

EXPLORING OMAN

Sam Watson searches the desert for rare wildlife and fallen meteorites – and visits the site of an historic SAS victory

The Sultanate of Oman isn't one of the more well-known Middle Eastern countries. It sits quietly at the end of the Arabian peninsula, minding its own business. It's very pro-British.

It doesn't harbour terrorists, fundamentalists or other undesirables. It is also stunningly beautiful; stark mountains to the north, verdant greenery to the south and the varied landscapes of the desert in the centre provide tremendous places to explore.

When I moved to the United Arab Emirates from Cairo two years ago, Oman was one of the places I was determined to get to know, and my home base here is an hour from the Omani border. So it's easy to nip down there for a weekend – and I often do.

Recently I took Bumblebee, my Camel Trophy Edition Discovery 1, over the border for a longer trip, intending to cross the Tropic of Cancer in the north and head down into the

central deserts, home to several types of endangered wildlife and also a large area of fallen meteorites. After that I wanted to explore the south of the country and its more recent (and less peaceful...) history.

Temperatures in the region are hotter than I was used to in Egypt, with an average of 41°C and humidity that feels squishy – like you could spread the air on bread with a knife.

Of course, this means your Land Rover's cooling system needs to be in good order; and if you like to use air-conditioning (I don't), it needs to be freshly

