

Practical **LRO** Range Rover P38 faultfinder



How to

RID YOUR P38 OF NIGGLING FAULTS

For ever

The Mk2 Range Rover is prone to niggling failures caused by its complex electronics – but they can be solved with a bit of detective work, says long-time P38 owner Philip Kent. Neil Watterson finds out more

Your centre stop light isn't working,' I tell Philip as he pulls up in front of me in his smart, R-reg P38. 'That's odd – there's no warning showing up on the dash,' says Philip. 'I'll have to look into that.'

Philip has owned Range Rovers for the past 20 years and this, his first P38, wasn't going to spoil his love affair with the vehicle. With a lifetime's engineering experience, he applies good old-fashioned methods to his

fault-finding – not just assuming that it's the electronics at fault.

After a number of annoying failures on his Range Rover, he decided to make a point of going over the whole vehicle every couple of years, removing every electrical connection and cleaning the contacts.

By the way, that fault with the stop light was a dry connection on the circuit board, simply remedied with a spray of contact cleaner and a clean rag.



Force of habit: keeping a P38's electrical contacts clean can prevent problems from ever taking a hold. Philip sprays the lot every couple of years – a very good plan

BRITPART

The quality parts for Land Rovers

Britpart, The Grove, Craven Arms,
Shropshire SY7 8DB, England.



NON-OPERATIVE TRANSFER BOX

Failure to change ratios when the high/low transfer box is selected is a reasonably common occurrence on those P38 Range Rovers that never venture off-road.

In this case, Philip soon found the cause – the connector block on the gearbox was full of road grime and the connectors were dry. After a quick dismantle and a spray with some electrical contact cleaner it was all clipped back up and the transfer box now works as it should.



WET FOOTWELLS

Add wet footwells to a fluctuating temperature gauge and you'll be forgiven for fearing the worst – the heater matrix has imploded. Some garages assume the same, leading to huge bills.

Faced with this problem on a friend's P38, Philip tested the water in the footwell and found there was no anti-freeze in it, so it must have been something else at fault. Removing the dash, he found the air-conditioning drain pipe had come adrift, causing the leak.

Normally it should drain underneath the car, just above the gearbox – a domed rubber 'bung' should allow the water out and also prevent muck getting in, but it gunges up. Poke the bung with the blunt end of a pencil to clean it – wear some kind of eye protection, because the water may suddenly pour out.



TEMPERATURE GAUGE

The 4.6-litre V8 has gained notoriety for the block becoming porous and overheating, so the last thing you want to see is the temperature needle shooting up and down as you drive along. Yes, it may be the engine is at fault, but the first thing to do is to remove the connectors to the sender on the top of the engine, clean the contacts and refit. It fixed Philip's errant readings and there's a good chance it'll do the same to yours.



AIR SUSPENSION

The electronics do cause problems with the air suspension, but so does working the pump too hard. And sitting under the bonnet isn't the best place to keep dirt and grime from the compressor. The compressor, normally covered with a lid, is hidden away, so the filters are neglected. Take them out, give them a good clean, allow to dry and replace.

AIR-CONDITIONING

Philip's system worked better if a window was open, but it should work with all the windows closed. The problem was with the air vents at the rear of the vehicle: the sponge filters were completely clogged with dirt.

They sit either side of the wiper in the top tailgate; remove the cover to access them. Take them out, rinse and allow to dry. Replacing them did the trick – the aircon works perfectly now.



CRUISE CONTROL

'When this failed, it wasn't long before I found the source. I knew it worked on a vacuum, which is picked up from an inlet manifold and runs round the back to a diaphragm on the passenger wing.

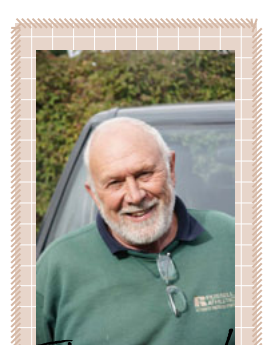
'As I pulled the pipe off the back of the diaphragm, I noticed it was perished – enough to destroy the vacuum. A bit of fuel hose of the correct diameter now fills the space and the cruise control works again.'



WINDOW WINDERS

P38s have a tendency to rip the teeth off the window winder mechanisms thanks to the metal not being the strongest and the limit being sensed by torque, rather than by a limit switch. This means that, every time the window shuts via the 'one-shot' feature, more force is applied to the mechanism than is necessary, eventually stripping the teeth.

The only real solution is to raise and lower each window by keeping your finger on the window switch, stopping it before it reaches its limit and then flicking the switch again to let it complete its journey.



The expert

Philip Kent has owned five Range Rovers in this country; four manual Classics and this P38. He also owned an automatic Classic while living in Oman – but didn't enjoy that experience.

He's had a wide range of engineering jobs, from heating and ventilation engineer to undersea welder. He once drove a Ford Granada loaded with spares for some plant to Russia as it was cheaper than air-freighting it.