



Sandstone's Unimog 406. Researching its history.

When the current owners of Sandstone purchased the farm a Unimog 406 was part of the sale. This has been used as a Fire Engine for a number of years. In late 2023 it was time to give the Unimog a refresh and the Modern Workshop at Sandstone, under the guidance of Janki Palmer, took on the job together with a respray.



While the unit was out of service we decided to research its history and year model. Some pointers were the indents in the front bumper which were introduced in post 1964 models and then the closed louvres next to the headlights which indicated post 1966. However the key piece of information was that for 1974 models, disc brakes were introduced on the front axle. However this was a point that was to be queried as we will see.



After securing the build details from the chassis plate we contacted the South African Unimog club but our e mails went unanswered so we made contact with Daimler Benz in Germany. They gave us the Daimler Benz Unimog museum at Gaggenau's e mail address who reverted to us in 24 hours with the build details of our Unimog.

Fahrzeugkarte		Motor-Endnr. - 0 -		Kontingierung		Kons. endnr.		28. Aug. 1974	
UNIMOG		IFT-Gew. 00.05.74		IFT-Gepl. 00.07.74		Exp.-Datum 13.08.79			
BD	Prod.-Nr.	Arb.-Tg.	Bm.-Nr.	End-Nr.	Motor	Thi	Pri	A. Nr. 30.	
	06009	138	406-120-52-	023842	353.902	416.810		34675 00038	
Aggr.-Nr.	Lack 1	Lack 2	LZ 1	LZ 2	VP	VFZ	GpM	Reifen VA-ges.	Reifen HA
	0000				4005				
048 069 071 090 092 103 111 126 142 200 210 214 215 260 261 408 460 510 624 644 674 701 730 753 761 770 771 852 854 890 971 976									
U n t e r s t u t z u n g 14.8.74/La.									
UCDD Pretoria/Südafrika									

It was assembled at United Car and Diesel Distributors (UCDD) in Pretoria. UCDD was then taken over by Mercedes Benz of Germany in 1984 with the factory in East London. The date of production of the Unimog is shown as the 28th April 1974 but is actually a 1973 model as it is not fitted with disc brakes which were new for the 74 model year as mentioned earlier. This was not unusual in the 70s for the motor industry in South Africa to be given older model units when the overseas models had been updated, it happened at many assembly plants.

Anyway we now knew its birthday and also the list of codes that define its specification. They were all in German but the internet is a wonderful translator and we gathered together a list of the key specifications.

Sandstone's Unimog 406 Fitment codes

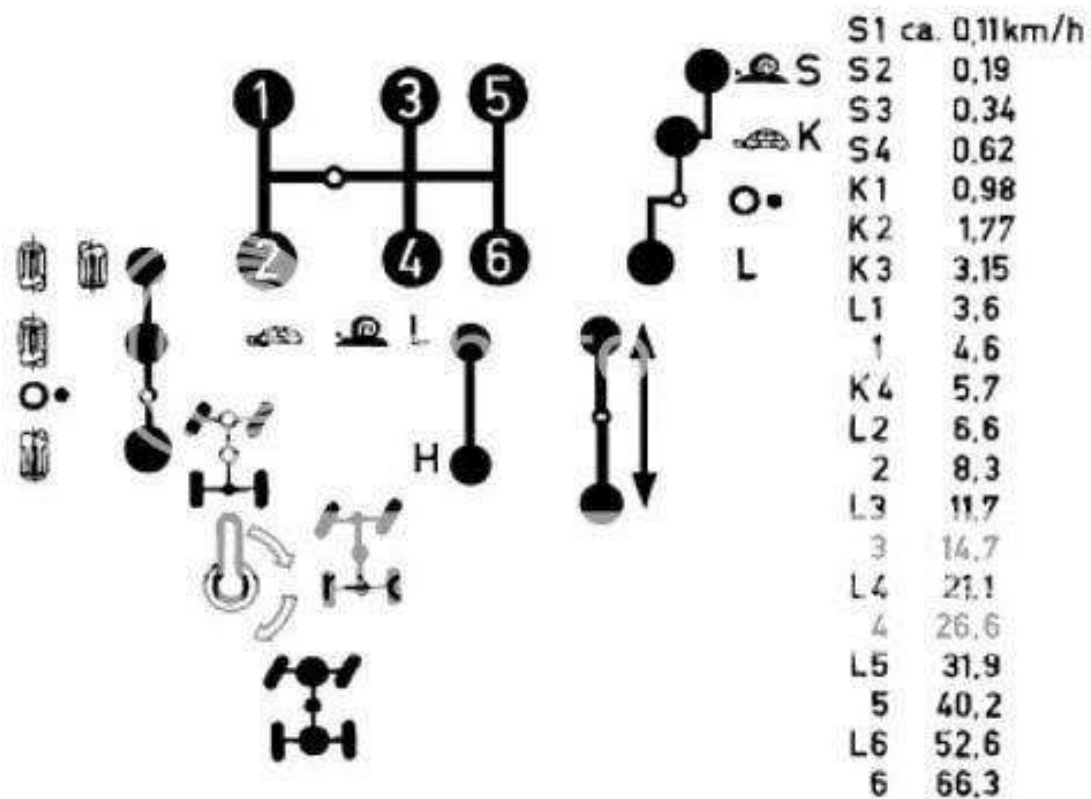
- 048** Electric tachometer, cables wiring, etc.
- 069** Elevated intake on LH side
- 071** Dry Air Filter
- 090** Elimination of factory cold start (start Pilote) system
- 092** Elimination of heating & ventilation system
- 103** Primary transmission
- 111** Transmission & engine driven two speed PTO
- 126** Front PTO shaft, 1 3/8" SAE six spline
- 142** Rear PTO shaft, 1 3/4" six spline
- 200** Rear trailer hitch & connectors
- 210** Steering protection plate
- 214** Implement attachment points, front
- 215** Rear attachment mounting brackets, pins, hardware
- 260** Removable fuel strainer (screen) in filler neck
- 261** Fuel tank capacity increased to 130 litres
- 403** Cab with hatch
- 460** Windshield, laminated safety glass
- 510** "X" frame, w/fenders, bushings, pins, mountings
- 624** Disc wheels, 11 x 20, for use with disc brakes
- 644** Spare wheel 11 x 20 for tires 12.5, 14.5, etc.
- 674** Spare wheel holder under driver's cab and platform
- 701** Double circuit Hydraulic system, pump, vales, tank, etc.
- 730** Two line trailer air brake system
- 753** Two hydraulic connections, rear w/separate return line
- 761** Four hydraulic connections, front
- 770** Rear power lift
- 771** Three point linkage
- 852** Headlights/mirror brackets for left hand traffic
- 854** Headlamp stone guards
- 890** Loss of normal battery
- 971** Service parts assortment (with original delivery only)
- 976** Type plates/operating diagrams in English

We made another contact with Mercedes Benz in German to try and establish which dealer in South Africa sold our Unimog and who was the buyer but they were unable to disclose this information owing to Data Protection laws. One thought we have had is that it may have been originally been sold to the South African Defence Force and, in 1974 apartheid South Africa, such information was not in the public domain and certainly not worldwide knowledge.

A fairly rare specification of the Sandstone Unimog is its "Cascade" gearbox.

There are four types of "transmissions" available on the 406/416 Unimog. The standard in most is a basic 6 speed. It shifts just like any other 6-speed. The second most common is the 20 speed. The 20 speed is basically a 6 speed with a cascade or "crawler" box attached. The cascade box is basically 2 extra sets of sets of lower gears. So 6x3 plus 4 reverse (even though 2 more are accessible) = 20 speed (should be 22). The cascade box is engaged by the cascade trans engagement lever in the middle of the group. Once the cascade is engaged then you have to choose the right set of crawler gears you want with the cascade group selection lever. They were most commonly found on the CASE 406 models. The lowest gear has a 4000:1 ratio and will do a 1/4 mile (402.3m) in 5 hours under WOT (wide open throttle).

Here's a diagram:



Info courtesy of Pavementsucks.com, A forum community dedicated to off-road vehicle owners and enthusiasts



The Cascade type gearbox.

We like to know the provenance of our Heritage items but sometimes it takes a lot of detective work!