



Original LT77 box and LT230 transfer case are from the same Discovery that donated its engine way back when. Bolted to the back of the latter are two things that make the vehicle a lot better off-road, in the shape of an Ashcroft underdrive and an X-Brake

Drivetrain

As we've mentioned, the 200Tdi engine came complete with its gearbox and transfer case, both of which have been fitted with raised breathers and pressed back into action. The primary box, the venerable LT77, is famous for two things: its heavy clutch, and the fact that compared to the R380 that replaced it, you can't break them.

Behind the LT77 is a 1.4:1 ratio LT230 transfer case, with an Ashcroft Underdrive bringing down the vehicle's overall gearing on demand. This is operated by a Disco 2 shifter mounted next to the driver's seat; the handbrake lever, meanwhile, keeps the vehicle well and truly stationary as it pulls on an X-Brake.

Beyond this is a custom rear prop, lengthened to suit the extended wheelbase and put up with the amount of droop in the vehicle's suspension (greater than standard, it won't surprise you one bit to learn). The front prop is original in length, but both run early Range Rover yokes as these had a wider angle than the later version.

Axles

When Les first built the hybrid, he took the brave decision of sticking with the axles' original halfshafts. This in spite of the fact that he was running a Rover V8, shod with 85-profile Dirt Devils and competing in challenge events. Stunningly, he rapidly became well versed in the task of replacing the weedy old 10-spliners: 'I'm not sure if it was the chocolate shafts or my unique driving style,' he says. 'But when I made the decision to fit ARBs, it was all uprated using 24-spline shafts from Ashcrofts.'

The axles themselves are a 110 front unit and a 300Tdi rear, with Qt diff guards looking after the diff cases and raised breathers keeping water out. Inside, both have 3.54:1 diffs with ARB Air-Lockers; as well as the shafts, Ashcrofts also provided the drive members, in addition to CVs up front.

Moving along the axles, brakes are standard all round, though EBC pads have been fitted in



35x10.50R16 Simexes are mounted on max-offset Mach 5s, though the latter are slated for replacement with a set of beadlocks. Note also the Ashcroft drive members which turn the whole plot

place of the original pattern units. You'd expect to find extended brake lines, but with new brackets having been welded on in the right place, taking into account the lift and droop on the revised suspension, this wasn't necessary. Les has even stuck with the original rubber flexis rather than uprating to braided hose.

Mounted on the hubs are a set of 16x8 Mach 5 rims 'with the largest offset I could get,' though Les says he intends to change them for beadlocks soon. What won't be changing is his tyre choice: the field has widened a lot in recent years, but you still won't find many people arguing against the 35x10.50R16 Simex Extreme Trekker, and even though it's by no means as tall as some, this is still regarded as the definitive tyre for challenge events.

Suspension and steering

What this points to is that despite its looks, this Land Rover is actually not as extreme as you might think when it comes to suspension lift. In fact, it's a mere one inch above what would be standard – concerned more with keeping a low centre of gravity, Les took the praiseworthy approach of aiming for articulation rather than spectacular but ultimately needless ground clearance.

'Originally,' he says, 'it had Old Man Emu 764 springs all round, but after it had been through its weight-loss programme these were much too hard and high. Another set gave the right lift but were too soft. Now, about two further spring changes later, I've got it just right. The only problem is that I have no idea what springs are now fitted!'

What he can say is that whatever they are, the rear springs dislocate when asked. The fronts will do so too, 'just about,' so it's all to the good that there's a set of Rough Country +5" shocks and Gwyn Lewis mounts all round to let them do their stuff.

Further potential comes from a set of Qt radius arms at the front and Giggiepin trailing links at the back, controlled by a mixture of



Brake servo from a 90 runs to dual inlet front calipers



Rough Country +5" front shocks are mounted using towers from Gwyn Lewis



Rear shocks too are +5" Rough Country Units, again picking up on the chassis using Gwyn Lewis mounts

Polybushes and original rubber units. An interesting and certainly unusual combo, that – and one which, like the rest of the system, points to the fact that Les isn't one to be seduced by flash parts just for the sake of it.

Similarly, there's nothing fancy going on with the vehicle's steering. Strong, certainly, but not fancy. There's a raised breather on the reservoir, and a standard three-bolt PAS box turns the wheels via the original drop arm and factory-size linkages – quite simply, with just the one inch of lift to cope with, and 'mere' 35-inch tyres, there's no need for anything else. The drag link and track bar are heavy-duty units from Qt, however, for the simple reason that standard or non-standard, they're bound to get the occasional battering from Mother Earth; combine these with a home-made steering guard, and if you ever see this Landy with its front wheels pointing towards each other it's most likely because Les has discovered a hitherto forgotten landmine.