

# DUNSFOLD DIARIES

WITH PHILIP BASHALL



**THE DUNSFOLD COLLECTION** is not yet open to the public but is hoping to establish a permanent museum. You can help make that a reality by becoming a Friend of the Collection for an annual subscription of £35. Visit [dunsfoldcollection.co.uk](http://dunsfoldcollection.co.uk) to see more.



## Memory Lane

A birthday - and a box of old magazines - is Philip getting all nostalgic?

**N**OSTALGIA may not be what it used to be, as the old joke goes, but I've been indulging in a lot of it lately. In June I celebrated my birthday with a day out at the excellent Bluebell Railway in Sussex, where I had a great day playing trains and sipping the occasional light refreshment with friends. Contrary to the impression that may be given by the photograph on the opposite page, I am not actually 144 years old, even if I sometimes feel it!

In the same month, I fired up the Dunsfold Collection's ex-SAS 1957 Series I 88-inch for an 'invitation only' event up in the Cotswolds. Organised by an informal group known as Friends of the Series One, it's a low-key get-together that happens once a year. Often it will involve going abroad - next year's run will be to Arnhem - but this year's was relatively close to home, being based in the village of Wroxton, near Banbury. For that reason, I felt able to take the SAS vehicle; oddly enough, the authorities frown on you carrying machine guns into Europe...

The 88 doesn't look right without them and, being completely open, it's also very tiring to drive for long distances, but for a summer trundle around the Cotswolds it's just the ticket.

This Series I (pictured, above, behind Rob Sprason's Australian 80-inch and in front of Andrew Bullas in the prototype 2.0-litre, chassis no.1) is one of only two genuine SAS Series Is known to exist; the other is shown in the photo, below left, and they both live within about 25 miles of each other. Ten Series Is were commissioned by the SAS: a prototype, based on an 86-inch in late 1954, followed by nine 88s. Dunsfold's example was sold off in 1967 and ended up with a film hire company, who used it for several movie and TV appearances, including *Digby*, *The Biggest Dog In The World*, *Dr Who*, and *Quatermass* - for which it was painted French Blue all over!

When the 88 came to Dunsfold, we had to replace a few missing bits but it's extremely original and very low mileage. It's quite well-equipped in the weapons department, too: a pair of Vickers .303s for the front passenger, a Bren .303 LMG for the driver, and a Browning .30 mounted on the tailgate.

I was tempted to stick the ex-SAS 88 on a trailer and take it up for the Series One Club National Rally, too, which this



The two known ex-SAS Series Is together: Dunsfold's is the second vehicle in this line-up





Thirty or 40 years on, old magazines often reveal long-forgotten historic photos

The box of free mags that got Philip reminiscing...

year was held at Clippesby Hall, a holiday park near Great Yarmouth in Norfolk. In the end, however, I went up in my Iveco van with a tent, because I had lots of Land Rover parts to sell. At this event, I offer parts at a good discount, which is my way of putting something back into the hobby; I'm a seller but also a buyer and a collector, so this is my way of thanking everyone who has supported me and the Dunsfold Collection over the years.

As I drove onto the site and stopped at the reception area, I noticed a box of old magazines on the floor with a note inviting visitors to help themselves. Among the back issues of Land Rover Owner and Land Rover Monthly, I spotted some copies of All Wheel Driver, the magazine of the All Wheel Drive Club. "They're old," I thought, and sure enough they turned out to be from the late '70s and early '80s. I couldn't resist scooping up a handful to peruse later, because they make fascinating reading after all this time – back then, nearly half the vehicles in the AWDC were ex-military.

Even the mainstream Land Rover mags, the LROs and LRMs of this era, have recently taken on a new significance, thanks to the surge of interest in Stage 1 and 2 Land Rovers, early Ninetys and One Tens, Discoverys and so on. Photos of pre-production or early factory-registered



Enjoying a birthday tippie at the Bluebell Railway – and no, he's not quite that old!

examples often appeared in these magazines at the time but have long since been forgotten. I picked up a copy of LRO at random, and there on the front cover of the June 1991 issue, promoting a feature about greenlaning, was A827 KRW, a prototype Ninety!

The trouble is, of course, that magazines are awkward things to store, and they have almost no resale value. If you take them to an autojumble and they get the slightest bit damp – which is very likely to happen, even in dry weather, as temperatures drop overnight – you might as well throw them straight in a recycling bin. We get offered old magazines probably once a month at Dunsfold, but we just have no space to keep them –

there's already a ton-and-a-half of mags and brochures on the floor above me. They include some bound sets from Roger Crathorne, who donated them to the Collection when he moved house and no longer had room for them.

But if you do have the space, these old magazines are well worth hanging on to. Besides the thrill of finding pictures of rare or interesting vehicles, there's also fun to be had in scanning the classifieds and the display adverts. Remember when you could buy a brand-new recently decommissioned Lightweight? John Craddock was selling them, back in the day... Maybe nostalgia isn't quite what it used to be, but it's still a pleasant way to pass the odd evening.