

A visit to the Dunsfold Collection

BOB & SUE DARBY

Sunday 23rd July saw a group of NTT members visiting The Dunsfold Collection on the outskirts of the pretty Surrey village on a bright Sunday morning. We were greeted at the entrance by Phil Bashall (Chairman of the Trust) and Richard Beddall (Trustee, and NTT VP).

On our way from the car park the first vehicles we encountered were a 1971 British Trans-Americas Expedition Range Rover and a 1964 Series 2A Forest Rover by Roadless Traction of Hounslow, purchased new by the Central Electricity Generating Board and collected from Hounslow and driven 200 miles to its work site at Rheidol in Wales, where it spent its life on dam maintenance work and was known as 'The Rheidol Bug'.

And so on into the bright new reception area, where we were treated to

tea, coffee & cake, and a short talk about the collection.

Brian Bashall, Phil's father (and winner of a NTT Lifetime Achievement award in 2003), started the collection in 1968. His interest in Land Rovers had begun back in 1953, when his girlfriend's father told Brian that he couldn't take his daughter out on his Vincent motorbike. The four-wheel purchase choices facing Brian were a Jowett Bradford van, a Ford Prefect or a second-hand Land Rover. To his eternal credit, Brian chose the Land Rover and soon developed a passion and enthusiasm for these iconic vehicles that led to him acquiring the first examples that were to form the nucleus of the Dunsfold Collection and, in due course, establishing a specialist parts and servicing business. Phil recently closed down the parts and servicing business and reconfigured the site to create the museum.

The Dunsfold Collection has expanded to include not only prototype and pre-production vehicles but examples of almost every model made by Land Rover from 1947 to the present day, including military vehicles, record-breakers, royal cars, limited editions and display vehicles.

We were then told about the three Range Rovers parked outside the reception building:

- 1995 Range Rover P38A Stretched Limo (James Bond movie as M's staff car as well as in the 'Harbour Lights' TV series).
- 2006 Freelander 2 Pilot-production vehicle, (used on an exclusive *Autocar* magazine expedition to Morocco ahead of the official press launch).
- 2004 Pre-production Prototype L320 Range Rover Sport (believed to be the oldest L320 Sport prototype surviving today).

On into the museum entrance to be greeted by a large display of models and



1964 Series IIa Forest Rover by Roadless Traction, Hounslow.



The Born Free lion.



Models of every scale.



The view from the upper floor.



1998 Farmer's Friend Concept vehicle.



1985 Pre-production Land Rover. Llama number one.



1983 Laird Centaur 3.5 V8 Petrol; last of the eight Centaurs built by Laird (Anglesey) Ltd.



1985 Electronic warfare dual-wheel conversion for NZ Defence Force.

memorabilia and a green lion, one of 13 made to mark the collaboration of Land Rover with Born Free.

Carrying on through to the main area, we see 24 vehicles, Land Rover engines, gearboxes, bicycles, plus posters and cabinets full of interesting item sand show pieces.

The current display includes:

- 2000 Lara Croft 'Tomb Raider' film vehicle.
- 1978 Prototype Land Rover 100in. for French and Swiss army evaluation.
- 2000 second-generation P38A Range Rover 'Linley' Limited Edition.
- 2016 Defender – the Roger Crathorne last-day-of-production 90.
- 1998 Farmer's Friend Concept Vehicle.
- 1968 Series 11A 109in. SAS 'Pink Panther'.
- 1998 Freelander 'Fifty 50 Challenge' Expedition Vehicle.

These are just some of the unique vehicles to see – there are 150 in the collection and room for only 25 or so on display at any one time, so it will take many visits to see every one.

Outside in a courtyard at the rear of the Reception are two heavyweights, a

Laird Centaur, a pre-production Llama as well as a dual-rear-wheel Defender.

And so it was time to leave – a revisit needed we think? We all thanked Philip and Richard for their time and wished them success in their efforts to get more vehicles on show; we think that with so much to read about each vehicle and exhibit a longer visit is needed.

At present they are trying to sort and organise the very large amount of

sales brochures, after which they want to try and do the same with the large amount of workshop manuals and parts lists which would help them to satisfy the enthusiasts from all over the world who come to them for help; digitising them all is probably the future but it a massive task.

We wish them all the best in their efforts.

All photos by Bob Darby



NTT visitors with Dunsfold Trustee Richard Beddall (left).