



NEWSLETTER

February 2018

BBC Weather Forecast Sunday 21th January

Rain, wind, sleet maybe some snow during the day and temperatures down to ??*c.

Just the sort of weather where most normal people would stay indoors all day. And what did some of the more mature club members do? .They went green laning!.

Just our luck that on the day Andy had organized one of his greenlaning trips the weather had decided to take a turn for the worst but despite this 5 of us had arranged to meet up at the car park at Silbury Hill off the A5.

The first lane we turned onto was one which I had done many times and also passed many times as it is only about a mile or so down the A361 from the A5 and eventually leads towards the golf course at Roundway Down. But after about a mile we turned right onto a new byway. Yes you read that right, a new byway!. There used to be a byway that went passed the Cherhill Monument but Wiltshire CC decided to close the original lane and created a new permissive byway. It was at this point that Paul our newest club member joined us in his Nissan pickup.

Now this where the fun starts. Andy having already checked out the route decided that Roger should go first followed by Jon as they had the largest tires then myself followed by Andy, Neill and Paul. At this point I ought to be worried about what was coming, but hey not to worry I'm with friends. The problem I have is that I don't have the tallest tires so whereas Roger and Jon can just drive up a rutted lane I know I will be scraping my difs along the ground and not helped by having a lump of metal from a forklift welded to the underside of my rear diff. The lane did a 90 degree right and straight up a hill. Roger and Jon cleared it ok with Jon correctly waiting for Roger to clear the hill first. It was at this point we noticed that Paul was struggling so Neill reversed back to give him a pull. I drove up to the base of the hill and all I could see was a set of quite deep ruts which looked more like railway lines going straight up towards Jon.

Not having any choice which route I could take I engaged 2nd low and both difs locks and went for it. About half way up the Rangie appeared to drop into a dip in the track and despite the drivers door and window being firmly closed to keep the cold out a whole load of water came through as if somebody had thrown a bucket of water at me. This was quite a surprise to me, so much so that I ceased forward motion. As I couldn't get going again I needed a pull from Jon to get me to the top of the hill. I think there is a more commonly used term when one gets stopped when traversing rough ground but I prefer the more technical term of "ceasing forward motion".

Andy and Neill seemed to make it up without much difficulty but Neill soon realized that something wasn't quite right with his Landie as there was a lot of water coming out from under the bonnet. We also realized that Paul was having difficulty so Neill reversed back to give him another pull. When we reached the top where it levelled off next to an old farm building we stopped to check on the vehicles.



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Here is new member Paul slowly but steadily making it up the track towards the right hand turn. Picture taken by Jon who was about to drive up the hill.



I think Neill was glad we did stop for it turned out he had got a leak near the bottom of his rad. It was also then that Paul told us about the damage to his drivers door. It seemed that as Neill or Paul was about to attach the recovery rope the pickup rolled back and the open door got caught on the gate post where we first turned onto the track. I was also dubious about the effectiveness of my X brake. So here we are having only done one lane and no more than 2 miles and we have 2 damaged motors. Well what a day this is turning out to be. Neil then wisely decided to call it a day and call for the RAC. Contrary to what some people have said we did not abandon him as it was his decision to do no more and wait for recovery. Also it would have been unwise for him to carry on as he could have done some damage to his engine. Next we headed towards Yatesbury Lane. Some of the older/more experienced among us remember when this used to have some real deep holes in it and only one to do if you had some serious tires and power such as Steves old Chevy V8 powered hybrid. Now it's been all smoothed over with old scalplings curtsy of Wiltshire CC. Even the lane leading off to the farmers field has been flattened and laid down with scalplings. Oh well there's still the field to cross. Oh dear looks a bit muddy, never mind lets send our pathfinder

(Roger) across and see what it's like.



Err a bit deep we think. Oh dear what do we do now?. Paul and me were definitely not going to try it, Andy was having second thoughts and Jon didn't want to get out of his nice warm Landie. So it was left to Paul and myself to join a load of tow ropes/straps together so Jon could pull Roger back to where we had stopped. Even with his two diff locks engaged Jon was struggling to pull Roger so I hooked onto the back of Jon to help him. The mud was pretty deep and goey and the old fart (RT) nearly lost a boot in the mud and had to be helped by our newest member Paul (see picture below).

Andy decided it best to abandon this lane and turn left towards Sugar Hill and another lane where we have to do a 90 right and 90 left down a tight lane. What was really noticeable was that the lanes were now fenced off and levelled off with a load of scalplings. This does show a rather more positive attitude by WCC rather than just take the easy way out and just TRO the lanes like some other councils do. It also means that everybody can use the lanes but to be honest it does make it a little boring for people like us.



Sugar Hill used to be another one of those lanes that was getting quite rutted at both end but this has been flattened so much so that it's a nice easy drive up and down to the field at the other end with the woods on our right. The track even had fences both sides of it to stop people straying off the track into the field. Despite the initial rain and a few casualties it turned into a good day and thanks to Andy for organizing it.

Future Events

- AGM 20th March
- RTV 25th March Grt Brickhill
- Laning 1st April
- Rally Marshalling 22nd April
- Laning 22nd or 29th April



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