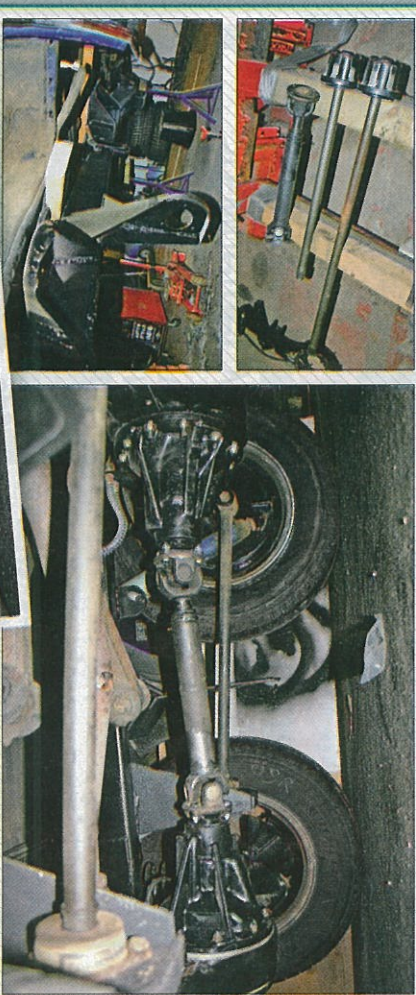


6x6 — HOW'S IT DONE?

THE BACK plate of what was the Discovery's rear axle is removed and a pinion from a donor axle is turned upside down and bolted to it. It's basically a straight fit, but some machining is necessary to get it just right.

Turning the pinion through 180 degrees, means that the second prop turns in the right direction. Adrian has fitted free wheel hubs to the rearmost hubs.



the front end. It was a 3.9 Efi model and in a tidy condition, so Adrian was halfway there – if you see what I mean.

He then spotted another one for the back end in Kettering where it was lying neglected with a blown engine so he had it brought down to Essex on a transporter. By the start of July 2009, he was all set to make a start.

Adrian says: "With two donor Discoverys in pieces in my unit I had shed loads of bits to sell. The really strange thing is that, just after I started the project, who should turn up to collect a surplus centre-console but Trevor Alder, the man who had inspired me to do the conversion in the first place. It was pure coincidence and it was great to meet him and pick

his brains."

Obviously, the first cut was to remove the back end of the rear donor, and then chop the back off the other one. Next Adrian extended the chassis by welding in an extra section above where the third axle will be installed. The axles could then be offered up.

As it stands, the Discovery has actually been extended 40 inches. When I first saw the vehicle the non-running third axle had been gutted and plated over, the half shafts cut and the ends put back on.

At that time the vehicle was running as a 6x4. However, Adrian contacted me shortly after to tell me that he had managed to purchase a set of 6x6 axles so we popped over to Essex again to

take a look underneath.

Basically, the back plate is taken off the second axle's diff and the pinion from another differential is turned through 180 degrees and bolted on. From this a very short prop shaft runs to the third axle which is unmodified. Surprisingly simple.

dialling in the detail

The inner skins of the two bodies are lapped and welded throughout and the outer aluminium skins are stuck together using a strong two pack adhesive used in the boat building and aircraft industries.

Some comp safari builders use this type of adhesive to glue panels onto their space frames to avoid drilling the frames and having to use pop rivets. I have

used it myself and, believe me, you only get one chance to put the edges together because once this stuff has gone off you will never, and I do mean never, separate the pieces again.

further challenges?

After the entire brake system was replaced with all new pipes, pads and discs all-round and the bushes were replaced, the bodywork was prepped and the Discovery went next door to Ray Piper's unit. Ray has been re-spraying and panel beating cars there for the last 40 years and it was here that the Tri-Dis was to be painted in Land Rover green.

Lastly all the trim was put back in with two sets of rear side facing seats making nine seats in all.

Adrian has adapted the third axle with free wheel hubs to reduce transmission drag when six wheel drive isn't needed. Traction shouldn't be a problem off-road – not too sure about ramp over and departure angles, however.

Adrian did not embark on the Tri-Dis project as a business venture but was working towards a goal he had in mind. He said: "I know so much more now after this first build. I want to sell this one as I have already started on another which will also be a 3.9 Efi but it will have 235/85/16 tyres as I feel that they will fill the arches a bit better."

"Finally I will build a 6x6 left-hand-drive Td5 and, when my wife Laura has finished at the university, we are going to drive that one across Europe for a couple of months ending in Transylvania in Romania before we make our way back home".

Six-wheeled Land Rovers are, of course, nothing new. As far back as I can remember there

have been a lot of businesses making a good living out of converting them, especially Range Rovers. One company that built a lot of them was Townley Land Rovers. Most of them went out to the Arab states where the sheiks and royalty loved them.

I had a quick blast up the road in Adrian's Discovery and, to tell you the truth, it drove just like my own Discovery. It's a credit to him and, hopefully one day in the future, the pair of them will be able to set off on their dream trip to Transylvania.

I just hope that they don't forget to take a stake and a big hammer, in case they meet up with you know who one dark night.

To contact Adrian for more details or to view the Tri-Dis, call 07775 860315.

LRM

