

SERIES ONE

A Gem from The Land

After a long and very detailed rebuild the 584th Land Rover off the production line is ready for its new life and will be regularly used

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Down Under

'At some point, it was bought from the scrapyards as a restoration project by an Australian enthusiast'

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A total rebuild of an important piece of Land Rover history by CKD Shop in Warwickshire

WORDS AND PICTURES
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As if 1948 Land Rovers were not rare enough, ones with matching numbers and a traceable history are even rarer. Those first 1,500 examples are both highly sought after and probably the most valuable of all Land Rovers. The one featured here is the 584th one off the production line and has been rebuilt by CKD Shop in Southam to its usual very high standard.

R860584 was first built and 'dispatched in' on November 4, 1948, and left the Solihull factory on November 29 to be shipped to Fremantle Port in Western Australia, where it arrived in January 1949. It was one of a batch of very early vehicles ordered by Faulls Motors, in Subiaco, Perth.

How it travelled from the port to the dealership is not recorded, but it is likely to have been driven as it is only a journey of about 10 miles. Perhaps of note is that the route is part of The Canning Highway and was the subject of AC/DCs 1979 hit Highway to Hell referring to the stretch from where lead singer Bon Scott lived in Fremantle to a pub called The Raffles in Applecross, near Perth.

Eagerly awaiting delivery of her purchase was a woman called Mrs N Stokes of Perth, who took delivery from Faulls on January 19, 1949. Before the advent of the Land Rover, farmers relied on horses and a few leftover World War Two Jeeps, so Mrs Stokes' Land Rover would have caused quite a stir in her community.

It served her well, as it was not recorded as scrap until some point in the 1980s and ended up in a scrapyards near Manjimup, Western Australia. It was a largely complete car but must have suffered a few faults that all added up to it being beyond economic repair.

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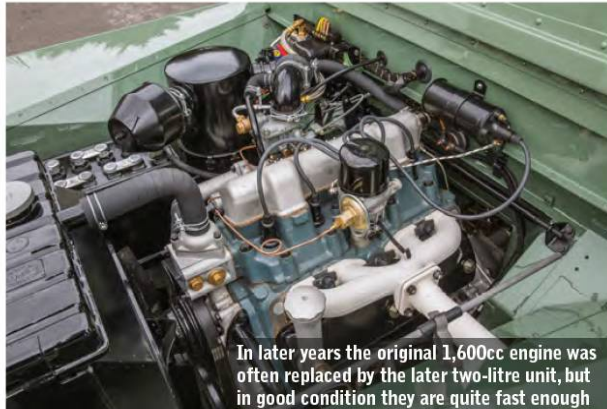
CKD Shop is in Southam, Warwickshire, UK and can be contacted via its website ckdshop.co.uk.

As well as rebuilds, it also re-manufactures many hard to find Series One parts and body panels.

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Chassis number R860584 worked hard in Australia from the day it was imported in January 1949 until it was scrapped in 1980



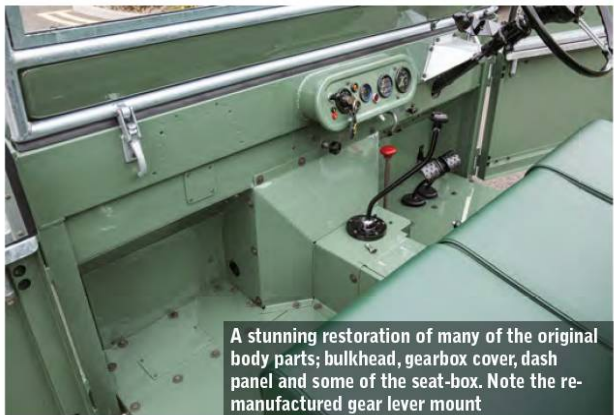
In later years the original 1,600cc engine was often replaced by the later two-litre unit, but in good condition they are quite fast enough



This Land Rover has its original steering wheel, peculiar to the very first ones. Flat and with four spokes



Early badges had the word 'Land Rover' finished in red, soon changed to yellow



A stunning restoration of many of the original body parts; bulkhead, gearbox cover, dash panel and some of the seat-box. Note the re-manufactured gear lever mount

'Like so many projects, either time or money ran out and the parts lay around slowly deteriorating'

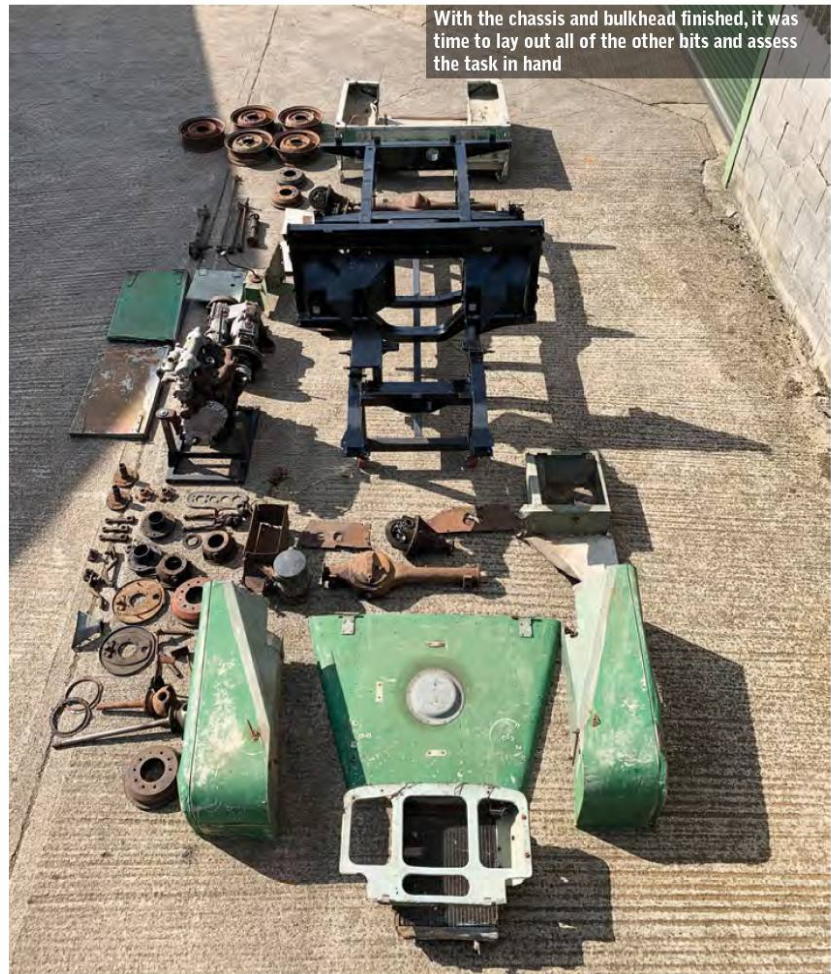
Australian enthusiast, who dismantled it, intending to rebuild each bit and re-assemble it as a restored 80in.

Like so many projects, either time or money ran out and the parts lay around slowly deteriorating. Alex Massey and Rob Sprason of CKD Shop knew of its existence and knew exactly what it was, as did the owner. A deal was struck and it went in a container, along with a few others to be shipped back to the UK almost 70 years after it first left there

Once back at the CKD workshop '584' was stored awaiting the right buyer. Word soon spread among potential customers and a collector of Series One Land Rovers expressed interest, having read about the first CKD rebuild in Classic Land Rover back in February 2020 and eventually seeing the actual car.

He admired the attention to detail and Alex and Rob's unequalled knowledge of very early Land Rovers. He asked that it should be rebuilt to exact original specification, maintaining as many original parts as possible and even retaining the features that Land Rover improved very soon after this one left the factory.

In their meticulous way, Rob and Alex went through all of the components of



Rob Sprason and Alex Massey, the founders of CKD Shop are devoted to perfection in both their rebuilds and their re-manufactured parts

the Land Rover to assess the scale of the rebuild. Thankfully, the Australian enthusiast had kept everything and they were relieved to find that this was indeed a matching numbers car.

Not only were the engine, transmission and axles correct, but so were the more common service items, like the radiator, coil and distributor - all stamped with a number month and the year 1948. Unusually for an Australian car, there was some severe rust in both the chassis

and the bulkhead. The Birmabright bodywork was largely salvageable, with damaged panels able to be replaced by CKDs own accurate recreations.

CKD Shop admits to not doing all of the heavy engineering work preferring to use experts in whichever field is required. The chassis went to an accident repair specialist which attached the rusty chassis to its in-house jig before starting to replace the rusty areas. This ensured that it was exactly the same shape and

dimensions when finished, as it had been when it left the factory.

Likewise, the engine, gearbox and diffs went off to specialists for a rebuild. When they dismantled the engine they found that it was still on standard pistons, indicating a relatively low mileage. In the process of rebuilding, the engineering company did use a modern design of piston fitted with a different specification of piston rings that improve oil consumption, compression and running. Otherwise, the engine is a standard 1,600cc 'side plate motor.

The bulkhead presented new problems to solve. The first 1,500 cars have a hand fabricated bulkhead, as opposed to a pressed steel one introduced in early 1949. A bespoke jig had to be made for this for the same reason as the chassis - to prevent distortion in the process of welding in new panels.

As parts were finished, they went to a paint shop to be sprayed with many coats of a pale green unique to the early 1948 Land Rovers. This is slightly lighter than the more familiar light green that was introduced at the beginning of 1949. One of the biggest challenges was to re-create the pre-1500 specification gear lever. There was nothing salvageable to work with and CKD Shop had to make a new set of components from scratch, using drawings and photographs, helped by hands-on experience gained from others sample vehicles they had in the workshop. ➔

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Testament to the skill of the body shop, the bonnet, much of the seat-box and wings, the gearbox cover and several other panels are original. The rest are CKD Shop's re-manufactured parts



That satisfying moment when the project is starting to take shape with rebuilt components arriving daily



Sharing space with other early 80in Land Rovers in CKD Shop's immaculate workshop

There are other details unique to these first Land Rovers; the four rests for the bonnet mounted spare wheel are made of English ash. One can easily imagine that the parts specified by the drawing office had not yet been made, or found. A runner was probably sent over to Rover Cars to scrounge some bits of wood from the body shop and they improvised.

Other little details are that the tilt tie-down clips on the side of the rear tub are tin-plated – not galvanised like later versions. The panels that make up the sides of the rear tub were folded at 90° to make the rear panel (where the number plate

'Other little details are that the tilt tie-down clips on the side of the rear tub are tin-plated'

goes). The same panel was used for left and right, but to simplify the fitting of the rear lights a second hole was made to accept the wiring. This is visible on this one.

After months of careful assembly and

rebuild work the Land Rover was finally pronounced finished and ready to hand over to its new owner. CKD Shop granted Classic Land Rover exclusive access to this very special piece of Land Rover history and Rob took me for a drive around the lanes of Warwickshire.

It was remarkable in every respect. The ride, performance and handling were exactly as one would imagine it would have felt like in 1948 when it was driven from Freemantle to Perth: It was like a new 1948 Land Rover.

A top job from a small, but dedicated team of perfectionists **CLR**