

Tiggy's Great German Adventure

An amazingly original and cherished 1990 Discovery has its moment of fame with celebrities and paparazzi in Germany, and also helps the Dunsfold Collection raise money...

ONE day in early June 1990, a GP from Swanley in Kent arrived for his appointment at his local main dealer, Beadles of Dartford, to take delivery of a brand-new Discovery. He was driving his cherished 1972 two-door Range Rover, which he'd also owned from new, and was about to hand it over in part-exchange for the Windjammer Blue three-door Disco. He checked that all the extras he'd specified were present and correct: burglar alarm, sun hatch, tow bar, dog guard, seat covers, Discovery-branded spare wheel cover, locking wheel nuts, anti-roll bars and protective rubbing mouldings on the body sides and doors. Everything was in order, although he couldn't remember being told that the optional-extra side protectors would mean that the bottom section of the jazzy decal stripes would be lost!

Dr K would keep his Discovery for the next 14 years, but during that time it would only cover 51,186 miles. In the final years of his ownership there was often less than a hundred miles between MoTs, and in the year before he finally

decided to put it up for sale, the difference between the last two MoT certificates was just 18 miles.

For the first three years the vehicle had been serviced by the supplying main dealer and when they carried out a 36,000 miles service just before its third birthday, it had driven just 12,493 miles. Subsequent services were carried out just as religiously every year, although now they were being done by a local independent garage. To describe this very special Discovery as cherished and cosseted would be to do it an injustice!

In 2014 Dr K's Discovery was advertised for sale and appeared in G-WAC Notes, the newsletter managed by well-known Discovery enthusiast Roy Preston. That's where the chap who was to become its second and only other owner found it, and quite sensibly snapped it up! After all, early Discoverys in this condition and with only one owner from new don't come along all that regularly.

"I'd been looking for a good, original D1 for quite a while," he tells me. "Early Range Rover classics were already well outside my budget, and I'd always thought that the first-



STORY: GARY PUSEY PICTURES: CRAIG PUSEY AND JLR GERMANY



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generation Discovery had been rather overshadowed by its big brother and overlooked by mainstream enthusiasts and collectors.

"But good ones were very hard to find, even then. Most seemed to be either modified as off-roaders or in downright awful condition, and I didn't want anything that would need a significant amount of work, let alone a full rebuild. I was a subscriber to G-WAC Notes and was quite surprised to find something apparently this good being offered for sale. You'd have expected it to have changed hands behind closed doors. I think I was the first person to arrange to see it, because when I got there the owner had been deluged with interest.

"I met Dr K and we got chatting, and he was interested to know that I was a huge admirer of what I thought was still a massively under-rated vehicle in classic car terms, and he was amused to hear that I wanted it as a family-friendly classic Land Rover that I could use for our annual camping holidays. We agreed a price and I was the proud new owner.

Bodyside decals were standard but Tiggy is missing the lower panels

German celebrity rally drivers included TV presenter and former model, Sonja Krauss, and actress Anja Kling

"Over the previous few years I'd worked quite closely on a few expedition and event projects with JLR's German operation, which has an enviable reputation for participating in classic car navigation rallies with both Land Rover and Jaguar historic vehicles, as well as arranging significant long-distance international expeditions with current Land Rover vehicles, such as Frankfurt to Beijing, or extensive drives across Namibia.

"When I mentioned that I'd found my perfect Discovery they were very excited, because it turned out they were planning to enter several classic car navigation rallies in Germany that summer and they wanted a Discovery! Apparently, they'd spent an age trying to find a good, original example for sale in Germany that they could purchase and add to their modest heritage fleet, but to no avail. They'd even spoken to their colleagues in the UK to see if one could be found there and either bought or borrowed, but that didn't deliver the goods either. The immaculate three-door was the answer to their prayers."

An agreement was reached that would allow JLR Germany to borrow the vehicle and the new owner drove it from the UK to Wülfrath, east of Düsseldorf, while JLR paid for the fuel and the ferry crossing. It was probably the longest drive the Discovery had ever undertaken.

First up was the Rallye One three-day navigation rally based at the town of Durbach in Baden-Württemberg, just a few miles across the border from Strasbourg, that was to run between and May 29-31, 2014. JLR had entered a four-vehicle team for journalists and celebrities to drive and the Discovery, by now known as Tiggy, was set to join a 1949 Series I, an Jaguar E-Type and a S-Type saloon. Tiggy seemed to enjoy its new celebrity status and behaved impeccably for its driver, prominent German TV presenter and former model Sonja Krauss, and the combination was an attractive one for photographers and film makers, thereby achieving JLR Deutschland's objective of plenty of press coverage!

Three months later the Discovery was part of JLR's three-car team in one of Germany's top navigation rallies, the famed Hamburg-Berlin Klassik, once again alongside the 1949 Series I and the E-Type Jaguar. The HBK, as it is known,





Interior in Sonar Blue was a ground-breaking revelation in 1989, but arguably looks dated now





The Hamburg-Berlin Rallye. Clockwise from above: departing one of the stage checkpoints; in 2014 the Rallye crossed the border into Poland, seen here near Szczecin; would they have sat on the roof it was their own car, I wonder? Driver Bernhard Weinbacher of Auto Bild magazine with JLR's Mayk Weinkötter

is taken very seriously indeed and quite a few car manufacturers enter teams from their classic vehicle fleets or their heritage divisions, and 2014 was no exception, with large teams from VW (with old Volkswagens, Audis and Bentleys) and BMW (with classic BMWs, Minis and Rolls-Royces) alongside the JLR trio. Private teams can also enter, as well as single entrants, with vehicles of any age up to 1990, and this makes for a fascinating range of vehicles. Despite being cancelled both last year and this year due to the pandemic, the HBK is expected to resume as soon as the rules allow. It is always hugely oversubscribed by owners of both old timers and young timers.

I've done the event once in my 1970 Press Launch Range Rover and had a thoroughly enjoyable time, and I've often thought what a blast it would be to enter a team of UK-based Land Rovers and try to win the team prize! The social side is also superb, with excellent hotels and a decidedly convivial atmosphere!

One of the things that I really didn't expect was the number of spectators who turn out to watch the cars. The rally is well-publicised beforehand and details of the route, which varies every year and has even been known to become the Berlin-Hamburg on occasion, are issued in advance. Large crowds in every town and village on the route come out to watch, and many make a party out of it.

Tiggy was in the capable hands of driver Bernhard Weinbacher, one of Germany's top automotive journalists and a keen Land Rover fan, with JLR Germany's Mayk



Weinkötter as beifahrer (that's co-driver and navigator to you and me). The rally is not a race in the usual sense, but it is very competitive. There are around 20 timed navigation exercises of sometimes excruciating complexity spread over the three days of the event, as well as a couple of hundred miles of driving each day following the rally route book. Tiggy did very well, coming home in 46th place out of 170 starters. Pleased with his result, journalist and driver Bernhard Weinbacher wrote a very flattering article in Auto Bild Allrad magazine (at least I think it was flattering) under the title 'Dich kenn' ich doch...'

The third and final event was a one day affair on September 6 known as the 5th Auto Zeitung Youngtimer Classic, with Mayk Weinkötter of JLR and Martin Urbanke of Auto Zeitung (literally, Car Newspaper) driving. Whether they



Distinctive interior with wooden Discovery badge fitted by Dr K



The famous 'golf ball dimples'!



Detachable cubby bag is now a rare and desirable extra



Unique fabric design was very attractive

did well or embarrassed themselves isn't known, because no reports of the rally or the results have been found!

Tiggy survived its German adventure well enough and was returned to JLR's press fleet workshops at Neuss, where it was given a thorough check in readiness for its return to the UK. Although it could have been returned on a trailer, the owner decided to complete the second half of his road trip by collecting the vehicle from Neuss and driving it back to the UK. JLR pronounced Tiggy fit and well and filled it up with diesel, and the owner set off for the ferry.

Unfortunately, somewhere along the way his wallet had disappeared and he found himself with neither cash nor card. Food was sacrificed for 24 hours and speed restricted to 56 mph to get Tiggy home with only the contents of that single tank of fuel. The final 50 miles were completed with the gauge on empty. He could never have done it in a V8!

Tiggy resumed a leisurely life of modest mileage and regular care and attention. It was at this point that the new owner discovered that the Dunsfold Collection had also seen the advertisement in G-WAC Notes and had been keen to buy the vehicle. They were pipped at the post, but it made the new owner wonder whether Tiggy might still be able to help the Collection raise funds. He approached the trustees to ask if they would be interested in adding Tiggy to their fleet of vehicles available for hire to corporate clients who wanted an early, mint, unmolested first-generation Discovery for events. The Collection was happy to accept the offer, and Tiggy

has been in demand ever since!

Clients have included JLR in the UK who have hired the vehicle for several press events at Goodwood over the years and have also brought invited journalists to Dunsfold to drive it, as well as Land Rover main dealers (or retailers as they apparently prefer to be known nowadays) who have wanted a well-preserved vehicle for various showroom events such as the launch of the fifth-generation Discovery in 2016.

Tiggy formed part of the Dunsfold Collection display at the recent Land Rover Legends show at Thruxton Historic, which gave the owner a good excuse to treat it to a thorough clean. I must say it scrubbed up very well indeed and was an extremely popular attraction throughout the weekend.

A few weeks later, Tiggy ventured to the Festival of the Unexceptional at Grimsthorpe, where it stood (literally) head and shoulders above what the event's organisers describe as 'the most marvellously mundane motor cars'. A Discovery I is anything but mundane to my mind, having probably saved its maker's bacon when it was launched in 1989.

Tiggy once again attracted a lot of attention at the Festival and there can be no doubt that interest in good, early Discoverys is rising fast, probably in inverse proportion to the number of sound, original and rot-free examples that still exist. If you've ever been tempted to buy a decent Discovery I, now is probably the time to make your move. But not on Tiggy, which isn't for sale!