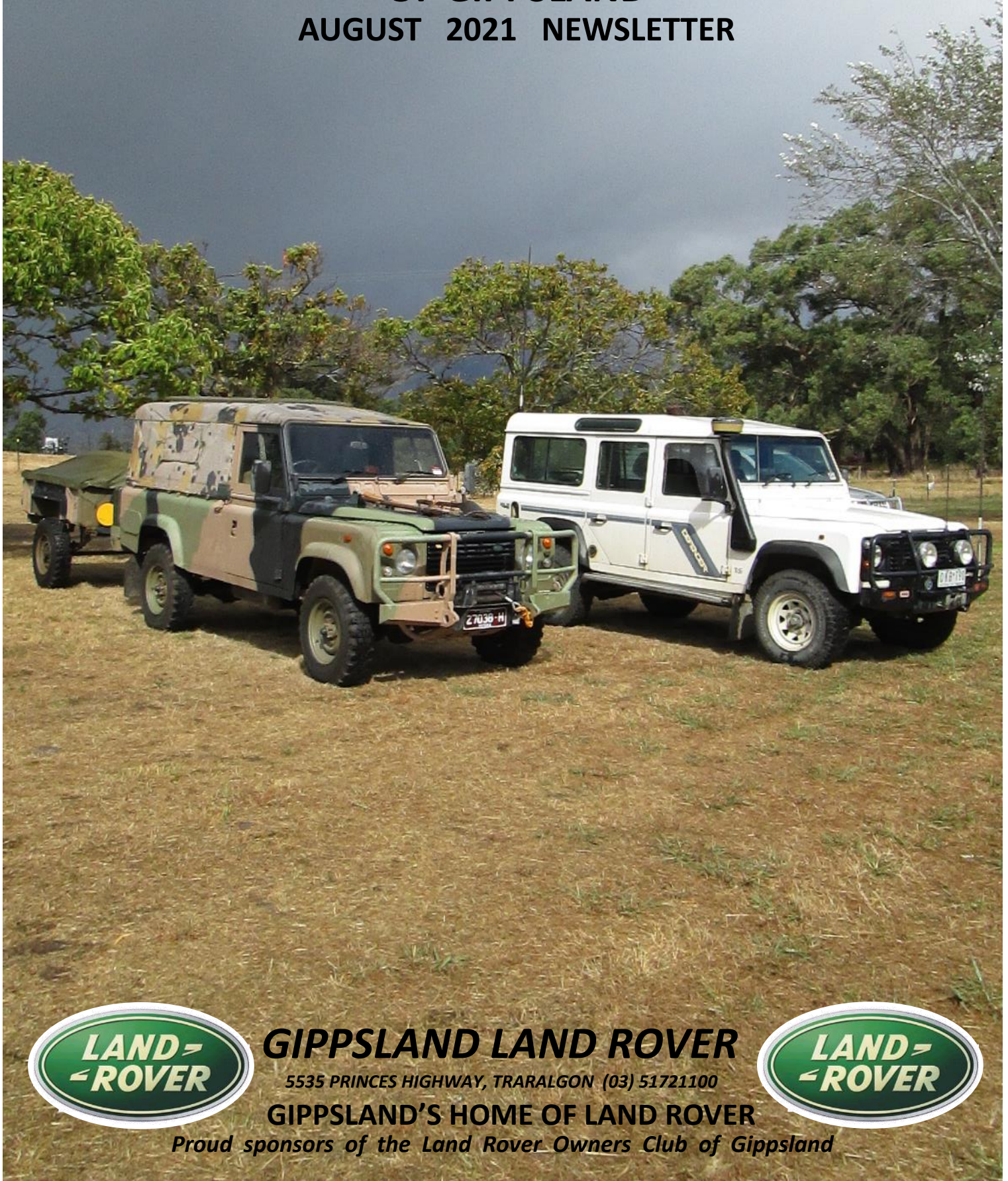


LAND ROVER OWNERS' CLUB

OF GIPPSLAND
AUGUST 2021 NEWSLETTER



GIPPSLAND LAND ROVER

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LAND ROVER OWNERS' CLUB OF GIPPSLAND

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Some very sad news

A very important person passed away this month. The Club was saddened to learn of the passing this month of one of its most valuable members, Someone Else. Someone's passing creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Else has been with the Club since its beginning and did far more than a normal person's share. Wherever there was a job to do, one name was on everybody's lips, let Someone else do it. It was common knowledge that Someone Else was the largest contributor of his time to the Club whenever there was a need for volunteers, everyone just assumed that Someone Else would volunteer. Someone Else was a wonderful person, sometimes appearing to be superhuman. But a person can only do so much. Where the truth be know, everyone expected too much of Someone Else. Now Someone Else is gone. Who is going to do the things Someone Else did ? When you are asked to help, remember that we cannot depend on Someone Else any longer.



More Pfizer vaccine's arriving shortly



Land Rover — The Worlds Most Versatile Vehicle

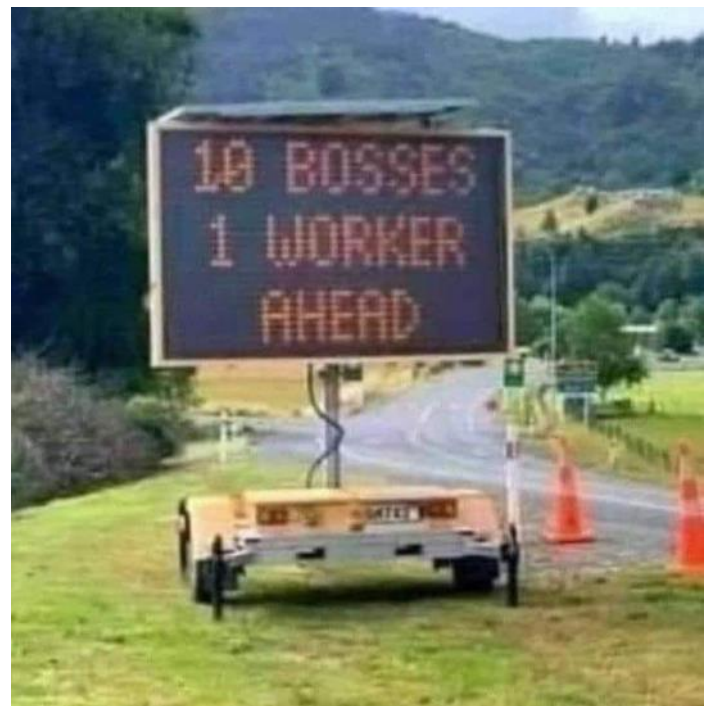
It's almost Spring Time



This month's cover; Two Land Rovers at Nyora display day

Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland 2020-- 2021 Committee

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Tilligerry RSL Sub-Branch secure Army jeep for static display

A 30 year old decommissioned Australian Army jeep will take pride of place at the entrance to the Tilligerry RSL Sports Club in the coming months.

The Land Rover jeep was gifted to the club's RSL sub-branch by the Department of Defence and is currently being garaged at a Salt Ash property while members work to erect a carport at the RSL where it will remain on static display.

"We have put down the slab and we are just getting quotes on a carport... it may be that we have to apply for a grant to cover the costs," said sub-branch president Paul Carleton.

"All going well we are hoping to have the shed erected and the jeep in place by Remembrance Day [November 11]."

Mr Carleton said that the sub-branch had been fortunate as it never set out to acquire such a rare piece of military history.

"It all started a few weeks ago when it was decided by the membership that we needed to either refurbish or replace the 40mm Borfor's gun that we have on display because it had deteriorated due to rust and age," he said.

"We contacted the Defence Department in Canberra and on

a visit from one of their representatives we were told they would not refurbish the gun and offered us a jeep in its place.

"We accepted the offer and John Olive [sub-branch treasurer] and myself drove down to Albury with a trailer to tow it back to Port Stephens.

"We were surprised to learn that the vehicle - a 1991 Land Rover with camouflaged canopy - was in good condition, complete with a working engine, but we will be keeping it as a static display only.

"It will take pride of place at the club's entrance hopefully in time for our Remembrance Day service."

The jeep is the latest in a raft of improvements the RSL sub-branch has made in the past year.

In March 2020, the sub-branch upgraded the cenotaph at Tilligerry RSL Sports Club and through a \$8250 Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grant, built a cabinet in the club for war memorabilia.

The memorabilia stored within the cabinet was sourced from local members past and present.



Land Rover Defender 130 eight-seater LWB model spied ahead of 2022 reveal

The Land Rover Defender is already offered in two sizes, namely three-door 90 and five-door 110 variants, but an even longer 130-badged model is currently in the works for those who feel that the 110 is still too small.

A lightly disguised prototype of the new Land Rover Defender 130 has been spotted undergoing testing in Europe, flaunting its longer body.

According to Motor1, the Defender 130 will be around 340mm longer than the 110 model, bringing its overall length up to 5100mm. That, for the record, would make more than 100mm longer than the Land Cruiser 300.

Whereas the current 110 model seats seven, the Land Rover Defender 130 will offer seating for up to eight occupants, Motor1 reports, and given that extra length it should offer improved luggage space as well.

According to Autocar, the Land Rover

Defender 130 is set to command a large price premium over the 110, and it's likely that it will only be available with the more luxurious trim grades.

The engine range will almost certainly include the current straight-six petrol and diesel powertrains, as well as the plug-in hybrid and the familiar supercharged V8.

As previously reported, Land Rover is also believed to be working on a double cab bakkie version of the Defender.

This would attempt to lure buyers into a more premium end of the pick-up market, one which Mercedes failed to capitalise on with its X-Class, which many felt was too closely related to the Nissan Navara to be a truly high-end product.



2022 Range Rover Drops More Camouflage To Show Its Evolutionary Styling

The new-generation Range Rover has been spied numerous times in 2020 and 2021, showing its different variants including the long-wheelbase and the plug-in hybrid version.

The luxury SUV is gradually shedding its camouflage revealing more of its evolutionary design. This is the case with the latest spy shots, which are the most revealing yet. It makes sense since the official reveal could take place before the end of the year.

All the fake body extensions below the camouflage wrap are now gone, allowing us to see more details on the SUV's bodywork. The single intake on the front bumper covering most of its width is clearly visible, as Land Rover's technicians didn't bother to cover it. Thus, the design of the front end seems to be a lot less cluttered compared to the outgoing model, in combination with the slimmer LED headlights and grille. The new Range Rover retains the imposing dimensions and the proportions of the current generation which was first unveiled back in 2012. The model is instantly recognizable especially from the profile thanks to the large greenhouse and the flat waistline, a characteristic of all Range Rover generations. The rear end will change more dramatically, as implied by the turn signals located below the rear windscreen, although retaining the long rear overhang and the large tailgate.

Despite the visual similarities, the new



Range Rover will ride on the brand new MLA platform and offer more electrified options, available in mild-hybrid, plug-in hybrid, and battery-electric variants. Like its slightly smaller sibling – the Range Rover Sport – it will be available in the performance-oriented SVR vari-

ant which is rumored to get a twin-turbo 4.4-liter V8 sourced from BMW. We expect to learn more about the Range Rover in the official debut that's rumored to take place towards the end of 2021.

Meet the Land Doughver: Man merges love for Land Rovers and pizza into oven on wheels

Pal Singh believes the only thing better than pizza, is pizza that comes to you. The owner of Fire and Slice pizza in Sumner, Christchurch, has merged his love for pizza and Land Rovers by installing a large commercial wood-fired pizza oven into a series three Land Rover Stage 1 V8.

The result is the 'Land Doughver' – a mobile pizza oven used to cater events and bring pizza to the people of Christchurch, wherever they may be. It has made appearances at weddings, community events and markets so far, with no event too big or too small for its portable pizza prowess.

Singh bought the former New Zealand military truck on Trade Me last year. Installing the oven and making the vehicle road legal was his "dream project". It took several months of work before the vehicle could get a warrant of fitness in April. He opened Fire and Slice pizza shop on Sumner's main street in 2018. The shop started slowly in its first year but has since become one of the most popular food spots in the coastal suburb.

The Land Doughver allows Singh's team to give their customers a live pizza making experience. Staff take a store's worth

of product with them (including vegan options) and make and sling dough, top the pizzas, cook them and serve them as hungry punters watch on. "It's been a huge hit. People are hiring us not just for the pizza, but Jeep and Land Rover fans too," Singh said.

The oven on wheels also allows Singh to accommodate



larger groups, as his Sumner restaurant seats fewer than 30 people. The Land Doughver can cater groups of any size due to its open plan setup. Singh moved to Auckland from India in 2011. He studied and worked in hospitality and hotels in the city for five years, where he developed his love of pizza, before moving to Christchurch. His lack of desire to live in a big city environment led him to discover Sumner and its community, and he has lived there since. "I had no plans to open a business in Sumner, but then I noticed they needed pizza," he said. Getting consent for his store took 14 months, but he was finally able to open Fire and Slice in 2016. "It's been a big challenge, but it is satisfying to have created something from nothing."



Jaguar Land Rover issues urgent customer warning after major parts delays

JAGUAR LAND ROVER has warned customers could face delays of up to one year on some of their most popular models. Leasing companies have been warned lead times stand at over 12 months for 53 different model variants. Affected models include the 2022 model ranges of the popular Land Rover Discovery and Land Rover Defender.

The 2022 versions of the Jaguar E-Pace, Range Rover Evoque and Land Rover Discovery Sport models are listed under the delayed models.

However, a Jaguar Land Rover briefing note said garages can still offer customers quotes for models despite the delays. It said: "Although these can remain open for quoting and ordering on your systems if you choose, your supplying retailer will not be in a position to accept orders for these derivatives due to extended lead times."

In an official statement, JLR confirmed delays were down to the global semiconductor shortages. It warned delays in the key part will have an "impact on production schedules".

It confirmed they were "working closely" to "resolve the issues" as best they could. "We continue to see strong customer demand for our range of vehicles. "We are working closely with affected suppliers to resolve the issues and minimise the impact on customer orders wherever possible."

Despite the delays, Jaguar Land Rover has confirmed a range of models were still available to order.

They said there were still large numbers of Jaguar I-Pace and F-Type models available to purchase. They also confirmed plug-in hybrid versions of the popular models were also available to order. These included the E-Pace, Discovery Sport, Evoque and Defender 110 models.

The update comes just months after semiconductor shortages forced some of its production plants to close. Jaguar Land Rover's Halewood and Castle Bromwich plants halted production in April due to the issue.

The company also blamed semiconductor shortages on a £110million quarterly loss in the first quarter. They warned sales were down in the three months to June 30 and predicted the problems could continue into September.

A statement said: "The shortage of semiconductors is presently very dynamic and difficult to forecast. "Based on recent input from suppliers, we now expect chip supply shortages in the second quarter ended September 30, 2021, to be greater

than in the first quarter, potentially resulting in wholesale volumes about 50% lower than planned.

"We are continuing to work to mitigate this. We expect the situation will start to improve in the second half of our financial year."



If your man does any of these,



He's brought another Land Rover

Land Rover is recalling 111,746 Range Rover Sports and LR4s over fire risk

If you own a 2010-2013 Range Rover Sport or a 2010-2016 Land Rover LR4, first of all, congratulations for keeping it on the road this long. Secondly, your vehicle is at risk of catching fire, so, y'know, maybe don't park it inside. Land Rover is issuing a recall over concerns that a cracked fuel outlet flange on the tank may crack and cause a fuel leak. This recall affects vehicles with

both the 5.0-liter V8 and the 3.0-liter V6 engines, for a total of 111,746 units. The recall was announced via the website for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) on Aug. 12.

The fix for this is relatively straightforward and will see your Land Rover dealer replacing the fuel outlet flange with a new part. This repair, like all re-

call repairs, will be performed at no cost to the owners.

Land Rover expects notices to go out via mail starting on or around Oct. 8. If you think your vehicle might be one of those affected or you just have questions, you can contact Land Rover's customer service department at 1-800-637-6837 and reference recall N623.

2021 Land Rover Defender 90 recalled just weeks after Australian launch

A structural fault affecting the front seats could compromise safety, according to the manufacturer.

The new 2021 Land Rover Defender 90 SUV has been recalled in Australia, just weeks after arriving in local showrooms. Citing a potential fault with front seat sliding assembly, Land Rover recalled 48 examples of the short wheel-base off-roader.

The affected vehicles were delivered between July and August, 2021 (stamped Model Year 2021).

The recall notice, lodged with the Department of Infrastructure, says: "The front seat end stop brackets may not meet specifications, as a result it may allow the seat to latch further forward than intended." "A reduced seat performance or strength in an event of an accident increases the risk of injury or death to vehicle occupants."

A spokesperson for Jaguar Land Rover in Australia told Drive: There have been no reported incidents or injuries related

to this recall in Australia.

"A concern has been identified on select vehicles equipped with the manually adjustable fore/aft seats, where the front seat track end stop brackets may not meet specifications, as a result the seat may latch further forward than intended." "Vehicles with affected end stop brackets could, in the event of a crash,

allow reduced seat strength and seat performance integrity, increasing the risk of injury.

"Owners of affected vehicles will be contacted by Jaguar Land Rover and are asked to make arrangements with their nearest authorised Land Rover retailer to have the work carried out free of charge.



UK car production plummets to lowest level since 1956 amid chip shortage, worker absences

U.K. car production plummeted to a new low last month, marking the worst July performance for the industry since 1956, according to a trade group.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders said that U.K. manufacturers built just 53,438 vehicles in July, marking a 37.6% drop on July 2020.

A global semiconductor shortage, factory shutdowns and worker absences amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic all contributed to the decline, SMMT said.

While July was a particularly bad month, car production across U.K. factories is up 18.3% year-to-date compared to 2020, when Covid restrictions meant people couldn't go to work. Some 552,361 cars have been built in the U.K. since January, but that's still 28.7% down on 2019 pre-pandemic

levels.

Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive, said in a statement that the figures "lay bare the extremely tough conditions UK car manufacturers continue to face."

"While the impact of the 'pingdemic' will lessen as self-isolation rules change, the worldwide shortage of semiconductors shows little sign of abating,"

The so-called "pingdemic" referred to people receiving notifications on their phones telling them to self-isolate for several days if they came into contact with someone who tested positive for Covid-19.

Why is the car industry suffering?

New vehicles have dozens of microchips in them to control everything from power steering and car stereos to acceleration and electric windows.

The U.K. is making more electric cars,

which have significantly more chips in them, than ever before.

Approximately 26% of the cars built by U.K. manufacturers in July were either battery electric, plug in hybrid, or hybrid electric, SMMT said, adding that this is a new record. It said U.K. car factories have turned out 126,757 of these products since the start of the year.

Several car manufacturers cancelled semiconductor orders at the start of the pandemic because they were concerned about a drop in sales. But when sales recovered faster than expected, the car giants found themselves at the end of the line for chips.

Sweden's Volvo, Germany's Volkswagen and Japan's Toyota all announced this week that they will have to reduce production further if there is not an urgent solution to the chip crisis.

German technology and engineering group Bosch, which is the world's largest car-parts supplier, told CNBC this week that semiconductor supply chains in the automotive industry are no longer fit for purpose.

Harald Kroeger, a member of the Bosch management board, said that supply

chains have buckled in the last year as demand for chips in everything from cars to PlayStation 5s and electric toothbrushes has surged worldwide.

The car industry is a crucial cog in the U.K. economy, generating over £78.9 billion (\$108.4 billion) a year. Approximately 180,000 people work in manu-

facturing while 864,000 are employed in the wider supply chain.

Roughly 30 manufacturers are building 70 car models in the U.K. at present. That includes local firms such as Jaguar Land Rover, Vauxhall and Rolls-Royce, as well as international firms like Ford and Nissan.

2022 Range Rover Sport SVR Ultimate Edition gets new colours and bespoke detailing

The Range Rover Sport SVR is the fastest and most powerful SUV from Land Rover. But for 2022, the Range Rover Sport SVR Ultimate Edition has received a few bespoke elements from the SV Bespoke Group, the same folks behind the custom Jag F-Type Heritage 60 Edition. The SUV will debut at Salon Privé, Blenheim Palace, UK, on September 1, 2021.

Also new is a body-colour carbon fiber hood to reduce weight. The hood has accompanying air vents as a telltale sign of the herculean muscle awaiting underneath. Other custom touches include 22-inch forged alloy wheels, black brake calipers, and black detailing on the mirror caps, front grille, and tailgate. "Range Rover Sport SVR redefined Land Rover high-performance capability when it was introduced in 2014," said Mark Turner, Commercial Director, Land Rover SV Bespoke. "The SV Bespoke personalization features of this Ultimate edition elevate its appeal even further."

Under its carbon fiber hood is a 5.0-liter

supercharged V8 engine pumping out 567 horsepower and 516 pound-feet of torque, enough brute force to accelerate from zero to 60 mph in 4.3-seconds. Meanwhile, the top speed is at 176 mph, making the Range Rover Sport SVR one of the fastest SUVs for the money.

Inside, the Ultimate Edition gets chrome SV Bespoke B-pillar badges, illuminated treadplates, anodized metal pedal shifters, and light performance seats with

embossed SVR logos. Other standard goodies include sport-tuned air suspension, a 19-speaker Meridian audio system, and four-zone auto climate control. Advanced safety features like lane-keeping assist, parking sensors, forward collision mitigation, blind-spot monitoring, driver attention warning, and a surround-view camera are all standard, too.

The 2022 Range Rover Sport SVR Ultimate Edition is available to order now.



Buy a 2022 Land Rover Defender 110 Trophy Edition, Join an Off-Road Competition

A one-day off-road adventure in the Land Rover U.S. Trophy Competition is part of the limited edition package.

Land Rover North America is producing 220 exclusive Defender Trophy Edition 2022 Defender 110s to honor the platform's expedition-ready pedigree.

The Trophy Edition Defender begins with the 2022 Defender 110 P400 X-Dynamic SE and adds a custom wrap, the Extended Black Exterior package, a tow hitch receiver, a Clear-Sight rearview camera, the Air Suspension package, the Cold Climate package, a 11.4-inch touchscreen, the Off-Road package, and the Advanced Off-Road Capability package. The more hands-on list of goodies includes an expedition roof rack, a front skidplate, a deployable ladder, a winch installation kit, mud flaps, an integrated air compressor, and rubber floor mats.

When you become one of 220 people to own a Defender Trophy Edition, you get the opportunity to also be part of a one-day off-road adventure in the Land Rover U.S. Trophy Competition. Up to 90 teams (that's six waves of 15 teams maximum on a first come, first served basis) will compete at the legendary Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Caro-

lina, starting October 11, 2021. Competitors will face a number of on- and off-road challenges, including physical and team-building obstacles. Expert one-on-one coaching will be provided as part of the adventure, giving customers a unique opportunity to develop extreme driving techniques and skills in their own vehicle, before putting their training to the test. The Land Rover Defender Trophy Edition will be available in August 2021 and will be priced at \$91,350. They can be purchased at select Land Rover retailers in the United States.



Land Rover Defender 90 2022 review

Replacing a much-loved mud-plugging design classic that was well-past its use-by date is one thing, but following it up with an innovative, refined, spacious and easy do-anything/go-anywhere SUV wagon with striking design is quite the achievement. If you option it up smartly, the 90 can be all things to all people – not just for ones away from the city.

In the esteemed words of one Dannie Minogue, THIS is it! This is where Land Rover's New Defender truly faces the music. This is the long-awaited, much-anticipated, short-wheelbase '90' three-door wagon.

Arriving nearly a year after the 110 5-door wagon launched, the 90 is the true style icon of the New Defender range. More so than other Land Rovers like the Range Rovers, Discovery and Evoque, the 90 is the one with a direct lineage to the 1948 80-inch wheelbase 2-door original.

But is this a case of style over substance as well as sentimentality over common sense? The answer may really surprise you.

Does it represent good value for the price? What features does it come with? 7/10

Let's get the toughest part out of the way first. The Defender 90's pricing is not for the faint hearted. The most basic model starts from \$74,516 before on-road costs, and it isn't exactly heaving with standard equipment, though all essentials are present. Even its steering wheel is plastic.

Referring to the historical size of the short-wheelbase model (in inches), the 90 is split into eight models and five engines, as well as six trims.

Here's the pricing breakdown, and all are before on-road costs – and listen up, because this can get confusing as

the Defender is the most multi-configurable LR ever made! Strap in, folks!

Only the base P300 petrol and its slightly more expensive D200 diesel counterpart from \$74,516 and \$81,166 respectively come in the standard trim, officially known simply as 'Defender 90'.

These include keyless entry, a "walk-through" cabin (thanks to the gap between the front seats), active cruise control, dual-zone climate control, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, digital radio, a 10-inch touchscreen screen with LR's advanced Pivo Pro multimedia system offering over-the-air updates, surround-view camera, heated folding door mirrors, semi-electric front seats, LED headlights, rear parking sensors, 18-inch wheels and all the most important safety features, which I'll cover in detail in the Safety chapter.

For an \$80K+ luxury-branded SUV, it's pretty basic, but then again, it has proper go-anywhere 4WD capabilities. More on that later.

Next up is the 'S', and it's only available in P300 from \$83,346 and D250 from \$90,326. 'S' ushers in colour-coded exterior trim, leather upholstery (including the steering wheel rim – finally!), digitised instrumentation, a front centre console, 40:20:40 split-fold rear seats with armrest and 19-inch alloys! Oh, the luxury!

The SE breaches the \$100K mark by some \$326, and is only available with the P400, meaning a 3.0-litre in-line turbo six-cylinder petrol engine, Matrix LED headlights, fancy ambient cabin lighting, better leather, fully-electric front seats with driver-side memory, a 10-speaker 400W audio upgrade and 20-inch alloys.

Meanwhile, the luxurious P400 XS Edition from \$110,516 lives up to its implied

name with body-coloured exterior bits, panoramic sunroof, privacy glass, even more-trick Matrix headlights, a small refrigerator, 'ClearSight' rear-view camera-mirror (normally a \$1274 option elsewhere), cooled as well as heated front seats, wireless smartphone charging and electronic air suspension with adaptive dampers that absolutely smother the road for a lush ride. At \$1309, this is an essential option in lesser grades.

For more focused off-road adventures, there's the P400 X from \$141,356, bringing a few more 4x4-related items as well as goodies like an instrumentation heads-up display and 700W surround-sound audio.

Finally – for the time being – the \$210,716 P525 V8 is like the full-on mini-Range Rover experience distilled in the Defender 90 package. Along with 240km/h supercharged V8 thrust, it boasts unique exterior accents, blacked-out trim, higher-grade leather, 22-inch wheels and even an 'Activity Key' wearable watch that allows for surfers, swimmers, and others who regularly face extreme conditions to literally wear their key via a watch-like strap-on device. Normally it's a \$910 extra.

Note there are four accessory packs available that bunch together themed options, called Explorer, Adventure, Country and Urban. With over 170 individual accessories, a favourite is the folding fabric roof for just under \$5K extra, adding a bit of old-school Citroen 2CV chic to the Defender.

Metallic paint adds between \$2060 and \$3100 to the bottom line, while choosing a black or white contrasting roof is another \$2171. Ouch!

So, does the Defender 90 represent good value? Off-road capability-wise, it's right up there with large 4x4 icons like the Toyota LandCruiser and Nissan Patrol, but both are body-on-frame in construction rather than monocoque-bodied as per the Brit, so aren't quite as adept dynamically (or for refinement) on-road. Plus, these are packaged as Defender 110 wagon rivals, with no competitor anywhere matching the Land Rover's three-door shape. The Jeep Wrangler you say? That's much more utilitarian. And not a monocoque.

Literally and metaphorically, the Defender 90 stands alone.



Is there anything interesting about its design? 10/10

This is a case of engineering helping shape design because the old one was legislated out of existence.

Blunt yet comparatively aerodynamic (with a Cd from 0.38), the L663 Defender 90 is a clean, post-modern interpretation of a legendary style that works because it only retains themes rather than outright details of the original. In that regard, there are also parallels with the first Defender of 1990.

The design is beautifully balanced and proportioned. Clean, spare and like nothing else on the road, it looks even better in real life. The 4.3-metre length is properly compact (though with the mandatory spare, that jumps to nearly 4.6m), offset nicely by a wide 2.0m girth (mirrors in; it's 2.1m with them out) and 2.0m height, providing pleasing proportions. Fun fact: that 2587mm wheelbase (down from 3022mm in the 110) means – in imperial measurement – the Defender 90 should actually be called the '101.9', as that's its length in inches. Built on the D7x platform that is "an extreme version" of what's found in the Range Rover, Range Rover Sport and Discovery, the Defender is most closely related to the latter, with both being assembled at the same new factory in Slovakia.

But Land Rover claims that 95 per cent of the Defender is new, and while its styling is meant to evoke the classic models built over three distinct generations until 2016, the fact is, they are nothing alike.

For many fans, the move to a monocoque construction is probably the biggest departure for the Defender. And while it is bigger in every dimension than before, Land Rover says technology has actually improved the icon 4x4's off-road prowess. For example, the all-aluminium body is said to be thrice as stiff compared to a typical body-on-frame 4WD. Suspension is independent all round (double wishbones up front, integral links out back) with rack-and-pinion steering.

Key points to keep in mind is that ground clearance is 225mm, rising to 291mm if necessary with the optional air suspension; and minimal overhangs bring exceptional all-terrain capability. Approach angle is 31 degrees, ramp angle is 25 degrees and departure angle is 38 degrees. And, let's face it. Everything about the way the LR looks



screams adventure. Design well done.

How practical is the space inside? 8/10

Here's how we see it.

If you want space and practicality for a family, stretch a little to the 110 wagon. It has the access, room and cargo capacity that the 90 cannot hope to match. That's obvious just by looking at it.

With that in mind, the Defender 90 is after a different type of buyer – ones that are wealthy, urban yet adventurous, and where size matters. Compact is king.

Clamber up and inside, and several things strike you at once – and don't worry, it's not badly packaged cabin trim. The doors are hefty; the seating is high; the driving position is grandstand-level commanding, aided by a disarmingly large steering wheel and stubby dash-mounted lever; and there's a great deal of room – including at last space for elbows without having to lower the window.

The Defender interior's aroma is expensive, the vision out expansive, rubber floors and wipe-down cloth seating refreshing and the sparse symmetry of the solid dashboard timeless. Land Rover calls it 'reductionist' thinking. No other new 4x4 on the planet hits these markers.

Despite its base status, the instrumentation – a combination of digital and analogue – is handsome and informative; the climate-control system simple; the fittings and switchgear are of a sturdy quality and the 10-inch touchscreen set-up (dubbed Pivo Pro) instant, intuitive and easy on the eye. From multimedia also-rans to front-runners, well done,

Jaguar Land Rover.

The front seats are firm yet enveloping, with electric rake adjustment but manual fore-aft control, which is a boon for fast seat sliding to access the back seat via a bordering-on-too-narrow gap. It's a squeeze, even for skinny people.

Storage is sufficient rather than outstanding, with our \$1853-optional Jump Seat providing additional Big Gulp-sized cupholders and a quartet of charging outlets behind when the back side of the backrest is folded down instead of erect (at a fixed angle). This is a well-padded and reasonably comfy but narrow seat; and though it is set even higher than the outboard buckets, it requires users to straddle the lower console in a slightly awkward manner.

But the fact the Jump Seat provides a three-birth front row utterly makes the Defender 90's case for consideration. It's easier to slide across there rather than clamber out back, and great for dogs who wish to be as close to their human loved ones as possible, and – well – would be a boon at a drive-in.

A word of warning, however: you might need to \$1274 extra for that video rear-view mirror, because the centre seat's tombstone silhouette all but blocks the driver's rear vision.

That all said, the rear seating area does offer more practicality than the Defender 90's compact dimensions suggest. Getting in and out is always going to be harder, and there's not much space between the front seat and post, it's a case of squeezing past. At least the latch is mounted high and is a one-tug movement.

The big surprise, though, is that there's



sufficient space for most people. Lots of leg, knee, head and shoulder room; three can fit fairly comfortably; and while the cushion is firm and the cloth material a tad coarse, there's enough support and cushioning. No folding centre arm-rest is cheeky in an \$80K machine, the side windows are fixed and there is a lot of monochromatic rubber and plastic back there, but at least you'll get to enjoy directional air vents, USB and charging ports and even somewhere to put your cups (by your ankles). No map pockets is a bit too tight, though, Land Rover.

I also really dig the skylights – very early Discovery – and the sturdy grab handles, which add to the airy and glassy feel back here. This is a genuine three-seater back here.

But there's a price to pay for all this back-seat space, and that is a compromised cargo area. From floor to waist-line it's 240 litres or just 397L to the ceiling. And if you fold these seats down, the uneven floor boosts that to 1563L. The floor is rubberised and so hardy, while the kerbside opening door reveals a big square aperture to easily load stuff through.

Here's the thing. If you opt for that \$1853 Jump Seat, it turns this into a unique three-seater wagon or panel van, adding a surprising degree of unique practicality.

What are the key stats for the engine and transmission? 8/10

Under the bonnet, there are no less than five engine choices – and unlike in classic Defenders of all – they're not old and rattly diesels either, but instead (like the body) state-of-the-art.

Petrol-powered Defenders first.

The 90 we're driving, the P300, might be the cheapest, but it isn't the slowest. Using a 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo, there's a decent 221kW of power at 5500rpm and 400Nm of torque from 1500-4500rpm. It's enough for the 90 to scoot to 100km/h in 7.1 seconds despite weighing in at almost 2.2 tonnes. Not bad at all.

The P400, meanwhile, uses an all-new 294kW/550Nm 3.0-litre in-line six-cylinder engine. This needs just 6.0s to hit the 100km/h marker.

But if you really want to throw down the performance gauntlet, then it has to be the P525 - a thundering 386kW/625Nm 5.0L supercharged V8, that streaks past 100km/h in only 5.2s. Heady stuff...

On the turbo-diesel front, things quieten down again. Also coming in at 3.0-litres in either 147kW/500Nm D200 or gutsier 183kW/570Nm D250 tune, the former needs 9.8 seconds to 100, while the latter slashes that to a much-more re-

spectable 8.0s flat. That alone probably justifies the \$9200 premium.

All engines drive all four wheels via an eight-speed torque-converter automatic transmission.

Speaking of 4WD, the Defender features a twin-speed transfer box with high and low range. Land Rover's latest Terrain Response is also available, which varies accelerator response, differential control and traction sensitivity according to conditions such as wading through water, crawling over rocks, and driving in mud, sand or snow as well as on grass or gravel.

Note that towing capacity is 750kg unbraked and 3500kg braked.

How much fuel does it consume? 7/10 According to the official combined fuel figures, the P300 averages a disappointing 10.1L/100km, for a carbon dioxide emissions rating of 235 grams per kilometre.

Superior economy is promised by the diesels, with both the D200 and D250 recording 7.9L/100km, for a CO₂ emissions result of 207g/km. This is aided by mild-hybrid technology, which helps store wasted brake energy into a special battery to help save fuel.

Things get worse again with the P400's 9.9L/100km (230g/km), though it must be pointed out that this is also a mild hybrid and so is slightly better than its smaller and less powerful P300 sibling. Predictably, worst of the lot is the V8, with its 12.8L/100km thirst (290g/km). No shocks here...

Note that over a few hundred kilometres, our P300 sat on about 12L/100km, and much of that was on rural roads - so there's definitely room for improvement there. Also, keep in mind, using



the official 10.1L/100km figure, and with a 90L tank in tow, there's a handy theoretical range of almost 900km between refills. Of course, all petrol Defenders prefer to gulp down premium unleaded.

What safety equipment is fitted?

What safety rating? 9/10

The only crash-test rating relevant to Australia for the Defender is the 110 wagon's five-star result, obtained in 2020. Which means there isn't a specific one for the Defender 90, but Land Rover states the shorter version retains the same status.

It does get six airbags – dual front and side airbags, plus curtain airbags that cover both rows to provide protection for outboard occupants.

All versions also include Autonomous Emergency Braking (that works from 5km/h to 130km/h) with pedestrian and cyclist recognition, as well as active cruise control, traffic sign recognition that will alert you if the speed limit changes, rear cross-traffic alert, lane guidance, blind-spot alert, a surround view camera, forward traffic detention, forward vehicle guidance, rear traffic monitor, seatbelt reminders, a clear exit monitor (great for not dooring cyclists), anti-lock brakes, electronic brake-force distribution, brake assist and traction control.

The S gains auto automatic high beams, while the SE, XS Edition, X and V8 score matrix headlights. Both dramatically improve driving security in low-light conditions.

A trio of child seat tether latches are provided behind the rear seatbacks, while a pair of ISOFIX fittings are located at the base of the outboard rear cushions.

What does it cost to own? What warranty is offered? 8/10

Nowadays, all Land Rovers come with a five-year unlimited kilometre warranty and roadside assistance. While that is standard stuff with the mainstream brands, it matches Mercedes-Benz's efforts and so is ahead of the paltry three-year guarantees offered by premium marques like Audi and BMW.

While capped price servicing is not available, a pre-paid service plan lasting for five years/102,000km maximum costing between \$1950 and \$2650 depending on engine, topping out from \$3750 for the V8.

Service intervals are driving and condition based, with a service indicator on

the dashboard as per most BMWs; but we recommend a trip to the dealer every 12 months or 15,000km.

What's it like to drive? 8/10

Though the cheapest Defender 90 and the only one with a four-cylinder engine, the P300 – the only example provided to us by Land Rover for the Australian launch at this time – is certainly neither slow nor unrefined.

Acceleration is brisk right from step off, with speed building up quickly and really kicking in strongly as revs rise higher. If you're willing to use the Sport mode, the slick-shifting eight-speed torque-converter auto is equally smooth and responsive. This really is a lusty, muscular engine, and does an exceptional job keeping the 2.2-tonne P300 moving. Most people should find the Defender 90's steering equally welcome and amendable. It's effortless and easy around town, with an awesomely tight turning circle and a fluidity to the way it glides about. No issues in this environment at all.

However, the steering can feel a little too light at higher speeds, with a remoteness that might be disconcerting for some. In moderately tight turns, the helm and obvious shifting of weight on the coil springs can bring on a ponderous and even top-heavy feel at speed. Get past that feeling though and, actually, the Defender 90 is mostly reassuringly planted and secure in such condi-

tions, and is ably assisted by driver-assist safety tech that is constantly monitoring where and when to cut or redistribute power to whatever wheel needs it to ensure the Land Rover tracks true. And once you're familiar with the P300's dynamic characteristics, you'll start to feel at home hoofing it along at a pace.

Along with the ESC and traction controls' eagerness to intervene good and early, the brakes are also primed, to work hard to wash speed away quickly and without drama or fade. Again, there's a sense of solid, quality engineering going on underneath.

And it's well worth remembering if you are an owner of the traditional old Defender: as the 90 P300 demonstrates, the L633's dynamics are a thousand times better than any preceding production iteration.

Lastly but not at all least, we're impressed with the coil suspension and 255/70R18 rubber (wearing Wrangler A/T all-terrain tyres) that sheathe those fabulous steel wheels. The ride quality is firm but not unyielding and never harsh, with ample absorption, as well as isolation from bigger bumps and road noise, betraying the posh Range Rover genes that lurk within.

Again, that's something you could never say about the old Defender. And quite remarkable too, given that this is the 90 SWB on tough tyres.



Man Takes His Land Rover for Swimming Lessons, Turns It Into a Scuba Rover

It must be the heat or something in the air because crazy stunts are starting to be a daily occurrence. After we saw a guy drive a three-wheeler Honda contraption with 66-inch tires through a lake, this time, a very brave man turned his Land Rover into a Scuba Rover.

Watching a monster truck go through deep water is always cool. Seeing how far its off-road capabilities can take it is truly mesmerizing, but a Land Rover attempting to cross a lake is a whole 'nother story.

Okay, the company did officially state that a Land Rover 4x4 can actually go through water up to 3 feet (90 cm) deep. But wading through three feet is one thing and fully submerging your vehicle is another. And we're talking here about a 1987 Range Rover Classic, which, a man named Nathan Gibbons from Derbyshire, England, is trying to take it to swimming lessons.

According to Derby Telegraph, this is not the first dive he's taken with the vehicle. Nathan decided to make his old Range

Rover Classic amphibious after he and his friends drowned its engine in a river back in April.

That was enough to spark an even crazier idea in his mind: cross an entire lake with it. And he did. Nathan and his friends gathered up again for the stunt. After he fitted a huge handmade "snorkel" to the engine of the 1987 classic, he and one of his friends plunged into the water. They had to hold their breath for 15 seconds before making it out.

You can actually see below that the 4x4 vanished into the water in a field in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, leaving only the duct-taped engine "snorkel" and some of the roof visible. They didn't even bother pulling up their windows for this risky maneuver (don't try this, folks).

As crazy as it might sound, Nathan has plans for even more daring challenges in the future. "We've got to repair the Range Rover first, but we've got a little Smart car, and we're on about making it do a jump in the water.", he says to Derby Telegraph.



A Look Back At The 1970 Land Rover IIA

Land Rovers can make the impossible look effortless, and the 1970 Series IIA Land Rover is one such example of this trait.

The Land Rover Series II and IIA SUVs were essential vehicles in the legacy of this historic brand. The SUVs stemming from these series were known for their incredible off-road capabilities and go-anywhere personality. They were tough, rugged, and were the definition of a true off-roader. Apart from tackling the unpredictable outdoors, the SUVs of this period were extremely important as well.

The Series IIA Land Rover helped solidify the brand's reputation as the go-to manufacturer when it came to the world of

off-roading. No other brand came even close to their functional capabilities, and the future of this off-road automaker seemed brighter than ever. The Series IIA Land Rover did wonders in its time and is a respectable name even in the modern era.

The Series IIA Land Rover was in a league of its own. It cemented itself as one of the top-tier off-roaders in the market at the time. Its handy design, practical capabilities, record sales figures, and various televised appearances helped the Land Rover skyrocket in popularity and reputation.

The Series IIA Land Rover was introduced to the public in 1961. Its design language was variegated, with a 2-door

concept consisting of a soft-top or a wagon configuration. Along with this, a pickup version and a four-door wagon version added to the overall diverse exterior layout of the all-mighty Land Rover.

The design was useful and catered heavily towards the functionality factor of the SUV. The only significant update the series IIA housed over its predecessor was the outboard movement of its headlight units instead of them being present on either side of its grille. The evident and noticeable placement of the spare wheel gave the SUV an instantly recognizable front fascia, and one could not mistake this machine to be anything other than a Land Rover.



An Absolute Powerhouse

The power-train options on the Land Rover sported some variety as well. The 109 version of the IIA Land Rovers housed a 2.6-liter straight-six gasoline unit by 1967. Other engine options included a 2.0-liter diesel unit with 51 hp and a bigger 2.25-liter gasoline unit with 77 hp. Both these engine types came with four cylinders, but the newer 2.6-liter gasoline-only engine configuration evolved further, sporting six cylinders and increased power output to a total of 94 hp. The IIA sported gradual yet subtle changes in terms of design from its predecessor. The one and only significant change came in the form of its ascend in the performance category. The Land Rover had enough to keep its functionality factor as fresh as it could be. The SUV was purpose-built and was meant for the outdoors. A strong example of this fact was the grille of this machine, which could be used to cook meat.

An Appreciating Historic Asset

The Series IIA was one of the most successful offerings by the brand at the time. The popularity of this machine was on a gradual ascend, with various appearances in television, movies, and documentaries. The most noticeable appearance of the SUV was in the 1960s in the film *Born Free*. The sales figures of these SUVs were at an all-time high and helped solidify the Land Rover name further as one of the most popular and ultimate off-road automobile manufacturers at the time.

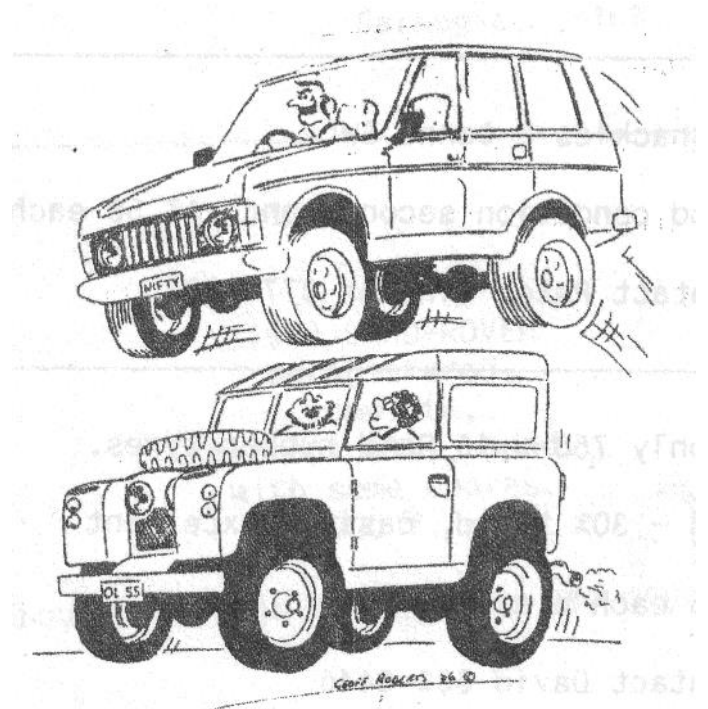
The problem with a mainstream car in modern times is that it falls under the category of a depreciating asset. However, the Series IIA Land Rover says otherwise, as this piece of history manages to hold and appreciate in value in the constantly fluctuating world of the modern economic scenario. Motoring enthusiasts across the globe pounce at the opportunity

of getting their hands on this important relic. Many hardcore restoration experts display their excitement towards this SUV in the modern era, paying a premium price and even investing a huge chunk of capital in bringing back the lost sheen and glory of this once outdoorsy and rugged off-roader.

The overall condition of the SUV determines the value of these machines, and the range is vast. Depending on the various model years and engine configurations, the price points are seldom definitive. Even the most neglected and poorly maintained Series IIA machines can sell for well over \$10,100, while the flawlessly well-maintained machines can do a price tag of around \$58,500.

The Series IIA Land Rover SUVs were not just competent but were an essential piece in the vast puzzle that is the world of off-roaders. With their top-notch utilitarian capabilities, handy engine configurations, and intelligent exterior layouts, these SUVs proved extremely useful.

The Land Rover brand in the current day and age can largely credit its healthy growth and popularity quotient to its SUVs from the years past. The likes of the Series IIA's paved through the rough terrain of success and gave the brand the status as one of the most untouchable and ultimate off-road SUV manufacturers of all time.



"Must be one of them new-fangled overdrive jobs!"

When Afghanistan was a land of peace and plenty



A British explorer's fascinating images from a 1955 Land Rover expedition show a nation unchanged since the time of Marco Polo. British photographer Christopher Balfour went on an epic journey with a team of explorers from Cambridge. They travelled through 11 countries in a veteran Land Rover and explored little-visited regions of Afghanistan. A fascinating 120-page book sheds light on their expedition and shows countryside untouched by modern life.

Eye-opening images taken by a British photographer of Afghanistan in peacetime have been revealed in a new book. In a fascinating 120-page book, travel writer Christopher Balfour reveals a side of the country that few will recognise, untouched by modern times and decades of unrest. The photographs capture locals engaging in domestic life in a stunning landscape which had changed little in six centuries



with one image showing a man holding up two fish that he had caught from the nearby river. In another image, Balfour captured a vast temple and one of two Bamayan statues - a huge Buddha figure that had been carved hundreds of feet high into a cliff face, which was later destroyed by the Taliban in 2001. Other images show a man lugging bales of hay on his back, a farmer sowing his field using two cows to pull the machinery, and an encampment in the desert with camels for transport.

The images have been released in the new book 'Afghanistan at a time of peace: A 1955 journey into the Boharak plain in a veteran Land Rover' by Christopher Balfour and is published by Tricorn Books.

A team from Cambridge travelled overland to the mountainous country that is Afghanistan and found a place largely unchanged and untouched by the modern life of the time. They entered Kabul and travelled across the country, exploring the stunning rural countryside.

The team's photographs show they travelled to Bamiyan - an ancient city famous for empty hillside niches that once sheltered the giant Buddha statues which were blown up by the Taliban.

In 2015, Afghanistan attempted to boost tourism to the area as it is considered a rare oasis of tranquillity that has largely been spared the wrenching conflict that afflicts the rest of Afghanistan.

They also show the Blue Mosque of Mazar-e-Sharif - a mosque in the Balkh province which Sunni Muslims believe contains the tomb of Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib.

The explorers even reached the remote Boharak Valley and set up camp alongside the River Zardeh. Throughout the book, they keep a diary of their travels and the places they reach, as well as the performance and repair done to the Land Rover en-route.

'In 1955, Afghanistan was in the middle of King Zahir Shah's forty-year peaceful rule,' writes Christopher.

'After his well-liked father, Nadir, had been assassinated in 1933 after only four years in power, Zahir was appointed aged nineteen.

'Nadir's cousin, Amanullah, was exiled to Italy in 1929. This was because of his unpopular attempts at modernisation following his trips to Europe.'

Mohammed Zahir Shah was the last King of Afghanistan, reigning until he was deposed in 1973. Throughout the Second World War and afterwards, the king helped steer the country on a path of neutrality.

The popular leader was behind many political and social reforms, including attempts to improve the status of women as well as reforms which provided for a parliament, elections and a free press.

He was overthrown while vacationing in Italy in 1973 by a coup d'etat organised by his cousin and former prime minister Mohammed Daoud Khan.

The former King remained in exile until 2002 when he returned to Afghanistan and was given the title of Father of the Nation.

He died in 2007 and his long reign was marked by peace in the country that was lost afterwards and is often regarded nostalgically by Afghans.

Balfour continues: 'Welcomed by the Afghan authorities in Kabul, the team from Cambridge had travelled overland through the mountainous country.

'It was arranged that they could visit Badakshan and after much-appreciated hospitality, they reached the Boharak Valley.

'They were invited to set up camp alongside the River Zardeh. For three weeks the local people were kind hosts and explained their way of life.

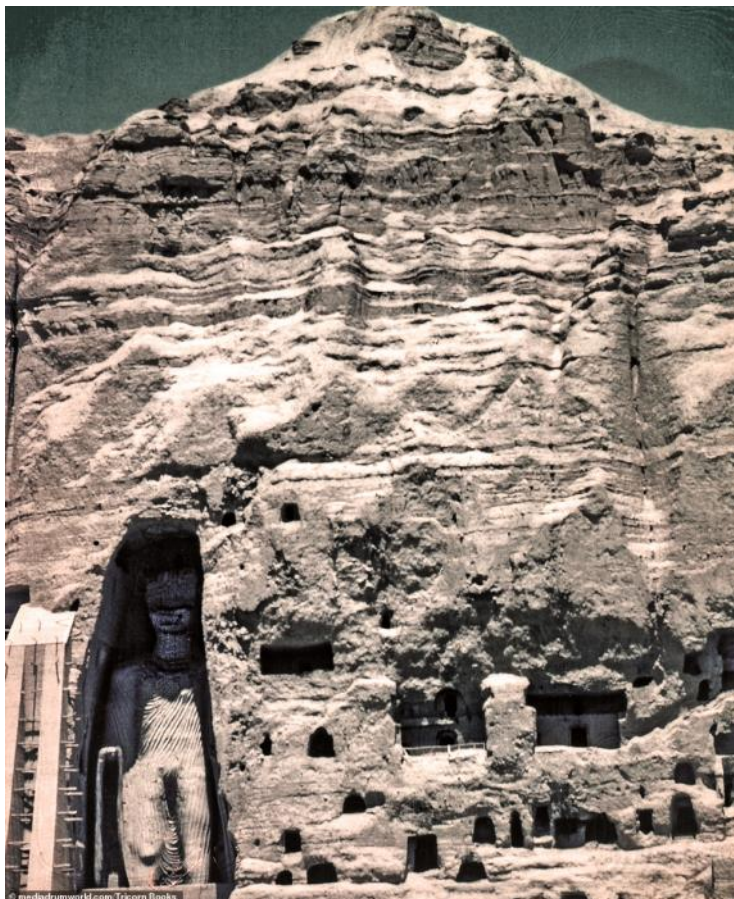
'Afghanistan was then much the same as Marco Polo had described it six centuries earlier.

'No visible buildings. Lush grass and trees. Air so pure and salubrious to cure all sickness. The team was leant a Land Rover OUE 271 by Rover which never "failed to proceed" through eleven countries.'

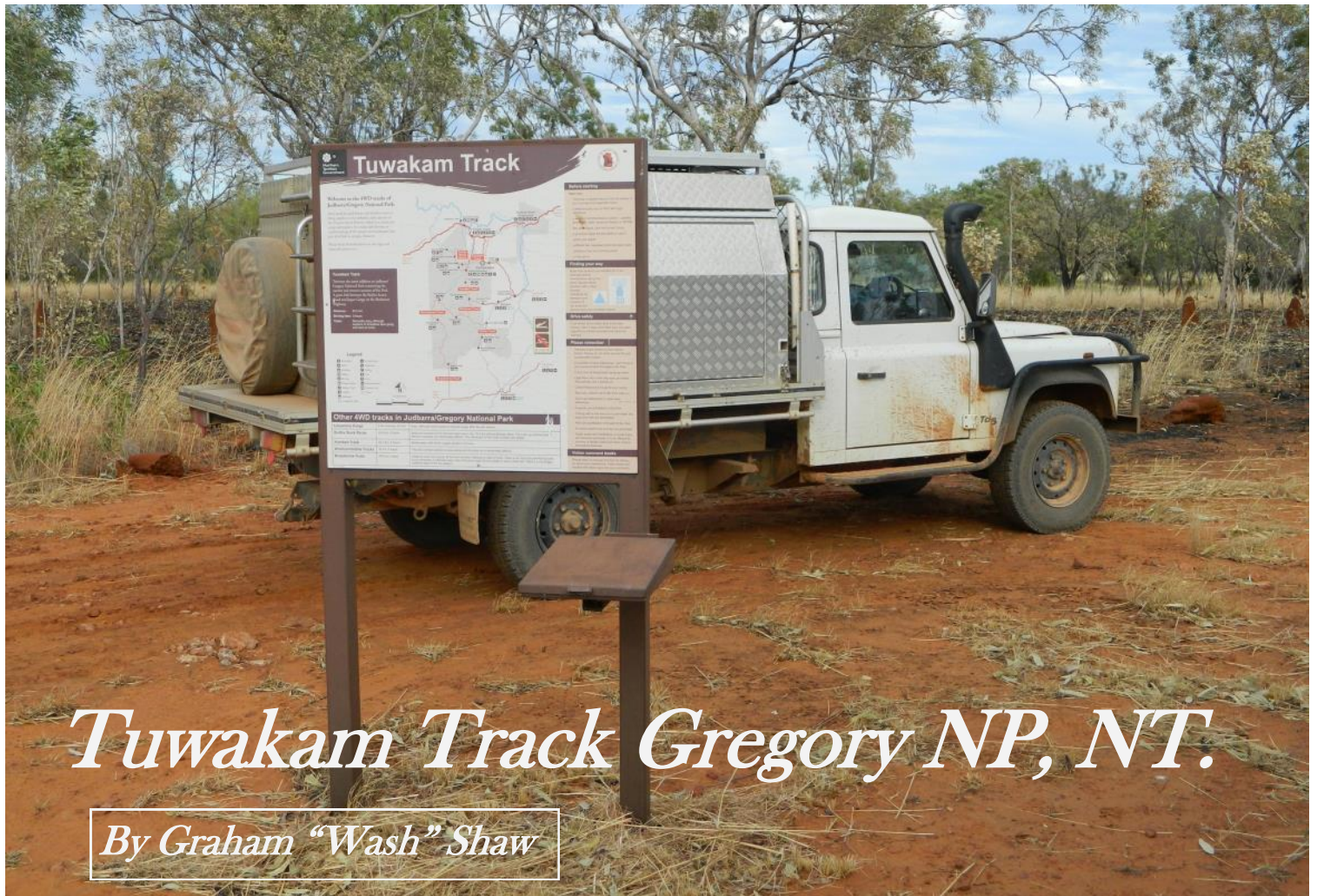
Published by Tricorn Books, Afghanistan at a time of peace: A 1955 journey into the Boharak plain in a veteran Land Rover by Christopher Balfour, is available to buy for RRP £16.99.



Christopher was part of a team from Cambridge that travelled overland through 11 countries to the mountainous region of Afghanistan in a Land Rover and found a place largely unchanged and untouched by the modern life of the time



One of the huge Bamayan statues carved into the mountain which were later destroyed by the Taliban in 2001



Tuwakam Track Gregory NP, NT.

By Graham "Wash" Shaw

Coming across from Daly Waters following Binns Track (Buchanan Highway) Perry and I stopped at Top Springs to enquire if the Humbert Track into Gregory National Park was open. "Yes, it was opened a week or 2 ago." When we arrived at Victoria River Downs the signs indicated that the Humbert Track was closed. We pushed on and as it was getting late as we finally entered the edge of Gregory NP with a sign indicating a camp site about 12kms further into the park. At around that distance we came to Jasper Gorge Picnic area with several "No Camping" signs. We drove about 3 kms further on with no luck and headed back to the rest area. And another 2kms beyond with finding anything that looked like a campsite. It was starting to get late so we headed once more along the Buchanan Highway and kept an eye out for somewhere suitable for our 2 vehicles to camp the night. Five km's further on as we left Jasper Gorge, we found the just opened Lupayi Campground. It has toilets, tables with seats and bbq/firepits.



Next morning we continue northwards and came shortly to the Tuwakam Track into Gregory NP, with no sign indicating it was closed. A decent track and we followed as far as the edge of the actual park where a sign indicated it was 20.2kms to the Bullita Access Road (main Gregory NP road).

Tuwakam Track

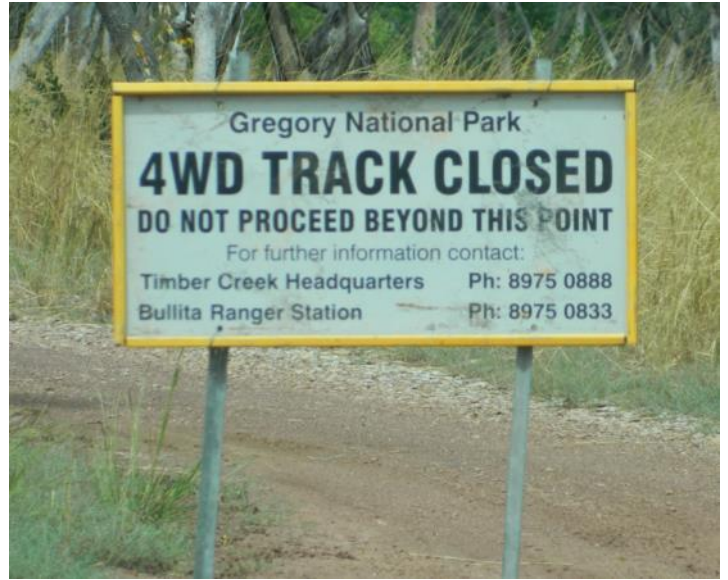
Traverses the latest addition to Judbarra/ Gregory National Park connecting the eastern and western sections of the Park. A great link between the Bullita Access Road and Jasper Gorge on the Buchanan Highway.

Distance: 20.2 km

Driving time: 3 hours

Track: Generally easy, although sections of limestone slow going and hard on tyres.





It was still a reasonable track and the 3 hours seemed a bit much when it looked much like a proper track and cruised along in 3rd High for a while. And then it was down to 2nd Low going over limestone sections. I stayed in Low for the rest of the track running between 4th and 2nd. At one point I managed to start a wild horse stampede. While I knew Perry had drifted back a bit, I was too busy navigating the rocks to pay much attention to how far back he was. We called a stop to give ourselves a coffee break as the limestone blocks were taking a toll on the arms. I managed to have the billy boiled before he caught up so it was a quick

break. The track continued to be good and then limestone blocks to the end. Being one of those not-so-serious clock-watchers, having only just started to wear a watch after 50 years without, I didn't pay much notice of the travel time. By using a bit of help from computers and the time-stamps on photos, I reckon it took us about 2 hours, including the 10-minute smoko. I was surprised at this as the Humbert Track estimated time had been fairly reasonable. This is a seriously rough track, not overly difficult but definitely not suitable for caravans, and probably only well-sprung trailers.

November volunteer activity

Thanks to all the folk in the Parks Victoria Foothills and Souther Alps Team, we now have our location and tasks for the 15th, 16th and 17th of November volunteer activity locked in.

We have a fantastic location to work and camp at, Howitt Hut. We can camp on the grassy flat areas near the hut with the toilet close by. We have undertaken work at that location previously. Howitt is an iconic and historic hut and the surrounding scenery is some of the best in the Alpine National Park.

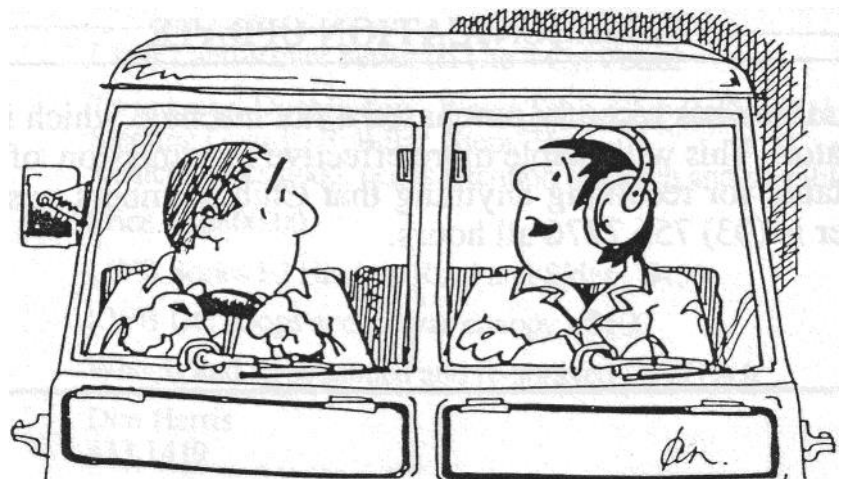
This time there is some post and rail fencing to replace, work on the toilet structure and adjacent water tank, some hut maintenance work, maybe a fire ring and general site work.

Talking to Wayne Foon it seems there will be a good representation from Parks Victoria to help us out.

I will give more details on what you will need to bring, activities, etc. in coming months.

Let's hope that the Covid situation allows us to go ahead with this activity. As I have noted previously, the November joint work will be exactly ten years since we, as a club, began our great volunteering relationship with Parks Victoria.

Greg Rose
Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland/ Parks Victoria Liaison.



"Surprisingly quiet for its age."

Howitt Hut

By Greg Rose



In November of this year Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland volunteers will be working with Parks Victoria rangers at Howitt Hut. This will be the third time club members have worked with Parks Victoria at the hut.

In May 2013 club members drove up the wet and muddy Howitt Road, with small patches of snow on the plains. At the hut we crunched through frost covered grass to do a clean-up and some minor repairs, mainly hammering nails back in to hold the corrugated iron walls through another winter. Mike Dower and Cliff Ireland were the Parks Victoria rangers we worked with on that occasion.

In May 2015, in much warmer weather, we revisited the hut with rangers Danica Shaw and Wayne Foon. Our tasks were putting in several bollards, to protect areas around the hut, clean up the interior and cut down the long grass around the exterior. Putting in the bollards was hard work, the ground being a mix of heavy soil and rocks.





Howitt Hut has a fascinating history.

Harry Stephenson's book, "Cattlemen and Huts of the High Plains" has some excellent photos of the hut as it was, when built by the Bryce family, in the early 1900s. The hut location was ideal to support summer grazing, situated at around 1600 metres above sea level, on the large grassy Howitt Plains, with ample water from the headwaters of the Caledonia River.

The hut was originally built of timber slabs and had a shingle roof. After approximately thirty-five years the hut was clad with corrugated iron, giving the structure the appearance, it has today. Probably the most original thing in the hut now is the stonework of the fireplace. The Howitt Hut area is a popular picnic and camping spot, with a long drop toilet and shady grassy places to set up camp.

The hut had a role in the aftermath of the unsolved Wonnangatta murders of late December 1917, early January of 1918, there is considerable debate about the exact date of the murders. James Barclay's body was found at Wonnangatta Station on the 23rd of February 1918. It was widely believed that the station hand, John Bamford, had murdered Barclay. A reward was posted, and a nationwide search was made for Bamford. In early November 1918 Bamford's body was discovered. A post-mortem found a bullet in the skull. At the inquest the police report stated that John Bamford's body was found under a log approximately a quarter of a mile from the Howitt Plains Hut. Suicide was considered but evidence from Doctor Backhouse, a Stratford doctor, who performed the autopsy at a Dargo hotel, showed the bullet was not fired from close range. A verdict of "murder by person or persons unknown" was made by the coroner.

The Howitt Plains area, in which the hut is situated, is a fragile sub alpine environment with snow grass plains and herb fields. Snow gums, with their stunted and twisted forms grow in the area. Walking through the tussocky grass, a few hundred metres behind the hut, a creek forming part of the headwaters of the Caledonia River is reached. Walking a short distance south, along the road from the turn into the hut, there are magnificent views to the east into the Mount Darling – Snowy Bluff Wilderness Zone. Early morning views from the road are often spectacular with the peaks rising above the cloud filled valleys. The plains are often coloured by a variety of wildflowers. The area is subject to Seasonal Closure with a gate just beyond the point where Kelly Lane meets Howitt Road.

Howitt Hut is easily reached by travelling from Licola, up the Tamboritha Road and turning onto Howitt Road at Arbuckle Junction. The road can be a little rough in places so a vehicle with good tyres and reasonable clearance is recommended. Situated at 1600 metres, even in summer months, the weather can be very chilly. Four seasons clothing and good camping gear with a warm sleeping bag should be taken for an overnight stay near the hut. Like all alpine huts, it is intended for emergency shelter and preserved for its historic value and should not be camped in.

References.

"Cattlemen and Huts of the High Plains" by Harry Stephenson. Published in 1980. The book is a valuable resource if you are interested in the history of the high country.

"The Wonnangatta Mystery – An inquiry into the unsolved murders" by Keith Leydon and Michael Ray. First edition 1999, several reprints since then. There is an excellent photograph of Howitt Hut in 1918 on page 87 of the book.

The Pod Xtreme Off Road Trailer

By Greg Rose



I have had some club members ask me about the Stockman Pod trailer that has appeared in photos of our recent trips. Hopefully this will answer the questions.

Stockman Pod trailers have been around since 2006, the factory is in the Melbourne suburb of Carrum Downs. In addition to the range of Pod trailers they also build the Rover camper trailer.

The model trailer we have is the Pod Xtreme Off Road. The base price of the Xtreme is \$12,490. There is a range of options including water tanks, jerry can holders, cargo bars and a full conversion to a camper trailer with a tent and pull-out kitchen. We were very lucky with our purchase. When we visited the

factory, in late 2019, they had no completed Xtreme trailers for sale. They did have the display trailer that had been built for that year's Leisurefest show. It had everything we wanted including rims of the same size and stud pattern as our Land Cruiser and the same tyre size. Even though it wasn't really for sale, a little bit of negotiating and the chance of a quick sale saw us drive home with the trailer that day. Our trailer has the standard Xtreme features of; a completely sealed tub with the hinged lid made from thick recycled plastic, Cruise Master independent suspension, recovery points, DO35 hitch, electric off-road brakes, dual wheel jockey wheel and a fully galvanised

heavy-duty chassis. The trailer was also fitted with 3 alloy rims and all terrain tyres, Stockman cargo bars, draw bar mounted cargo box, two jerry can holders and a heavy-duty front stone guard. Once we got the trailer home we arranged for Mat Goode, Gippsland Custom Accessories, to fit a battery and Redarc battery management system, interior LED light, power outlet to run an Engel fridge, Anderson plugs for solar panel input, LED reversing light, tie down points in the tub and a reversing camera that displays on the Land Cruiser head unit. We fitted the ARB Simpson roof top tent, that we already had, to the cargo bars. Prior to doing that we had Stockman fit the lid strengthening



kit and heavier hydraulic arms for the lid. I also made up a mesh firewood box for the drawbar, bolted drop down stabiliser legs to the rear and fitted weather-proof LED lights to protected places under the trailer to light up the ground around the trailer when camping.

The question a few people have asked is, why did we get that sort of trailer and why not a caravan. We had seen the Pod trailers being towed in some very out of the way places and did quite a lot of research on them before deciding. With apologies to the caravan owners in the club, we are not fans of caravans and prefer the camping experience that the trailer affords. There were a few factors that made the Pod ideal for us. First it is genuinely an "off road" trailer. Strong, light, and manoeuvrable. The narrow trailer means that extended towing mirrors are not needed and it can sneak down tight tracks. The independent suspension is excellent, giving the load a jostle free ride. The trailer is very easy to tow. With all our gear it weighs in at just on 1 tonne, well under its maximum allowable weight of 1250kg. The ball weight is 100 kg. It is light enough to be towed by our Discovery 1 and easily managed by our Land Cruiser 200 Series. Towing the trailer with the Land Cruiser increases fuel consumption by approximately 1 litre per hundred kilometres. That gives us a range, with our two fuel tanks, of over 1300km of normal driving. With the plastic tub and galvanised chassis there should not be rust and corrosion issues. The Pod is versatile. We can remove the roof top tent, fit the kayak racks, and easily transport up to three kayaks. It can carry all our gear meaning less weight in the Land Cruiser. Finally, the Pod Xtreme is easily housed in our garage and one person can wheel it into position.

Typically in the trailer we have a 40 litre Engel fridge (in addition to the one in the Land Cruiser), chairs, table, portable toilet, shower/toilet tent, insect proof tent, a big plastic trunk (cooking gear, 12 volt fan, gas heater, Coleman stove top oven), an AluBox (vehicle and trailer spares, oils and power tools), gas bottles, a large Coleman gas stove, another AluBox for food, a Stihl battery powered chainsaw, folding firepit, firewood and on occasions our inflatable canoe with paddles, seats, canoeing vests and wet suits. A 20-litre jerry can of diesel and 20 litre water container are carried



in the fitted jerry can holders. An additional two water containers, a 20 litre and a 10 litre are in the trailer to supplement the 55-litre water tank in the Land Cruiser. The Pod is a bit like Dr Who's TARDIS, seems much bigger on the inside. The ARB Simpson roof top tent is well made and bedding, including pillows and the all important 12-volt electric blanket, stay in the tent when it is packed up.

Another important factor, often overlooked by travelling couples, is that both Lois and I can set up and pack up our tent and whole camp and hitch up the trailer, on our own, if we had to if one of us was unable to help.

When overnight camping we leave the trailer hitched up, as the swing away tyre carriers, clear the draw bar giving

access to the rear tailgate on the Toyota. Base camping for a few days the trailer works well. The only drawback is that with the rooftop tent deployed it is a two-person task to lift the lid to access the contents of the trailer. That is not a weight issue, just that someone needs to steady the tent ladder which is not detachable. Set up time for the roof top tent for an overnighter is roughly ten minutes. Pack up time is the same. A full set up for extended camping; putting out solar panels, setting up the shower tent, table, chairs, etc. takes about 25 minutes.

A further question has been, why not have the roof top tent on the four-wheel drive, as we did very successfully for many years with our Defenders. A couple of points to answer that one. Even





though our Land Cruiser 200 wagon can carry a maximum of 200 kg on the roof, the roof top tent adds approximately 65 kg to the vehicle and is high so that has an impact on the centre of gravity. All we use the roof rack for is a hard wired Redarc solar panel, a mounting place for the awning and to carry 4 MaxTrax. A second consideration is that we tend to spend at least two nights in places now, even when on longer distance trips. Having the trailer as a base camp frees up the vehicle for exploring the area without the need to pack up the roof top tent before driving.



Even with the constraints of the last couple of years we have managed to use the trailer quite often. It has been on several trips into the high country into secluded camping spots, sometimes with the rooftop tent and on other occasions using the trailer to carry a ground tent, inflatable mattress and sleeping bags. A larger rig may have been too wide and heavy to negotiate some of the tracks. We have had it on a couple of multi week outback camping adventures and it performed superbly. The supple suspension works very well on badly corrugated roads.

A final, unexpected consequence of towing the Pod Xtreme is the curious looks and comments from people who have not seen that type of trailer. It seems to attract attention.

The Wilks Brothers: Fathers of Land Rover

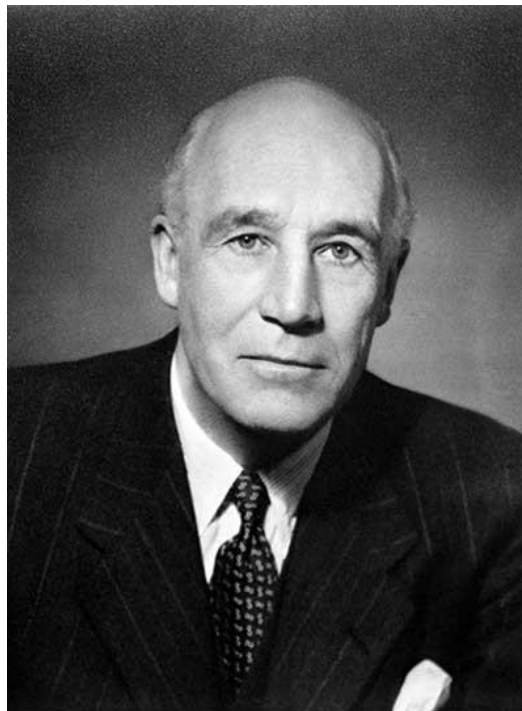
Most Land Rover owners know about the Land Rover's earliest history. The Wilks Brothers, higher-ups at The Rover Car Company, had a wartime Jeep, drove it around their farm in Wales, thought they could build something like it in Britain, and drew a picture in the sands of Red Wharf Bay in Anglesey. Millions of Land Rovers and billions of adventures followed over the next 71 years. But who, really, were the Wilks Brothers? And what else were they known for?

Maurice (born 1904) and Spencer (born 1891) Wilks were born to Thomas Wilks and Jane Eliza in England. Their father was the manager of Leather Company, and their mother was a Suffragette.

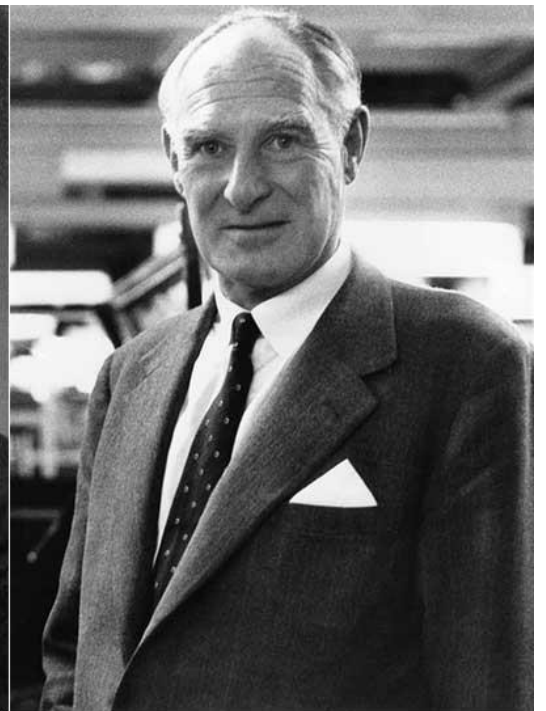
Their original career paths did not trend towards the auto industry, but Spencer married Kathleen

Edith, a daughter of William Hillman, the founder of the Hillman Motor Car Company.

When William Hillman died in 1921, his son-in-law Spencer took over the co-management position at the company. He got his brother Maurice a job there as well, and he worked at Hillman from 1922 to 1926, when he took a job at General Motors in the United States for a few years, before going back to Hillman as a planning engineer. Meanwhile, Spencer had become disillusioned with the Rootes family who had bought Hillman and took an offer from Rover to become their general manager in 1929. A year later, Maurice joined him,



Spencer Wilks



Maurice Wilks

as Chief Engineer, moving to the position of Technical Director in 1946. Other family members also took a role in the company. Maurice and Spencer's nephew, Peter Wilks, worked as a designer; relative-by-marriage William Martin-Hurst was a managing director; Range Rover Classic designer Charles Spencer King was a cousin.

Although both Wilks Brothers get the credit for the ancestry of the Land Rover, it was Maurice who did more of the brainstorming and engineering, while Spencer used his managerial position to sign off on the projects.

Maurice had a farm on Anglesey, a large island in the north

west of Wales. After World War II, he acquired a surplus military Jeep, which he drove around the farm. In the post-War period, Britain was still burdened by heavy rationing, even though they had been victorious. Raw materials, including steel, were heavily rationed. There was one way to acquire more material, though: make products for export, bringing foreign money into Britain in the process.

Maurice got the idea to make a British utility 4x4 based on the Jeep concept. It would be a useful farmer's vehicle, and most importantly, it could be exported around the world. He sketched the basic design out in the sand at Red Wharf Bay, a beach near his farm. There, in the summer of 1947, the wheels set in motion for the Land Rover. It was to be a stopgap solution until Rover could get on its feet again making upscale vehicles. It ended up outlasting the Rover car company itself. That's what most Land Rover enthusiasts know about the Wilks legacy. However, if you go to visit Maurice's grave in Anglesey, you'll see no mention of the Best 4x4Far on his headstone. The Land Rover was one of his post-war re-applications of war technology to the civilian world, but the one that's carved into that stone is the gas turbine car he worked on.

In 1939, Spencer Wilks was approached by the British government about working with them on the gas turbine for airplanes, at that point a budding war project. They were the leading jet engine developers in the early years of the War before other manufacturers took the lead.

After the War, Maurice had been deeply impressed by the potential of turbines for civilian use and spearheaded a project in 1945 to create a gas turbine car. By 1950, the JET1 had been prototyped, and over the 1950s and 1960s Rover continued heavily working with the concept, including running concept cars in several LeMans races. Turbine cars never took off, for a variety of rea-



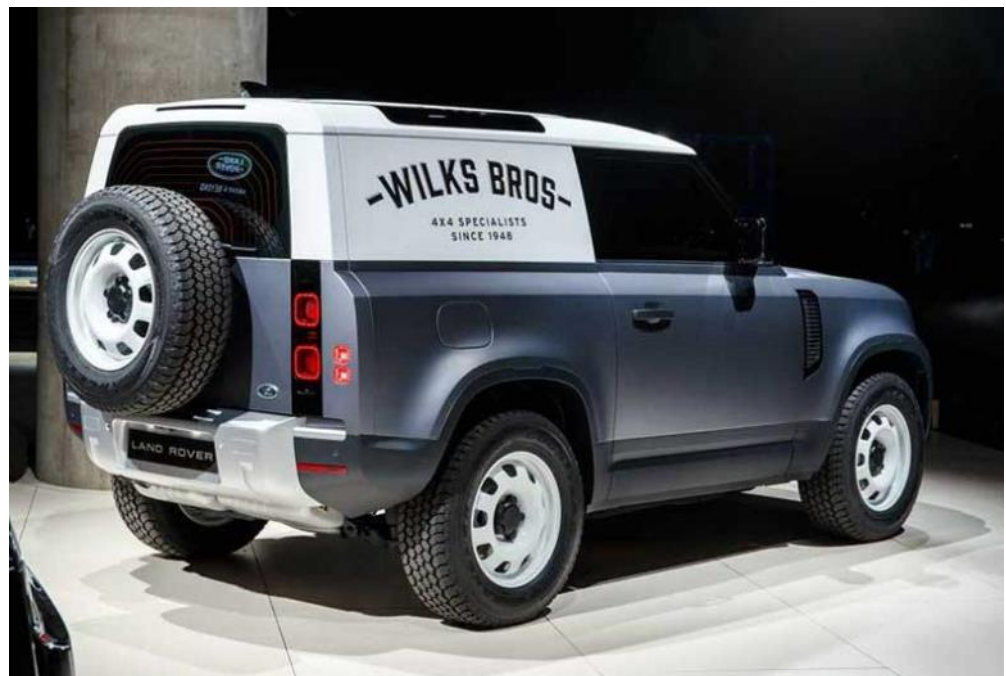
sons, but the development cycle was hugely influential in automotive design and engineering.

However, Maurice died in 1963, at his Anglesey farm, at the age of 59, and would not see the final result of his turbine program. Spencer would retire, then un-retire in the 1960s, and died in 1971.

Though their turbine cars were an eventual commercial failure, the Land Rover

more than made up for it, outlasting even the collapse of the remains of the Rover Company in 2005. Their legacy is referenced by Land Rover to this day -- at the launch of the new Defender in Frankfurt in September 2019, the Defender Commercial was emblazoned with their most successful achievement: "Wilks Bros., 4x4 Specialists Since 1948."

[The Wilks Brothers: Fathers of Land](#)



My wife sent me a text that said, "Your great". So, naturally, I wrote back, "No, you're great". She's been walking around all happy and smiling. Should I tell her I was just correcting her grammar or leave it?

I went for a job interview and the manager said, "we're looking for someone who is responsible." "Well I'm your man," I replied. "In my last job, whenever anything went wrong they said I was responsible."

I just cannot believe I have to be an adult for the rest of my life.

This whole "Having a job" thing is really getting in the way of me living my best life.

Finally old enough to do anything I want. Too tired to actually do it.

Just found out the company that produces yardsticks won't be making them any longer.

Road-Legal 1967 Land Rover "Mildred" Is Unbelievably Steam-Powered - Hits 12 mph

Folks, the world is changing, but some people have way different ideas of what that change is meant to look like. While some people are out there trying to make everything electric, one man is looking to make some things steam-powered, including a 1967 Land Rover. Frank Rothwell is an elderly gentleman from Oldham, England, that just so happens to be considered elderly because of the number that represents his age. At heart, you'll rarely see a human that's more alive. How alive? How about rowing across the Atlantic, solo, at that age, just to raise money for Alzheimer's research. But we'll talk about that some other time. For now, it's all about this 1967 Land Rover that just so happens to be fitted with a steam-powered engine. No joke. With a passionate love for these types of engines, Frank asked himself if smaller steam engines can be fitted to vehicles other than old farming equipment, like, maybe a Land Rover. After crunching the numbers, Frank quickly realized he was on to something. With an "engine in, engine out" mentality, this gentleman decided to get to work creating the vehicle you're witnessing here. The Land Rover engine had to be taken out, and in its place, Frank set a mock plywood steam engine just to make sure the calculations were all good.

Now, I understand you may be thinking that this whole venture is not eco-friendly. Honestly, does it even matter? There's a friggin' steam-powered 1967 Land Rover that is road legal! If you also think it's unsafe, think again. With a max speed limit of 12 mph (19 kph) and two braking systems in place, you really can't mess it up. This insistent shaking that both driver and passenger experience at cruising speed are enough to keep you moving rather slowly. Because of this "engine swap," the Land Rover no longer includes 4WD capabilities. Instead, it's been reduced to just a rear 2WD steam powered beast. Drop the handbrake, set it into gear, either forward or reverse, release some pressure, and away you go. Well sort of. Before any sort of driving around, the steam engine goes through an entire prepping or priming phase needed to build pressure within the machine. Once the furnace or kindle has been set to the proper temperature and wood has been reduced to embers, from between the driver and passenger seat, the rear bench offers access to a coal deposit, the fuel

for this experience. As the vehicle is driven around, coal should periodically be shoveled into the furnace. After all, that's how a steam engine works. Frank, and DriveTribe host Mike Fernie seen here on a journey driving this beautiful monstrosity around town. Aside from the fact that they're basically cruising at a speed where the camera team can even keep up on foot, the moment a hill was encountered, you could really see old Mildred (the vehicle's name) struggling to get to the top. Mike even mentioned that at one point Mildred was running at about 2 mph (3.21 kph). Sure, it may not be the fastest car on the planet, but if you like to get yourself some attention with a one-of-a-kind vehicle, just throw a steam engine onto just about anything and all eyes are on



Aberdeenshire vintage Land Rover hire business takes the wedding scene by storm

North-east couple Andy Findlay and Bridgit Edmonstone, who met whilst working at Scotland's Rural College, have launched a new concept in wedding car hire.

Based in Aberdeenshire and covering weddings, elopements and events throughout the north of Scotland, Bonnets and Boots Limited offer a fun, stylish and unique wedding car alternative.

A first for the local area and featuring an iconic 1983 sage green Series 3 Land Rover, affectionately known as Olive, Bonnets and Boots will add a sense of style and personality to a bride and groom's big day and is guaranteed to turn heads and have guests talking. With seating for up to six passengers, the Land Rover offers versatility for accommodating the bridal party.

Olive is accompanied by Babs, a mini 'Toylander' decked out in the same colour scheme which will delight the younger wedding guests and will pro-

vide great photo opportunities.

Future plans are in the pipeline to offer other events such as celebration picnics, proposals and birthdays in collaboration with a local artisan catering company. Andy who is a freelance training instructor in the land based sector and Bridgit who has had a long career in marketing, pride themselves on customer service and attention to detail.

Inside the restored Land Rover, the wedding party will be treated to luxury blankets and a picnic basket with water and bubbly for their drive.

The interior is tastefully decorated with twinkling lights, white roses and eucalyptus.

As standard, the exterior is decorated with raffia and florals in neutral colours but can be tailored to suit

clients' individual specifications. Director Andy Findlay commented: "With the easing of restrictions, the current trend for relaxed, informal and intimate weddings and a demand in the market for 'something different', Bridgit and I spotted a gap in the market, combined our interests and the ensuing result is a unique package which we hope will be a great alternative for local couples."

