



**PARTNERSHIP**  
SERIES IIA + SANKEY  
Is there a more charming  
working vehicle  
combination? Beats a  
Transit in the mirror...



# BODGER'S MATE

Theo Ford-Sagers visits a Series IIA that's helping to revive an ancient English trade in the heart of the South Downs

PHOTOS: LAURENS PARSONS



**W**e often call a working Land Rover a 'workhorse', but in the case of this 1964 Series IIA, known as Harvey (or 'arvey to his friends), the term has a particular relevance. His duties echo those of working horses for hundreds of years.

Harvey is the steed of choice for the man known locally as the Amberley Bodger, or Colin Wells when he's not wearing his flat 'at. Colin may be a bodger but that doesn't mean he's slapdash about his work – far from it. Bodger is an old term for the skilled craftsmen who created

wooden items, mostly furniture legs, with a pole lathe. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Buckinghamshire bodgers were powering a flourishing English furniture industry, with their hand-turned items being considered superior to the machine-made alternatives that were becoming available.

Colin is reviving this ancient trade from a leafy HQ that nestles in a corner of the Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre, in the heart of the South Downs. Other craftsmen and volunteers have joined him over the years, each practising their own craft, adding their own open workshops to the Greenwood Village. Today a few visitors are mooching about, an ancient

stationary diesel engine is smoking back into life for the first time after decades of dereliction and in the middle, with a Sankey trailer, is Harvey.

### Neigh bother

The bodging profession used to require a four-legged beast of burden to haul the uncut wood, lug crafted items in bulk to the 'chair master' for assembly, and probably heave some tools and provisions around in between times. Chair parts were being delivered by horse as late as 1958.

Harvey's duties are hardly different. His loadbay gets loaded with straight logs (known as 'butts') prior to splitting, longer timbers are loaded on the full-length roof rack, and the bumper-mounted 6000lb winch is sometimes called into action to drag timber about. The Sankey trailer is mainly used when Colin is demonstrating his craft at shows, and needs the extra carrying capacity to transport his lathe, wood and tools.

Up front are free-wheeling hubs, an orange light at the back wards off lorries on the M25 when Colin is towing at 45mph... and that's about it for modifications. Wipers are the early twin-motor type, and there isn't even a heater (they were an optional extra in the '60s). Part of the beauty of an old Land Rover is the ability of such a simple machine to perform a range of



### 'It's the only suitable vehicle'

**OWNER:** COLIN WELLS, THE AMBERLEY BODGER

Colin's woodland pastime belies a previous high-octane motorsport career at venues such as Brands Hatch. From 1979 he ran his own driving school based at Goodwood, and later escapades involved giving punters hot laps in a Porsche 962

race car, 'but I'd always had a passion for wood,' he explains, a passion that he's been exploring since 1989. These days Colin's time is devoted to woodworking at the Greenwood Village, which he established here at Amberley six years ago.



Perfect loadbay for the traditional 18in 'butts' of uncut wood



The bodger's traditional wood-turning workshop

## Visit the museum

The Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre promotes the region's industrial past, and runs a calendar of public events throughout most of the year. Visit [amberleymuseum.co.uk](http://amberleymuseum.co.uk) for details.

If you'd like to learn more about Colin's woodworking trade, or book yourself onto one of his courses at Amberley, visit his own website at [greenwoodworker.co.uk](http://greenwoodworker.co.uk)

'The beauty of a Land Rover is its ability to perform important duties with minimal changes'

## HELLO HARVEY



Sankey trailer attaches to the Series with a Nato hitch



This will see Harvey out of most spots of bother



Flashing light wards off M25 lorries



Full length roof rack is for carting lengths of timber to the workshop

### TECH SPEC

- Model: 1964 Series IIA 88in
- Engine: 2.25-litre 4cyl petrol
- Power/torque: 77bhp @ 4250rpm/124lb ft @ 2500 rpm.
- Transmission: Selectable 4WD with low-range transfer box. Selectro free-wheeling front hubs.
- Tyres: Atacama Sport 7.50 R16
- Winch: Britpart BD6000

important duties with minimal changes from standard.

### I believe in Harvey's dents

'I couldn't have it looking shabby for your visit, so I got the roller out the other day and gave her a lick of paint,' says Colin, putting on the Kelly kettle and welcoming us into his 'hovel'. That's the traditional name for the bodger's workshop, but there's nothing decrepit about this one. It's fantastically warm and inviting. 'I wouldn't want to go too crazy restoring Harvey, though. That vehicle's spent all its life collecting all its dents and bumps. Why spoil it's character?'

And character it certainly has, by the bundle. Everything about it says 'working vehicle', from the almost-ordered clutter in the cab, to the way the 2.25 petrol sweetly purrs into life at the first twist of the key. Nothing's seized, excessively corroded or gummed up, impressive considering this 51-year-old vehicle has never been rebuilt.

In a former life Harvey worked on a local estate, later passing into the ownership of a chap called Paul Austin, the vehicle's last owner, who still looks after Harvey's maintenance to this day.

'Harvey's had the usual bit of welding on the rear crossmember and around the bulkhead, but it's pretty good really,' says Colin. 'When Paul bought it, the underside was completely caked in chalk. We think that might have helped preserve it.'

**'That vehicle's spent all its life collecting all its dents and bumps. Why spoil it's character?'**

There may be something in this. I'm no chemist, but some quick research confirms my suspicion that corrosion of steel is indeed inhibited by an alkaline environment.

### Solid as an oak

Harvey's a tool, but it's clear that this is a bit more than just another working vehicle to Colin. 'It's robust, it goes anywhere, and being an old Land Rover, it looks the part at the museum.'

Any breakdowns? 'Nope, he's never let me down. Ah, well...' Colin stops himself, and points out some welding at the bottom of the gear lever. 'There was the time the gear lever broke off when I was on the way to a show...'

Anyone who's familiar with the 'enthusiasm' that some Series gearboxes excite from the

driver, will sympathise... 'Fortunately I was in second gear at the time, so I was able to crawl the rest of the way there!'

'Sometimes when I'm extracting wood from local woodland, a Land Rover's the only suitable vehicle. I while back I ran a woodworking course that was based in some woodland. I often had to put Harvey in low box to pull through the mud and I was crabbing about all over, but it got me around the place! Of course the original bodgers didn't have Land Rovers to help them, they had horses instead.'

A good workhorse, whether carrot or petrol-powered, will always earn its place in its owner's affections.

Another reason why it's so easy to have a soft spot for old Land Rovers like Harvey. **LRO**



**Engine smoothly gets into action without fuss**

### Roaming about

We pile into the cab of Harvey for a tour around the Amberley museum complex. Harvey feels right at home as we weave through this fantastic maze of industrial heritage, with old curiosities, machines and crafts being exhibited around every corner. Modern vehicles aren't allowed here, but Harvey is such a valuable addition to the site that Colin has special permission to use him.



**It's certainly a lot warmer than riding a horse – even without a heater**