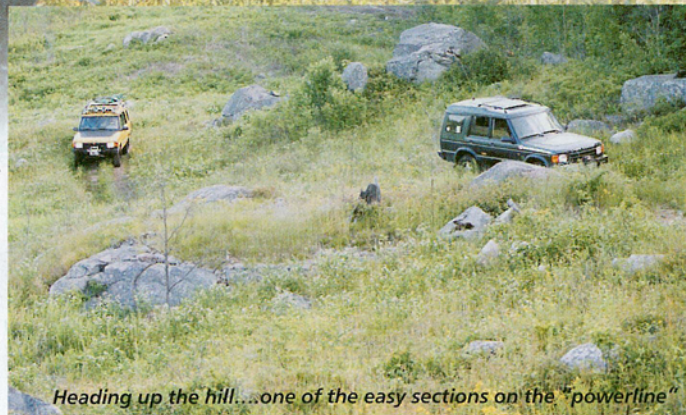




All vehicles back at camp, all present and accounted for.



There is always one... trail repairs to a Series One.



Heading up the hill...one of the easy sections on the "powerline"

► on. But no, we spent the best part of four hours winching, pulling, rigging, and re-rigging to get two trucks through.

I was truck two in line behind Peter's well outfitted Discovery, and it was no easier for me. In fact, it may have been harder as the ruts were now part of the challenge.

Once I was across, a third vehicle, another Discovery driven by Patrick Findlay, had decided he wanted in on the fun too. He was quite a bit lighter than my 110, but no less of a challenge to say the least. The track was really torn up now, and simply standing was a feat of balance and engineering.

OK then. Three trucks through the first obstacle. A quick check of the GPS indicated approximately 0.6 mile to the exit road. The trail was about three quarters of a mile long; we had come this far, we were going for it.

The third obstacle looked much like the second one did the previous year, only worse. We walked the length of it, thinking it might be solid enough to carry us across, but more likely not. A quick survey of the chronograph indicated we would most likely not make dinner if we

pressed on, so it was decided we would have to turn back.

It was a scene from Camel Trophy 1988. The mud, sweat, blood and tears was astounding. My 110 suffered a severely damaged (and recently installed) fuel tank as well as a pair of bashed diffs and a matching rear sway bar mount. The diff damage was my own fault; lack of concentration for a split second caused me to run into a rock squarely with my front diff, at a speed that would have shattered the diff if not for my diff guard. After that unnerving jolt, a second, equally powerful jolt rocked the truck a split second later – the rear diff. It had become lodged on the offending rock and the right rear wheel was spinning helplessly.

With dinner calling us (and we still had not stopped for lunch yet), we engineered a cunning plan to free my beast. We carefully jacked the rear with the Hi-Lift jack and placed the spare tire under the raised wheel. Once we realized the rock was in the way and preventing us from getting the tire fully under the now dangerously airborne wheel, we decided to shift the truck to the side, and hopefully drive right off.

The jack was strained to ridicu-

lous levels, pushed well beyond what the original designers ever had in mind, and slid the truck over. The jack was removed, the plywood jack plate placed between the diff and rock and I was able to drive off the rock with no further damage (beyond my pride).

winch and winch again

More winching was the order of the day, as I was now on point with the 110. A bit of rigging had me moving at last, as the other trucks made their way into the swamp. A second rigging and long pull had me freed from the tenacious grip of the swamp, just as a speeding Discovery nearly collided with me. Patrick had become impatient, perhaps seeing visions of BBQ ribs and chicken in his sweat-soaked eyes. He would have made it all the way out from the look of it, but with me in the way, he was forced to apply the brake and slide to a muck-covered halt.

Once I was finally free from the mud hole, Patrick's Discovery, which nearly became my back seat, needed a bit of help out of the hole as well.

Once Patrick was free, the last Discovery was lined up for attack. You could see the deter-

mination in his eyes as he fixed his gaze on that far bank. I wish we'd had video, as he blasted that Discovery across and out of that hole in a flourish of flying muck as if he had stolen it. No mud hole was going to come between him and food!

Later, finally back at the event grounds, the BBQ was excellent, with plenty of great food for the hungry participants. A few hours of telling stories of the day's events over an ice-cold beer further solidified the family atmosphere so abundant at these events.

The annual auction was well under way once we arrived at the event grounds on Sunday, and several hundred dollars were generated to help keep great events like this one going.

Looking back on the field as we reluctantly headed on our way home, it was like a time warp, with just about every vehicle line Land Rover had released represented, from the intrepid Series One to the latest LR3 and, best of all, they were all dirty.

No grocery-getter garage queens here; these trucks were designed to conquer the harshest terrain on earth, and they never cease to amaze with their ability to do so.

