

Land Rover kicks off 2018 with restoration of original launch vehicle

The first Land Rovers were shown at the 1948 Amsterdam Motor Show; this original launch vehicle has been missing for the last 63 years. The car brand will celebrate its 70th anniversary year throughout 2018, starting with the restoration of the original Land Rover.



For years the whereabouts of this launch Land Rover was a mystery. The demonstration vehicle from the Amsterdam show was last on the road in the 1960s, after which it spent 20 years in a Welsh field before being bought as a restoration project; it then lay languishing unfinished in a garden. Following its surprise discovery just a few miles outside of Solihull, UK – where the car was first built – the experts at Jaguar Land Rover Classic spent months researching in company archives to unravel its ownership history and confirm its provenance.

The team behind the successful Land Rover Series I Reborn programme, which allows customers to own a slice of Land Rover history with meticulously restored Series Is, will now embark on their most challenging project yet: a year-long mission to preserve this historically significant prototype and enable it to be driven again.



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Tim Hannig, Jaguar Land Rover classic director, said: "This Land Rover is an irreplaceable piece of world automotive history and is as historically important as 'Huey', the first pre-production Land Rover. Beginning its sympathetic restoration here at Classic Works, where we can ensure it's put back together precisely as it's meant to be, is a fitting way to start Land Rover's 70th anniversary year.

“There is something charming about the fact that exactly 70 years ago this vehicle would have been undergoing its final adjustments before being prepared for the 1948 Amsterdam Motor Show launch – where the world first saw the shape that’s now immediately recognised as a Land Rover.”

The team will follow a dedicated process to restore the launch vehicle, which has a lot of special features that are unique to the 48 pre-production vehicles that were produced prior to the mass production vehicles, such as thicker aluminium alloy body panels, a galvanised chassis and a removable rear tub. The patina of its components will be preserved, including the original Light Green paint applied in 1948.

Previous owners of this historic vehicle are being invited to the facility to share their experiences and to witness its restoration.

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