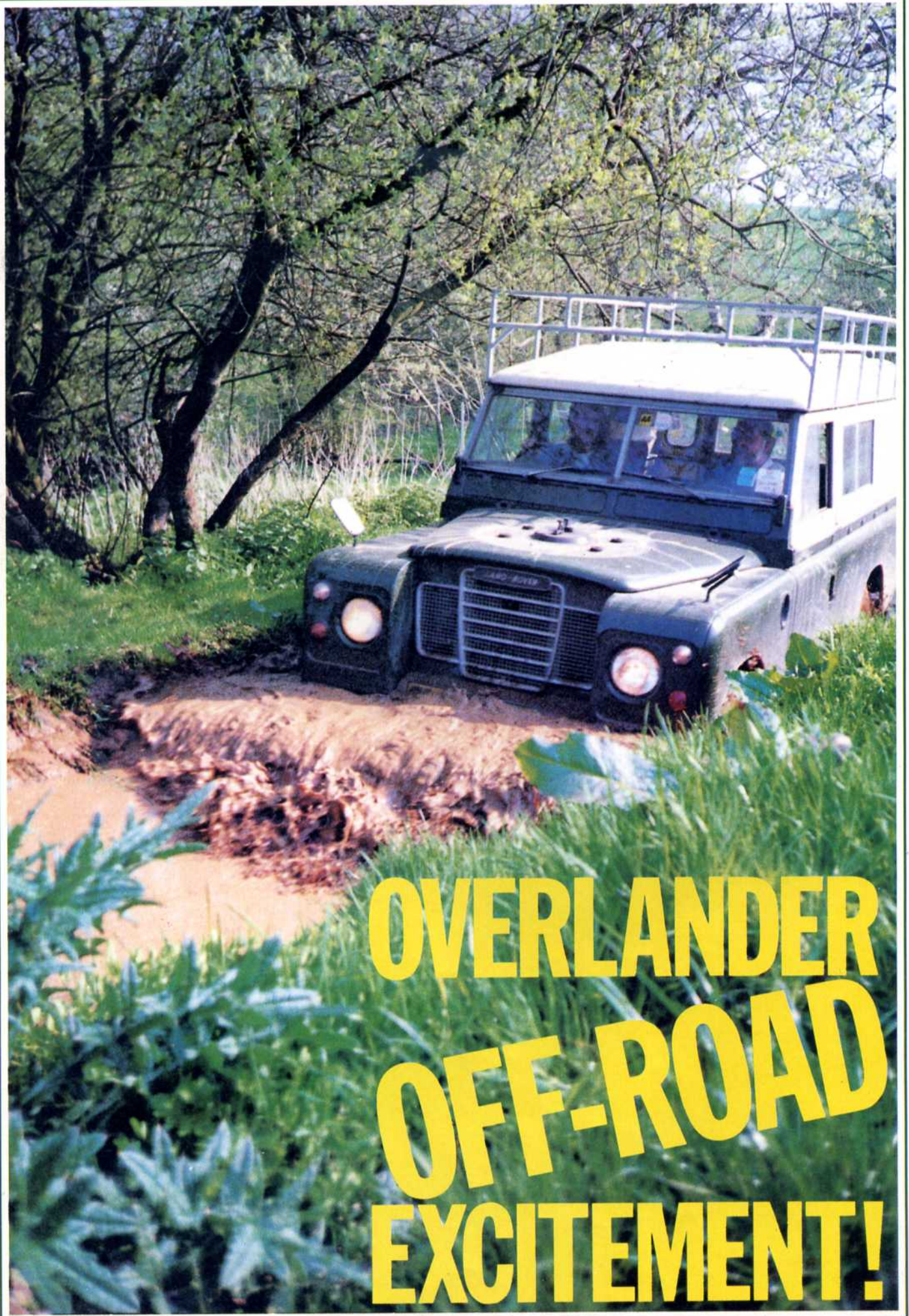


# UP HILL AND DOWN DALE



**40 YEARS:** **THE LAND ROVER SUPPLEMENT**



**OVERLANDER  
OFF-ROAD  
EXCITEMENT!**

**T**here is a place in deepest Devon where Land Rover owners can take their vehicles and acquire all the skills of 'off-roading'. For a day and a half they will be trained to tackle some of the worst and most exciting challenges that can be thrown at a Land Rover - mud, loose gravel, log roads, a one-in-one (45° hill), stone steps, 'quarry' descents, steep humps, lumps, pot holes, a multitude of deep ruts and a dozen or more deep water runs.

All this with expert tuition that ensures the absolute minimum of risk to driver and vehicle.

Having owned a variety of four-wheel-drive vehicles I couldn't resist David Bowyer's invitation to try his Overlander Off-road Driving School course at his farm (East Foldhay, Zeal Monochorum, nr. Crediton in Devon). In a picturesque setting David has constructed an off-road course bristling with imaginative ideas. I have to admit that I have been dying to have a crack at it for some time.

My own Series One Land Rover being in bits at the moment David kindly offered to lend me a vehicle (which is strictly against normal practice, because it is considered essential that owners 'grow into' their own vehicle when learning off-road skills). I went by train to Exeter and from there by slow train across ungated crossings to Coplestone. British Rail Enquiries had already warned me to ask the driver to put me off at Coplestone. Many is the time I've asked a bus driver to be put off at a stop but this was the first time I've had to ask a train driver. As if to underline my arrival in one of the remoter parts of England, as I struggled to open the train door at Coplestone a passenger by the door said: "This is a mistake, this is Coplestone".

"That's right", said I.

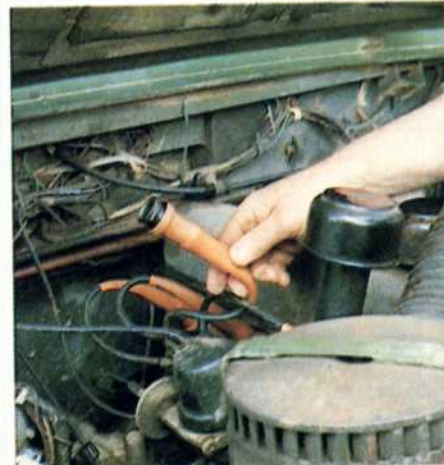
"You're the first person to get off here in two months", he insisted as I stepped out on to the miniature platform.

On arrival at the charming little hotel of Nymet House, where most of the Overlander course recruits stay, I joined our deputy editor Peter Simpson who had travelled down from Wales in the TR7. We discovered that the four other people on the course, in both cases couples with early Series Three LWB Land Rovers, were shortly to embark

*The course begins in the classroom with David's fellow instructor Keith Hart taking us through the basic principles and explaining some of the recovery techniques and equipment.*



*Next came preparation of the vehicles, which starts with silicone grease around the distributor cap seal.*



*The plugs must be well protected against water. This Series One Land Rover has used common domestic electrical rubber sleeves, a clever idea. Plenty of WD40. Sound preparation of the engine bay against water is vital. That includes plugs, plug leads, distributor, coil, etc. Diesel engines don't have the same problems.*

on overseas overland expeditions and had come to learn how to cope with challenging off-road conditions. Two of them were off on an extended European trip, which was to include some of the remotest parts of Spain. It seems quite common for young adventurers to enlist on the course before setting off overseas with their Land Rovers (and very wisely too). In fact Jim Benson, who was a member of the British Camel Trophy team (that won the 'team spirit' award) took the course just prior to being selected for the team.

I think I can best capture something of the spirit and flavour of the course by letting the following photographs and captions take over telling the story for a while.



*The 'wading' plug has to be fitted into the clutch housing and must be removed afterwards for normal road use.*



*Mud flaps need to be tied up to keep them from harm, wing mirrors put in, aerials down, batteries secured and tyre pressure down to about 20psi. Before setting off free-wheel hubs must be engaged and four-wheel-drive low ratio, selected.*

*Out on the course an early Series Three LWB comes down from the 'tyred' hump to take on the angled slope.*



