

# My 1955 86" Land Rover Series One Station Wagon 7902 DF

Story and photography by David Bowyer

Purchased from Andrew Stevens in August 2020

*This is a little bit of history about this vehicle, how Andrew Stevens came to buy it, what he used it for and more importantly what he achieved through reaching his goal in finally converting the engine and all the running gear to a later specification of Land Rover components. Following which, after 25 more years, I refresh it again.*

During April, May and June in 2021, prior to entering DF in two major Land Rover scene events; the Land Rover Legends Historical at Thruxton and a long trip up to our Club's International Rally in Cumbria, I spent many hours in refurbishing the vehicle which included further steam cleaning, a very thorough service and some refurbishment works. I managed to carry out all the work on the chassis, that just needed cleaning and painting, no repairs required as it was galvanised, but there was a lot of work to do on the running gear and the underside without taking the body off and it made it so much easier by having our own 4 post lift.

The previous owner, Andrew Stevens who was one of the three founders of the Land Rover Series One Club who I have known now for 45 years, originally first rebuilt DF in 1975/6. DF was originally supplied to the RAF in 1955 as a Hardtop and was demobbed in 1963. After having 12 subsequent civilian owners it was in a poor condition, Andrew purchased it for £100 in 1975 from the car park of the Ship Inn at Stonehouse, Somerset. It took him a year to get it roadworthy and turned it into a Station Wagon to give much better visibility all round, rear seats and a rear safari door.

After 20 years and about 115,000 miles, Andrew decided to carry out a further major rebuild and upgrading of engine and running gear as he couldn't think of a more useful vehicle to keep as a parish runabout visiting parishioners, delivering and collecting things for the church, village and parish hall events, and of course taking part in 'Land Rover Series One Club' events.

## **A Major Rebuild**

Andrew completely rebuilt it again in the mid-Nineties which included updating the engine, gear box, axles, clutch and brake pedal boxes and windscreen wiper rack to a Series IIA specification, with a later Series One adjustable steering box and an ex-Military Series III engine. His plan was to include many other improvements as well; the wish list was pretty big.

For this major rebuild, a second-hand Series One chassis which was the correct age and near perfect condition was purchased, cleaned and galvanised as the original was getting rather beyond repair. The original bulkhead still in a reasonable condition was repaired and given a coat of hot zinc spray. The standard road springs were replaced with Lightweight Air Portable ones fitted on the radio vehicles to take the heavier weight of the Station Wagon body with the extra windows, rear seats and passengers. Series IIA axles not only give a slightly wider turning circle, but also being a fully floating axle it's easier to change the hub bearings and the half shafts are definitely stronger than semi-floating Series One shafts.

Andrew decided to fit 90/110 axle breathers along with breathers for the gearbox, transfer box and the overdrive unit. MAP manual freewheeling hubs were installed for fuel economy's sake.

The greater flexibility of the Air Portable springs meant that De Carbon gas shocks had to be fitted and more recently the excellent Lassa radials were replaced by Pirelli Scorpion 205/80 ATR tyres to give an even better ride.

The chosen power plant was an ex-Military Series III engine, which came with an alternator that proved later to be perfect for his thoughts on totally re-wiring the vehicle. This was coupled to a re-built Series IIA gearbox and transfer case along with a Fairey Overdrive.

One of the biggest headaches that Andrew had was the upgrade to fitting a Series II hydraulic clutch slave cylinder and clutch and brake pedal boxes to the Series One bulkhead. The first problem was caused by the fact that he could not fit the clutch slave cylinder as it fouled the new bulkhead, so he had to alter the slave cylinder bracket to allow it to sit at a different angle. This would allow for future cylinder servicing and removal. The Series II bulkheads are of course a completely different shape to the series one bulkheads! And the second problem involved the two pedal boxes to be adapted to give sufficient travel. In fact, he later fitted a Defender clutch pedal in preference to a Series II pedal as the action was much easier but ensured that he adapted everything to fit the original bulkhead. Oh what a problem and so time consuming to sort out. Poor Andrew, he must have looked up to the sky on more than one occasion to ask for help and guidance!

As I said the engine chosen was an ex. Military 2,286cc (2¼ litre) Series III 3 bearing unit. This gave a reasonably increased output over the original 1,997cc (2 litre) unit, but the low-down torque was appalling, making it difficult to pull away in 2nd gear. Clearly the engine had breathing problems with the oil bath air filter and long hose to the Solex carburettor. The first experiment was to manufacture an elbow to fit an SU carb. That was better! Even better was fitting a K & N air filter. The torque at low revs was greatly improved. Then he heard about ACR (Automotive Component Remanufacturing Ltd) and bought their inlet manifold with the SU carb that gave much better gas flow - and when that was coupled with their four-branch exhaust manifold the results were remarkable. One dark night on the motorway DF was still accelerating at half past six on the speedo when he chickened out!

More recently there were problems with the cylinder head, and needing a replacement urgently (DF was a daily use vehicle), the only one Andrew could find was a 9:1 compression ratio re-engineered gas flowed head from ACR, along with unleaded valves plus an HS 6 SU carburettor, the type that is normally fitted to the 2,625cc inline six cylinder engine.

Andrew also installed a Boyer-Brandsen electronic ignition system to complete this amazing finished and now proven engine conversion. All this effort and head scratching spent on the engine gives a very flexible engine, pulls like a dream and it is reckoned to produce around 100bhp.

Andrew then fitted a later 88/109" later Series One steering box re-built with new genuine parts and adding a stronger IIA drop arm (This was done at the time of the second rebuild). This had the advantage over the original steering box of being adjustable. Not long before taking over DF, Andrew rebuilt the steering relay with new genuine parts, adding OE track rod ends.

The braking system was renewed using copper piping from Automec for the lines, but the complicated task presented many problems. Andrew had upgraded the front drums to the 11" double-leading shoe variety as fitted from the Eighties onwards while retaining the standard rear 10" drums back in the 1980s. At this rebuild he fitted a master cylinder from a Series III 109" to serve these front brakes, however in use, he experienced severe juddering from the front brakes. Changing the drums and shoes made no difference and wheel alignment, bearings, tracking, even chassis alignment and a rolling road test at his local MOT garage revealed nothing. (In fact it turned out to be a new, but bent, stub axle)

He was at a loss to find the problem and decided to order a disc brake conversion kit from the Dutch company TI Console (now Heystee Automotive). These were developed by Santana, the Spanish manufacturers of Series III Land Rovers and in the late Seventies they wanted front disc brakes for their vehicles. They used Mercedes MB callipers with a unique disc. One snag was that the Series III servo unit required by the disc brakes would not fit under the 86" bonnet! However, the remote servo unit fitted onto to a bracket where the air filter oil bath would have normally sat. Just as well he chose to fit the K & N air filter for the carburettor! What a sigh of relief for Andrew when after fitting the disc brake conversion, not only was the mystery problem solved instantly, but the braking became amazingly efficient. He later added 1¼" rear slave cylinders to give a better balance.

And so Andrew continued with this amazing re-build, designing and planning a number of improvements for the electrics, lighting, insulation, heating, shelving, seating, radio and sound system, fitted a pair of new laminated front windscreens, never mind his skills in trimming that came useful. I will explain more as I embark upon my servicing and refurbishment which clearly shows his dedication in creating this very special 'one off' vehicle. The amount of research that must have gone into not only the planning, but also how to get around the many problems that just kept occurring, must have been enormous. This is where the illustrated parts books for Series vehicles comes so useful and having knowledgeable Land Rover friends comes in handy to bounce questions off.

However, even though Andrew regularly maintained and serviced DF to keep it a reliable vehicle for his daily runabout around all his parishes he looked after as a Vicar, *time has moved on* and I considered that after another twenty five years it was due for another good going over. This of course gives the new owner, in this case me, the perfect opportunity of getting to know all about one's new acquisition, both inside and out.

### **Now it's my turn**

As a Land Rover enthusiast, I certainly enjoyed going through absolutely everything including cleaning, several times in fact, the whole of the underside, re-painting the chassis which Andrew had galvanised during the mid-Nineties and under sealing the vehicle. Whilst at it, I also painted the axles, prop shafts, steering gear and just about everything else metal using Frost's Gloss Extreme Chassis Black that was showing the slightest sign of rust. Much wire brushing was carried out first before applying Frost's Self-Etching primer on the galvanised parts and 'Hammerite Kurust' rust converter and preventer on all the other metal items including the road springs before applying chassis paint. I applied Dinitrol underbody-sealant in the wheel arches and under the back body making sure that all the nook and crannies were well filled. During this year for good measure and peace of mind even though DF has a wonderful galvanised and painted chassis, I will be spraying black Waxoyl throughout the inside of the chassis and inside along with the closed sections of the bulkhead.

Draining, flushing and re-filling everything as necessary with Morris's Golden Film range of Classic oils. Andrew recommended using their SAE 20W-50 for the engine, 20-80 for the gearbox, transfer case, front swivel housings and overdrive unit and AG140 for the steering box. Lubricating the road springs and all the various pivot points, and whatever needed adjusting, this was done too. On the two prop shafts I replaced all six grease nipples which made greasing them so much easier. After wire brushing and painting the road springs, I worked motorcycle chain and cable lubricant in between the leaves by spraying it in from both sides and the ends. I'm sure this gave them a new lease of life.

Yes, there were a few minor oil leaks as any Land Rover has and most I have sorted. Both the hand drum brake and the rear drum brakes were still in good condition, all just needed a good clean, painting and adjusting. The front disc brakes are still in wonderful condition, the pads were barely worn and although the discs have a rusty edge, there's plenty of clean disc showing giving incredibly good even braking power. Yes, I do intend to replace the discs at some point in the future. If they are not available, I'll have these professionally skimmed.

I carried out all the normal servicing of the engine based on a 12/24,000 mile full service, checking, adjusting, lubricating and changing whatever was necessary as well as everything else under the bonnet, plus tidying up, replacing in some cases and re-routing various pipes and wires, etc., painting the radiator, flushing the cooling system and re-filling with a fresh solution of anti-freeze.

I am fortunate to have parts one and two of the original Land Rover Series II and IIA workshop manuals which is absolutely perfect for this vehicle together with an IIA owner's manual giving me lots of useful knowledge.

## **Instant heat in the winter mornings and cooler running in the Summer**

You will see in the picture of the engine that Andrew installed a 230volt Kenlowe Hotstart engine pre-heater which during frosty winter mornings he was able to jump into DF, instantly start the engine, have hot air to operate the demisters and add a little heat to the cab before moving off on his rounds. He achieved all this by simply plugging the Kenlowe Hotstart into an extension cable via the caravan type socket on the bottom right-hand side of the front grille just above the chassis. This is connected in turn to a timer to come on an hour before putting his coat on. To help circulate heat inside the vehicle because the original Smiths heater was not producing much in the way of heat, Andrew changed the element for a new Clayton core and whilst at it sourced a nice pair of windscreen demister diffusers.

Conversely, during summer months as the engine produced a little more heat on very hot days to back up the radiator fan, Andrew installed a 12volt Kenlow Thermomatic fan in front of the radiator to ensure that the radiator water did not overheat. Clearly Andrew thought long and hard on what he needed to include in his ideal Series One to give him many years of reliable service, driving around in comfort and keeping up with modern traffic.

## **Getting the steering right**

I did have some fun and games with the adjustable Series One steering box. I found the steering was very tight when I first drove the vehicle and it appears that the main reasons was, firstly lack of use as Andrew drove a very low mileage between MOT's the year before I took it over and secondly the steering box had been losing some of its oil through its' bottom gasket which just need re-tightening.

Well, I changed the oil within the comprehensive what I call a 24,000 major service and that improved things a bit. On top of that, each journey that I went on, it improved a bit more. Still wasn't right though. So I took the adjustment screw and back nut right off, gave them a good cleaning and painted a thin white line on the head of the screw to give me a datum point for fine tuning the adjusting. It was then trial and error, loosening the back nut each time and turning the adjustment screw a touch one way or another and re-tightening the back nut, until I got it as right as I could get it. It took a few months to get the steering right to suit me and now I am happy with it.

## **Working around the exterior**

I spent much time in changing most of the rubber door seals and aluminium reinforcement strips with what seemed like hundreds of aluminium rivets. Although they took ages to fit, I could not have done it without the help of club member Bob Jones who kindly loaned me the correct rivet clamp and supplied me with the correct rivets and aluminium strips to do the job successfully. Thank you, Bob.

Whilst working around the outside of DF, just about everything was checked over, adjustments made, various odd holes in bodywork filled in and repaired, loose bits sorted, paint touched up, in fact all manner of things like fitting new windscreen wipers to match the Series IIA windscreen wiper rack, replacing the washer pump, rebuilding the rear step, changing the towing ball and fitting a new towing socket inside the PTO hole. The galvanised front bumper and aluminium outer casings of the Fairey manual Free-Wheeling Hubs were treated to a good soaking of Frost's Ali-Clean which made the world of difference.

Another nice thing that Andrew did during his last rebuild was to replace the Perspex driver's and passenger's side windows for new glass screens giving of course much better vision over the scratched and draughty original ones. He also fitted Series III window catches which are also a huge improvement on the earlier screw in type catches. And on the subject of improved vision, the rear Station Wagon door sports not only a windscreen wiper and washers, but also there is wiring there for fitting one day a stick-on heating element.

One of the things that I feel is very important to be aware of is the vehicle's exterior lights for both summer and winter driving. To this end I took all of the lenses off of the sidelights, flashers, repeaters (a first for a Series One), rear brake lights, reversing and fog lights, gave them a good clean inside and out

as well as the bases, whilst paying special attention to all the contacts of both the base plates, reflectors and the bulbs themselves.

Unfortunately, the chrome has had its day on the perimeter of the headlight lenses so I may sometime change these for LED headlights from Mobile Services which I am using on my Ninety that we completely rebuilt a few years ago and I am so pleased with them. Talking of LED lighting, I am considering in the future upgrading to LED lighting all round but making sure that all the lenses 'look right' on the vehicle. One thing's for certain, LED lighting uses a lot less power and indeed gives a much better and clearer light output.

Many people are fascinated at seeing Andrew's classic windscreen mounted adjustable spotlight which was regularly used for when Andrew was visiting a new property on his rounds at night trying to locate the correct house name. (It was mostly used for reading signposts, but is also brilliant for 'seeing round corners' at night on dark twisty lanes!) I bet there must have been a time or two when neighbours looking out of their windows must have wondered what he was up to!

All the time I kept a running list of what I ideally needed to deal with on every part of the vehicle, crossing off what I had dealt with, and adding new lines of what still needed doing. And that's how I managed to go through just about everything to ensure that I was going to really know every part of DF.

### **Working through the interior**

Inside the Land Rover, Andrew had recently changed the front seats to more modern replacements specially made by Exmoor Trim to give a better, more comfortable seating position together with headrests for both the driver and passenger. The only trouble for me was that the thicker than original back rests put me too close to the steering wheel! To put this right, I made some changes to the driver's back rest pivot points to move it higher and further backwards and fitted the original seat base under the replacement Exmoor Trim seat base. This gives me more height, to not only be further back from the steering wheel but making it easier to use the pedals and to see over the spare wheel on the bonnet easier! Seat belts were not a necessary fitment when DF was manufactured, but in the Sixties it became the norm, so Andrew fitted inertia seat belts for both front seat users using the then new Land Rover approved brackets.

DF has a full set of four original rear fold down station wagon seats trimmed in elephant hide and in the front; the doors are trimmed in the same material with door pockets to the original specification. Likewise, Andrew made a cubby box between the front seats which has masses of room inside and pockets each side. In the pictures you will see a bungee strap over the top of the original seat back behind. This is to secure the lid back open to enable me to reach down to grab either my bottle of water, or my spill free mug of coffee as I am driving.

At some stage in the future I will be getting the four rear seat bases and backs recovered which will be helped enormously by Andrew giving me an original length of grey elephant hide material that he that saved.

The head lining was trimmed and fitted by Andrew during his rebuild which indeed is a work of art. Not only does it give lightness to the inside of the vehicle, but also stops any condensation forming and adds insulation too. A lovely classic interior lamp is fitted in the centre, operated by the door switches and really looks the piece. On the padded shelf which Andrew made, he fitted speakers on either side of the radio, with two more speakers fitted in the rear of the vehicle each side above the quarter lights. I had quite a lot of cleaning to do inside DF to give it some sparkle. I found the best solution was to use an aerosol of Autoglym Hi-Foam interior shampoo which easily cleaned and refreshed the head lining, seats, carpets, door trims and everything else in sight. OK, so in some cases I applied 2 or 3 applications, but the results were amazing.

Whilst working inside the vehicle, I took the opportunity to upgrade the old radio/cassette player to a more modern DAB radio/disc player with new aerials (both DAB and VHF), but still used the speaker system which Andrew installed 25 years ago with surround sound speakers in the back.

I took out the two front floor panels and gearbox tunnel cover in order to check, adjust and lubricate the high/low ratio, 4WD high lever and Overdrive mechanisms and to properly clean everything in sight from the top, painting the parts of the chassis showing, servicing the hand brake mechanism and its pivot. It was whilst inspecting the fuel tank and pipe work along with cleaning the fuel pick up filter that I noticed that the cork fuel cap sealing ring was not doing its' job properly! I very soon changed that for a replacement rubber one from the club shop.

As I was working in this area I changed the hand brake, high/low and gearbox rubber boots as well as the pedal rubbers. I also made up a fresh leather gaiter for the Overdrive lever pivot. I replaced the floor panels, after re-spraying them, using new floor pan screws, clips and penny washers, likewise the same to the under-seat centre panel. I also took the opportunity to replace the gear lever knob, the High/Low, 4WD High, and Overdrive knobs. Bit of an overkill I know, but it saves explaining a lot to those that wonder what all the knobs are for! These new engraved knobs were supplied by club member Sue Cummings of Charlesworth and Son Ltd.

### **Electrically perfect**

I had very little to do on the wiring, as Andrew did such a remarkable job in not only completely re-wiring DF twenty-five years ago, but before starting he designed a completely new system incorporating a number of circuits, all fused, for all the original electrics and all the new additional accessory circuits. This along with many nice proper Rubberoid junction boxes and a complete set of laminated illustrations of all the circuits, junction boxes and fuse boxes make life so much easier when wanting to know what powers what!

When Andrew fitted the replacement engine all those years ago, he changed from Dynamo to an alternator, reversing the polarity to Negative earth from the original Positive earth which is of course the accepted way to go allowing for all modern electrical accessories. Another nicety, there is a reverse switch on the gearbox turret to automatically operate the reverse light. That's a first for a Series One!

Other first's are that Andrew incorporated Hazard Lights in his wiring specification and interior door light switches for both front and the rear station wagon door. Another lovely touch is the fitting of a USB and cigarette lighter sockets for modern plug-in accessories like my Memory Map, Sat Nav and mobile phone. I've added another unit which incorporates a voltage sensor to show alternator/battery condition.

Where I did work on the wiring under the bonnet on some loom covering that had come adrift, I used black 'Harnessing Adhesive Fleece' tape which is so much more in keeping than ordinary PVC tape. In fact, I used this tape also to make a new loom to go up from the dash to the radio shelf above the front window.

### **Insulated well**

Andrew also gave much thought to fitting Hardura insulation to DF, in the front under the bonnet, the bulkhead, under the front seats and in the back, the headlining, so again I had little to do on this count, just a little impact adhesive to apply here and there, mainly under the bonnet where the Hardura soundproofing had come away, probably caused by my over steam cleaning! He also fitted some very nice grey contract carpeting to both the front and back which also added to the general sound deadening. By the way I found a nifty way of stopping my driver's side of the rubber over mat slipping around on the contract carpeting when getting in and out of the vehicle. I simply fitted some the hook half of self-adhesive Velcro to the underside of the rubber, and hey presto, doesn't slip any more, but can easily be prised off to for cleaning.

## **Locating spare parts and servicing items**

Throughout my weeks of working on DF, there was a constant need of finding and working out where to purchase all manner of things from lubricating oils to broken or simply worn-out bits that need replacing. Andrew kindly allowed me to purchase all his spares stock and servicing items which proved very useful indeed. In one of the photographs you will see that I built some shelves in DF's garage to put all these items on which served as a good reference point. And he went to great lengths to explain what oils he had always used during the 45 years that he owned the vehicle.

However, there were still many small items that I needed and the first point of call was always our Club Shop and if it was not stocked then it was down to looking through the Ad & Classified sections of Legend magazine. And if that failed to produce what I needed, then it was down to googling on the internet. I've never used the internet so much in all my life! Sure enough, you can find more or less anything you need, but beware I was horrified at some of the prices being asked for original take off parts. But not always, especially if I took time and patience in going back on line the following day to search further.

## **Making DF smart**

Having touched up various odd areas of paint work, not a lot really considering it's been twenty five years since it's full re-spray, I gave it a good 'T Cut' and polished it well with good waxing from the Meguiar's range of polishes and I have to say the vehicle looks very good for its age. I also spent some time in cleaning and polishing all the windows inside and out with one of Frost's glass revivers. For the first show, I applied Meguiar's Endurance tyre gel to the Pirelli Scorpion radial tyres. It certainly looked a very smart Land Rover at Legends Historical event!

## **Well secured**

Although DF is locked up well at home, I am concerned for its security when away at shows and rallies, so I've given much thought to security as one has to these days. I had 'Landy Bits n Bobs' make up for me an 'Ardcase' pedal lock with two security locks, which is slightly different from other Series Ones as I've got pendant pedals along with the standard accelerator pedal. I rate this highly as it is a very strongly made security device. I also use a 'Stop Thief Pro' steering lock as well as a simple, but effective hand brake lever lock. In one of the front photographs you will see that I have fitted a 'Hasp and Staple' to the front edge of the bonnet and the spare wheel is locked too. Along with a couple of immobilizers installed, I've also installed a *Defender, Defender Vehicle Theft Defence* system to give me total confidence!

## **Wonderfully reliable**

As at the time of writing, January 2022, I've now owned DF for 18 months, before and during the time that I spent on refurbishing it I drove about 500 miles. Since last June, I've driven a further 1,500 miles or so and every time that I get behind the wheel, it feels great to be driving a little bit of Land Rover's history. It drives quite comfortably sitting on the radial tyres and chosen Lightweight Air Portable Road springs, it accelerates and pulls well, it certainly brakes well and pulls up squarely, it's quiet enough to enjoy the radio, both speech and music. Considering DF is now 67 years old; I think it is remarkable.

Now of course I am running it on E5, the expensive petrol along with the recommended shot of Frost's Ethomix, which I keep handy by my driver's seat in a handy holder that I made up to keep things running smoothly. Talking of fuel, whenever one takes over a vehicle, one often wonders how much fuel is left in the tank when the fuel gauge gets down to  $\frac{1}{4}$ . I thought that I ought to work it out, especially as I was about to drive last summer all the way up the M5/M6 to Cumbria. Having given it some thought, I simply waited until the gauge got down to showing exactly  $\frac{1}{4}$  and on level ground put a clean piece of batten down through the fuel filler to enable the fluid to leave a mark. I then had to judge how far up the batten by comparison with the height of where I would normally fill to and the answer was I had 3 gallons (about 14 litres) left. So now I know! More than enough to get to the next Service Station on the Motorway.

## **A true Land Rover**

Some Land Rover enthusiasts will not agree with the conversion from Series One to Series II running gear, but believe me, what Andrew Stevens achieved through sheer hard work, much trial and error, headaches upon headache, he brought into being the perfect Series IA for use of a daily driver over a considerable length of time and mileage. The all-important thing during the rebuild was to maintain the looks off a normal smart Series One Station Wagon. This is a tribute to Andrew for having the forethought in visualising how it could be achieved. In my travels so far, especially driving all the way up to Cumbria from Devon for our International Club Rally, people would stop me in the service stations or car parks and say 'that's a very smart early Land Rover, is it all original?' And I say 'Yes it's all original, every single part' with a smile. Yes, that's true; Andrew upgraded DF with later Land Rover parts to help cope safely with our modern driving conditions.

So all I have done is to thoroughly go through every single part of the vehicle by hardly leaving a stone untouched, well every nut, bolt and washer, etc.! In doing so, I don't think that I have missed anything and if something needed attention, then, it got it. For the servicing part, I'm a firm believer in following the official Land Rover Service schedule. In this case I used of course the Series II petrol 2¼ litre Schedule which gives close on 100 items to cross off after checking, changing, adjusting or reporting to oneself to go back later. The smile is of course not only does completion of the paperwork give you confidence in what you have carried out, but also when the MOT Tester says 'I can't find any faults with this vehicle, it's the best prepared and looked after old Land Rover I've ever had in here!'

## **Looking back**

I'm sure that many club members will remember my 1954 86" blue Station Wagon SYB 617 known as Sybil that I bought way back in late 1979 which I always enjoyed working on and giving her lots of TLC over all the years that I owned her. Unfortunately, I stupidly let her go in 2004 when I was driving so few miles in her in between MOTs. After a while I of course regretted my decision because 25 years of owning the same classic Land Rover is quite an achievement and I learnt so much about the vehicle.

As the Land Rover Series One club grew from small beginnings, Sybil took me to a great number of classic vehicle shows, the early days of the many Land Rover shows, to club events all over the show! Association of Rover Club events, I think 3 or 4 of the first Land Rover Anniversary events and one weekend all the way to the Top Farm Museum event in Yorkshire.

I kept Sybil pretty standard in most respects and serviced her regularly keeping an eye out for what needed repairing or replacing over all those years of ownership. Sybil only had one owner before I bought her and yes in the early days I suppose I did carry out much refurbishing of the vehicle and had the underside as smart as the inside, outside, and under the bonnet thinking about it. I do remember adding my own little extras like fitting a remote brake servo to increase the braking performance, making a padded radio shelf above the windscreen for the radio speakers and a few other niceties. So imagine my delight when Andrew Stevens offered his beloved 'DF' to me. I didn't think twice about it, thank you Andrew.

Thank heavens I had saved Sybil's strong metal toolbox with all those useful little bits in and my imperial spanners.

Back in those early days when so many of us were enjoying early ownership and working on one of these incredible little Land Rovers, we did not have the internet and eBay as a source of reading information and locating spare parts at the click of a button at any time of the day or night. But what we did have was a remarkably fast growing membership of our club, around the world, with lots of knowledge coming forth, our magazine 'Legend' providing so much useful information and a Club Shop gaining strength by the year with an incredible number of part numbers available to keep our Series Ones on the road.

Finally, one of the very good reasons for belonging to the Land Rover Series One Club is to learn from other club members on what they do to their vehicles and how they look after them. If this article achieves this, I'm more than happy.

## David Bowyer

You can read more about the history of this vehicle by clicking on [‘The Holy One’](#) in the April 2021 edition of Classic Land Rover written and photographed by Louise Limb shown in my Articles section.

### Useful web addresses

[www.lrsoc.com](http://www.lrsoc.com) for all club information and the Club Shop

[www.davidbowyer.co.uk](http://www.davidbowyer.co.uk) my website

[www.premierlubricants.co.uk](http://www.premierlubricants.co.uk) where I obtained my Morris’s Golden Film Classic oils

[www.LRSoffroadparts.co.uk](http://www.LRSoffroadparts.co.uk) various fastenings

[www.johnwearing4parts.co.uk](http://www.johnwearing4parts.co.uk) seals, glands and rubber parts

[www.Frost.co.uk](http://www.Frost.co.uk) an Aladdin’s Cave for chassis paint, under-body-sealant, primers and all sorts

[www.automotivecomp.com](http://www.automotivecomp.com) ARC (Automotive Component Manufacturing) engine enhancements

[www.embertonimperial.co.uk](http://www.embertonimperial.co.uk) handbrake lever lock and various useful parts

[www.charlesworthmouldings.co.uk](http://www.charlesworthmouldings.co.uk) new gear lever knob, High/Low, 4WD High and Overdrive knobs

[www.dynamoregulatorconversions.com](http://www.dynamoregulatorconversions.com) a useful contact for dynamo, alternator, regulator and LED lighting.

[www.kenlowe.co](http://www.kenlowe.co) Kenlow fans and spares

[www.boyerbransden.com](http://www.boyerbransden.com) electronic ignition systems

[www.mobilecentre.co.uk](http://www.mobilecentre.co.uk) LED headlights and a vast range of auto electrical items

[www.landybitsnbobs.co.uk](http://www.landybitsnbobs.co.uk) Ardcase pedal locking devices

[www.gloucesterlandrover.com](http://www.gloucesterlandrover.com) Defender-Defender tracking systems

[jj354a@btinternet.com](mailto:jj354a@btinternet.com) Bob Jones for rubber door seals, ali strips, semi tubular rivets and tools to do the job

Version 5