



NEWSLETTER

May 2018

Green laning at Easter

Green laning at Easter, well so what you may ask. As a rule we don't normally go green laning over the Easter weekend as the club usually leaves the weekend free for members to have time with their families and therefore do a club event later on in the month. For some reason this year was different as Andy was asked if he could put on a laning event. He just happened to choose April the 1st which was Easter weekend. As I'm sure most of you will remember this Easter was forecast to be a very wet bank holiday weekend and there was even mention of snow in some parts of the country. To make it more interesting Andy decided he was going to go away to sunny Spain at the same time so I sort of volunteered to lead the laning trip. I then realized I had no idea of the route and still don't know how to transfer the route onto memory map in the Toughbook/tablet etc. Simon Prebble kindly offered to help by doing it from his house but we soon realized something still wasn't right so he kindly drove over to my place one evening and put all the routes in the various electronic gizmos.

With all the rain we were having I was a little concerned as to whether we should really be going out at all but on the day the weather turned out nice but I still wasn't too sure what the tracks or the ground was going to be like.

Three of us met up at Cherwell services and we then drove up the M40 to meet Roger at J11 (Banbury junction). We then took the A422 towards Stratford Upon Avon and then onto Alcester. As I'm sure most of you know driving any proper 4x4 with their 2 gearboxes and in our case 3 differentials is not the best vehicle to drive in today's heavy traffic, but on an open road early on a bank holiday Sunday it was brilliant with barely another car on the road. We stopped just outside Alcester to make sure all the technology was working (toughbooks, tablets, iphones) so at least I wasn't the only following the route on the Toughbook. The first lane was only a few miles up the road and down a narrow lane but being the lead vehicle and without a passenger it was easy to miss the first lane. What also didn't help was that although the lane had obviously been graded and marked up the only indication that this was a right of way was a black arrow burned into a short wooden post with a small sign underneath saying UCR. As the day progressed it soon became apparent that as we were driving a lot of UCRs and few Byways we (or should I say I) missed a lot more of the lanes as it's not easy to spot a wooden post in the undergrowth. After only a short drive we went down a short lane to come across our first real ford of the day. There was a sign next to it saying; 'Unsuitable for vehicles at all times'. We have all got snorkels fitted but as we could not see where the exit was and there was no way of checking the depth of the water especially after all the rain we had we decided to give it a miss. Interestingly this ford is mentioned in the June issue of LRO when they did a Coswolds laning trip. The rest of the lanes were slightly more interesting than the first one with one nice straight one leading at 90 degrees from a main road straight into the countryside and gradually turning



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into the sort of lanes we get in the Berkshire/Wiltshire area. Plenty of low range driving with the only damage being more scratch marks on our vehicles. We eventually wound our way down towards the JLR facilities at Gaydon. What really caught my eye was the half dozen or so tower cranes which dominated the landscape at Gaydon. According to Roger JLR are in the process of building a new factory there.

We then crossed the M40 after making a slight error at one of the new junctions which wasn't shown very well on the GPS maps and headed towards another gate after going along a short track. The track slowly climbed up and then I realized we were driving through the Burton Dassett Hills Country Park which was full of people enjoying the good weather. Our progress was impeded by some rocks sitting on the track but after moving them we all managed to get enough traction to get going again. How embarrassing it would have been if one of us could not have got going and we would have to have done a recovery right in front of all those people. As it was 3pm some of us had another tea while the rest had a well earned ice cream.

The dreaded last lane of the day.

After our ice cream and tea we set off to do one more lane and then head for home. We managed to find our way out of the Country Park and back onto the normal tarmac road. After just a mile or so we started to head down this lane which led to a large farmhouse. The lane then turned right into the fields and then a left down into a dip. After all the dry tracks we had been doing all day this was the first really wet and challenging track and due to my lack of ground clearance and deep ruts Neil had to pull me back several times. Out of nowhere the farmer and his mate appeared and started giving us some verbal saying how we (ie; us offroaders) were tearing up his field and shouldn't driving in these wet conditions. Our problem was that Neil and I had to try and convince him that despite the all the rain in the previous days all the tracks had been dry all day and his was the only wet track of the day. We suggested that the best option would be for him to apply to the council for a winter TRO so his field would not get chewed up so much in the winter months. After our little "discussion" we parted company and when we regrouped back on the tarmac we decided that was definitely the last lane of the day so we all made our way back to the M40 and home.

Keith Lister doing some welding on a farmers 101

One of our newer members, Keith has the use of a barn at a nearby farm and just recently did some welding on the farmers 101 Land Rover.

Report by Keith Lister

I've had a few problems with my Disco Td5 just recently, namely a lorry kindly through up a stone which hit the windscreen with an almighty bang, making both my wife Sue & I jump out of our skins. The result was about a 5 inch circular crack which meant a new screen was required. So I duly phoned Autoglass for a replacement through the insurance specifying that it was a heated screen & that was what I expected it to be replaced with. The girl was very pleasant & said that's what they would do. So, a week later as arranged, 2 vans turn up, as it's a 2 man job, the 1st guy walks around my car then starts to say, "you've got a heated windscreen haven't you" to which I replied "yes I explained that to the girl on the phone. He said "well the one on the van is not heated". So he arranged for another visit for after our Easter break. Again 2 guys turn up and fit the correct windscreen this time but an A pillar trim has to come off again because one guy forgets to put a piece of trim in first. So now they don't have enough clips for the trim so they will have to make a 3rd trip out for those to be fitted. After driving it that same day there appeared to be some wind noise on the nearside. I figured it must be from the holes where the fixing



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studs should be, a bit like blowing over the top of a bottle. So I put some electrical tape over the holes, cured. While looking around for the wind noise I noticed they had left off a piece of scuttle panel trim so I was on the phone again to see if the fitter had got it in his van, which he said he hadn't. So they are supposed to be fitting that as well as the studs today (Thursday). Guess what, the rubber deflector on the end of the skuttle panel has had to be ordered again as they have no record of my phone call or email.

The second thing to go wrong was the air conditioning stopped working on our way home from our Easter jaunt to Bath. Investigations proved that it was the condenser, having been rubbing against the intercooler. This was replaced, quite an easy job & my son inlaw recharged it for me. It worked fine until yesterday, the first really hot day of the year. I checked for leaks again but couldn't find any, so thought it might be an electrical fault. I checked the obvious, fuse, ok, I then remembered I'd swapped a relay, so I swapped back the horn relay fingers crossed it's working again.

The third thing was a minor problem. I thought I'd go to Otmoor RSPB to take some photos. As I pulled in to the car park the air suspension started making more burring noises than usual. As I opened the door I could hear this prominent hiss and the rear tyre was rapidly deflating. After speaking to James Dixey about the next problem & asking if he had any second hand tyres I rang Matt Urlwin who had 2 of the size I needed, so Tuesday afternoon I fitted them at a mates garage.

Hopefully the fourth & final thing to go wrong was the air suspension compressor was constantly running. The only way to stop it was to remove the appropriate fuse. This is when I rang James for some advice on what to check for. He suggested checking for any leaks. After going round squirting all the pipes & connections with washing up liquid I located a leak on the accumulator. It was a fractured pipe connection probably through age & fatigue. I got some useful advice from Neill Stockford to try Aralditing it back together as a new one is £112, worth a try. I initially rang him to see where he had bought his new tyres from. I cut a short piece of brake pipe & put this inside the broken pipe to help strengthen the joint before gluing it all together. Hey presto job done.

This month not only have I been working on my own vehicle but also a couple of mates.

Pat Booth asked if I could help him replace the front diff in his Range Rover along with making up some brake pipes for the front calliper. He also replaced the nearside steering ball seal. I suggested we take it to a workshop I have the use of near Longwick because it would be a lot easier to do the work on a ramp.

While there I showed him my friend Richards 101 which was my next job, to repair the two front out riggers.





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