

MUSEUMS

The Dunsfold Collection has recently joined the FBHVC as a museum member so as an introduction to this organisation here is the background to its formation.

For many Land Rover enthusiasts, the Dunsfold name will be well known but for the wider historic vehicle movement this is how it fits into the story and history of Land Rover.

Dunsfold is a small village in Surrey UK, but it became well known because of one man. It was here that in 1968 the late Brian Bashall started a small country garage and because of his interest in all the vehicles from Solihull that it became known as Dunsfold Land Rovers. This would later change to simply DLR. During the 1960's there was not much interest in the heritage or history of old Land Rovers but despite this Brian started collecting rare and unusual versions of the Land Rover. This was sometimes done with inside help from some of the few people at the Rover company who felt there was a need to save some of these unique vehicles which might otherwise have been broken up and sold for scrap.

Brian's son Philip worked alongside him eventually taking over the business after Brian's death. Philip was equally, or maybe even more, enthusiastic about saving these special Land Rovers and became a well-respected expert on the subject, always willing to share his knowledge on both the historical and technical aspects of Land Rovers with enthusiasts.

DLR became one of the first and best places to call for Land Rover repairs or for the supply of spare parts, particularly for Series Ones, military vehicles, or other unusual Land Rovers.

All this time, the vehicle collection continued to grow but storage problems meant that they were tucked away in different locations around the area. Because of this it was not easy to view these vehicles, so a few Dunsfold Open Weekends were held, and these became very popular attracting many visitors. However, it was a lot of work to get all the Land Rovers out of storage, clean them and get them together lined up in a nearby field.

Philip always had the wish that all these special vehicles, together with a huge archive of drawings, models, books, badges, and advertising material should be safeguarded for the future.

A major step towards this was in 2014 when the Dunsfold Collection became protected by becoming a registered charity, looked after by a board of trustees and with a group called the "Friends of Dunsfold Collection" who financially supported the collection.

More recently, around 2020, Philip Bashall

felt the time was right to close DLR as a working garage and parts supplier to devote his time to developing his dream of securing the future of the collection for the benefit of all enthusiasts. Of course, the closure of DLR was a sad time for all the customers from around the world who had used its services for so many years but what was to follow would be exciting to Land Rover enthusiasts.

With the help and support of a number of people,



Philip transformed the garage buildings into a permanent Land Rover Museum. After a couple of years of hard work there was, on Sunday 11th June 2023, a grand official opening. This was for specially invited guests who had either worked on the project or supported it by subscribing to the Friends of Dunsfold Collection. On a sunny summer's day, about 120 enthusiasts gathered for their first viewing of the new museum.

Attendees were amazed and delighted to see the transformation from an oily workshop into a clean and bright museum full of all sorts of Land Rover history. About 25 vehicles were fitted into the building together with many display cabinets around the walls containing all sorts of interesting items, from the smallest pin badge to sectioned engines and gearboxes.

Looking at this large display it must be remembered that there are still another 100 special Land Rovers in store at other places with the plan to rotate the vehicles around so that different Land Rovers can be seen on display at different times making a repeat visit a must!

Like many small transport related museums, the Dunsfold Collection does not have the resources to open on a daily basis, but they will be organising open days as well as offering special tours for pre-arranged groups and this would make an interesting day out for any group.

For more information about the Dunsfold Collection have a look at their website:

www.dunsfoldcollection.co.uk

