

# 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.



## On the wagon

Philip recalls some of the rarer Series I station wagons

**A**SK someone to picture a Series I Land Rover, and they will probably think of a canvas-topped short-wheelbase, or perhaps a truck cab pick-up. A station wagon is not the first thing that's likely to come to mind – and yet Land Rover offered them from the very earliest days, and they sold in reasonable numbers.

You can see why station wagons are popular with collectors today – and their better halves! Less draughty than a soft-top and better-trimmed inside, they are more comfortable for making any kind of long journey; plus, of course, they are now relatively rare compared with their soft-skinned relations.

Among the rarest is what's usually called the Tickford, pictured above, although it was simply called the Station

Wagon back in the day, Tickford being the name of the coachbuilder – more properly, Salmons-Tickford – which built the bodies in Newport Pagnell. It was a Land Rover catalogued model from October 1948 until the summer of 1951, and a healthy 651 were sold; not bad for a coachbuilt vehicle. Around 40-50 are known to survive.

The one shown here belongs to Land Rover collector and all-round nice guy Nick Parr, who is a Gold Supporter on the Dunsfold Collection's Wall of Fame. We've restored several vehicles for him at Dunsfold DLR but I'm embarrassed to say that the Tickford was started in 2011 and has only just been finished – it was one of those 'as and when you can' projects and it involved a lot of outside contractors: two guys to repair the alloy panels, a carpenter to rebuild the wooden frame, specialist trimmers, chromers and so on.



The Tickford wasn't quite so pristine when found

The Tickford has had something of a chequered career since I bought it as a barn-find up in Perth, Scotland, many years ago. Like many of these vehicles, it had been used on a country estate and was pretty beaten-up, as you can see in the picture of it before restoration, above. But a bit of tinkering soon had it running and I was actually able to drive it off the trailer when I got it home, after which I used it as a run-around just as it was.

Eventually I sold it and it ended up as part of an infamous Norwegian collection that was sold at auction. By now vandalised and with smashed windows, it returned to the UK to be sold at yet





Nick Parr's 107 Station Wagon was originally fitted with a snowblower like its sister vehicle, below



another auction, which is where Nick Parr bought it. He asked me to do the restoration, something I wasn't initially that keen to do since a Tickford is rather outside my comfort zone, but Nick can be very persuasive.

Having just taken the finished vehicle for a spin on what was probably the last dry and salt-free day of the year, I have to say that it's a lovely thing. Exmoor Trim deserve a shout-out for retrimming the interior, which was unique to the Tickford; the team treated it as a kind of learning project and, while they've done a great job, I don't know how enthusiastic they would be to do another!

When Land Rover stopped offering the Tickford, there was a bit of a gap until it introduced its own Solihull-built Station Wagon in late 1953 with the launch of the 86in model. Much rarer, however, and something of a cult vehicle with today's collectors is the 107in long-wheelbase Station Wagon that appeared in June 1956. With its distinctive Meccano-like rear doors, the 107 wagon lasted through to the end of Series I production because it had a unique chassis, quite different from a 107 pick-up's, and so Land Rover

never bothered to re-engineer its chassis when the 109 pick-up was introduced.

Nick Parr also owns the beautiful 107 shown at the top of this page. It was delivered new to the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation and fitted with a snow blower, like its sister vehicle in the black-and-white photo, above. That meant it was fitted with a secondary gearbox but, when Dunsfold DLR restored it for Nick, we all agreed that it would be better without it, so the redundant gearbox is now safely tucked away in Nick's garage. The Station Wagon is a great truck, and Nick uses it a lot.

Coincidentally, Nick's 107 was found in Cornwall, which is also where one of the two 107 Station Wagons in the Dunsfold Collection was based. Not just anywhere in Cornwall, mind you, but the Royal Duchy! I didn't know that when I bought it many years ago as a kit of parts to restore as my 'holiday car', although the registration UAC 871 suggested it had been first registered by Land Rover itself.

UAC is now owned by Dunsfold trustee Richard Beddall, and when he contacted the previous long-term owner he discovered that it had been despatched



UAC 871 was first used by the Duchy of Cornwall...



...while TBT 444 went to a Scottish country estate

new to the Duchy of Cornwall, along with sister vehicle UAC 872, for Royal duties during a visit by HM The Queen and Prince Philip in 1956. This probably explains why the vehicle is unusually fitted with four inward-facing seats in the rear compartment, rather than bench seats. It may also have a bearing on why the wheels are body-coloured but have blue centres – the previous owner still had the original wheels stored in his loft when Richard contacted him.

The other 107 Station Wagon in the Dunsfold Collection was gifted to us some years ago on condition that it was never sold on. TBT 444 is a bit of a mystery in that it was painted Export Sand by the factory – you can see the colour now showing through on the front wings, in the picture, above – but was immediately resprayed Dove Grey before delivery to an estate in Scotland, where it was used for shooting parties. The chauffeur from the estate has since been in touch to say that he still has the picnic table that was carried in the 107 for the guests. The vehicle has also been trimmed in blue leather, which is strange. Perhaps it was a cancelled export order, and a dealer snapped it up and refinished it to the estate's own requirements, hence the 'TBT' Yorkshire registration.

These Station Wagons are much like a regular pick-up to drive, although the weight of the extra glass in the taller body means they wallow a little more. UAC 871 will always have a special place in my memory because it's the first vehicle in which I found out what brake fade is like! I was coming down a mountain in Wales with a full load of passengers when I felt the brakes disappear; fortunately, I managed to get it into low-box while we were on the move. That's the drawback of having a station wagon – you can't make the excuse that there's no room for passengers!