



Title 205

As long as I owned various models of Landrovers, from about 1946 until 1972, I used to spend my holidays in Cornwall, where one of my pleasures was the drawing and colouring of old **Tin-mine Ruins**, which could only be reached by Landrover. In one of these I found the remnants of a Whim steam engine, built by Harvey in 1840, rebuilt in 1860 and working until 1930. It had a 24 inch diameter cylinder. I was so pleased to find it that I drew it immediately on 20 August 1971. *Author's copyright.*

My Taste in Cars

Title 205

I do believe that taste in cars, just as taste in clothes, does proclaim the man, and even more so the woman. My first driving lesson I had from a book, and my first driving licence I had in 1933 in Maidenhead by simply filling in a form and handing it in at the local post office. When about six years later the law was changed and I had to take a driving test, I borrowed a small Hillman from a fellow student which had one fault, its clutch had to be operated by pulling it back by hand! Thus I drove down Piccadilly to the satisfaction of the testing official who, I believe, was rather astonished by my performance, and I had my licence for life.

The first car which was my 'own' belonged to Milton Antiseptic Ltd whose Chief Chemist I was in 1943. It was in war-time, and strict black-out regulations were in force. This meant shields with very small horizontal slits in front of the head lamps, which made night-driving exceedingly difficult. Not much later, in about 1946, I had saved a few hundred pounds, and I could buy a Landrover from a farmer for £ 250. It was green, had a canvas top, and was in very good condition. I was very proud of it.

It did not take long, I saved more money, sold the green car and could order a brand-new white Landrover from the Manufacturers, the Rover Company in Solihull. I specified an open back, instead of the canvas top, in fact it was a small 'pick-up' truck. I also fitted a movable searchlight on top of the cabin, which gave it a very distinctive appearance, and I was again very proud. This type, white Landrover with spotlight on the cabin, remained my standard car for many years, as it proved ideal for my purposes. I had a tarpaulin fitted over the otherwise open back of the pick-up, and could store any suitcases or other bulky items, like a large toolbox, under it. I also acquired the registration number A R M 51 for it, to give the Landrover my own initials. Every few years, I was able to order an exact replacement model, except that the last two had Diesel engines.

This style gave the vehicle an almost official appearance, which led to an amusing incident. The first Motorway, M 1, was to be opened, and I drove to the beginning of it, to report any interesting technical details for the *Daily Telegraph*. After driving a few kilometers along the brand-new Motorway, I came to a small roadside café for workmen, where I had a cup of tea. I was soon accosted by one of them, who said: "Beg your pardon, Sir, can I have an invitation to the Opening Ceremony, please!" I replied that I was not in a position to oblige him, whereupon he told me that he thought I was the Chief Constable of Middlesex. "But why did you think that?" I asked, "Well, that white Landrover with the lamp on top, could only belong to a high official!"

[Back to Synopsis](#)[To... Science in London - A change of life. Title 206.](#)