

PANTS & BARKS

Feb'89



Journal of the HANTS & BERKS ROVER OWNERS

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Note:- * denotes committee member.

"Hants & Berks Rover Owners" is a member of the ARC (Association of Rover Clubs), the RACMSA (RAC Motor Sports Association) and the Association of Central Southern Motor Clubs.

EDITORIAL

It is with regret that I have to announce the resignation from the committee of Pete Nightingale. Pete is the founder of this club and is the last truly 'active' saloon car owner. He has resigned mainly because he was unable to stir the other saloon owners into doing.... well.... anything really. Pete has done a great deal over the years to make the HBRO what it is today. We all thank him sincerely for this; the door will always be open for his return. I hope this does not put all the other saloon owners off; there is still an important role for saloon owners in the club. In fact, there aren't many ARC clubs that still have a Saloon Car section. I hope to see you out in force at the Rally.

As you will have seen from last month's events page, we are aiming to revitalise the annual Rally. Gary has made arrangements for us to use the site at Harroway Farm.

This is the twelfth P&B that I have produced. There have been a few changes in that 12 months too, with changes to the committee and a considerable increase in the club's activities. We have had more trials than ever before culminating in the tremendously successful 'do' at Weaver's Down in December. We have also run a few treasure hunts with an ever increasing attendance despite the apparent lack of interest on the part of the saloon owners for whom, primarily, the treasure hunts are run.

Thanks go to Colin and Dave for large amounts of "oven-ready" copy this month. It makes my life much easier.

Remember the Harroway Farm event? If you won an award, you may still be short of some of the badges and/or engraved labels. The list of those in need of the missing labels/badges has been mislaid. Please contact Colin Gross with details so he can complete your trophy!

Letter to the editor:-

Wallingford,
Oxfordshire,
24/Dec/88

Dear Mr. Kirby,

1) Ref your interesting report in HBRO journal Jan '89, Weaver's Down - is it not possible to include the date of the event and in what part of the country the event was held. It is as though it was a Min of Defence activity.

2) I wonder if other readers/members find the refs to Land Rovers and Range Rovers as "Landies" and "Rangies" trying. Most of us are adults and have long since given up reading "Noddy" books.

3) Last point - could not all advertisers give their 'phone exchange name & county - most irritating to have to phone B.T. to find out where code is - or as frequently called Location - point to raise at next committee meeting.

Best wishes,

Paul Warburton.

In reply.....

1) The omission of the date was simply an oversight. I think you'll find this is the first time I've forgotten to include it. The location has been well publicised; maps and grid references being given. In leaving out details of the location and date I failed to allow for new members seeing Pants & Barks for the first time. (Weaver's Down is 10 miles North of Petersfield, Hampshire.)

2) Large numbers of Land Rover and Range Rover owners use the terms of endearment 'Landy' and 'Rangy' when referring to their vehicles. I've merely adopted the terminology for the articles. It also saves having to write out the names in full each time or to use the rather ugly abbreviations LR and RR. Most contributors now send their articles in ready printed, so I have no control in those cases. See elsewhere in this issue!

3) Every time I've converted a location into a dialling code, I thought I was being helpful! Perhaps I could ask all current and future advertisers to provide the location name and the relevant code with their adverts. Thankyou.

.....and you can call me Steve!

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE.

It is always difficult to decide on suitable topics for pages such as this. The Chairman is supposed to act as an unbiased observer on club activities, and to use his casting vote as required at committee meetings. To keep the page unbiased from either 'Off Road' or 'Saloon' topics is not easy, but this month I can at least start with the HBROs annual Christmas dinner.

After a break of one year the HBRO returned to its favoured venue of The Dove in Micheldever. It was nice to see several new faces joining the established crowd for this annual celebration. Besides the good food, the proprietors had supplied each guest with a stock of balloons, crackers, hats, streamers etc. which were all put to good use by the members. After the meal Pete, as departing Chairman, was persuaded to present the annual awards, which he did in his customary style. Attempts to make Roger miss his train, by getting all those present to set their watches 10 minutes slow, were foiled when someone told Red Leader. They hadn't realised that Red Leader was travelling on the same train. Anyway it was obvious that a good time was had by all, and hopefully the proprietors of The Dove will allow us back again next year.

For the 'saloon' owners I can say that the planning for this years hoped for annual rally (Petes favourite event) is still under way, and more details should appear in next months magazine. The next treasure hunt is being prepared by Gary and Pennie, and as always this will be an event for all club members to attend.

The 'Off Road' members will already know that we are holding the first trial of 89 at Ham Lane, Langrish, on the 26th of February. Other events are still awaiting dates and venues. This delay is caused by the Association of Central & Southern Motor Clubs who deal with the distribution of Military Land. A full calendar will be published as soon as possible.

Finally I have noticed that there is a lack of 'On Road' material being submitted to the Editor of Pants & Berks. Since Steve already spends a lot of his time in preparing this magazine we cannot really expect him to research and write 'saloon' material as well. Surely some of you car owners must have something to write about, so why not put pen to paper.

GREEN-ROADING NEWS

Steve Kirby, Rights of Way Officer
(Member of The Byways & Bridleways Trust)

It's book review time again.

"Public Highways: Their Origin and Status."
by Alan Douglas Kind. Published privately.

This isn't really a book as such, it's a degree dissertation by the Rights of Way Officer of LARA, the Land Access and Rights Association. This sixty page document is a must for all those interested in the history and status of rights of way. Alan discusses Unclassified County Roads (UCRs), Reclassification Procedures and the Definitive Map, Scottish Highways, Roman and Prehistoric Roads, and Cul-de-sacs. The last named introduces an interesting discussion based on the premise that country folk aren't so daft as to walk or ride out into the middle of nowhere and then come back again! The implication being that a mistake in the recording of rights has been made sometime in the distant (or perhaps not so distant) past.

There are many references to legal cases and precedents, one such taking a whole chapter. The text is sprinkled (even inundated) with legal terms which make the reading rather heavy going, but as these have specific meanings, I accept their necessity (though I've yet to find out what they all mean!). I suspect many are used in order to limit the word-count; Alan was limited on the number of words he could use! Numerous maps are included to illustrate the examples. A couple of the appendices referred to in the text are omitted from the document supplied due to the fact that some of the sets of notes and files are huge and quite impractical to re-issue.

Format A4, spiral bound. £10.

Alan produces this document himself but as he is a busy man, perhaps club members wanting a copy could contact me first so a bulk order (should that occur) can be sent. Orders will be sent to his private address which I have.

Some of you may know that Colin and I drove the Ridgeway on Nov 4th from Overton to Streatley. This was not made a club outing as the weather conditions had to be carefully chosen and we wanted to go midweek.

Careful perusal of the map reveals large numbers of sites of historical and archaeological interest along this most ancient of routes. I am in the process of collating information on these sites preparatory to a trip which will involve visits to most of the main ones. Such a trip could take up to three days if done in one go. Again, a midweek period would be preferable so as not to conflict with the Code of Conduct. The idea would be to start at Overton near Avebury in Wiltshire and work towards London, staying overnight at accomodation or camp sites en route. If anyone would like to participate and/or make any suggestions, please contact me. The numbers of vehicles involved will have to be strictly limited to a maximum of four. There is at least one member who has already shown interest in making a serious video film of such a trip. Article(s) for national magazines will be produced afterwards.

Green Lane Trip, 8th. Jan.

Gary's suggestion to meet at the Viables layby in Basingstoke turned out to be an excellent one as we filled it with vehicles! I lost count eventually; there must have been 16 or 17 Land Rovers and Range Rovers there. Fortunately there were enough map equipped 'leaders' to split the masses into four groups. Three groups headed E, SE and SW whilst I went NW. I am indebted to Nick Jennings, Gary Hodgson and James Wallis for leading these groups. I had my nephew Paul with me in my Range Rover and I led Angie and Ted Marynicz and family in their recently re-engined SWB station wagon; Dave Ridden with four friends in his LWB station Wagon with, bringing up the rear, Simon Knight and three passengers in a Range Rover. Thus we had 17 people in the four vehicles. As it happened, we needed only one gentle tow all day, although with that lot we could have carried any stranded vehicle out of the mud!

The RAC have now become interested in green-road activities. See below.

27/9/88

(MOTOR SPORTS NEWS)

"4 WD ACTIVITIES - MOST SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER TO HIT THE 5000 MILE NETWORK OF GREEN LANES?"

IMMEDIATE ACTION BY CLUBS IS REQUIRED

This headline dramatically summarises the main reason for Brian Thompson's resignation of Motor Sport's sole representative to the Haselhurst Rights of Way Review Committee, arguably the most influential gathering of "Green Lane" users in the UK.

Whether it is solely the increasing use of Green Lanes by either Motor Club users or the uncommitted 4-wd drivers that is having such dramatic effects in the eyes of other countryside users on a National scale is open to some debate. In spite of the lack of complete proof of these allegations it is clear that examples of exceptional environmental damage have not only been attributed to us by our motor cycle colleagues (who after their own tribulations over usage in the past are naturally protective of their own well disciplined activities), but also through the Police, the NFU, the Countryside Commission and individual Members of Parliament, each with their own reasons to publicly condemn the creation of such damage.

The RACMSA issued a strong statement in late May which drew attention to these problems and called for education of all 4-wd users through the adherence to a Code of Conduct by both the Motor Club users and, with the co-operation of Manufacturers of such vehicles, the uncommitted user, and by the increasing number of specialist Cross Country Training Schools.

Despite the increased efforts of the All Wheel Drive Club, and the Clubs within the Association of Rover Clubs and the initiatives being taken in hosting meetings arranged to stress the need for more determined action by Clubs, Manufacturers and schools - it is clear that the problems are intensifying.

The Codes operated by the Clubs to voluntarily restrict usage and ensure good practices, and the need to meet locally with our motor cycling colleagues to plan a joint policy for each County, do not yet appear to be having the desired action "on the ground" in some critical areas.

The RACMSA insists that all users of 4-wd vehicles must understand and respond, to the seriousness of the problems which will take on major political significance unless we, as a responsible body of Clubs, can persuade all users to respect the countryside. Not only users within the MSA registered clubs, but all known 4-wd vehicle users whether in other clubs, training schools or just individuals must immediately be seen to exercise care, restraint, consideration and tolerance in line with the Code. Difficult areas in particular require special emphasis where all concerned need to not just apply the Code, but to look beyond it as well.

Copies of the Code are available from the RACMSA on request and can be freely reprinted for wide distribution.

Details of local contacts for your motor cycling club colleagues for each county, so that the practical arrangements can be urgently put into operation in the most critical areas, can be obtained through the LARA office (Tel: 0788 541137).

"An environmental disaster?" - it could turn out to be true and we, as responsible Clubs, need to be seen to be doing all that we can to avert this, and the consequential political arguments. Immediate action to preserve your rights requires action in all fronts without delay.

FOR SALE

* Range Rover Clutch Bits. Disc and pressure plate, new. £90
Phone Mike Cunningham on 0252 (Fleet) 626693.

DRAGON'S DRIVE

News from the Hants & Berks Rover Owners' North Wales Correspondent.

Firstly the editor asked for reports on trips to the Motor Show, via the LR Factory, courtesy of FWD Motors. The main feature was parking at the factory, with a minibus (LR 110 County) to the NEC. As parking at NEC is £3, and the car parks huge, so getting to and from, or even finding, your car can be a nightmare, this is well worth having. In addition Land Rover Ltd had laid out a large display of vehicles, with a lot of staff on hand to discuss them with. As a further attraction they were offering trips round the "Jungle track," unfortunately there was a massive queue when we went, estimated at an hour, so we reluctantly we had to give it a miss. To top that the tea urn in the hospitality tent had just run out.

Next we come to Weavers Down. When I first heard the HBRO were to hold a trial there I decided I would have to go. Apart from being a fantastic site, it is where, courtesy of an AWDC Safari permit, that I first developed my off road skills(?). As the time got closer the sheer economics of the whole thing got doubtful, I clocked 650 miles over the weekend, but eventually I stuck to my guns, but decided that to bring the Landy was out of the question. Fortunately at this point I met Steve Kirby at an ARC meeting, and he kindly offered to lend me his Rangy for the event.

After a weekend visiting old friends Sunday morning found WOW2 (Diesel Astra Estate, it goes roughly 3 times as far to the £ than an LR!) churning through the mud of Weavers paddock. (I know all the motorsport terms.) It promised an interesting day as it was all but a month short of 4 years since I last drove a Rangy off road, and that was only a mile. A quick warning from Steve about his vehicle's idiosyncrasies, and confirmation that it was already in low range with the diff locked, so I didn't have anything technical to worry about, and I was off for a quick spin round the carpark. I was surprised that despite power steering it wasn't as easy as I expected to swing from lock to lock.

Soon we were off through the woods to the first section. This drive prompted several people to comment that if that was just the drive to the start, what were the sections like!? Already I had discovered why people like V8s.

The first section weaved through the woods and across some deep ruts. I soon found a tree inches from the front bumper. The Landy would have hit it I'm sure, but I would have driven to the bang. Not being my motor I stopped, only to be told by those watching that it would have missed. The next section involved dropping into and climbing out of a rutted gully several times, by now the advantage of coils was beginning to show, before running along the gully then turning out up the bank. All went well till I tried to turn out of the gully. I decided to take advantage of the Rangy's lock and swing wide and hit the bank square on. Unfortunately the track wasn't quite wide enough and I missed the gate. I'm pleased to say that most other Rangies made the same mistake. Interestingly the Landies had no such problems, the gully was obviously too narrow for them to get straight, so they didn't bother trying, and hitting the bank at an angle mainly got them up with no problem. By now I had cracked the steering, straight arms may be great on the motor, but pulling the seat forward solved things off road.

The third stage went over a couple of banks, then in a loop and over them again. No great problem, bags of room to swing round, unfamiliarity caused me to misjudge the lock and hit a cane. Some say it was justice as, when the Hants & Berks first started trials, I was responsible for the rule not allowing Range Rovers a shunt! Finally in the morning was a climb up through the trees, a steep washed out descent followed by a 90 left into some water with a 90 right over a bank and out the the track. I noticed that people were going through the 3 gate well to the right before turning into the water, whilst I thought it better to go to the left. Talking to them revealed that that was their plan as well, but they couldn't get across. I thought I'd cleared it, but found I had just clipped the left hand cane with the back end, well I had wanted to get close to it!

ANNUAL AWARDS.

During the dinner break I went for a spin in Hugh Glossop's Landy. For those who don't know it Hugh's motor is a Ser2 SWB with a V8 together with, since I last drove it, an auto box and power steering. I expected an auto to be good off road, although I had reservations about steep descents. The steering was odd as it had a fairly small wheel, quite sensible with power steering, but a bit strange. It felt OK though, not suffering from the ultralight lack of feel sometimes found with power steering. I was right about the transmission. Running on the owner's advise in 2 I had perfect control with just the one pedal. When I did eventually get it to stall on a steep climb, it was the gear box rather than the engine that stalled, in other words, the vehicle stopped, whilst the motor kept running. This was enough to stop it rolling back, leaving plenty of time to calmly apply the brakes, select reverse, release the brake, and drop slowly back down the hill. When I tried a steep descent, I did find it going a bit faster that I would have liked, but it must be said this was an extremely steep drop, such that I wouldn't normally attempt in a strange vehicle.

The first section after lunch was a fairly simple one, but with just enough mud and ruts to catch those who hadn't re-engaged brain for the afternoon, or even low range/diff lock (it has happened before!) To prove the point this was the only section where I saw any damage done, when someone drove into a tree! The next was another weave up and down through the trees, with a sneaky BMX style "wall of death" turn against a bank. Again I thought I had cleared it, only to be told the RR body roll caused me to catch a cane with the roof at the back, oh for the Landy with a pickup bank!

So ended an enjoyable day, following the prize giving it remained only to thank Steve again, to whom I am very grateful, leaving Colin & Hugh to collect the canes in the dark, and set off for home. I will admit to feeling a twinge of sympathy for the Anglian Landies I passed as they plodded up the M1, but only a twinge, presumably they were home before 10 30. Red Leader

At the end of each year the committee have the interesting task of sorting out who has won the HBROs annual awards. Currently there are four trophies; two being awarded on a points basis resulting from trials competitions; and two decided upon by the committee itself. For those of you new to the club they are briefly described below.

RED LEADER SHIELD.

This trophy is awarded to the club member who achieves the lowest aggregate score throughout the years RTV events whilst driving a standard leaf sprung Land Rover. Only factory fitted engines are allowed (or 2 1/4 Litre Series 1s) so V6 or V8 conversions are illegible. Dave Cuthbert (Red Leader) who donated the trophy has specified that each year the following events are to count towards the points allocation:

- a) All the HBRO RTV trials
- b) The RTV trial at the ARC Nationals
- c) Any event that the committee feel suitable i.e. local events run by neighbouring clubs to which the HBRO have been officially invited.

The winner will be decided by taking the average of their total penalties accumulated from all the eligible events, the lowest score being the winner. If a driver misses an event, or drives an ineligible vehicle, then he, or she, will be credited with the maximum penalty obtainable at the event i.e. 8 sections of 10 maximum penalties giving 80 points. If a driver is officiating at an event then they will be allowed to ignore that event, and take their average from the remaining events. The results or maximums from at least half the eligible events must be counted.

This years winner was Malcolm Adamson with 40.6.

The runners up were:	Dave Cuthbert	54.8
	Vic Garrett	56.0
	Roy Michael	65.6
	Angie Marynicz	66.5

PILOTS TROPHY.

This trophy was donated by Roger Pattie and points are scored in the same way as for the Red Leader

Shield. However this trophy is for drivers of standard Range Rovers. Roger has decreed that only minor modifications may be made to the vehicle i.e. the fitting of uprated springs and shock absorbers. Any other modifications must be in line with modifications made to all production Range Rovers. Tyres must be as factory fitted with sizes of 205/215 x 16.

The competition for this trophy did not start until August 1988 and Roger decided that its first year would be a slightly extended competition. As a result it will be presented for the first time at the 1989 AGM.

MEMBER OF THE YEAR.

This is the first of the non competitive trophies, and it is awarded by the committee to the HBRO member who they feel has done most for the club over the preceding year. It is always a matter for lengthy deliberations since so many of you put a lot into the club.

Throughout the year the winner has assisted with setting out almost every competition held by the HBRO. He has acted as scrutineer at most events, and represented the clubs interests at ARC meetings. For this, and all his general help with club activities, the committee have awarded Member of the Year to:

Hugh Glossop.

WALLY OF THE YEAR.

Contenders for this prestigious award included Pete Nightingale, for hitting Hugh Glossop over the head with a JCB bucket, and Hugh Glossop for letting Pete do it. But eventually they were eliminated (because they weren't using Rover products) in favour of:

Alan Tew.

Alan won this award for his efforts in tree pruning. I understand that Alan wanted to prove that his Rangle could climb to the top of a thirty foot tree. Although he proved his point, and managed to get his vehicle to the top, it then took him over an hour to get the front wheels pointing the same way again.

This is the second year in a row that Alan, and his vehicle, have won the award. In his acceptance speech at the Christmas dinner Alan suggested that if he won it again next year it should become his for ever.

Prize Giving.

In line with the HBROs normal policy the

trophies were presented at the clubs Christmas dinner. For those of you who missed the event the trophy will be on its way to you shortly.

The committee would like all club members to note that this years competition for these trophies will run until the end of September. This will allow us to present the trophies at the 1989 AGM, an event to which more of the members are able come. It will also overcome any problems that may have arisen in future years if for some reason the Christmas dinner could not be held.

Editor, *Pants & Barks.*

Colwyn Bay
January 89

Dear Steve,

May I say how much I enjoyed the Christmas Dinner. I had wondered if I was a bit mad (*shut up, Hugh!*) coming down from Wales for one evening, but it was definitely worth it.

I have been to every Hants & Berks Christmas dinner, except '87, and enjoyed them all. This year's was subtly different however. In the past they have been a group of friends with a common interest, this time it was a Club. Credit for this must go to all members, but is largely due to the efforts put in by the committee over the years.

Thank you all.

Dave Luthbert

P.S. I thought the efforts to make the Treasurer miss his train were very obvious and amateurish. I expect them to be far more subtle next time. Good Luck! **Red Leader**

FOR SALE

Please note that small ads are free but please let me know when a sale is complete so I don't keep printing an out of date ad each month. Please quote location and dialling code in your adverts. Thanx.

* Firestone Super All-Traction (SAT) Tyres.

7:50 x 16, 6 or 8 ply. £45+ VAT. Delivery can be arranged at extra cost. Phone Mark Jones at Gerrards Cross on 0753-887871 for more information.

* Range Rover. Sound chassis, good mechanics (but starter u/s), straight body. Offers around £1500. Vehicle is at Dorking but phone Dave in Colwyn Bay, North Wales, on 0492-534417 for details.

* Rover 2.2 litre Saloon Red, Webasto sun-roof, Electric windows, Radio/Cassette, Tax, MOT, £350. Phone Robert Smith on Epping 72922.

* Used Tyres:- Two Firestone Town & Country M+S Radials, slightly worn. One Avon Ranger II crossply, half worn. Phone Jeff on 01-898-2120.

* Mobelec Magnum contactless electronic ignition unit for Rover V8, £25 Phone Steve on 01-894-3961.

* Land Rover Engine, 2 1/4 Petrol. complete with ALL ancillaries except oil filter housing. 35,000 miles. Good, quiet, oil-tight unit. Redundant after diesel conversion. Any sensible offers around £100. Phone Chris Baldwin on 096-274-269 (Winchester)

* Bolt on Roll Bar for Truck Cab Land Rover, complete with 4 Cibies and 2 Halogen spot lights. Two rotating orange beacons for cab roof, plus 1000lb electric winch. Contact Mr. Perry at home on Romsey 884237 or at work on Southampton 824802.

* IIa bits. LWB axles with good chrome, steering box, two 7:50x16 tyres, two 6:00x16 tyres on wheels, front wings. Plus Srs.III bonnet and loads of odds and ends. Phone John on 0895-33568.

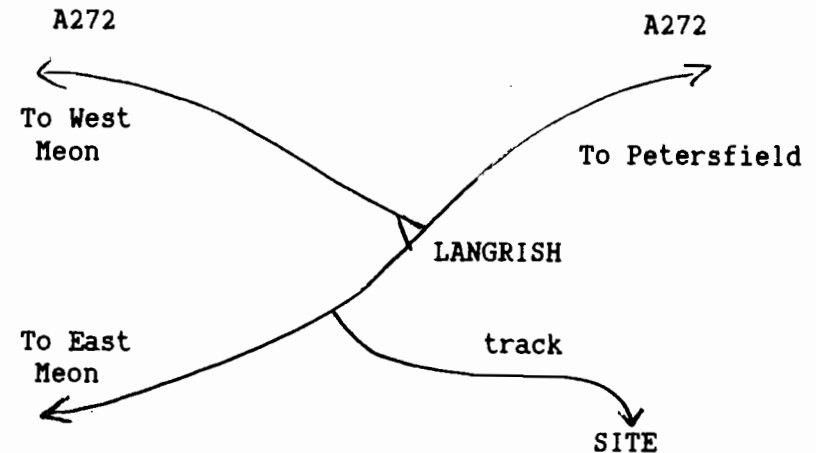
* 1958(ish) Series One 88" Land Rover. Breaking for spares. Chassis in very good condition. No engine but all body panels and mechanical bits available. Phone Roy Michael on Eastleigh 611491

ROAD TRIM VEHICLE TRIAL

We are holding an RTV trial at Ham Lane Leisure Centre, Langrish, near Petersfield, HANTS, on the 26th of February. The event will be open to all fully paid-up members of HBRO. Entries should be on an official entry form if possible. The fee is £8:50. Scrutineering will be at 9:00.a.m. and the competition will start at 10:00.a.m. prompt, so please be on time. Classes will be as usual:-

- 1 : Standard. Wheelbase under 93", under 2500cc engine.
- 2 : Standard. Wheelbase under 93", over 2501cc engine.
- 3 : Standard. Wheelbase over 93", under 2500cc engine.
- 4 : Standard. Wheelbase over 93", over 2501cc engine.
- 5 : Special. Any non-standard or "Home built" vehicle.
Any engine size.

HAM LANE TRIAL SITE.



Map reference of site entrance :- 197 SU704235.

CRISIS AT LODE LANE?

Red Leader

MANY of you will have read that the Army have recently returned a large number of Land Rovers as unsatisfactory, and are seeking major rectification of many more. (I will not quote figures, as they are meaningless without knowing how many have been delivered.)

What has gone wrong? The biggest problem has been with the engines (4 cyl. diesels) although I know there have been other faults as well. It is probably appropriate at this point to forget the Military, and look at Land Rover in general.

When the 110 came out I, and I know I'm not the only one, was a bit worried that they were losing some of their basic ruggedness, and so reliability. They also shared the Range Rover's biggest failing, the ability to travel in comfort at speed off road, so that if you hit trouble, you were going much too fast, especially a problem with the average Squady, who contrary to popular belief, is often not a highly skilled off road driver. At the time it was announced that production of the Ser 3 would continue, so it looked as if Land Rover Ltd agreed, but they soon disappeared, though whether by design or lack of demand I don't know.

The 110, and Ninety, were aimed at the Shogun, Fourtrak etc. but did they succeed? I have no experience of Shoguns, but my boss did buy a Diahatsu Fourtrak, the top model, high roared, turbo diesel version, which I got a couple of opportunities to drive. The ride was better than my tired sprung Ser 2's, but not much, it would be interesting to try it again after nearly a year with my better sprung Ser 3. It went well, it certainly didn't feel slow, with, I am told, reasonable economy. It was comfortable to drive, with a car type gear change, and featured a forward facing rear seat, with further luggage space behind. It also had fairly normal, if mundane, styling.

How do LR compare? I must admit my experience of 110s is limited, and of Nineties nil. For this reason I will not comment on the ride (the 110's is superb, but it is a very different vehicle), and I can't comment on the performance (a V8 runs rings round it, but at a cost!), but as for the rest of it! You cannot get away from the Land Rover seating position, even if power steering does make life far easier. All I can say about the gear change is that it is a (vast?) improvement, but still not carlike. This brings us to the real stumbling block, the rear seats. Not only do they face sideways, with doubtful comfort, but the space must be shared with the luggage. Finally the looks, you may like the lines of a Ninety, but no one could call it styling.

In case you think I'm ignoring something, he did come out with us along the Ridgeway. He had a few problems caused by unsuitable tyres and 15" wheels, but it was apparent that it was a competent offroader (how many people who have a Ninety to tow a caravan run on SATs?).

Have Land Rover, in chasing a target which regrettably they've not quite met, lost too much at the other end?

To return to the Army's problems (and by Army I include the Navy & RAF) I suspect that over the years there has been a certain amount of complacency on both sides, the Army, whilst looking at other vehicles, always assuming they will buy LR's, whilst Land Rover Ltd assumed the forces would continue to use them, even after changing the model. To be fair, there was considerable development of the 110, and the version used by the Army differs considerably from that you and I could buy.

Compare this with the other common Military vehicle, the 4 ton 4x4 truck. When they change this there are years of testing (for the MK this took a good 6 years) starting with exhaustive testing of all the alternatives, then further years of extensive trials of the chosen vehicle, a process that has just restarted to find the MK's

successor.*

Is the Army now to do take similar action with the Land Rover, with no guarantee that they will win? To add interest to this, David Brown, who purchased Bedford off GM, and apparently put in a bid for Land Rover, announced in the autumn that he intended to produce a light 4x4 specifically to rival the Land Rover. Whilst I don't know details of his deal with GM regarding design and development staff, it is evident that with Bedford's experience, this will be a vehicle to be watched.

What would the lose of Army business mean? Again I do not know what proportion of production goes to the British forces, but it is considerable. However they also sell to many other armed forces, many not able to do their own extensive testing. Whilst they may not slavishly follow the Brit's lead, it must effect their choice. Next come other large fleet users, such as electricity boards, councils etc. Of course their requirements differ from those of Forces, but a lack of confidence by the Army must make them reconsider their options. What effect such a move would have on private buyers is impossible to predict. I doubt that many would admit they bought them because the Army does, but I'm sure that for many it is at the back of their mind. Finally there are those bought for use in more extreme conditions, such as the third world, such customers would surely place great store in the Military's actions.

This means that the lose of the Army's custom could be disastrous, and every step must be taken to retain it, which I am sure Land Rover Ltd are well aware of. It is to be hoped that they have, as they claim, solved all the problems, many of them were more concerned with quality control than design, so it is hopeful, but it need be more drastic action may be needed, such as fitting a different engine. It may be a stupid question, but why don't they fit the VM diesel used in the Range Rover? They are already fitting an Isuzu diesel for the Australian Army. The LR diesel is also found in two other vehicles, the Sherpa and the London Taxi. Freight Rover have admitted they had

problems, but have now solved them, but still they are to start using a Perkins instead. I have not heard anything about cabs reliability, but it was announced just before Christmas that they are to start using Nissan diesels this year.

All is not doom and gloom at Solihull however. The Range Rover is selling well, out selling the Land Rover, and doing particularly well in America, where it is fast becoming the car to own. It is also gaining an excellent reputation for reliability over there. A major development for '89 is a new transfer box, eliminating the need for a diff lock, always a problem up to now, especially if not used regularly.

As most of you will know even more exciting things are coming in the form of the Mini Range Rover, possibly by the end of this year (but don't hold your breath!). There has been much speculation about the details, which I don't intend to add to. I just hope they have got it right. It should take some of the pressure of the top end of the current Land Rover range, maybe allowing them to take a "backward" step to some of the more robust features of the Ser 3!

* For those who are interested in such things, the contenders for the next generation of Truck 4x4, 4Tonne, for the Army are:

AWD-Bedford ML. This appears to be an updated version of the Mk, featuring a Perkins diesel and 5 speed gearbox.

Leyland DAF. Again 5 speed, but this time with permanent 4 wheel drive, and centre diff lock.

Volvo Highlander. Complete with a 6 speed box. This should cause confusion bearing in mind that the 4 tonners are often driven by inexperienced drivers who only drive a lorry when on exercise (I clocked up well under 1 000 miles in a truck in 5 years of holding an HGV licence.)

FOR SALE

* Range Rover Bits:- Pair Front springs £5. Dog Guard VGC £30, several 50mm Ball Hitches, £2 each, Set rear light protectors 90% complete, £20. Contact Nick Jennings on 0734-471258 (home) or 0734 -471528 (business).(Caversham, near Reading.)

* Hard Top for SWB Land Rover. Possible swop for truck cab. Phone Roy Michael on Eastleigh 611491.

* Alex's February Sale.....

1 Goodyear Super Hi-Miler 750x16
5 Various 185R14 (Suit Transit, etc.)
2 Various 560x13
1 'Remould' 520x13
4 Various 155R13

Any offers?

All very cheap as I need the Garage space.
Phone Alex Waugh on ODIHAM 704872.

WANTED

* PHOTO'S of my Land Rovers in action:- WOW 293 (later ACC 445A), OEY 366S and KOM 682, "TOBY". Phone Dave Cuthbert on Colwyn Bay 0482-534417.

* Truck Cab & Windscreen frame & Tailgate for 88".
Phone John on 0895-33568.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

F.W.D.MOTORS have vacancies for mechanics for repair and maintenance of Land Rovers and Range Rovers. Salary negotiable. Contact Bob Grigg at F.W.D. Motors, Kingston. Phone 01-977-8118.

"ALTERNATOR CONVERSION MADE EASY"

A step by step guide to convert from dynamo to alternator. £2.95 post paid. (Parts required are available) Please send cheque/postal order to:-

K. Wiggins, 9 Cae Garw, Dinas Powys, South Glamorgan, CF6 4UG, WALES.

EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

* Second Sunday in each month, green-lane trip. The rights of way officer will usually be present to indicate rights of way on the maps. It is recommended that those involved obtain current maps of Hampshire and Berkshire.

* Second Wednesday each month, Noggin & Natter at the Hind's Head, Aldermaston. (From 7:30 p.m.)

Feb 8th Noggin & Natter and possibly videos at the Hind's Head, Aldermaston, Hants. Opens at 7:30 p.m.

Feb 12th Green lane trip. Phone Steve or Gary.

Feb 26th RTV Trial, Ham Lane. Details elsewhere in this issue.

May 20/21 Club Rally to be held at Harroway Farm, near Ramsdean, HANTS. This event is for everyone. There will be a social evening with a barbeque, food & drink, skittles, darts etc. along with a trial, a treasure hunt, a gymkhana a green-lane trip and a few other surprises. The site is suitable for tents and caravans. Water and limited toilet facilities are available.

May 26-29 Nationals at Rudding Park, Yorkshire. Details Later.

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