much appreciated. Their guided tours and talks on the vehicles they were involved with at the factory are always well-attended and this year was no different.

The weather was kind to us throughout the weekend and we were treated to a low flypast on Sunday afternoon by the Aces High Douglas Dakota, which is conveniently based at the nearby airfield and was returning to base.

As an opportunity to see examples of pretty much every vehicle that Land Rover has produced, as well as many of the huge variety of Land Rover-based conversions, and while away a few hours with like-minded folk, the Dunsfold Show cannot be beaten.