

# BAIE OR BUST II

Part Two of Steve Hoare's preparations for his overland adventure to Northern Canada



LAST MONTH we covered personal gear preparation, with advice on what type of clothing and gear should be considered when heading in an extreme cold environment. This month we deal with our transport, the Land Rover.

Even though the expedition was not leaving until February, preparation started months before.

This report acts as a guide to anyone looking at venturing into the wilds. It is not meant to be an exhaustive essay on the do's and don'ts. Hopefully, we'll do our best to raise your temperature and heart beat a little so the Land Rover in your driveway can be used for the adventures it deserves.

## Vehicle Preparation

Vehicle preparation is important as your life will depend on the vehicle being able to get you in and back out to civilization. As such, the vehicle should be in good running order.

The trip was not going to be a technical rock crawling off-road trail, but we would face

snow and ice covered roads and trails for hundreds of miles. It is a remote area with extreme weather.

The vehicle should be in a well serviced condition.

We'll start from the front and work back through the vehicle.

We were taking our 2003 Discovery so axles, differentials, wheel bearings, steering and suchlike were all relatively new. Even so, we checked the seals and hoses just to make sure. On older vehicles all the drive train should be checked and serviced.

We had a steering guard fitted to protect the steering rods, however it is still advisable to take a few spare track rod ends and a steering rod. (Sliding off into a ditch or hitting a Caribou can do some major front end damage).

Check all the lights and carry a set of spare bulbs. The Land Rover emergency bulb kit is the obvious choice as it comes with a selection of bulbs/fuses and is available from most Land Rover dealers. Use WD40 and/or grease on the light lens screws. In the event that a bulb needs to be replaced this will make it easier to remove the lens.

When it comes to tires, check to ensure that they are all in

good condition, including tread and sidewalls. Try to use a standard size as an extra spare will be easier to find if need be when you're away from home. Along with a spare wheel/tire, it is also advisable to carry a second tire, inner tube, spare valve, valve cap, tire pressure gauge, repair kit and air pump. Most of the group standardized on the Goodyear Wrangler MTR 245/75/16 ([www.goodyear.com](http://www.goodyear.com)) a slightly taller tire than standard and an aggressive tread pattern to tackle the expected deep snow. The tire also has a strong side wall so it should be less prone to punctures in the side wall.

Be sure to include a small hammer and long screwdriver to chip ice off the wheel rims. Heavy ice build up on the wheel rim can cause a serious steering shimmy.

To compliment the tires and to assist with traction with the expected snow, several sets of tire chains were included in the gear list.

RUD chains ([www.rudchain.com](http://www.rudchain.com)) were chosen due to the ease of fitment and the ability to fit the chains without removing the road wheel. Test fit the chains before having to use them. This

helps the user to familiar themselves with the fitting procedure, to ensure that the correct size has been purchased and that no links are broken. Be sure to re-adjust the chains after a short drive as they will 'settle' and loosen up with use.

Cold weather is a battery killer, so we opted to fit the 'Blue Top' Optima ([www.optimabatteries.com](http://www.optimabatteries.com)) as it offers good starting (900 Cold Cranking Amps) and is also suitable for deep cycling and winching. The battery terminals were cleaned and greased with Vaseline. We also carried a spare battery and starter pack in case of emergency.

The drive belt(s) (serpentine) should be replaced if there is any sign of the rubber cracking. Keep the old belt(s) as emergency spares.

The same applies to any coolant and/or oil hoses. We also carried radiator seal, emergency hose tape, silicone RTV sealer and a large roll of Duct tape.

Antifreeze should be renewed with the maximum 50/50 mix and we also carried a bottle of spare coolant. An OEM engine block heater was fitted to keep the engine coolant warm and an oil sump heater was

*Above: All the vehicles oil and lubed, ready for the official start and our first stop.....Tim Horton's.*