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August 2003 £3.45

ISSN 1471-7077



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Pictures of Lilly

Stefan Thiele looks at a Discovery with a glorious past

Above: Happy family: Sebastian's hobby has the support of wife and children

Some people refer to the Camel Trophy as the Olympics of four-wheel driving, and the 1996 event will be remembered as the toughest of them all. Kalimantan – Indonesian Borneo and the

third largest island in the world – was the setting for the 17th Camel Trophy and the last of the traditional "jungle" events, before the Trophy ceased to exist altogether in the year 2000. Isolated, wild, hostile and

unforgiving, Kalimantan is the land of mud and the ultimate nightmare for any traveller. Dense tropical rainforests, a network of fast flowing rivers and the hot and sticky climate make this possibly one of the most unpleasant places in the world.

In 1896 Dutch explorer Anton Nieuwenhuis was the first to cross the island from west to east. It took him 14 months. The 20 international teams of the Camel Trophy took just 22 days to complete a record-breaking east to west crossing in their Discoverys, covering a distance of 1850 kilometres.

Team Germany, Eberhard Stettner and Christine Höfer, had fought a superhuman battle against the raging elements and had lived through a hell of continuous technical maladies. After suffering from a broken front axle, a bent driveline, total loss of steering, a frontal crash with the Team Japan Discovery and last not least a rollover, their totally battered Discovery limped across the finish-line 24 hours behind schedule.

Overall winners in this gruesome event were Team Greece; Russia took best of the Special Tasks and the Team Spirit Award went to South Africa. The Germans finished in 17th place in true Camel Trophy style: "Winning is part, taking part is all".

For the poor Discovery however, it was complete disaster. The legendary conquest had not left a single piece of sheetmetal unscathed and the right front wing had been ripped off altogether. All the window-glass on the right-hand side was broken and the chassis was bent like the roller-coaster at Billing Aquadrome.

This wreck of a Discovery

was shipped back to England, and from there it went immediately to Worldwide Brands, Inc in Cologne, the German branch of the company that markets adventure gear under the Camel trademark. WBI had hoped to display the Discovery

at glamorous sales events, but a feasibility study gave it the thumbs down and "CT 30" was left to rot in a rather unglamorous parking lot.

Things were looking grim, when Eberhard got wind of this sad situation in late summer of 1997 and in a quick move bought the rusting remains of Lilly – as CT30 was known in her battling days. A motor mechanic by training, he enlisted the help of his father-in-law, and they set about rebuilding the Discovery.

After the 1996 event, Eberhard had found a job as a Camel Trophy trainer, and set about the restoration with plenty of motivation. Among other things, he replaced every body panel and both doors on the damaged right-hand side. Lilly began to rise like a Phoenix from the ashes, but only half-way through the process things came to a standstill. Personal goals shifted and Eberhard reluctantly put Lilly up for sale in the summer of 2002 without ever getting a chance to drive her on the road.

Sebastian Fasold of Gersfeld saw the



Left: The rollover in Kalimantan

Above: Inside immediately afterwards (Photos: Thomas Grimm)

magazine ad and wasted no time. Working for Land Rover Germany as "Flying Doctor", sorting out vehicle problems that the dealerships cannot handle, he had won the coveted award for best mechanic with Land Rover in 1999. He immediately recognised that this was a tremendous opportunity: here was a chance to buy a true gem, a genuine Camel Trophy Discovery that needed the help of an expert, a person who had a thorough understanding of this vehicle down to the last bolt and nut.

On June 22, a deal was struck and after meticulous preparation, the car went off to the paint shop to receive a fresh coat of Camel Trophy Sandglow, paint code number 361. Sebastian's good connections to Special Vehicles at Solihull, who had transformed the standard

production Discoverys into Camel Trophy vehicles, proved of great help. This is how he managed to get hold of some special adaptors for the Safety Devices roll-cage and a host of other small parts.

However, his aim was to keep Lilly as original as possible, exchanging parts only when they were beyond repair or simply missing. So the roof-rack, chassis and a myriad of mechanical items were restored with painstaking care for originality.

The warped dashboard – common on Discoverys of that age – had to be replaced, and then the new one had to be cut



VIN plate confirms authenticity: it's SALLJGMF8TA-503613



