



DIFFICULTY RATING:

TIME ALLOWED: HOURS!

COST: N/A



AMERICAN SERIES IIA

WORDS AND PICTURES BY MICHAEL SHAW



vehicle methodically. I was relieved to come up with quite a substantial to-do list of things I could do myself and my confidence was restored.

I ordered the manuals, located Series parts suppliers in the US and in UK, and began to buy all the parts I knew I would need when Elsa came back.

I also joined online Land Rover forums, subscribed to Classic Land Rover Magazine, and watched Land Rover repair videos on YouTube.

Packages began to show up almost daily, a surprise to my magnificent other who was now faced with an apartment cluttered with Land Rover parts. How could I convince her that Elsa was worth it, that Elsa was lovable?

Elsa returned roadworthy and best of all with a 'passed-inspection' sticker on the windscreen. W

e took Elsa out for a drive around the block and I gave my MO a turn in the driver's seat.

I thought she might be intimidated, but she was excited because she'd driven a standard transmission before, thus had a bit of self-confidence so there was no smashing of gears.

The two of them were getting along. It was Elsa who had built a connection I

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had not expected. We were a family now. Finally, I could begin to work on my to-do list in earnest.

Working my first to-do list in an apartment dweller setting was a valuable learning experience which challenged my determination and creativity, but the moral support from my magnificent other is what helped me the most.

The constrictions on these tasks made us both realise that the time will soon come when I must have a garage to do some of the messy jobs as well as those tasks requiring power tools.

And I surely would be able to accomplish more during the colder weather as well.

It became obvious to my MO and me that we will have to buy a house with a garage for Elsa. After all, she is one of the family.

APARTMENT LIVING

If you're a classic Land Rover owner living in an apartment complex you need to be creative – as Michael Shaw discovered

We all have them, our lists of things to do Land Rover. These fall into three main categories: must-do, eventually must-do and wouldn't it be nice to-do.

If you live on an estate with double garage and workshop, you can rebuild a gearbox and swap an engine. More power to you, but I'm a guy who lives in an apartment complex and, here in US, there are strict rules in rental communities.

As soon as Elsa, my Series IIA Land Rover rolled off the flatbed truck, I was faced with a challenge related to apartment living; my Land Rover would be towed.

Rightfully, our management does not want inoperable vehicles, resident owned or not, taking up valuable parking spaces.

And certainly none of us wants abandoned vehicles being dumped in our complex. Let's just say a Series Land Rover without license plates does not blend in next to a sleek new metallic-gray sedan. I found an old license plate I bought in Alaska – man-cave wall

décor – and I attached this pretended pedigree to my station wagon. My hope was that any member of our maintenance or management team making the rounds might think, "Oh, someone must be visiting from Alaska, "Wouldja just look at the kinda cars they drive up there?"

A quick drive around the block told me Elsa needed new brakes, a new clutch and gearbox, and its steering rebuilt.

Besides the impossibility of doing these major repairs inconspicuously in an apartment parking lot, I was not at all qualified to do such complex work.

Self-doubt took over, and I wondered if buying this Land Rover had been a mistake. Here was a major to-do list, but there was nothing on it I could do.

Since repairs and even much of the maintenance for Elsa would have to be done by professionals, I now asked myself, what could I do living in an apartment? Were there any smaller low-profile jobs I could handle?

To make a clear determination of what might be reasonable, I went through the



1. Elsa fit into strict r lot and license



4. Alth useles: recom made mirror



7. Sta install strikes style c driver a shir



10. N previc (337€ locks)



1. Elsa upon arrival and trying to inconspicuously fit into the neighbourhood. My complex has a strict rule for unregistered vehicles in our parking lot and my car's former owner had removed the license plates before shipping the vehicle.



2. I ran upstairs, rummaged through my travel memorabilia and found an old license plate I bought in Alaska. I attached this pretended pedigree to the stern of my Station Wagon until I obtained genuine legitimate Virginia plates when I removed my very cool but illegal Alaska license plate.



3. First, I decided I would install two round wing mirrors (606187), and an interior mirror (345585) using its special bracket (338275). These mirrors are an inexpensive aftermarket item, and the field of view is not flat so 'objects are closer than they appear.'



4. Although the wing mirrors look cool, they are useless. For any serious highway driving, I would recommend door-mounted, rectangular mirrors made of original glass. Regarding the interior mirror, the wider field of view is no problem.



5. The famous finicky brake light switch, prone to failure. I bought a new switch, (589223) from Rovers North. Installation was super easy because I set up my phone behind the car with the camera in selfie-mode so I could see on the screen when the brake lights came on as I pressed the pedal.



6. The old-style door latch was removed, this was surprisingly tough and required some bolt cutting due to rust, thus I needed to order new nut plates (337806 & MRC9417).



7. Standard shim and striker plate. During installation, I discovered I needed an updated striker plate (333140) because one of the old style ones did not work with the new door latch. For the driver's door to properly close I found I also needed a shim (347594) inserted behind the striker plate.



8. In Elsa's case, the genuine Land Rover shim I bought turned out to be about 1.5mm too thick, so I fabricated a thinner custom one out of a flat piece of perforated racking metal.



9. Striker plate with thinner shim installed. From start to finish this project dragged out two weeks because of the parts ordering each step of the way. It was well worth the time and effort to now have doors which lock securely.



10. New locking door latch installed. I had previously ordered three new locking door latches (337801, 337801) and taken them to a local locksmith who keyed them alike.



11. Copper sleeve inserts for the half step. This half-step required some slight modification, because the drop plate bolts were slightly loose in the half step. I solved this problem by making sleeves from copper pipe and sanding them thin enough to fit.



12. The copper sleeve inserts in place before final install of half step. There is also a large sized step at some suppliers with a step on each side of the tow plate. Either size will bolt perfectly behind the drop plate in the rear because the mounting holes align.



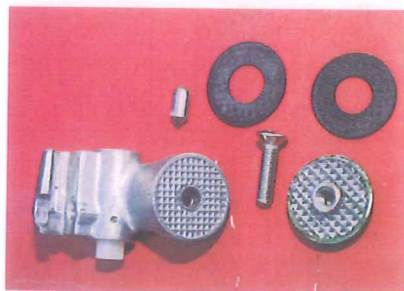
13. New rear half-step with tow jaw installed. I like this Rovers North galvanised rear half step which mounts to the left of the tow plate because it rides low but does not add too much to the departure angle for off-road driving



14. New washer bottle installed. I cleaned out and kept the original bottle, bought a new lid with an attached pump, then connected the tubing and wiring. I bought a two-speed wiper/washer combination switch for the dash but didn't like the modern switch knob, so I replaced it with a classic Series-style one



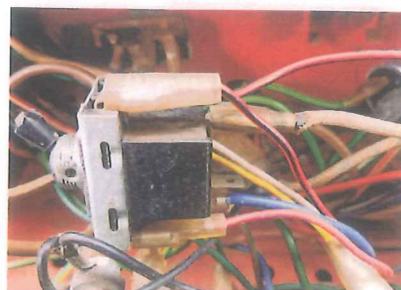
15. Additional power source wired in. I managed to obtain a fused cigarette-lighter power outlet on a six-foot cable. I wired this to ignition switched power and ran it out to the open glove box. This gives me 12V access for phone charging or other plug-in needs



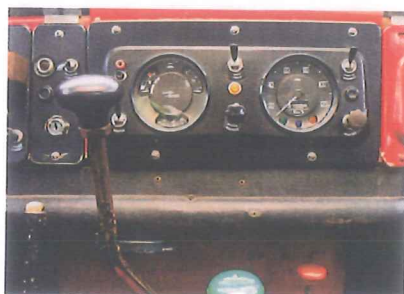
16. Window catch and its five components. I bought the rubber washers (340391) from Rovers North in Vermont, the oval Philips pan head screw (78402) from DAP in Vermont, the long version of the catch from Dunsfold Land Rover and the window catch nut, from PA Blanchard (332329) in the UK.



17. The dash when I purchased the Land Rover. There's no washer switch, a missing inspection socket, a bare warning bulb in centre and missing switch labels so plenty to sort out



18. Broken headlamp switch. I replaced the broken headlamp switch and rewired the connectors to the interior lights switch so both exterior and interior light work correctly



19. The smarter upgraded dash with new wiper/washer switch, new headlamp switch, inspection sockets, replaced centre warning bulb with lens and switch labels added



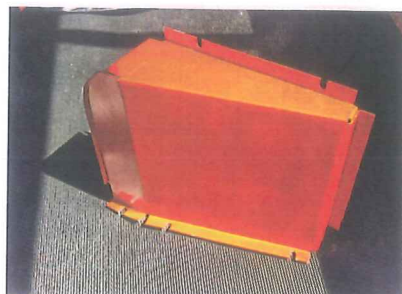
20. Replacement rear door check rod replaced and fitted to Defender-style channel. I found the original door-check rod (333041) and a channel which is used for the Defender at Rovers North in Vermont (RHR - RN X117)



21. Bottom view of Defender style check rod channel. I called and Rovers North checked it for fit with a Series door check rod. I ordered the parts along with the small rubber door-check stop (333445), assembled it all and bolted the channel onto the chequerplate. It works perfectly.



22. The right rear corner of the interior missing its lamp cover. The missing lamp cover shows in the parts manual as part no. MRC2245, however the body part on my truck is lower in profile than the picture shown in the book



23. Replacement lamp cover panel after painting. On the balcony of my apartment, I sanded it lightly for prep, then I took the part in a big empty box to a remote corner of the parking lot at work



24. Rear interior corner with replacement lamp cover installed. Over a period of several warm days during my lunch hours I'd apply light coatings of paint, and then I'd let it dry inside the cardboard box in my car. I installed the panel and it looks great