



# MUDDY GOOD SHOW

The first-ever Kelmarsh  
Land Rover Show is a  
resounding success



Story Patrick Cruywagen Photography Alison Cruywagen











**This page and opposite:**  
Land Rover shows are about chatting to like-minded Land Rover fans and having fun with the family.

**W**hat makes a Land Rover Show great? Seeing and experiencing new things? Hanging out with like-minded Land Rover lovers from around the world? Buying new bits for your old Land Rover? Snuggling into your sleeping bag while listening to the gentle patter of rain on canvas? Dodgy German sausages washed down with the finest local ale? Well the first-ever Kelmarsh Land Rover show had it all in abundance.

Last year when the Billing Aquadrome announced that they would no longer be hosting any more Land Rover (or automotive) shows, they effectively ended something that had become an institution among Land Rover fans all over the world. Billing as we knew it was dead. Event Director Tom Siddall and his team from Live Promotions decided to move it to Kelmarsh Hall and Garden, which is only a few miles away from where the A14 meets the M1.

Any doubts that this show would not be as big as the Billing Show of old were quickly dispelled when I woke up on the Saturday morning and took a stroll around the place.

Several fields which had stood empty the night before were now filled with happy campers. This was because schools only closed on the Friday and so many people arrived on the Friday evening.

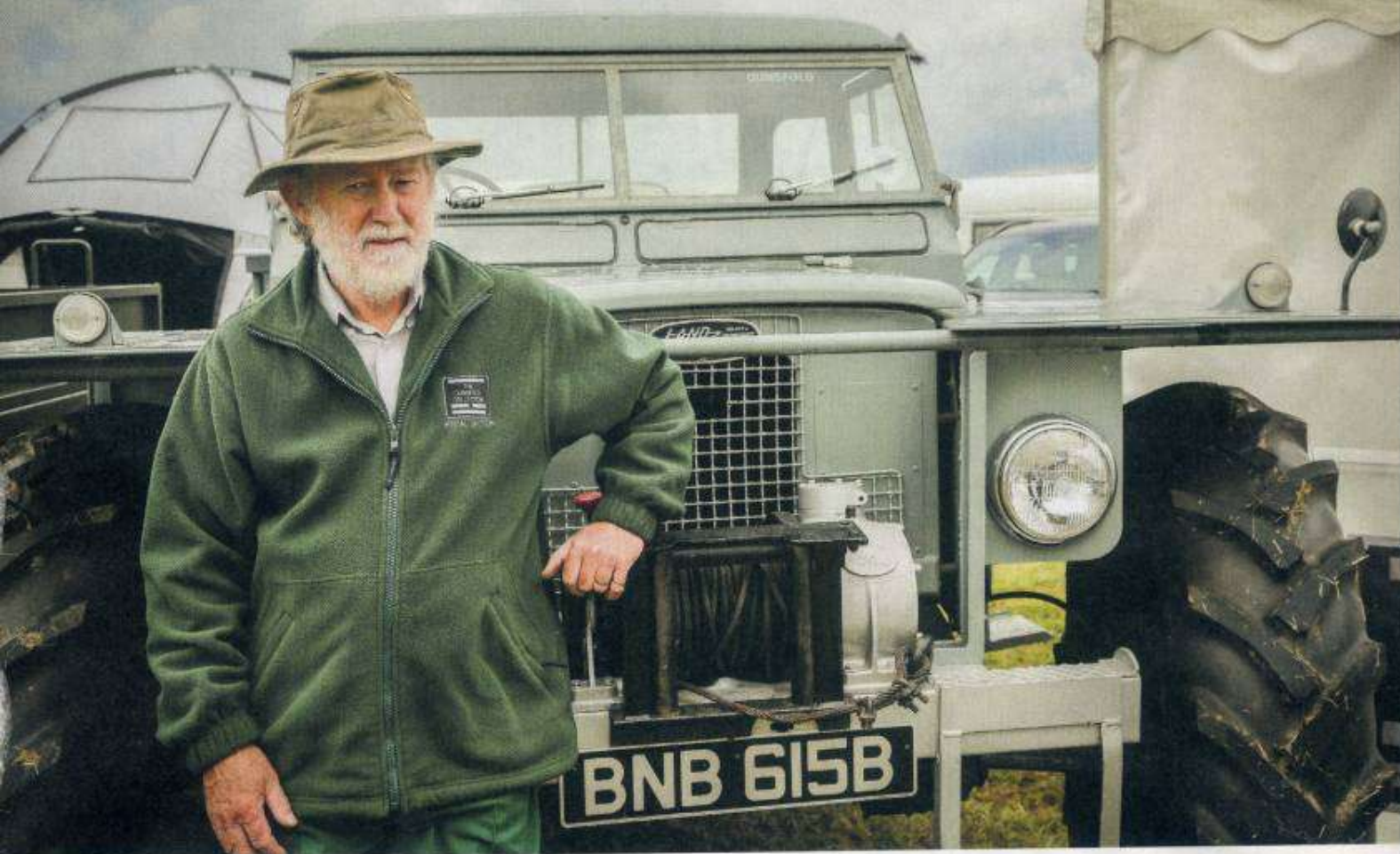
While Tom and his team worked hard to ensure that the ablutions, showers and other bits worked the way they should, the weather gods decided to throw them a curve ball and it rained most of Friday and Saturday night. Rain did not stop play though and people still enjoyed themselves.

Then for the first time ever at a UK Land Rover Show, the Red Devils, the Parachute Regiment Freefall Team, landed in the arena. I have to say that it was one of the most impressive things I have ever seen at a Land Rover show. While some of the team members had huge flags attached to them as they sped down towards the arena, all made perfect landings, much to the delight of the crowds gathered around the arena. Showgoers also had the opportunity to meet members of the team after they had successfully landed.

Then there was the usual Land Rover-related carry-on in



**This picture:**  
Warwick Hutchinson  
poses proudly with the  
most unusual vehicle in  
the Dunsfold Collection,  
the Forest Rover



## KELMARSH LAND ROVER SHOW 2018

The 2018 show will be held from 27 to 29 July so no  
problems with kids still at school

the arena including the Flatdog Twist-Off, LRM Driving Challenge (kindly supported by Duckworth Land Rover and Upol), Mini Mes, winching displays by Challenge South West and various clubs on display. No Land Rover show is complete without a proper off-road course and Kelmarsh was no different with Avalanche Adventure offering off-road driving for only £15 per vehicle. Their course was only a mile or two down the road. Charlotte and Richard Armstrong took their Defender 110 around the muddy route and judging by the smiles on the faces of their kids Samuel (4) and Rosie (1) it was heaps of fun. In fact, we think that Rosie was probably the youngest person to experience the impressive track.

While the arena and off-road track kept everyone happy, I enjoyed strolling around the trade, club and other stands. Land Rovers shows are all about chatting to like-minded Land Rover fans and picking up odd bits for your Land Rover. The Dunsfold Collection exhibited several of their wonderful Land Rovers at the show. I think their odd-looking Forest Rover was without a doubt one of the most photographed Land Rovers at the show.

I had some Germans camping opposite me and after showing them my Defender's factory-fitted BMW engine, we became Land Rover friends for life. There were loads of other foreigners in attendance







and it was great to see them also embrace the new venue.

Arena action concluded on the sunny and bright Sunday afternoon with the show awards ceremony. The Best Vehicle in Show Award went to a very special Defender 130 belonging to Harriet Longridge. Ironically they were camping right next to me. Their hi-cap double cab with the workbox on the back is a pre-production Puma prototype. How many of you have ever camped next to one of them? Then Richard Hopkins received a merit award for his restored police P38A Range Rover which was used as an escort vehicle at the funeral of Princess Diana. In the best Restored Classic category John Horn's Series III 109 hard top (with a usable 200Tdi engine) walked away with top honours. John plans on heading abroad in it. As for club

honours, the Mersea Land Rover Enthusiasts, who had a rather impressive lineup of Land Rovers on their stand, took first prize.

Was the show a success? I would say a definite yes. People love the new venue, and there is loads of space for the show to grow. Not to mention camping in the English countryside with the impressive Kelmarsh Hall as a backdrop, is a winner in anyone's book.

Final word goes to Tom. "We are so happy with how the move to Kelmarsh Hall went and have received superb feedback about the location and the success of the event overall. We already have so many good ideas for next year. Our plan here is to create Europe's largest Land Rover Festival."

