



Land Rover Defender

Stories of Use

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Photography: Dominick Tyler

October 2014

Introduction

Cars may be one of the most costly household purchases, but they follow the same long term trend as other material goods, towards shorter useful lifetimes and diminished repair-ability. Like power drills, sofas and this season's dress, cars are largely seen by owners as closed objects, to be bought and maybe sold and only repaired by experts. They are disposed of when the effort or cost outweighs the perceived value of the vehicle.

This report studies the Land Rover Defender, which conversely, for many people and for many decades has continued to invite home repair, manipulation and adjustment. The research emerged out of a conversation between Professor Julian Allwood and Professor Kate Fletcher. This conversation evolved into a commission to explore the potential of bringing two discreet sets of knowledge and working methods together in a new context.

The research followed an ethnographic methodology and intellectual framework developed by Professor Fletcher for the Local Wisdom Project. Fletcher's research on the 'craft of use' in fashion was brought to this new context of Allwood's work in the automobile sector and the remarkable statistic that approximately 80% of all Defenders ever made are still on the road.

The following stories describe how Land Rover Defenders and their predecessors, the Series vehicles (referred to as simply as Defenders from here forward), through their design and the culture that surrounds them, have in many ways defied the trend toward detachment and disposability. The stories capture how Defenders allow, reward and even invite user behaviour that consequently leads to longer or alternative lives for the vehicles.

The research took place over 4 months with 25 interviews from various regions of the UK including Kent, the Peak District, London, Devon and Wales. The photographer, Dominick Tyler collected visual portraits of 12 of these owners and their vehicles in their location of use. These 12 were chosen as those that best demonstrate the use of practical skills, inventiveness and creative approach. What follows are the portraits alongside excerpts of

the interviews, which have been edited for brevity and clarity.

Local Wisdom investigates the satisfying and resourceful practices associated with using clothes – the 'craft of use' and this project has attempted to draw some comparison and learning by applying similar methods to stories of Defender use.

Adopting methods from garment research for a project about vehicles may seem an odd fit but behaviours in both share similar cultural characteristics. For instance, a generation or two ago, a large part of the population of the UK would have had some experience of altering, repairing or opening up their garments. The same can be said for vehicles.

In keeping with wider material trends, both clothes and cars are notably produced and designed very differently than in recent history. In both cases, with the development of cheaper mass production methods, the incentive for repair and particularly DIY repair has diminished at the same time as the goods have grown more 'closed' to material intervention by their owners. Expected lifetimes of vehicles and garments have steadily decreased and in both cases any repair work is more commonly repaired by specialists rather than their owners. Qualities such as extra seam allowance in garments or a vehicle body that is easy to remove have been usurped by other more highly valued characteristics and cost savings.

The skills to make interventions are receding at the same time as it becomes more difficult for the home sewer or mechanic to take part. The loss of basic skills such as letting down a hem is perhaps akin to that of changing a wheel; what was once a basic aptitude has become a specialised, niche expertise.

In the following examples, owners recount their perspectives which differ from the current dominant narrative of car ownership. These vary from accounts of indispensability to unabashed romanticism. They offer examples of appropriate fit for particular needs and often demand very different uses; for the off-road

and towing needs of the farm, for transporting children or many friends, for navigating difficult roads and bad weather. Owners further discuss how economical the vehicles are due to ease of repair (even for the novice) and their reliability in the field.

Owners interviewed use Defenders for a range of functions such as farming and other land-based work, for UK off-road adventuring and overland trips across Europe and Africa, for the daily commute and for some, seemingly solely for the challenge of a mechanical project in the garage.

As well as giving examples of practical use, many owners also speak of less tangible qualities; the historic and nostalgic reasons for owning one of these classic vehicles, indeed of the acknowledged impracticality of them in many scenarios. But some also speak of the sense of adventure that comes from the perception that their Defender will take them anywhere, through anything. And while owners always acknowledge the vehicle's limitations in fuel efficiency and comfort, many speak of their vehicles as almost immortal. This must be by far the quality, which distinguishes Defenders from most other vehicles and sets them apart from larger social material trends; that they are expected by their owners to have such extremely long lifetimes. One of dominant explanations for this recorded in the research is that the simplicity of the older vehicles invites and inspires mechanical rejuvenation and longevity.

Owners are recorded as taking pride in this handiwork but just as often those practicing the most advanced repair and alterations (welding on the chassis, fitting new electrics, replacing engines) seem to take these skills for granted. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that for those who value their vehicle for reasons of economy and reliability, these assessments are often totally dependent on the skills they possess. The quality of reliability that is often quoted; the Defender's ability, no matter the accident or malfunction, to 'limp home' also perhaps requires at least some mechanical know-how.

This is of course not the case for all owners. Many of

those interviewed do not possess the skills or desire to take such tasks and cases are included where the owners do not do any of the repair work or maintenance themselves.

However, the qualities that make Defenders so amenable to DIY intervention plainly draw the resourceful and independently minded to them. Furthermore there are also many accounts of how these vehicles invite a DIY approach even for the complete novice; by their nature they provide good 'entry level' lessons in mechanics. An off-road educator in Wales says,

'certainly the vehicles from the Series I's to today are far easier to take to bits and not that difficult if you're not that mechanically minded...it's easy for someone who doesn't know what to do to actually take part of it to bits to see how it's built and then put it back together again.... people buy a Land Rover and start playing around with it and realise how easy and how much fun it can be.'

These vehicles not only appeal to those who value resourcefulness and independence but they also foster the same qualities in many others who stumble into it.

And although no one explicitly says it, the pleasure of working on the vehicles is obviously an enticement as well. The easy access to components and to the satisfaction that comes from completing tasks on something relatively basic are experiences invoked many times. These are perhaps the most immediate and gratifying rewards to an owner's faith and resourcefulness. In rejecting the widespread tendency towards disposability in their approach to vehicles, they also keep a more rewarding relationship alive.

-Katelyn Toth-Fejel, October 2014

‘Well you know; nothing terribly dramatic’

Macclesfield, Peak District, UK



Repeated many times is the statement that these vehicles make economic sense because of how easy they are to repair. In some cases this is because parts are easily cheaply and easily obtainable but in many cases it is apparent that the real good value comes by being well matched to the owners' DIY mechanic skills.

This is one example of the many owners who say, 'I don't do much myself' and then mentioned extensive repairs. In their opinion this is not unusual but part of the requisite skill set preferred relationship with a vehicle. In such cases the Defender's qualities of basic mechanics and easy access seem to be perfectly suited to the skills of the owner such that they are able to make the best use of them.

'I mainly use the Land Rover for my small farming business. I think there are several reasons [why it is good for delivering hay]; one of them is that obviously it's a good vehicle to use off road so I can use it around the farm on the fields and then the woods if necessary. Secondly they are quite ruggedly made, they have a separate chassis and therefore they tend to have quite a long life.

[About repairs] Well you know; nothing terribly dramatic, all I've had to do... I've replaced the windscreen wiper motor once, replaced the fan belt I think on occasions, routine maintenance like replacing filters, replacing oil, greasing, I have done some welding on my own on it because I've got a welder, I can do welding.

'One advantage with a Land Rover is because they've got on the chassis, what they call the 'outriggers'; ... you can buy new ones of those so I have myself replaced several, well, all of the outriggers at different times I think. It's not a very nice job having to lie underneath it welding, but I've done it.

I mean it's partly for financial reasons because you know if I bought a more modern vehicle of that type or you know one of the Japanese so called pickups that a lot of farmers use, you can't really re-do anything much to them yourself –or I wouldn't be able to anyway. So it would be more expensive to run really.... The other thing I like about them is of course because they are so popular; they hold their value well.'



'It's a very functional car for us' Macclesfield, Peak District, UK



Expectations of certain uses and functionality are very clear in instances such as this where the Defender is treated as a tool. In such cases it is not expected to meet all a family's transport needs. Limitations to do with low fuel efficiency, exposure to the elements, heavy steering and discomfort are therefore not a problem.

'This really a workhorse for here...The main reason we got it is because of the road- because we couldn't get out in anything else, up and down the lane. It's got lower gears, really you can just power through things can't you. And also [my husband] needed it for the farm, for pulling stuff in the trailer and taking the sheep to the abattoir and stuff like that.

I mean if I go into my studio in Manchester, I usually go on the train. If I go in this, the petrol consumption goes way up because you're driving in a city as well. In the winter the snow actually comes in to the car. If you have a look when we shut the door, every Land Rover leaks around the doors... ours has a gap so when it snows really badly if you're parked in the wind where the snow drifts then you often get in the car and there's a little snow drift on the seat, perfect. [I wouldn't prefer it] but it is quite fun though isn't it, to get into your car and find it has a snowdrift in it. Look you can see there's also lot's of organic growth on the inside of the window... well no [it doesn't really bother me] because it's a very basic car isn't it?... It's a very functional car for us....It's a farm vehicle and for a certain use. If I was going out for a special dinner, I wouldn't be going

out in this probably.. But I love this car. It suits me more as a person.

Another quirk is the power steering. I mean is there power steering on it?! It's really hard to turn. I think there is a certain amount but it's very heavy and the steering wheel is very big...So you can see to turn it is hard work. But I think when I'm driving it does make you feel like you could drive through anything. It's almost like you could go anywhere in this.'



'It will last for so long, it owes me nothing'

Sevenoaks, Kent, UK



A number of people interviewed have taken up alterations to the Defender as an engineering challenge. In each case they are great admirers of Defenders but also realise they can improve on something great. They take great pleasure in their projects, bringing exquisite craftsmanship as witnessed here, and the desire to seemingly pay tribute by bringing about an enhanced potential, in this case by making it more powerful, stronger, quieter and potentially incredibly long lasting. Expense and time spent are therefore considered a bargain.

'The Defender I've got now, I've had that two years and I bought for that £3,500 pounds and in two years it now owes me over £15,000 [laughs] but it's just what you do you know and I don't begrudge it a single penny and I still haven't stopped spending on it either. I can't explain it.

It is just an inbuilt thing with me and my family... I'm building mine to a higher [spec] - it's not like jacked up, everything looks pretty much standard but I've over-rated everything, everything that I can, I've improved upon. Everything that rusts, that replaced so that it won't rust or won't rust as quick (laughs). That's exactly it is, [I can make it immortal]. I mean my dad looks at it and he says, 'cool, you should still have that in 25 years.'

That is the way I look at it. Nothing in my eyes is better than what I've got. That's exactly it yeah. And I've got a motorbike, I don't need to go fast in a car. It's just a fantastic piece of kit. You couldn't do

it [make these types of repairs and modifications on other vehicles] They don't come to bits like this. Every single part of that Land Rover is either bolted or riveted together. You know my Defender it'll do it but I'm not about to start smashing that round the woods. It's a working tool to me, it's not to be smashed up unnecessarily.

If it gets broken in the course of the job so be it. ... The Range Rover's too soft... Everything in mine has got the bare amount of electrics attached to it. And even if every single electric fails, as long as I've got a battery, I can get it started, I can get it home.'



‘Now that I have it, I actively seek
more adventures’
Notting Hill, London, UK



The Defender is not practical for London in many respects but it does bring other qualities; it bestows style and flair on this city dwelling owner and reminds him of times when, in this vehicle, he was in far more adventurous places. It allows him to be physically in London but to dwell psychologically in Africa, on an adventure or as was said by many others, to take on a slower pace of life altogether different to the normal speed of the city. Perhaps it is the very inappropriateness of the Defender for London streets that allows this to be so effective.

‘When I bought the car I wasn’t living in London... I use it for a way of getting around for the moment. In the past I’ve used it in overland trips in the desert which I did a couple but just mainly use it to get around at the moment.

I’ll repair it as long as it needs to but again as I said mainly because of the soft top it is extremely noisy, it is cold, it doesn’t have lights inside...You could probably list a very long number of reasons why the car is not suitable for the use for the purpose that I do it but ultimately I have a strong affection for my car. It’s been with me on so many adventures that it’s kind of part of my experience and so it is something I’m very attached to.

[about the overland trips] ...Other than having to change probably a tire we didn’t go through any mechanical failures...It’s been everywhere and never had a problem but then it broke down on Bond Street! It was funny.

I’ve always had a passion for the outdoors and passion for desert before and that wasn’t driven by the car however now having the car I now actively sought a way to use it in a location which otherwise I wouldn’t have gone without having my own car.

Well it definitely does [create opportunity for adventure], it is a very social car in the sense that the back has got the two benches and it suddenly becomes very social when people are sitting in a car facing each other...wherever I’m in town and I’m giving a lift to someone or my friends...it creates a sense of adventure even though maybe nothing is actually happening considering we’re just crossing [London]. It gives the sense that people are going on an urban safari even when you’re just passing town.’



‘You’ve got to remember; this is a tool’ Pembury, Kent, UK



In this case a 1989 Defender fulfils all the motor needs of one individual including light farming work and the transportation of children and now grandchildren on local trips.

The expectations that the vehicle will outlive the owner echoes others who speak of their Defenders as if they will last forever. In each such case the Defender is treated as a tool, distinctly different to a car. It is used for its strengths; used sparingly, locally, slowly and with regular maintenance.

‘It’s my main motorcar. It always has been. I’ve only had one. 25 years ago it was for the school run and I found it very useful...quite honestly I’m 68 now and I’m hoping that it will see me out.

I always remember the very first test drive that I went to it. ‘Ms, you’ve got to remember; this is a tool, it’s not just a car.’ And I’m sure I don’t use it to its full capacity. I know damn well I don’t. But ... it was absolutely invaluable and also when we had the foal and then the mother colicked desperately, it’s very good as opposed to the lorry because the back ramp on the lorry, you have to walk up Everest whereas if you’ve got a sick horse, particularly if it’s got a bad leg, you can get it into the trailer because obviously the thing is much lower mounted or whatever the technical term for that is...

I use it to tow the flail mower... it’s jolly efficient with brambles and nettles and stuff like that...

We’ve always had ponies forever and basically I

used it in the early times – for towing the trailer... The trailer was essential to our life because I’ve got two children, two ponies and I used to take them off to pony club rallies...

Also on the thing of child orientated vehicles, I’ve found that if we were taking the children to somewhere, a whole gang of them, and there were too many for a car and well for my husband’s car...I found it was quite funny because my husband used to get terribly upset because nobody wanted to go in his smart car, they all wanted to get in the back of the Land Rover which would probably be mildly illegal now.

However I’ve always had one bench seat in the back and one that went up it’s not got proper seats in the back because I use it as a proper Land Rover tool.’



‘They’re all workable’ Welling, London, UK



Here again, the skills and interests of the owner are matched well to the qualities of the vehicle.

In contrast to others accounts, in this case the owner chooses Discovery vehicles of a certain era for many of the qualities associated with the Defender but with added practical comfort. While obviously a very skilled home mechanic, the extensive work done by this owner shows that such DIY efforts are not exclusive to Defenders and Series vehicles.

It is noted several times how these vehicles and particularly the more basic Land Rovers are good entry level teachers for anyone with the inclination to learn how to repair them themselves. This owner further says that the worldwide community of enthusiasts on the internet are hugely helpful in the opening up and spreading of this know-how.

‘I rebuilt the Defender before I went [to Morocco] and when I say rebuilt it, I rebuilt it! Because I got into that mind-set that I need to replace it in case it breaks, you know, stupid! What you do is you take a few bits and pieces with you and then you just see what happens. Because the thing that happens is the adventure. ...When I was in France, I picked up the phone, two days later, a brand new fuel pump showed up. So you’re never a million miles away from any part. And that doesn’t matter where you are in the world.

With Defender, in the field I could repair everything. I could easily - I mean when I went to Morocco, I

took gaskets with me in case I needed to take the engine apart. That can all be done in situ....But when I came back from Morocco I was pretty much broken...I needed something more comfortable and the Defender just didn’t fit that bill anymore...

The Discovery [is as basic as a Defender] up to a certain point...the series 2 Discovery [from 2004 or 2005], I feel that really is the last of the Land Rovers that the a competent DIY mechanic at home could look up the service and maintain and repair.

Because people, they find a shortcut and then it gets posted up...I look at it from a different perspective [to Defender purists] that they’re all work-able on, to a certain point...

You’ll be surprised actually, guys - and girls - who’ve got into the Land Rover thing, because you become passionate about it they do tend to teach themselves how to do stuff and you can have a person from you know who didn’t know how but they’re actually brave enough to carry out their own maintenance on a vehicle because they’re so well documented and it’s just a way of building confidence, that’s what it is.’



‘I’ll never get rid of it, no’ Pott Shrigley, Peak District, UK



This owner demonstrates an alternative take on reliability and thrift.

The Defender’s ability to ‘limp home’ no matter what the trouble is well noted. The most extreme version of such a tale was recounted by a collector and dealer in Dunsfold, Surrey, ‘The broken component, had he left it in the gearbox would have moved around and eventually damaged all the other gears so it was safer to take the actual component out and just drive the car in one gear. So that’s what he did and drove it all the way home for 6000 miles. There aren’t many cars or products you could do that with.’

This owner speaks in the same breath about how little repair the Defender has ever needed followed by a long list of repairs. This alternative definition of reliability speaks to the relationship between skills and vehicle that make what would be terrible inconvenience and expense instead minor incidences. And consequently a newer seemingly more reliable vehicle would be less practical.

‘It is a 1964 Series 2a short wheel base...It’s for carrying stone and I needed something that could pull a trailer so it needed to have a bigger engine and doing dry stone walling and four wheel drive to get, you know, half way up a farmers field.

The first owner, he used to jack it up every wintertime and paint the chas-sis with used engine oil so that’s why the chassis’s lasted this long... And then really the ten years I’ve had it, it’s gone downhill really. [laughs]

I’ll never get rid of it, no. They’re notorious for the

chassis, you know getting rather rusty, mine’s had a couple of patches, every MOT it might get a bit of a patch on it.

Yeah, I try and do as much [repair] as I can myself. I’d not had it long when the rear half shaft snapped...So that’s happened about three times now... You’re whatsit, your hub seals are always leaking. And it always drops oil as well. So you can’t stop with filling it up with oil. Oh and the gearbox, what am I on now? I’m on my third gearbox. Yeah, but the beauty of them is, they’re dead easy to work on and there’s loads of room under the engine. Oh and me fuel pump jacked in at Christmas. That was fairly dear sorta thing, well it was a couple hundred quid. But it owes me nothing. You know, I’ve had it ten years and I’ve not spent a great deal of money on maintenance. It owes me nothing, apart from an oil change.

... [I don’t carry any tools with me] You can usually limp home, even when your aft shafts goes, you think, blimey, you put it in four wheel drive and your front axle will take you home.

And like I say, I’ve got three kids so it’s got a proper seat in the back, worth more than the van, that seat. ..Yeah, obviously as the kids have come along I had to sort something out.’

‘The floor always goes so the bloke I bought it off put a zinc plate floor in...I never bolted [the floor plate] in again because I thought, this is about the third time I’ve had to do something on the gear box...I think it’s just the age, as I say, things wear out.



'I know what all the dents are' Macclesfield, Peak District, UK



In this case the simplicity of the Defender as a works vehicle that can be cheaply maintained fits in with the owner's way of life. It allows for a casual approach, the dings and dents creating a patina of memory. As he says, 'I did that. It's not pretty.' He's obviously pleased with the expertise he's picked up in 10 years but there are no ambitions for perfection here.

However, it's not quite practical enough, given his growing family and so even though he has great affection for the Defender, he will probably sell it.

'What I like about my car, is not matter what the weather is, I drive with the window open and my arm out the window. And it leaks. And makes a lot of noise. But I just don't care...You know I say we've had it as a work vehicle so although it's covered in dents, I know what all the dents are.

There's not an awful lot to go wrong with them. And the things that do go wrong with them, can be fixed with a fairly basic sort of toolbox. I know my wife's car, it takes me half a day to get it into a position where I can fix it.

I've got a Land Rover 1996 Defender 110, And I think it's an ex MOD one.

As far as you stick to a certain age of them like pre-2000 maybe...they just keep on going. I mean mine's done nearly 200,000 miles and it was used predominantly for 10 years lugging 3 tonne trailers about. And they're very reliable to work on....the body's all of aluminium so they don't really rust and

the bits that are steal are sort of the areas you keep an eye on...

We generally took it to the garage for like timing chain and stuff which is a bit more complicated. You know a job that would take me a week would take them an afternoon you know because they know exactly what they're doing. But as far as replacing bits of suspension, replacing brushing, replacing prop shafts, you know wheel bearings, chassis repair and everything, I've done it all...being able to bodge them together a bit and then if something broke and you can't get a part, you jam a bit in here, you do this and you do that. It's been fairly reliable to be honest I think.

I guess you get sort of experience over years of owning of them, I often find half the issue is diagnosing the issue. In the past I've replaced everything and then the thing that was broken was the last thing I checked...from experience, now I might be slightly more knowledgeable in knowing what that noise means.'



'You can mend 'em yourself'

Macclesfield, Peak District, UK



This story gives an example of a how owners are able to make quick body repairs themselves and why the Defender allows for such easy DIY mends.

This owner is able to regularly buy a new Defender and maintain it professionally to a high standard such as in getting a yearly wax oil chassis treatment. However he is also obviously pleased to make minor repairs in the field when necessary.

'So this is a 2013....I bought this now, because this will be the last Land Rover...Generally I keep mine 8 or 9 years so this will see me through.

My problem is, because I'm a working farmer, I go to market, we get multi checks by policeman, trading standards, I've got another MOT chap climbing underneath, checking brakes....so I have them about 8 or 9 years.

Well [I use it for everything] I mean in wintertime it's feeding the sheep, taking the trailer to haul stock to market...During the spring when I'm lambing sheep, I drive around in a Land Rover; sometimes chuck the sheep in the back, the dogs live in the back. Got all me equipment in here and everything from shepherd's crook in here.

I've had a wax oil for winter. If you look after the chassis well... always done mine about every year, costs about 200 quid...but it does make them last that much longer...

With the Land Rover I had before, I was coming

down a steep bank, only it was really icy and the thing locked up and I ran through a wall. Now a lot of modern vehicles have a plastic bumper, it'd probably been 1000 quid's worth of damage...but I tied that bumper bar to a gatepost and a strap and straightened it out and you couldn't tell...You don't need a body shop, you don't need to have spray equipment. I mean I painted the bumper bar black again with some Hammerite paint, you can mend 'em yourself...it does mean people with limited garage machinery can just repair 'me and that's why they keep going.

If you were going [over] 300 miles, you're probably go in a car. But if the weather was really rubbish, you'd be happy. I have tried other 4 x 4's but I mean I live down the next road which is even tighter...I mean the 90 Defender being quite short and compact, they stick to the road quite well..'



‘Where the spares are plentiful and everybody know how to bash ‘em out’ Rainow, Peak District, UK



Showing the lengths some people will go to modify their vehicles for different purposes, this Defender as a tool has a very specific use; to become home, living room and kitchen when far away from home.

The Defender is used both for the adventure and engineering project, although the owner is very keen to emphasise the functionality of all the changes he's made.

‘...I bought the 110. And I've taken it across the Alps, down to Tunisia and the Sahara, end to end across the Pyrenees. And now the odd weekend.

So I'm not done anything that's kind of trick, you know I've not raised the suspension. I've done things I've identified from traveling. So I've uprated the shock absorbers...

You can repair bits in the field. I actually took the alloy wheels off that came with it and put steel wheels on because basically you can hammer a steel wheel out but it's not as easy to do out in the desert with an alloy.

It's the repair-ability and it's actually the cost of fixing damage. So if you had a nice Range Rover or Discovery - which are lovely and they're just as capable in the desert as a Defender - but you rip the wing mirror off, it's a 100 quid. You rip the wing mirror off a Defender, it's 12 quid... So it's that ability to go out and if you scratch it, damage it, you can repair it relatively easily.

I mean a Japanese, like Shogun or something,

fantastic. Dead comfortable. Dead reliable. But when they do go wrong it cost you a lot of money. So Land Rover, I think is less reliable, it leaks like a sieve. But it's dead easy to repair. So on a motorway, it's noisy and impractical and the fuel consumption is rubbish but as soon as you take it off road, it's just brilliant. It just does what it says on the tin.

It's part of it, isn't it? You're off in the middle of nowhere, the glass is all flat, you know the panels are all flat. So to me it's part of the deal is that you can fix it on the run. If I was taking it to Australia I'd probably be saying I should have a Toyota, because you go to Australia it's the local equivalent where the spares are plentiful and everybody know how to bash 'em out.'

I've done little bits [of the conversions myself]. So on the back, there's a canopy which was built for me by a guy up in Lancashire, it's all aluminium, you know cut and folded and welded. The tent I bought and then fitted. And then there's a few bits inside I've done, like electrics, twin batteries for the fridge, some wiring inside...'



'I think you could get pretty much anything'

Guildford, London, UK



Showing that Defenders are appropriate as a work vehicle in very modern and urban contexts, this bespoke vehicle has just been purchased to maintain woodlands in London. Along with 4 wheel drive and a short wheel base, the Defender proves that it's ability to be endlessly modified makes it suitable for a huge variety of uses.

'We're a crewing and man power agency and we've just bought a 2014 Defender 110. We bought it because we needed a site vehicle for a new contract managing woodland in outer London in order to get employees around and carry equipment and tools....We chose it for it's ruggedness and ability to access off road areas.

We've had it adapted by a company that does such things to include a winch, winch bumper, the electrics and dead switch. We've got an auxiliary battery charging system. We've adapted the inside to include 4 inward facing seats and sliding windows in the rear and we've had a tow bar fitted and diff steering guards underneath...they protect the vulnerable mechanical parts from being damaged by uneven ground and stumps and things.

I think you could spend any amount with this company and get pretty much anything. They'll prepare any sort of Defender, some flash ones for rallying, all sorts.

If anything went wrong with it I wouldn't expect an employee to fix any of our vehicles so we would use a recovery company... If the breakdown was

simple we might discuss fixing it, with a Land Rover there's more chance you might be able to find a workaround or fix.

I liked the idea of a Land Rover because it is so basic and rugged. There's no frills, nothing to go wrong... It's a working vehicle so it needs to be tough and it needs to be cheap and easy to repair it if it does get knocked.'



'I do know them pretty well'

Rainow, Peak District



The most common work described in this story is the replacement of the engine for more power and better gas mileage. The life-extending adjustments evidenced in this story are evidence that these vehicles are outside of the normal trajectory of vehicle decline. It is worth the time and effort to resurrect them and make them fit for purpose. These vehicles therefore span contemporary and past considerations of time, speed and material value.

'It's a 1957. We bought it for my nephew in 1984, put a Perkins in it; the engine were seized and it were cheaper to run... I bought it off him and stripped it down completely, and rebuilt it... I put the canvas on.

[When did I start working on Land Rovers?] Ah, I was about 10, on my Dad's tractors, Land Rovers... I do work on other vehicles. But I prefer the Land Rover. They're mend-able. And I do know them pretty well. I don't sort of need a workshop manual I suppose.

I've been working on this for the last two years on and on... it stood for eight years in a field but I decided to get it out... But it's all dead original but with a new half chassis from here. Front chassis, we've got a new outrigger, new exhaust, shockers, springs; I've spent quite a bit on it. But the parts aren't expensive, really. The rest of it this is pretty original. Apart from the engine which is pretty lovely. This one was out of a Dodge pickup, ex council... Just make 'em fit. [The gear ratio is] not

too bad. Some of them are off sort of generators and so they're a little bit revvy. They are low rev but it's got Range Rover diffs and that sort of roughly puts it back where it were. It's fast enough. And you know it'll pull really well. And the series 1 gearbox obviously was a stronger one. It's original, first, second crash box, no sincro on it but I'm not into that; 'it's got to be dead original'

Years ago we used to do quite a lot [of adaptations]... [with a Discoveries] you can get a good engine and a gearbox and a very rusty motor.

[I use it] for winter mainly. I had a Wrangler Jeep for a few years and the electrics went on that so basically I just use it for winter or I do use it for going about a bit.

We always had a Land Rover...Years ago that was the only motors around.'



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