

Off road drive - learning art

We look at David F
Overlander off-
driving centre

THE Overlander Off Road Centre has been set up to provide a demanding, but non damaging, demonstration course specifically for off road vehicles. It will give you an ideal opportunity to drive your own 4x4 on a specially designed track where you can put your machine through its paces and be taught the correct way to go about it.

The course is set on the mainly south facing slopes of an idyllic valley in the heart of Devon, between Dartmoor and Exmoor, and

Top: Deep wading river section.

Right: H. R. Owen-supplied Range Rover, driven by Clifton Breves of Reigate, Surrey, tackles one of two 'tyred humps'.

Top right: A winching session on day two of the course. Michael Nelki, from Bristol, operates the Fairey winch on the course Range Rover.



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only half an hour from the M5. You could include a spell of off roading in a West Country holiday or just pop down for a short stay.

The first phase of the course extends to approximately 1½ miles, over an area of some seven acres, part of which is on a hillside. It contains a number of natural and man-made sections to test the ability of both driver and machine. These consist of side slopes, gulleys, ascents and descents with gradients up to

100% (45°). There are also obstacles designed to test the driver's ability to read the ground ahead, ditches, ridges, hollows, logs, railway sleepers, soft sand, shingle and, probably most important of all, wet, boggy areas. Facilities are also available for the demonstration of winching and recovery techniques.

The Overlander Off Road Centre is running one day courses providing tuition in the skills of off road driving and the chance for you to practice what the experts preach. To ensure personal attention at all times, courses are normally limited to six participants.

Briefly, the syllabus requires that 'students' arrive with their vehicles by 9.30am for coffee and reception. The course starts with two hours of

classroom theory on off road driving techniques, followed by approximately 1½ hours of practical on-course instruction. After lunch at the nearby Leisure Centre, the entire afternoon is devoted to driving the course and consolidating the morning's lessons.

A chance to make mistakes, but always with help and advice on hand, including recovery, should it be required. Following a break for tea, participants are invited to watch a variety of videos depicting more advanced off road driving techniques before a de-briefing session at which final questions are invited.

Each student will be issued with a certificate showing successful completion of a course in Off Road Driving Techniques and Related Skills.

Places on the Overlander Off Road Centre driving courses are by prior registration only and are run on selected days of the week to meet demand.

The charge for participants bringing their own vehicles is £50 per day plus VAT (\$57.50) which covers the full facilities of the Centre including refreshments and lunch. Alternatively, a one and a half day course which includes a full morning's tuition in the art of winching and recovery techniques is £75 plus VAT (\$86.25).

● Under no circumstances will children or pets be allowed on the course, either on foot or in a vehicle, for obvious safety reasons.

For further details and booking form contact David Bowyer, Overlander Ltd, East Holdhay, Zeal Monachorum, nr. Crediton, Devon EX17 6DH. Tel. Bow (03633) 666.

