



David's G480WAC

# G-WAC Notes

From the  
Project Jay Preservation Group.

**A News sheet for those who are interested  
in the early Land Rover Discoverys.**



Roy's G526WAC

## February 2012

Christmas and New Year celebrations are just a memory now so we can look forward to Spring and the show season. But with fuel at over a £100 per fill up now, how busy are the Land Rover shows going to be? I hope that we can get some G-WACs or G registered cars out this year, the interest in these early cars is beginning to grow? The classic car movement will still be busy and we have quite a few good shows in the North, so I will certainly be exhibiting in the 1980s section.

### 116" wheelbase Ambulance J463 HVK.

I read with interest the recent article on J140 OAC in Land Rover Monthly, the article also pointed me to Graham's website and to the G-WAC Notes.

I own J463 HVK which seems to have been part of the only bulk order of 116" wheelbase Discovery ambulances, these were supplied to North East Ambulance Service for use in Northumberland.

Thanks to one of James Taylor's previous articles, I know the background to the 116" development and build, but have been lucky enough to find out a little more from Ronnie Black (ex-ambulance man of Alnwick) about the 'HVK' registered fleet.

Ronnie was running a website called 'Ambulances of the North' which seems to be out of action at the moment, but he has some photos of their handover outside Alnwick Castle and subsequent promotional shots including winching practice.

J463 HVK has had a fairly hard time over the years, has run up 172,000 miles and had spent quite a number of years under the ownership of an event cover paramedic firm.

It popped up on ebay about two and a half years ago, very poorly described, no one else seemed interested, so I 'won' the old girl for an opening £1000 bid, this was reduced to £800 by the time I had been messed about from pillar to post and the windscreen was smashed by a falling branch.

The amount of water getting in through the multitude of poorly sealed holes (around 18!) in the roof, plus usual sunroof and door seal issues have meant a complete strip of the substantially built ply and linoleum interior, along with the crumbling chipboard lockers.

Replacement metalwork includes complete sills (extra length fabricated from box section steel) with attendant floor panels, rear floor, crossmember mounts, inner wings, battery tray and footwells.

The extra weight of the larger body as well as wear and tear have given me and my long suffering local mechanics a nudge to replace body mountings, almost all suspension bushes, springs and shocks as well as brake discs and pads front and rear.

A recent MOT test was a failure on one headlight bulb and a diesel leak so I am happy with the results although it has taken a long time. The test has now been passed; it was last tested four years ago.

Much like Neil's J140 OAC I'm planning on camperising the ambulance, I'll probably be heading along the lines of a crew-bus, with spacious seating for two in the back alongside a kitchenette, with a bulkhead and tool/grotty gear storage in the rear. Will probably end up putting in a run of lockers along the right hand side, (similar to the original fittings, but in slightly more interesting timber), and fitting in the set of two van seats that are loose in the back at the moment.



## Project Capricorn.

I joined Land Rover in 1984 as a studio designer working for David Evans, just as the company was searching for a product to compete with the Shogun and the Land Cruisers.

Work was already underway to turn the 90 into a more user-friendly leisure vehicle, featuring forward facing 2nd row seating in the SWB, together with a face-lifted exterior, new fascia and instruments along with significant engineering changes to the B.I.W of the vehicle, namely bonded construction.

Later, I remember seeing one of the Capricorn prototypes and it took me quite a time to realise what was different - something was just missing! Then it struck me that there were no rivets or visible fixings on the body shell or hardtop. I am sure it would have grown familiar, as the basic shape didn't change

Of course the Capricorn did not get to the production stage, but had it gone ahead it would still have left Land Rover searching for a product to fill the gap between the 90/110 and Range Rover, which the Japanese products were beginning to do, and the changes that it was introducing would have satisfied only a relatively small percentage of customers.

After a year at Land Rover I became the studio manager. After a lot of effort and "soul-searching", the decision to do a new product based on the Range Rover, rather than proceed with Capricorn, was agreed and Project Jay was go. Although we sketched numerous proposals that still had 90/110 heritage, it was decided to go for a completely new look for Project Jay.

I am sure it was not an easy thing to persuade some people at Land Rover in the use of the Range Rover platform, because we were continually challenged to be as different from RR as possible in the vehicle design. (Square as opposed to round headlamps, inset bonnet as opposed to "clam-shell", side-hinged tail-door and external spare as examples)

I remember how we worked very hard to complete the design process as quickly as possible with the challenges of minimum spend, but also how supportive everyone was to the concept of the product.

It is very easy with hindsight to say that Capricorn was definitely not the way to go, but back then the thought of Land Rover with another model line was hard to believe. Just look at Land Rover now.

I hope their success continues.

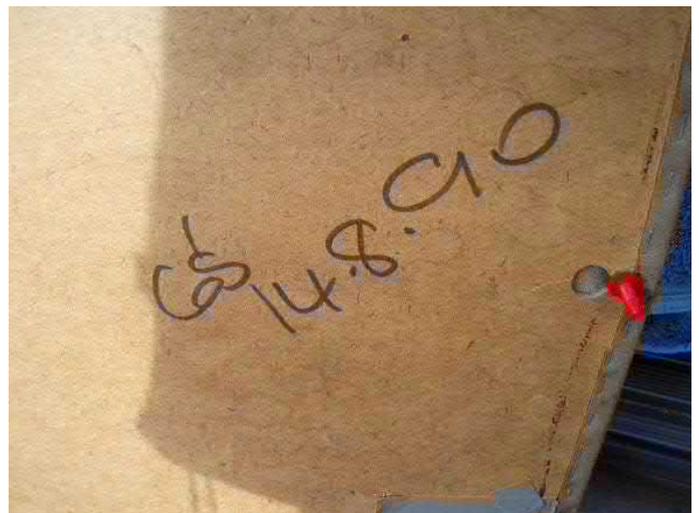
George Thomson.

## Bahama Beige trim.

I read with interest the article about G515BKV with the grey/blue items among the Bahama Beige trim. The combination in this pre production 5-door car is not unique.

My 5-door with the Bahama Beige interior was registered in October 1990 and also has the hand brake, gearlever gaiters, ashtrays and door opening lever housings in grey/blue, the same as in the pictures of G515BKV.

To my knowledge these items were never produced in beige for the 200 series



Does anyone know of another 1990/91 200 with the Beige trim, and has it also got grey/blue items or are they beige?

The picture shows the inside of the rear door card with a date hand written on it.

Dave Dorling.



