

## Dealing with Weeds

► In our last issue (p46) we published a very brief survey of weedkilling units, and the modern example was a modified Land Rover operated by Messrs Contrackeds Lands of Maidstone, Kent. Members of Ashford Section had an opportunity to examine this particular vehicle when proprietor David Conroy used it as transport to the February meeting, and parked it outside the venue. David's only worry was that some zealous traffic warden would give his weed control unit a ticket whilst he attended the meeting!

David has now kindly provided us with details of another of his interesting weed control vehicles. This is a 6 x 4 Range Rover of the type normally used in forestry and landscaping. It was originally converted into a fire support vehicle by Carmichael of Worcester and was initially stationed at ICI Grangemouth. It was subsequently transferred to Aberdeen Airport, becoming the property of Bond Helicopters.

More recently it was converted into a road/rail vehicle by Contrackeds Lands, its new use being for weed and vegetation control on railway lines. The body of the vehicle contains two water tanks, each containing one thousand litres. One of these tanks is permanent whilst the other can



**The road/rail Range Rover can spray up to 20 miles of track with a five-metre swathe when the trailer tanks are employed to supplement the unit's basic water capacity. Contrackeds Lands converted this vehicle from a fire support unit.**



**(Above) The operator riding in the trailer can spray selectively using a hand-held lance. (Below) Similar procedure is possible using the Land Rover unit. (Bottom right) Fixed off-track spraying can cover a five-metre swathe.**

be removed if required to allow space for carrying vegetation cutting equipment and suchlike.

The trailer has an on-rail carrying capacity of five tonnes and enables the on-track weed spraying capacity to be extended to 20 miles with a five-metre swathe. Personnel carried in the trailer can eliminate scrub and brambles using herbicides, with operator selection up to five metres from the track. Alternatively, the trailer may be used to retain prunings and brush from cutting operations in areas such as deep cuttings where there is no space for 'fell to waste' or chipping.

The rail wheels are for guidance only and rated to take only 10-20 per cent of the overall weight, to ensure firm contact with the rail. The road wheels provide all traction, braking and suspension for the residual 80-90 per cent of the weight.

The maximum allowable on-track speed is 25 mph, and this is used for positioning to site.

On-tracking is carried out either in a yard or at a level crossing and is a quick and simple operation. These days water accessibility on railways tends to be very poor and so top-ups are often achieved by means of a bowser/tanker which transfers water to the unit at convenient underbridges. ■

