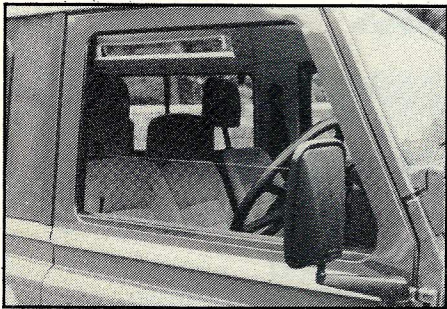


constantly prodding you in the "funny bone".

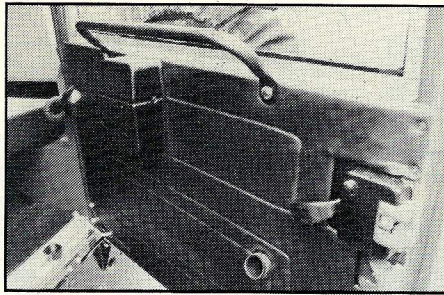
The interior is going to induce severe culture shock in the Land Rover devotee, but will be eminently acceptable to the "new to the experience" customer who will consider it quite normal. Unless, of course, he or she has been corrupted by that small vociferous group of people who go around saying horrible things about the truck-like features of Land Rovers. The ones who start off a conversation by saying, "What on earth do you want to go round in a THING LIKE THAT for?" Then, when you try to explain, their eyes glaze and they jump back in their Fiesta/Metro/Uno/Escort or whatever and, thankfully, go away.

The instrument binnacle has been drastically revised and improved. It now contains a speedometer with trip recorder and separate fuel, water temp and battery condition gauges. There is also a comprehensive warning light display. A variety of stalks operate indicators, lights, wash/wipe, horn and so on. The hand brake has been re-engineered and is now delightfully light to apply, being cable operated. I am very pleased to say that the traditional welly-boot resistant foot pedals have been retained, although they now look slightly incongruous in their more refined surroundings. If nothing else reassures the Land Rover enthusiast these, at least, will make him feel at home.

Seats have been vastly improved. The standard set are covered with a hard-wearing vinyl, but optionally available (except in the 'County' where it is standard) is a very attractive cloth covering which tends to enhance the appearance of the interior. The overall length of the "Ninety" is about four



Full width winding windows and superb door mirrors.



Weighty door could do with an indented retaining stay for safety's sake.

inches greater than the 88". Two of these inches have been given to the cab area, thus permitting a greater range of adjustment for front seats, both fore and aft and in rake. It makes for an appreciable difference in driver comfort and will be welcomed by anybody who is taller than about 5' 8" and a bit long in the leg.

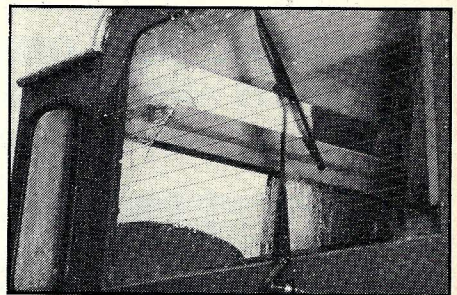
Having mentioned the extra inches of body length, I should perhaps explain that the other two inches or so have been given over to the rear compartment. This makes it slightly more spacious for passengers in the 'County' version but, more significantly, enables greater loads to be carried in the other 'workhorse' models. In fact, with the heavy duty spring package, a total payload of 917-kgs. is claimed for the petrol version, which puts it ahead of all the competition in its class and ahead of some of the much bigger stuff, too.

Driver's Delight

The first thing that strikes you when you drive the new Land Rover is how much quieter it is. It is disconcerting, to be honest. No roar of wind, no whine of transmission, no agricultural bellowing from the engine. "What have they done?" you'll ask yourself.

It takes off smartly with delightful clutch action, accelerates fairly briskly and corners like no Land Rover ever cornered before. Drivers who are used to ordinary cars probably will not find it remarkable, but that in itself is very remarkable. The lack of fuss and noise tends to deceive one into thinking that things are not happening very fast but, by Land Rover standards, they are!

The servo assisted brakes worked



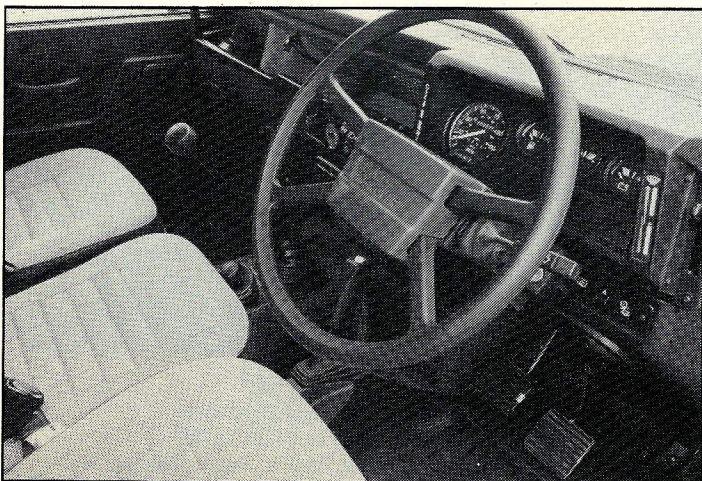
A welcome standard fitting on the 'County'; wash, wipe and heater.

smoothly and effortlessly but the pedal travel felt somewhat excessive to me. I tried a couple of other vehicles and they were the same, but nobody else complained so perhaps it was just me being heavy-footed. The all coil suspension soaked up the bumps with the merest tremor being felt by the passengers and even "sleeping policeman" road humps failed to induce any startling results.

The optional power steering . . . well, what can I say? I was not aware of it and the only way I could tell if it was fitted was to listen for the hiss of the hydraulics or to actually look under the bonnet. I suppose that means it's good. It was certainly precise and accurate enough and considerably more pleasant than my own short wheelbase Land Rover's manual system.

Off-road and the first most noticeable feature is the quality of the ride. During the course of the Press day I drove several "Nineties" and several Range Rovers and, though I am sure there are people who will disagree, I reckon the "Ninety's" ride is superior. It could be the slightly firmer springs, so you don't get the wallowing, or it could be the "wheel at each corner". It might even be the combination of both features. Whatever, the Land Rover rides like a dream across all manner of terrain. With over seven inches of travel on each front wheel and seven on the rear, it isn't often that even one comes off the ground, the long stroke dampers effectively killing any bounce before it has a chance to disturb the passengers comfort too much.

Visibility over the bonnet, and in fact all round, is superb and because the wheels are right on the corners it is a simple matter to place them wherever they will get the most traction. And traction there



No, your eyes deceive you not. This is a Land Rover.



A touch of luxury, but definitely a workhorse.