

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY

You've read
the press drives,
but what's the
Grenadier like
to live with?





GARY'S VIEW



Gary Pusey is LRM's Classics Editor, whose daily driver is a 1990 Range Rover V8. He also owns an enviable collection of rare Land Rovers

REGULAR readers will recall that I've driven the Grenadier on two previous occasions. The first was in February last year, when Ineos invited motoring journalists to visit its newly acquired (from Mercedes) factory at Hambach in France, close to the German border. At the end of the tour, we were driven to an abandoned coal mine, where we were allowed to drive pre-production vehicles off-road around a vast, sodden area of black mud.

Almost a year later, I got behind the wheel for the second time when I joined the global media launch in Scotland, and this time I was able to drive the Grenadier much more extensively over two days, both on and off-road, through an ever-changing weather map of snow, ice, rain, and glorious sunshine.

On both occasions I came away deeply impressed by the Grenadier's off-road capabilities, and amazed that a company that has never made a vehicle before could

come up with something so impressive at the first attempt. But my admiration was also tinged with sadness that what could be described as a modern, beautifully engineered, spiritual successor to the old Defender had not been built by Land Rover.



“It does give the same sense of adventure, toughness and presence as a Defender”



Both my drives in the Grenadier had been in wide open places. Tremendously enjoyable but not really representative of what it would be like to drive a Grenadier in real life, slogging up and down the motorway, trying to find a space in the supermarket car park, and threading my way through Hampshire's narrow country lanes. That's why I'd asked the Grenadier team if LRM could borrow a vehicle for a few days.

Four months later, just after the first Grenadiers were being delivered to the people who had ordered one last year 'off-plan', a 3.0-litre petrol Grenadier Fieldmaster appeared on my doorstep. Turns out LRM was only the third to receive a press fleet Grenadier, hot on the heels of Jeremy Clarkson and Harry Metcalfe!

It arrived just in time for me to drive it to the LRM Live show at Malvern, where Ineos would be displaying it for the weekend. Obviously, the four-hour drive to the Three Counties Showground was considerably more relaxing,

Grenadier can wade to an impressive 800mm as standard

smoother, faster, and quieter than it would have been if I'd been in any of my classic Land Rovers.

Many of the press reports that followed the global media drive commented on vague steering, windscreen wipers that left the bottom right corner of the screen uncleared, doors that wouldn't shut, and an uncomfortable intrusion into the driver's floor area. My sense after driving the car for eight days is that none of these are issues.

The steering requires you to steer the Grenadier both into and out of bends, just like I do in my old Land Rovers. If you don't, the steering will not self-centre quickly enough. If your preference is steering modern vehicles with one hand and expecting the wheel to return to centre with no input, then you will have issues...

The wiper 'blind-spot' can be a problem in filthy weather and at night, but I'm told Ineos is going to fix this. The doors are heavy and need a hefty push to close fully, but I'd rather have that than a flimsy door. I think the engineering of the Grenadier is uncompromisingly impressive.

It's true that the floor panel where the driver's left foot sits is raised, which means you can't stretch your leg, but I didn't find it a problem. I did find a rather irritating resonance appeared at around 75 to 78mph, but whether this is a general problem or restricted to this particular vehicle I don't know. And I would prefer it if the steering wheel was slightly larger than it is.

The Grenadier is a large vehicle, as became clear when I parked it alongside my 1997 Defender 90 and 1990 Range Rover, but judging its width wasn't a problem in even the narrowest of Hampshire lanes. The Grenadier might not be 'luxury reimagined' but it is a very effectively reimagined utility 4x4. Could I get comfortable with it as a daily driver? The answer is yes, and I was sad to see it go.



How does the Ineos stack up against Gary's current steed?



High seating position and great visibility inspire confidence

MARTIN'S VIEW



Martin Domoney is LRM Editor, and owns a 2007 Freelander 2 and a 1975 Series III pick-up, as well as a 1992 Range Rover Classic he is currently restoring

WHEN Gary Pusey mentioned he'd managed to secure a Grenadier on test, I was conflicted. I'm obviously curious about the vehicle as a whole – any solid-axle 4x4 being launched in this day and age is worthy of attention – but the Grenadier's back story and the reason for it existing had me slightly torn. It's not a Land Rover product, no matter how hard it tries, so why should I care?

I hadn't seen one in person before LRM Live, and I was not alone. The wholly positive reaction from visitors was reassuring, having spent some time poking around it and chatting to Matt the PR guy about it in the arena, I

was much more excited to get behind the wheel.

A few days after the show, I made my way to Hampshire to collect the Grenadier from Gary. We chatted and he told me all about what he liked and didn't like – there wasn't much of the latter, but he did mention a vibration at certain speeds. I had a plan to get the vehicle on a four-post ramp for a thorough prodding, so made a note to look for possible causes.

The drive home was a good mix of winding B-roads, faster dual-carriageways and the always delightful M25, which was a punishing test of the grunty BMW B58 3.0-litre petrol's cooling system, as well as the air con. I can confirm both stand up fine, even in 30-degree heat.

For such a big vehicle, and one equipped with beam axles, the Grenadier manages to ride surprisingly well and gets around corners with confidence, even when



When suspension articulation runs out, engage locking diffs

pressing on. Having Bilstein take care of the suspension set-up was clearly a good call, and the body's squared-off nose makes it quite easy to place on the road both through twisty turns and in built-up areas.

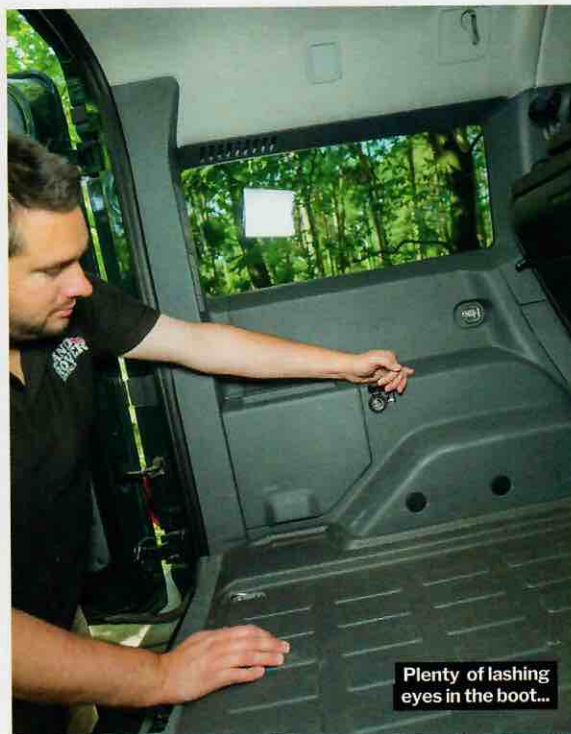
To get some more interesting ground under the all-terrains, I'd also factored in a few mild greenlanes on the way home to Cambridgeshire, and my excitement went up a notch further as I turned the wheel and pointed the Grenadier off-tarmac.

The hot, dry weather meant plenty of dust, and the exposed roots and hard-baked steps through the trees gave the perfect opportunity to get the axles moving. With grip levels high there was little need to engage the centre or axle diff locks, but the transfer box's low-range gears got a good workout threading the Grenadier through the trees. A fairly deep water crossing with soft





Split rear doors give good access to loadspace



Plenty of lashing eyes in the boot...



Seats are comfy, but don't form a flat floor when folded down



...and clip-on cargo rails for off-road use

mud beneath the surface had me reaching for the roof console-mounted rear locker switch – the electrically-actuated diff locks give great off-road confidence and traction, but I found them finicky to engage and disengage. The Grenadier dispatched the muddy pool with no issues, as you'd expect with a generous 800mm wading depth.

One thing that did impress me was the side and tail door seals. No matter how much loose gravel and dirt I drove through, with a thick tail of dust following the whole way, the inside of the cabin stayed very clean.

Now, I made a point of avoiding as many reviews from other channels as I could, and went into driving and using the Grenadier with an open mind. I do find the footwell protrusion annoying. It's no worse than an original Defender, and I found myself driving with my left foot tucked behind my right leg with my knee bent, just as I'd drive a Defender. But on a brand-new vehicle with an automatic 'box (no manual option), it feels a bit wrong. While the uneven split rear doors give great, almost full-width access to the loadspace, having to open the small door first is a bit of a pain. Unless you have a particularly compact dog, you won't find it opens enough of the gap to fit anything useful through.

Leaving the greenlanes behind and heading back onto the main roads, I get my foot down and let the turbocharged straight-six whisk me up to motorway speeds. Unless your foot's absolutely planted, the petrol engine is delightfully hushed and smooth, working in harmony with the venerable ZF eight-speed gearbox to propel the Grenadier's heft along at a pace that drivers of

most other traditional body-on-chassis vehicles will be wholly unfamiliar with. If you go for a gutsy overtake and cause the 'box to kick down hard, the engine can sound a tad thrashy at higher revs.

The dual-carriageways gave me a chance to try to diagnose Gary's vibration concern, and it didn't take long to replicate. It's not massively obtrusive but it's definitely noticeable at around 70mph. I'll have a look when it's on the ramp, which is where I'm heading next.

One thing I did find when driving this truck is how much attention it gets, both from those who know what it is, and those who have no idea. Don't be surprised if you get fellow drivers rolling their windows down to ask questions in traffic, looking around it at petrol stations and taking a second look as you drive past.

A friend has kindly let me use one of the four-post ramps at the dealership he works at, so I can take a proper look at the elements that make up the guts of the Grenadier. Raising it up on the lift, it's easy to see that it's made with hard use in mind. The axles are big, beefy units that connect to the Tremec transfer 'box via propshafts fitted with CV joints, rather than the universals that you'd find on an original Defender or similar. To my eye, the front diff angle is quite shallow, which makes me wonder if the axle end propshaft joint is operating at near its maximum working angle with the vehicle unladen, possibly contributing to some harshness. I also ponder whether adding a couple of extra degrees of castor might help the steering self-centre better, which seems to really irk a lot of critics.

The five-link suspension looks incredibly sturdy, and

3.0 petrol pumps out
282bhp; diesel
version 246bhp

**“The petrol engine and
eight-speed gearbox
propel the Grenadier’s
heft along at a pace”**

TECH SPEC

**INEOS GRENAIER
FIELDMASTER, Utility
Wagon, 5 seats (as tested)**

ENGINE

• BMW B58 3.0-litre petrol

TRANSMISSION

• ZF eight-speed automatic

• Two-speed transfer 'box
with centre diff lock

• Front and rear locking
differentials

PERFORMANCE

Top speed: 99mph

Max power: 282bhp

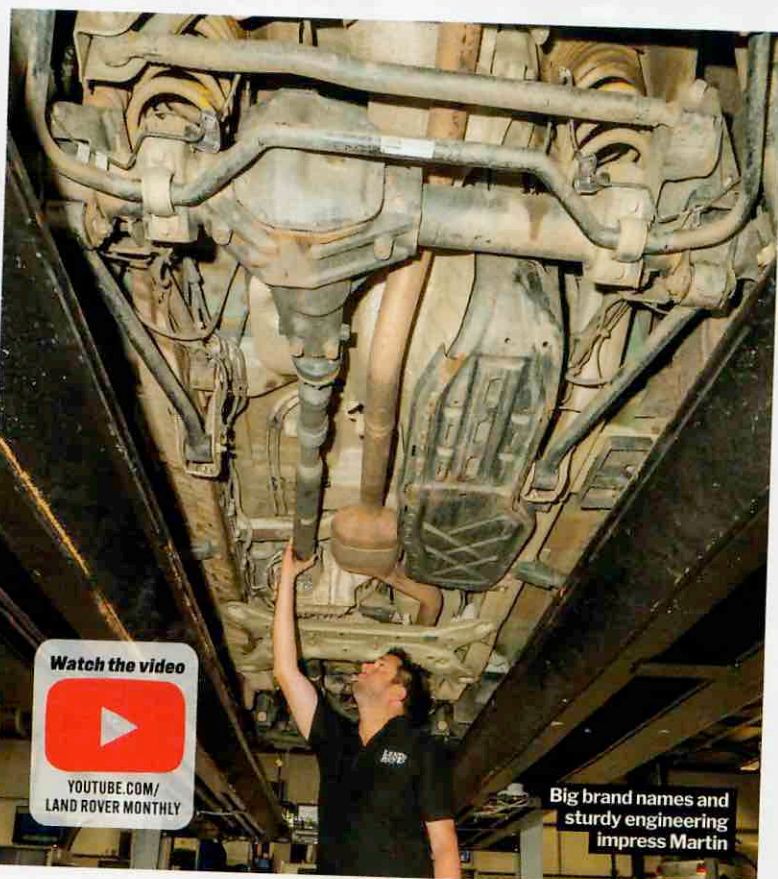
Max torque: 332lb ft

0-62mph: 8.6 seconds

WLTP fuel consumption:

19mpg

Turning circle: 13.5m



Watch the video



YOUTUBE.COM/
LAND ROVER MONTHLY

Big brand names and
sturdy engineering
impress Martin

the Grenadier's impressive lack of body roll is clearly down to the huge anti-roll bars – something I have heard there's a recall on, as they can get a bit upset at full suspension articulation. The brackets for the lower links hang quite low beneath the chassis, but I never felt the underbody get hung up at any point, even in ruts. What I do love to see is the care and effort that has gone into the surface coatings and wax injections into the chassis and body, to help keep the rust at bay.

Leaving the garage and heading for home, I had time to properly think about the Grenadier. There's an awful lot to like about it. It does give the same sense of adventure, toughness and presence as a Defender when you drive it, and it's not a vehicle you'd buy unless you had a real purpose or desire to own one. The cabin is spacious, the Recaro seats are absolutely brilliant and there's no lack of loadspace, even if the back seats don't fold completely flat, because the battery and fusebox live underneath them. I bet it tows well, too.

For all its upsides, and there are many, there are a few things that would get on my nerves after a while. The infotainment can be fiddly, there's nowhere to put your phone, having to open the small tail-door first is annoying and the steering wheel feels small. Nothing horrendous, but all niggles that you'd either get used to or find more irksome as time went on. Hopefully the former.

I honestly don't know what the future holds. I hope the Grenadier does well. I know that it's in high demand, and the aftermarket is already looking promising for upgrades. And judging by the support we saw at LRM Live, it has plenty of fans. If only it was a Land Rover. →

“You have to ‘drive’ this vehicle – no bad thing in the age of today’s disconnected modern motors”



Ride quality is impressive both on and off-road

STEVE'S VIEW



Steve Miller is LRM's Associate Publisher, and owns a 2002 Defender 90 Td5, as well as an early Ninety that he's rebuilding on a galvanised chassis

HAVING spent some time looking around the new Ineos Grenadier at our recent LRM Live show in Malvern, I was suitably impressed. So, it seems, were visitors to the event, as a quick show of hands in the arena proved.

It wasn't until after the event had ended that I had a real chance to spend a bit more time with it, and when the showground was empty, LRM's Gary Pusey handed me the keys for a quick blast.

My initial thoughts are that it is extremely well put together. Simply opening and shutting the drivers' door

told me that (though I had just got out of a 21-year old Td5 Defender...). Getting acquainted with the interior; the familiarity of BMW's automatic gear selector – we were soon coasting around the grounds. It felt extremely smooth, especially in the 3.0-litre petrol guise, and it certainly seemed to pick up pace well.

Having an array of switches above my head made me feel like I was in an aircraft, but the handling of the Grenadier did not; it seemed well-planted as we took some sharp corners at speed. The steering wheel feels way too small for me, though I'm sure it's a matter of getting used to it – and the fact it failed to self-centre was initially a little disconcerting. You have to 'drive' this vehicle – no bad thing in the age of today's disconnected modern motors. One thing I struggled with is the raised footrest to the left of the brake pedal (on right-hookers only). At 6 feet 3 inches tall my left leg felt it was raised too much: I think this would hinder my comfort over long distances. Do I like the Grenadier more than the Defender? The answer is yes and no, and they aren't directly comparable in many ways, except in price.



When did you last see a proper manual handbrake in a brand-new vehicle?