

A Change of Life

Title 206

When at the beginning of the 1970s I became more and more friendly with a woman called Stefanie Maison, I soon began to hear comments about my Landrover, the difficulties of getting in and out with longish skirts, then fashionable. I knew that a fundamental change in my life of bachelorhood was about to begin and it was her, or the Landrover. It was of course her.

At the same time the Rover Company closed their workshops in Fulham, where Mr Frank Spalton had for years looked after my various models. He was the head of the shop and it was due to him that I had a VIP service, particularly important for the Diesel Landrovers. I found that they needed more frequent service, than those with a petrol engine, and when his attention was no longer available, it soon became disastrous. The radiator started to boil, and the repair worker of another garage could neither diagnose the reason nor effect the repair.

By the end of the 1980s, Stefanie had a Honda Civic which was renewed every second year. I bought one of the two-year old models very advantageously, and must admit that the evolution from Landrover to a Honda Civic, was not altogether an unpleasant one. Although no longer having a searchlight, the comfort and its remarkable acceleration were definite advantages, but it was not the awe-inspiring white Landrover, which gained respect and avoidance from London taxis. I was then 65 years old.

We had reached the pleasant but rather extravagant position of having two Honda Civics in the family, and Stefanie's had to be parked near her office at a most exorbitant parking rate. She decided to commute by taxi and we both agreed that a single, slightly larger car, a Volvo, would suit us well. I followed the same principle and had it regularly serviced by a Volvo Garage and never had any mechanical trouble with the several models I owned during the next two decades—until we moved abroad in 1996. [See Title 408]

And how does my taste in car's define my person? Conservative! Uppermost in my selection was mechanical excellence. With advancing age, love of comfort became important, and one smash with a Volvo proved to me that, had I been in a Honda Civic, I would have been badly injured. Nothing happened to the Volvo, and had the drunken driver of a small truck who cut in front of me, escaped and was untraceable by the police. Safety had become also desirable in later life.

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