



# NEWSLETTER

## November/Christmas 2018

Hi all, sorry about the lack of newsletters the last month (or was it 2 months) but here is the latest one so people can read what we've been up to over the last few months.

### Shipston Weekend

Keith R had booked the Shipston on Stour site for a weekend of off road games and possibly an RTV on the Sunday. I wasn't able to go on the Saturday but was up bright and early Sunday and drove myself up to Shipston-on-Stour and beyond to the village of Halford. It was at this point that I realized I should have checked the directions before I left home. I had been there many years before when the club first went there so I thought I could just drive straight there. Luckily for me I saw Sue and Ash coming the other way just as I was about to drive out of Halford village. I quickly did an about turn and followed them to the site. My first thought when entering the site was that it looked very different from when we first went there and I'm thinking "where's the farm house and yard that I vividly remember". After an excellent egg and bacon roll (or two) provided by Sue we decided to go and play in some of the muddy and challenging bits round the edge of the field. This we did for an hour or so after myself and James had to be winched out of the mud hole. For those of you that have never been to this site the mud here has a particular consistency where you can get stuck (very stuck) after it's been raining whatever tyres you've got on. We drove round in a little convoy up past the farm yard and over the road to another area, again on the edge of a field. Now this is what I remember from the first time we came here except it is now very dry and passable apart from some of the more challenging parts of it. While most of us decided to stick to the more easily drivable top part James in his usual way decided to have a go at one of the holes. This kept us entertained for a little while as his tall tyres tried to find grip in the goey mud that exists here. I then followed Duncan for a guided tour round the rest of the site until we found a wooded area where we could have a little play in. This was another area where we could have stayed for another hour or so but a little later James came and joined us. Well he decided to drive down to what we all thought would be the more interesting bit only for his offside rear spring to come right out of its top mounting despite having a dislocating (or should that be relocating) cone mounted on to the top mount. After the clever use of a Hi Lift and a bit of hammering we managed to get the spring back on.

It was getting near to lunch time so back to where the rest of the gang were for some more excellent food provided by Sue. After this we slowly packed up and left mid afternoon. We had the use of a 750kg cargo trailer that Mark had borrowed for the weekend and I had the job of towing it with all the weekend gear back to Aylesbury. This trailer was an open cargo trailer with high mesh sides so I could actually see if any of the stuff was moving about in particular the barbeque which is not very robust. Compared to our over weight club trailer this was an absolute breeze to tow and nothing appeared to be moving about as it near its weight limit.



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## RTV TRIAL, GREAT BRICKHILL

In October we had our last organized event of the year. Andy and Graham did a sterling job of laying out some interesting sections the day before. But what really made it interesting was that it rained in the evening so when we turned up on the Sunday to have a good days trials driving we ended up doing a fair bit of recovery including myself being winched up from the bottom of the gully. It is possible to drive up from the bottom of the gully from a standing start on a dry day but even after some good tries from James Stevens and Simon in his V8 90 nobody could get up it. What also compounded the problem was that there was fallen tree a bit further up blocking the gully so whoever failed the climb had to do 7 point turn and drive back to the start point. We also had the use of the field where there were two sections laid out, one to the right of the gate up and round the grassy hill and one laid out using the sandy mound. Muggins here decided to go first on this one but it really wasn't as bad as it looked, indeed I was told that if I hadn't clipped the 2 gate I would have got a clear round!.

Simon Prebble provided the days entertainment with the sound of his V8 90. There's no denying it, the V8 does sound nice especially when it's well set up like Simons is. We also had another vehicle turn up which we have seen before, that is a Mitsubishi Delica or as Jon calls it a "Delia Smith". This should be a capable vehicle as it has all the engine and transmission from the Shogun. The only thing that let it down is the road biased 15" tyres it was shod with. Also the front recovery points were at the bottom of the bull bar so a bridle rope was used and a gentle pull was required when he had to be recovered.

A shame that the Aylesbury LRFC lot did not turn up as that brought the numbers down quite a bit but those that did turn up had a very enjoyable day and there was no damage done.

## Green laning Dec16th

As there was no green laning trip during November I decided to organize one for mid December and have our usual Christmas one between Christmas and new year. After I sent an email out to the membership I received an email from a new member asking if it was suitable for a Skoda Octavia 4x4. When I phoned him he assured me it was the slightly raised version and that he didn't mind it getting scratched as it was a fairly old car. I then got an email from Keith informing me that we might be having a new member joining us with a D3 Discovery. With this information I then spoke to Andy to suggest a route suitable for a Skoda car and a potential new member. He called me a few days later to say that we could do the lanes round the Streatley area and that the start point would be the H café near Berinsfield.

After picking up two passengers (Andy and Keith) we set off down to the start point to see that Neil and Val were already there. Very soon the rest started to arrive with Jonathon being the last to arrive despite being the nearest. All told we had 8 vehicles in total ranging from the Skoda to Jonathons tonka toy 90, Simons V8 90 to the D3 Discovery. The D3 was interesting in that it looked liked it was riding too high for normal road use but it had what's called Johnny Rods which are extension rods for the suspension which raises the cars ride height but fools the cars electronics into thinking it's running at the normal ride height. It also had a decent set of mud tyres on it.

As there was 8 of us we decided to split into two groups of 4 with Andy, Keith and myself leading one group and Jonathon leading the other. Our group had the Skoda while the other group had the potential new member with the D3. The first lanes were literally just down the road near Crowmarsh and then we



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moved a bit further down the road to South Stoke. The lanes here pretty mundane/easy going so absolutely no problem for the Skoda. We then made our way towards Streatley where the lanes looked a bit more interesting. We came to our first obstacle where a tree had broken in half but was still attached so we decided to just cut a few branches and squeeze past. But as the bank on the opposite side of the track was pushing me towards the tree we decided to pull the rest of the broken tree down. It was at this point that the second group caught up with us. After we cleared the obstruction we moved on to a farm and turned right and stopped to have our first tea break. I then got a call from Annie to say that Simons starter motor was playing up so they might be going home by the yellow taxi. After tea break we carried on towards Compton but before we got very far the ruts proved a little too deep for the Skoda and so he ground to a halt. After setting the winch onto the back of my RR we ran the winch line up to a tree and back to the Skoda. Dragging the front of the car sideways was no problem, we just had to somehow get the back end up out of the ruts. In the end a couple of the guys bumped it over. I'm not sure of the exact route but we ended up at a well used byway that goes under the A34 and heads towards West Ilsley. The Skoda does very well so long as it keeps out of the ruts, its traction control doing its job of keeping it moving although a set of all terrain tyres would help. We then started doing some scratchy and sometimes tight lanes as we wound our way back towards the A34. As we excited one lane and came onto a tarmac road some us noticed a there was quite severe leak from under the Skoda car. A fuel pipe had been pulled off the fuel system cooler so it was just a case of trying to get it back on. It also seemed a low branch that I drove under with no problem at all (I didn't even notice it) had caught out a few of the others with some people having to use muscle power to push the offending branch out of the way. It was at this point that some people decided to leave early so we were left with just one group. We did a few more lanes and to finish off we ended up having a drink at a pub near the Newbury showground (I'm not sure of the exact location as Keith and Andy were my navigators). Another very enjoyable days laning with no real damage done to any of the vehicles.

### Editors note

I would like to wish everyone a happy new year and I look forward seeing a lot more of the members next year as the club moves onwards and upwards leaving the past behind it.

Pat Booth



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