

old Disco?

smuggled them out of the plant to be painted elsewhere!

The earliest of these second-stage Discovery prototypes were running during 1988, but others from the same group seem to have been built anything up to a year or more later. Many were built on the Solihull production line by assembly workers, so validating the manufacturability of the design, the assembly processes and the assembly facilities.

Some of these vehicles were never road-registered because they were allocated to various departments at Land Rover for in-house testing; others were crash-tested against concrete walls at MIRA and needed no registration plates because they never went out on the roads. But those which did go out on public roads had to be road-registered.

A lot of public-road testing would have taken place at night, when the vehicles were less likely to be noticed and when photography would be difficult, but for additional protection Land Rover made sure that they were registered with numbers which were neither new nor could be immediately associated with Solihull. The company had a stock of such numbers, all a few years old, and by special arrangement with the licensing authorities was able to allocate them to prototypes and development vehicles when they were needed. To

compound the deception, the V5 of at least some of these prototypes describes them as Austin Maestros!

Testing and development continued on these vehicles until very late in the programme, but the next phase was a large batch of vehicles that were almost to production standard. There were at least 126 of these, which were known as SDVs (Specially Designated Vehicles). Build was under way by May 1989, and many of them were registered with "G-WAC" numbers and were used for the

Discovery prototypes

These are the serial numbers of known Discovery prototypes. All of them were of course preceded by the alphanumeric codes associated with normal VINs; C742 HUH, for example, is actually SALLJGBF7GA-380301 (we've added the hyphen for clarity).

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| 329069 | Earliest Discovery so far identified. LHD, and supposedly one of two prototypes built with fuel-injected V8 engines. Went to Canada on test and was registered on Canadian plate as 968 FPP. UK registration B62 COH. Engineering fleet number Jay 5. Survives in the Dunsfold Collection. |
| 337614 | Registered as C60 JKG. LHD Tdi. Later used for Camel Trophy training. Engineering fleet number Jay 17. Survives in the Dunsfold Collection. |
| 380301 | Registered as C742 HUH. Initially sold to Bill Morris, now owned by Charles Whittaker. Engineering fleet number not known. |



The Discovery was a major milestone for Land Rover, so preserving this vehicle matters