

DEAD IN THE DRIVEWAY

The story of how one call to the *LRM* editorial office led to a very rare Range Rover 35th Anniversary Limited Edition joining the Dunsfold Collection

LRM CLASSICS

IT WAS publisher and co-star of *LRM*'s podcast series Steve Miller who answered the editorial office telephone when Nick Hodgson called. "Nick introduced himself and said that he was an *LRM* reader and a big fan of the Dunsfold Collection," Steve recalls. "He went on to explain that he owned a 35th Anniversary Limited Edition Range Rover. The problem was, he said, it was stuck on his driveway with a flat battery, and he was locked out so couldn't get in to pop the bonnet and jump-start it.

"Nick was well aware that the 35th is a very rare beast indeed and knew what they were selling for in good condition. He'd owned it for ten years and enjoyed it very much, and he certainly didn't want to scrap it, but it had been immobilised for over a month, and he also couldn't repair it and didn't want to tax and insure it again.

"He said he'd been thinking about it a lot and had decided to offer it as a gift to Dunsfold, and he wondered whether the Collection might be interested. Editor Martin was in the office with me and overheard the magic words L322 and 35th Anniversary model, and in the blink of an eye he was standing next to me, desperate to know what was going on."

"It's no secret that I'm a massive fan of the L322 Range Rover," Martin enthuses, "so when I heard there was a 35th Anniversary in need of saving my ears pricked up. They're a glorious car to start with, but the 35th's special colour and interior combination really makes it. →



Scrubbed up nicely. After a day of intensive detailing work at Dunsfold and replacement of broken mirrors, spotlights, and various bits of trim, the 35th looks pretty good



"The L322 is steadily increasing in popularity and the 35th Anniversary Edition is highly sought-after"



Bespoke Front Runner roof rack was ordered by Nick Hodgson when he bought the car in 2015



"Sadly, a lot of third-generation Range Rovers are succumbing to rot and neglect, and the cost of insuring and taxing one can almost knock on the door of the purchase price in some cases, which is why the early diesels especially are getting into disposable territory. It's a big shame as they're a beautifully designed and built vehicle, not to mention immensely practical.

"It sounded like Nick's 35th was already on the cusp of being scrapped, and when Steve asked him what condition it was in besides being dead on the driveway, Nick answered very honestly and said he couldn't give it more than five points out of ten. Steve and I agreed to pass on his details to Philip Bashall at Dunsfold, and I for one hoped that it could be brought back to life and saved by the guys at the Collection."

Land Rover announced the V8 Supercharged 35th Anniversary Limited Edition in a press release dated 30 September 2005, stating that it was 'equipped to Vogue SE specification and comes complete with a Harman/Kardon Logic 7 sound system, 7-inch touchscreen navigation with 4x4 information, rear screen entertainment with DVD, personal telephone integration system, colour rear-view camera, front and rear Park Distance Control, and park heating with timer and remote control as standard.

"Bespoke Limited Edition features include Anniversary Claret metallic paintwork, Carmen Red leather interior and dual-toned steering wheel in the finest hand-picked Windsor leather, extended burr walnut trim and Limited Edition claret deep-pile sheepskin foot rugs."

Somewhat bizarrely for a top-of-the-range vehicle retailing at £85,000, Land Rover

announced that the first glimpse of the 35th Anniversary special edition Range Rover could be 'caught whilst it leads the cavalcade of The South London and Surrey Land Rover Club London to Brighton Land Rover Run from Crystal Palace Park in London to Madeira Drive in Brighton on Sunday 2 October 2005'.

Appropriately enough only 35 numbered vehicles were made by the company's Special Vehicles team, making the 35th by far the rarest of the three L322 limited editions built for the UK market (the 2004 Autobiography ran to 125 vehicles, and the 2009 Westminster Edition totalled 300 examples).

According to Julian Lamb (LRM November 2018) the 35 individually numbered 35th Anniversary vehicles were preceded by a 'design prototype' that he referred to as 'Car Zero', which led a rather chequered career but had actually been the vehicle that led the convoy to Brighton referred to in Land Rover's press release.

Interest in the Range Rover 35th Anniversary Limited Edition has grown noticeably over the past few years, with many enthusiasts marking it out as a future classic. I know of at least two well-known Range Rover collectors who between them have three, or maybe four, examples safely put to one side.

Of the 35 numbered vehicles, one went to the Royal Household and one went to the Saudi Ambassador in London, while another went on a VIP lease to Richard Branson. The others were allocated to main dealers and all but four sold quite quickly. Sixteen are believed to be on the road today, with a further 11 on SORN. That is an impressive survival rate and suggests that in

Front lamp guards fitted at some point leaving unsightly holes



future there are going to be plenty of them around. Whether they prove to be meaningful investments for those who have them tucked away remains to be seen.

Philip Bashall immediately called Nick Hodgson to find out more about his vehicle. "It was by no means a certainty that Dunsfold would be able to accept Nick's generous offer, even if the Range Rover was a highly desirable rarity like the 35th," Philip tells me. "Not every Land Rover can be saved, and the museum simply doesn't have the resources to take on vehicles that require extensive restoration or costly repairs. Nick and I agreed that I would drive down to his

Wheels responded well to some TLC

