



**November 2014**

# NOOZE

The Suffolk Land Rover Owners Club Magazine



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## **NOOZE**

is the "mouthpiece" of the  
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Owners Club**

SLROC welcomes any  
comments, contributions or  
complaints from our members.  
Send your contributions to:

**Andy Jeff**

51, Woodbridge Road  
Newbourne, IP12 4PA.  
Tel: 07801 470055

Or email me at:

**nooze@slroc.uk.com**

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### **Cover Picture**

'Blaze' tackling a stage on the  
recent Tyro trial at Newbourne.

## **Nooze News!**

It's getting to the time of year when Nooze becomes more a report of how we are tackling the weather conditions. Wet, muddy and in just a short time snow and ice too, but I don't think the weather has read the script. Newbourne is still relatively dry and the reports coming from trials are certainly not awash (if you'll excuse the pun) with "I got through gate 3 and then got stuck in the mud". However all the dry and sunny weather here doesn't mean that there's not mud somewhere in the world and Colin Lutz has certainly managed to find some in Georgia and regrets not taking his Landy. Just to remind us of what it really means to encounter truly muddy roads, not the sort of things we get here of course, Rob and Ally find out what impact a rainstorm can have on dirt roads in Gabon, though it sounds like the resulting challenge was greeted with an amount of glee!

Getting back to trials, I know we ask for 'reports' from the winners each time we run these events, but I think this is the first time the report has landed on the editors desk within 48Hrs! Thanks to Amy Berwick for that. Then to emphasise what a great event we had, James Prentice, the winner of the other class on the day sent in his report too! Read on to see them both and the results.

The Freelander challenge enters into round five and although we know how the year has ended up for the guys and girls on team 105, I hope that season finale will be within these covers very soon.

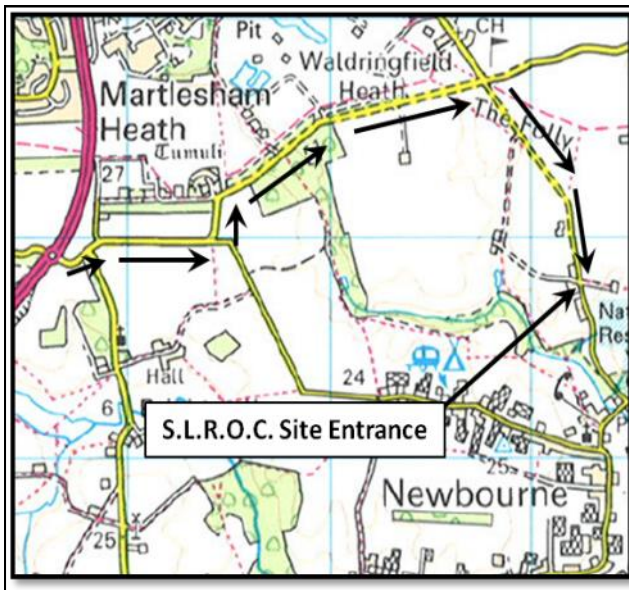
Laning trips of course go on all year round and in all weathers as we have often reported. In this issue and splitting over into the next issue too, Graham Loader tells us about a visit to Wiltshire of course including Salisbury Plain where he and friends encounter of all things an unexpected vehicle in a more than dodgy state along one of the lanes travelled.

Many thanks to all those who write in to tell everyone about their adventures. I hope that everyone who reads some of the tales feels inspired to write their own stories and send them in too. We'd more than gratefully receive them, and I'm sure everyone would love to read them - Keep 'em coming in!

All the best... **Andy**



# Directions to the Newbourne club site



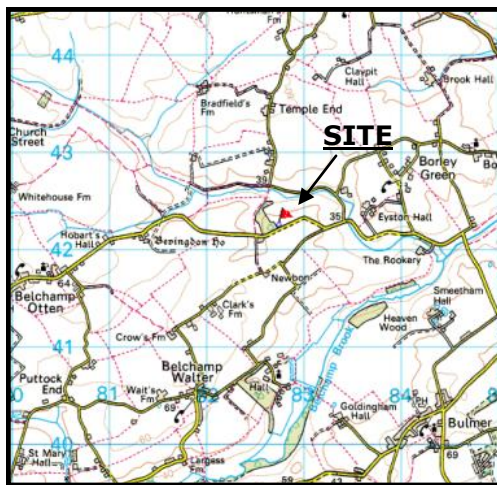
The club has its very own off-road driving site which we use monthly for weekend events, and competitions. The site is situated to the east of Ipswich, near to the village of Newbourne. Strict rules must be adhered to when using the site, to protect the safety of all users. Please keep your speed down around the village, and especially on the access track which has a 5mph limit. See you there!

## Badwell Ash



OS sheet 155 grid ref TL 000 693

## Snugg's Pit



OS sheet 155 grid ref TL 826 421

## Chat From the Chair

Well autumn is well and truly upon us, and the annual standoff between those wanting the central heating on and those telling them to "put a sweater on!" is in full swing. At this time of year the Club site gets its Autumn Clear-Up and this year has been no exception, Dan and his crew of volunteers spent one Sunday last month cutting back all the growth from the last 12 months, checking and renewing where needed the post and ropes and generally making sure all the courses are ready for the winter months ahead. I managed to pop up for a short while in the afternoon and have to say the site looks great, so a big thank you to all that helped, your hard work is truly appreciated.

You will recall last month I wrote an article highlighting the plight of Rover Rescue and inviting Members to attend a meeting to discuss its future and also submitting proposals for taking Rover Rescue forward. This meeting was held on 13th Oct. and while it was only modestly attended, I feel it was a very productive and positive meeting. A number of ways forward were discussed however only one got the backing of the majority of those in attendance. Tony Williamson, ex-club chairman and longstanding Rover Rescue member, has proposed to take Rover Rescue and re-launch it as a standalone response group. This was discussed as an option last year and given the backing of the main Committee and now, 12 months on, it is felt that this direction gives the legacy of Rover Rescue the best chance of continuing and hopefully evolving into a new response group. If you would like to find out more or have any questions regarding the new group Tony would be more than welcome to answer your queries. He can be contacted by email at [tony@totalonline.net](mailto:tony@totalonline.net) or via telephone on (07879) 881098.

Due to the fact that I am once again late in getting my chat from the chair submitted (*Sorry Ed; again!!!*). It does give me a chance to mention the last camp over weekend at Newbourne. Saturday saw the annual Ladies Tyro Trial, which was once again well attended, and had a fantastic atmosphere. A huge well done to all that took part especially the first time trialer's and those first time drivers. This was followed on Sunday by the monthly members driving day. The courses were nigh on perfect, with vehicles still driving the courses right up to 4pm. Again a big thank you to all those who marshalled even though there ended up being little to do in the way of recoveries. The only down side for me was the fact that by the time I arrived home, I found myself having to back the caravan onto the driveway in the dark! a little after 5pm, confirming that winter is only just round the corner!

This brings me seamlessly onto my annual prompt for this time of year. Many of us start to feel that sensation of an elevated heart rate, at the first mention of winter weather. However while it may be a little while off, now is the time to make sure that our vehicles, equipment and provisions are all in order. So have a think over the next week or so about what needs doing or what needs checking and try to get it sorted this month, so it's all ready should you need it over the coming months. Now where's my snow shovel?

Happy landrovering

**Chris**

## **EVENTS PLANNER 2014**

This planner is intended as a guide and as such any event may be subject to change.

<u><b>When</b></u>	<u><b>Club Event</b></u>	<u><b>Where</b></u>	<u><b>Org</b></u>
<b>Nov 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>CCVT</b>	<b>Snuggs Pit</b>	<b>A. Cutting</b>
Nov 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Children in Need Driving Day	Newbourne	H. Jeff
<b>Dec 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Single Vehicle Winch Trial</b>	<b>Snuggs Pit</b>	<b>R. Lambourne</b>
Dec 28 <sup>th</sup>	Mince Pie Driving Day	Newbourne	D. Rogers

**\*\*\*Events requiring Pre-Booking are in bold type\*\*\***

Driving Days - Back to **£10\*** for 2014!

RTV and Tyro Trials - still only **£15 Pre-Booked**

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**\*Don't forget: It's only a fiver for each extra driver**

### **Spotted on the internet - Our friends at SERV**

SERV Suffolk & Cambridgeshire would like to share with you our new Towing Vehicle which was delivered yesterday. Up until recently we were very privileged to be able to borrow a Land Rover which we used to deliver our show trailer to events around our counties. Sadly this was no longer available which has lead us to purchase our own superb new van. This purchase was made possible through a very significant donation, specifically to purchase a tow vehicle from the Suffolk Land Rover Owners Club, to them we are very grateful for their incredible support. The balance has been donated, at various events around in Suffolk & Cambridgeshire always staffed by our amazing and dedicated BloodRunner volunteers, a group of selfless people who put themselves out in all weathers and times of day and night to help others - guys we salute you. Don't forget we are always looking for new volunteers, we need BloodRunners, Controllers and people to help with our events and fundraising. You can contact us from our web page <http://www.servsc.org.uk/contact/>



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# What I did on my holidays - Part 1

By Graham Loader age ...ahem.

Well, what do you say when someone turns around to you and says, out of the blue, "Want to do Salisbury Plain next year?"...

I took all of a millisecond to agree that it sounded a wonderful plan and yes, I'd love to.

So this August Bank Holiday on the Saturday morning, I hauled the V8 Discovery and caravan out of Bury and away across country to the beautiful county of Wiltshire to meet up the usual laning crew. Deano had arranged a nice little campsite with electric just down the road from the Plains. Wayne & Christine had arrived on site early on Thursday morning, while Uncle Al' & Sue and Deano & Joy rolled in just before 1am on the Saturday morning so were already set-up and enjoying the relaxation.

We had a steady start to the week on the Sunday beginning with a couple of lanes near Mere followed by White Sheet Hill. From there Deano led us across Parsonage Down and we made our way to Imber Range. This network of roads is only open a couple of times a year due to the M.O.D. having stewardship of the area and using it for war-games and training. We passed through a very busy Imber village, itself a very

odd place, because on the 1st November 1943 all the residents were given 47 days to leave the area so that the US Army could begin training in house-to-house and street-fighting in readiness for the D-day landings. To this day, no one has been allowed to return, other than as a visitor on open days. So having driven the main route, exiting at Gore Cross we pulled in for a bite to eat before heading down to the 'German Village'.



This is another weird spot, where troops would train for house-to-house in the European theatre, however it's now been modified with shipping containers added to simulate certain other area's of operation. There are three other directions to go from the village but with the Southern routes currently under 'VR' (voluntary restraint) we headed east to Orcheston and then up onto Westdown range. It's worth noting that most tracks on the Plain are AWT's or All Weather Tracks so can be a bit boring, but it's an ideal opportunity for spotting rusting hulks in the scrubland.

Day 2 - Monday and Deano led us off in the rain to do a really long lane (over 13 miles to be exact) starting at another 'White Sheet Hill' on a track called the 'Herepath'.



What we didn't expect to find 'here' was a burnt out Peugeot half blocking the lane. Try as he might Deano couldn't get Casper to climb the slick bank to drive around so we ended up man-handling the wreck right onto the side so we could squeeze past. Little did we know that this would set a kind of precedent for the day: You'll see what I mean as we continue...



At the end of this lane near

Salisbury racecourse it gets quite narrow and uneven and I don't recommend taking a shiny down there. At the end we headed into the city so I could get gas. Mistake! The town was in virtual gridlock. Eventually finding Waitrose after a whistle-stop tour of a load of dodgy backstreets we pulled into Waitrose for dinner while I gassed up. Except I couldn't as they hadn't got any! Rapid consultation of the LPG lovers bible pointed out a couple of stations, but right up on the 303. So after a swift spot of shopping we agreed that Deano would take the 110's up to the ford's as planned while I went to find gas, meeting up with them at the end of Boscombe Down runway: The rain was still persistent. Traffic on the 303 was diabolical and I had to do some re-thinking of my route if I was to get back to them before teatime! Sure enough though, as I came around the corner by the airfield there they all were, sitting drinking coffee/snoozing or whatever. We got straight underway again, with various remarks on the CB such as "Shall we stop for a brew now", and "I've just got to roll a fag". I wasn't sure what was going on at the time, but apparently it was with reference to a past excursion, I later found out.

The track from here was a short one which led straight into another, and then Deano came over the CB to say that the way ahead looked rather tighter than he remembered and he would go in a little way and make a decision. Apparently there were lots of low boughs and all sorts of stuff (and guess who forgot his chainsaw this time!). Our leader wasn't keen to continue knowing that the height of the 110's was somewhat higher than our D1's, but I suggested we go on, and predictably he didn't argue. Have you ever heard of 'Last Lane Syndrome'? I think it's fairly self-explanatory...

By the time we got to where Deano & Joy had been stopped we could see the problem and what he'd done to abate it, but we still had to take a load down for the 110's to clear. Driving through this undergrowth was a unique experience as the rain sodden leaves were holding what seemed like gallons of water which ran all over the screen along with surfing beetles, spiders and who knows what else. Eventually we got out of there but it had taken an hour and twenty minutes to do 3½ miles and we were all sodden wet, so we made our way along the back roads to the campsite in now glorious sunshine. Cue more jolly japes in the evening.

Day 3 was a 'free day' so I bimbled off out after dinner for a ride around, stopping in Salisbury for a look about. ...**Continued Next Month!**

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# **Freelander Challenge Round 5**

## **From the Drivers Seat!**

I arrived on the site Friday evening on a high after receiving confirmation that the crew would be heading to North Wales in November for the last round of the WRC as an entrant in the National event.

Back to the event in hand, round 5 Bovington Camp, Dorset. The service area for this round was by far the most luxurious yet with flashy block paving, nothing but the best for the British Army! With service set up and everyone chilling all that was missing was the co driver who arrived just after 10pm to find she was locked out of the venue and had to spend the night roadside in the back of her 109.

The event was held on a tank training ground, a combination of soft sand, hard baked tracks and as the co driver put it, plenty of whoopy bits. Saturday dawned bright and clear, a quick check over the car and we were ready for the off. Sadly the first 2 stages were more a case of driving "Miss Daisy" than anything else as in the back of my mind was preserving the car to gain championship points and the WRC entry. However I did get my driving head back on and my stage times were improving, ending the first day with a final stage time of 11.40.

On day 2 the other entrants fell to the wayside and we set about achieving more consistent stage times, a good finish for our team was looking more realistic. Having finished all our runs and realising our competitors were in trouble we sent our service crew over to assist the opposition, such is the camaraderie between the crews on the BCCC. I'm not sure Maclaren



and Ferrari would be so keen to help each other out.

Having got Race2recovery back on stage we were left wondering who would take the class win. At prize giving we awaited the news to find out exactly what we had done. The upshot was that with Race2recovery's problems they had dropped to 3<sup>rd</sup> overall and as we had kept our noses clean with steady consistent times and no breakages we had taken 1<sup>st</sup> overall. With this win it has taken us to the top of the Freelander Challenge. The final round moves to Walters Arena where the result of the championship will be decided.



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## **Trialling - How Good Can It Be!**

On a gorgeous, sunny, autumn morning, I woke up and immediately thought: today's the day! The day I have been counting down for since the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February. Eventually, the Tyro Trial was upon us!

It was only Mum and myself going to Newbourne for this event, and we left home early, ready to meet James Prentice at McDonalds for breakfast (it would be rude not to, wouldn't it?). Mum was going to be James' co-driver, and I was going to be driving James' disco, 'Mack', with Jay Smith as my co-driver.

Upon arriving at Newbourne, James parked 'Mack' in the queue for scrutineering and I went and signed on. I was to be number 10; there was a total of 18 drivers. There was a slight worry, as 'Mack' was leaking a slight bit of diesel under the bonnet. Luckily, the leak was spotted, and James acquired a piece of pipe and was able to fix the issue with ease.

Next a bit of driver familiarisation was needed, since I hadn't driven 'Mack' before, and also hadn't driven for seven months. I was quite nervous when I got in, but as soon as we got going, my confidence was boosted. It probably helped that 'Mack' was sporting a brand new clutch!

Before I knew it, drivers briefing was upon us, in which Chris went over the rules and how the day was going to run. Chris was going to take entrants 1-10, and we were going to begin at section one, whereas Michael was going to take entrants 11-18 and begin at section ten.

The first section started at the end of the white course, and was a tricky one. I would definitely get used to turning the steering wheel quickly very soon! Luckily, we were going last on this section, which gave us a chance to watch how other vehicles negotiated the section. After learning where to go (and not to go) I was being called forward as I was going to be next; eek! I didn't get off to the greatest of starts, and ended up destroying the number eight cane, leaving me with eight points.

We kept our heads held high, and went to section two, which was at the other end of the white course. One tight turn, a bit of a side slope, but apart from that, the section didn't seem too bad! Once we felt like we had learnt the route we were going to take (roughly!) we went and queued up! We tackled the section, ending up with a five and one shunt... much better than I expected!

During the previous section, Jay advised me to turn a bit more, in order to make it round without a shunt, to which I had to reply that 'Mack' was on full lock and I couldn't turn the wheel any further. This resulted in a quick divert to the car park before the next section and Jay readjusted the steering stops.

Two more sections were done before lunch. When walking section three, there were many intriguing canes at ominous angles. The section begun with a sharp left hand turn and down a slope which wasn't too bad, it was the bit around the next corner I was worried about. I made my way up the hill the other side, which I thought was going to be tricky, but I happened to drive it well, and thought I got a clear... until I heard I clipped the fifth cane... never mind, at least the steering was better! Section four was pretty simple, although I did need to put 'Mack' into a hedge, and might have put a tiny little scratch on the wing...oops! (but James seems to like it and added some of his own!) The section went to plan though enabling me to get my first clear of the day, although I did use a shunt, which put me in high spirits for the afternoon to come!

After lunch, it was our groups turn to start at section ten, and Michael's group started at section one. Section ten was through the gorse, but didn't look too bad. We started driving the course, and suddenly I hear Jay swearing from the other side of the car, maybe he should have put his window up a bit earlier... mwahahaha! Anyway, I continued the section but unfortunately only just nudged the number one cane... damn!

Section nine was a tough one, with a nasty cross axel to get through gate nine which I wasn't looking forward too; I did ask Jay if I could just close my eyes, but I soon established that wasn't a very good idea... Soon it was our turn, and I managed to pass gate nine (with my eyes open!). Sadly I clipped the number six cane leaving me with six points.

We did three more sections after these; number 6, 7 and 8 which all of them I cleared! This came as a real surprise to me, and I was extremely pleased!

After collecting some of the canes, all the drivers and co-drivers were together at the cabin, ready for the announcement of the results. Firstly were the senior's results, and well done James for coming first! Then was time for the junior results to be declared, by which point I had all fingers and toes crossed. Chris went through all the names, and got to third and I realised my name still hadn't been read out. Surely mine would be next. Nope. The next thing I heard Chris saying was "And the winner of the junior class is Amy Berwick". I couldn't believe it! I was over the moon, and I think my smile showed that!

Overall I got 25 points, along with three shunts, which I am really proud of! I thoroughly enjoyed my day, and cannot wait until the Ladies Tyro Trial in October. Thank you so much James for letting me use 'Mack', Jay for being brave enough to be my co-driver and all the marshals and organisers who made the day possible!

## Amy Berwick

### Tyro Trial @ Newbourne, 27/9/14 - Results

Juniors			Seniors		
1st	A. Berwick	25 + 3s	1st	J. Prentice	12 + 6s
2nd	E. Fleming	39	2nd	P. Johnson	18 + 4s
3rd	A. Best	39 + 4s	3rd	M. Vince	21
4th	M. Bradman	42 + 1s	4th	J. Whitting	22
5th	E. Johnson	42 + 2s	5th	R. Lambourne	22 + 3s
6th	C. Jeff	43	6th	W. Elson	27
7th	T. Jenkins	46 + 3s	7th	R. Elson	30
8th	G. Roberts	51 + 2s	8th	S. Bradman	30
9th	B. Rout	56	9th	C. Jeff	Rtd.

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## **Trialling For Beginners**

After being a member for a while now I thought I would give a tyro a go, especially after 'persuasion' from other members!! I didn't have the best start to the day, as when I pulled up for scrutineering I got out and could smell diesel. I popped the bonnet and found there was a small split on one of the injector hoses, I thought it was game over from there but with help from members and some spare pipe we had it fixed in no time! I was number 9 in the trial. We were split into two groups 1 - 10 and 11 - 18! Section 1 - as I was number nine, I had plenty of time to watch a few before me to see where the best lines were and where I could use a shunt if i need it!! So my time came and I was sitting at the gate ready for the vehicle before me to finish. 'Course clear' was called so I set off!! I got through the first few canes ok, I had to call shunt to get through one set of canes that were a bit tight, but got through the rest and got a Clear with a shunt! I was very pleased with my first section! Section 2 - Again I watched a few others first, then my time came. I made the first sharp left hand turn and got through the canes without the body roll making the car touch the canes, but then couldn't make the turn and again had to call shunt. I did get round it though and made the other gates, but on cane seven, I got stuck and had to back up. I had another go, but knocked the cane down so ended up with 7 points and a shunt on section two! Section 3 - This section started with a few gates over the telegraph poles, but luckily they were dry otherwise they would have been more of a challenge!! This section was bit tight in places going across the course and again I used a shunt to get a better line on the next few canes! The finish was a 'hub' with cross axle just before it! I was about an inch from hitting the one gate, but got through the section with a clear and a shunt! Section 4 - This section started at the yellow table top, and went down the side and though the mud and up the sandy slope. Though I managed to get through all that, I hit cane 5 on this section! After the first four sections we stopped for lunch! So after lunch we started on section 10 Section 10 - We started on the yellow and had a few tight turns at the start to get a good line for cane 6. I put Mack hard into the brambles and though I had to shunt after gate two I did manage to hub the one gate and got through that section with a clear and a shunt! After I got off the course, Jay brought me a part of my bumper that i pull off in those brambles - Hmm! Section 9 - We started at the end of the black course and had a sharp right to get down through the gorse hill, then a sharp right with a shunt to get a hub finish! Another clear with a shunt! Section 8 - Started on the yellow just after the mud runs. Firstly, there was a sharp left which I managed to get around and the number 9 gate was a small climb with a bit of body roll! Got through this section, again clear with just a shunt at cane 4! Section 7 - This time, I was first to go and started on the access track at the bottom of the black course. By now I was on a roll and again got a clear, but this time without a shunt even though the finishing gate was on one of the black table tops with the gate slightly in the ruts tricking you and pushing you over to one side! Section 6 - Starting in the middle of the yellow course and going the opposite way to normal, then finishing by coming up and out of the side of the yellow bomb hole! I watched a couple of people go first to see their different driving lines, then I went and completed this section with a clear again! We didn't have enough time in the day to complete section five, so that meant only 9 of the 10 sections were done. For my first tyro trial, I was shocked (and amazed) at my score - only 12 points with 6 shunts! I enjoyed the event very much, and will be doing them again! Overall another fantastic day at the club. Many thanks to everyone who helped set up and marshal this fantastic trail. Roll on the next one!!!



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# Georgia on my mind...Part 1

Friend - "So, where're you going for your holidays?"

Me - "Georgia"

Friend - "Ooh, I've always wanted to play golf in Atlanta"

Me - Not America, the original Georgia"

Friend - ??????????????????. Blank looks, walks away

Puzzlement was the most common reaction when we mentioned Georgia, and to be fair we only knew a little about the country when we decided to go. There had been a program about the Georgian Military Highway on "The world's most dangerous roads", and various YouTube films showing the dramatic mountainous terrain, which whetted our appetite. We've never been ones for laying on a beach, so Georgia looked interesting. We read what books were available, and off we went.

We went as part of a small group for a couple of reasons. One was the language, which is difficult, to say the least. We have a little rusty Russian, but Georgian is in another class entirely.

A good side effect is that learning one or two words results in being treated as an eternal friend of the country, and hugs if you're lucky! Another reason is the roads/driving. The roads are frequently demolished by rock falls, biting chunks out of the surface and leaving the vehicle at



even greater risk of ending up 500 meters further down the mountain than expected. The driving is like driving in Russia, but without the cautious and careful evaluation of potential hazards, and consideration for other road users.



Anyone who has seen the crash compilations on YouTube will know what I mean. Our driver was good, taking his time and not overtaking stupidly. I suppose he realises that dead passengers can't tip!

Twice during the trip we were treated to being driven up to villages in four wheel drive vehicles. There are a number of people who earn a living driving both locals and tourists up into the mountains in 4WD vehicles. Sadly these aren't Land Rovers, they buy cheap Mitsubishi Delicas in bulk from Japan.





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The first trip was two hours in each direction, and while the roads would be no more than an easy green laning standard, the 4WD was needed in places. The little Delicias were quite competent, and were equipped with diff lock. The very ability of these vehicles was, in my eyes, a problem. None of them had more than a shadow of the original tread on the tyres. The drivers overcame this by locking the drive and ploughing through, resulting in the kind of off-piste damage we see caused by fools in the UK. The photos show the resulting damage. I did wish I had my 90 there, the rough lanes are everywhere, and the best have a good number of users, so there wouldn't be the usual problems of laning alone. I suspect the Georgians are pretty good bush mechanics, they have to be.



We did see a number of Discos and Defenders, some were obviously recycled emergency vehicles used for the same purpose in Georgia, often with the original livery. Once I was delighted to see a 110, which turned out to be owned by a French couple who were driving through all the countries in the Caucasus, camping as they went. It made me very jealous, and I've been trying to persuade Linda that that would be a great way to spend a holiday. No luck so far though.



With no equivalent of the MOT, and a very relaxed approach as to whether a vehicle is fit for the road, there are some wonderful sights on the Georgian roads. It is very common for vehicles to be bought in from other countries as crash



damaged or MOT (or equivalent) failures, repaired and put back onto the road. There are a lot of old Russian lorries and cars still in use. Even Ladas are liked, as they are reckoned to be tough and easily repaired. Which other vehicle does that remind you of? The Georgians are geniuses at recycling car parts – we saw several cows with old pistons converted into cow bells!

Speaking of cows, one of the joys of driving in Georgia is the number of beasts who share the road with you. Cows, pigs, horses, dogs, sheep, chickens, geese and turkeys, all are well represented. It isn't quite as alarming as it would be in the UK though, the animals are so used to vehicles sharing the road with them that they don't startle or gallop about, just slowly walk over,



or sometimes lie down in the road for a rest. This doesn't seem to phase the drivers at all, who just swerve around them.

The infamous Georgian Military highway goes up from Georgia, through a pass in the mountains, and into Russia. This route has been used since before Roman times, and was first turned into a recognisable road in the 1800s. Major improvements have taken place since the 2008 Russia / Georgian war, so it's a lot less scary than it used to be. It is still heavily used since, although rising to over 2300 meters, it is still better than the other passes. Lorries from Turkey, Iran, Armenia and Russia use the road, despite long delays waiting for customs clearance from the Russian border post. At the beginning of 2014 a major landslide destroyed a kilometre of road, killing several drivers and road workers. The road has been largely reopened now, but still requires a sort of convoy system for the lorries to pass, but still allowing traffic in the other direction. This is much enlivened by Georgian drivers overtaking the string of lorries, using the wrong side of the road. If someone comes the other way they just assume the lorries will let them squeeze in, and they usually do. They also apparently have the ability to see around corners, as they treat them like straight roads for overtaking purposes.

Is it worth it? It certainly is, the country is beautiful, with stunning mountains, fertile plains, warm-hearted and very friendly people, and excellent food, wine and beer. Still quite cheap, but as the skiing facilities are developed I suspect they will be enjoying many more tourists in the near future.

One nice point is that a previous President cured police corruption by sacking the entire force, and employing a new force on high wages, with a very strong set of punishments for anyone caught accepting bribes or misbehaving. It is now one of the few countries in the area with a clean and uncorrupted police force. All the police stations are built with glass walls, to symbolise the transparency of the new force – a nice touch.

One day, if I'm lucky, I will take my Landy there to do the roads properly, and be able to stop and take some better photos. In the meantime, hope you enjoyed this.



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## 26 Countries... 26000 miles... Zero Punctures! - Part 21

**Day 121 31/3. Bush camp, old quarry in-between Bitam & Oyem, Gabon  
1°49.54'N 11°38.11'E. Miles today 209, Total Miles 11220**

And so we trundled across a fancy bridge and Hello Gabon and Hello Police, which resulted in us having to go into three government buildings and get our passports checked - but alas, not stamped. We just had to fill out some silly tourist form. A bit further down the road at a roadblock, we got the carnet stamped with no problems and headed off towards Bitam, in search of the ominous entry stamp. We found the police station/immigration and were greeted by a rather gruff Gabonese policeman, who at the same time as eating his lunch out of his desk drawer, insisted we fill out yet another 'tourist form.' What they did with these forms, we have no idea. They seemed to be filed in the same drawer as his lunch. We had a way point of a quarry for a bushcamp for the night and so made our way on the fantastic tarmac road sweeping it's way through the jungle. Here Rob was so wishing for a sports car rather than a big lump of a Land Rover. The bushcamp in a quarry turned out to be a great spot and there didn't appear to be too many scary bugs. Or so we thought.....

**Day 122 1/4. Bushcamp, 50km from west end of 'Yellow' road to Libreville, Gabon**

**0°28.80'N 10°08.48'E. Miles today 200, Total Miles 11420**

Surely this must be some sort of Aprils Fools joke but we woke up covered in red itchy bites. I wasn't too bad, mainly just my hands and ears. Rob, however, looks like he's got measles. They are apparently from these small flies called "Forreaux" which are practically invisible until they fill with blood. Your blood obviously and by then it's too late. Lovely! On a recommendation from other overlanders, we decided to investigate the "yellow brick road" to Libreville so Rob could have some fun. Although the scenery of thick steamy jungle was awesome, the road was a huge disappointment, as it had obviously very recently been graded and so was easy as pie. We had planned to spend at least two nights out here on this route but now it looks like we wouldn't even spend one. Around 50

km from the end, we decided we had to spend at least one night out here and so bushcamped at the side of the road for the night. No problems at first, just a few very jovial locals driving by until the bugs came out. With both of our skins not wishing to sport any more bites, I made the quickest tuna pasta ever and we dived into the safety of the roof tent to eat dinner and watch a movie on the laptop.





**Day 123 2/4. Hotel Sanata Barbara, Ntoum, Gabon  
0°23.30'N 9°45.32'E. Miles today 34, Total Miles 11454**

Now formally known as Itchy and Scratchy, we woke up to a massive rainstorm and after a quick cuppa tea, were back on the road. Only now, do we thank our lucky stars that we pulled off for the night, as the road deteriorates quite a bit with loads of muddy bits made even muddier after this mornings rain. Rob is delighted and had a great time getting Dino completely covered in mud. The scenery was still awesome and the



number of scary insects and animals was rapidly increasing, with huge 2m long black snakes, a highway of ants and some odd looking light yellow monster that flew into the window and then into me! We are definitely now in the "jungle". We soon joined the tarred but badly potholed road towards Libreville and decided to stop in Ntoum, as we heard that there was a hotel where we could camp if we ate in their restaurant. The manager wasn't around when we arrived but the young Gabonese woman directed us to the shady garden. The heat and humidity was unbearable and we retired to the bar for a coke but then saw the prices and so sadly just made it one to share. Took a quick wander into town and found some cheaper coke in one of the many aircon supermarkets. Just how long can you wander around a supermarket before you get thrown out for loitering? Back at



the hotel, we must have looked awful, as this rather large lady, who was of some obvious importance brought us a couple of mandarins and offered us a room for free where we could take a hot shower and use the loo. Wow, we were so grateful. Clean and refreshed we settled down to the cheapest thing on the menu....omelettes for €3.50 each. But they were pretty big omelettes with potato inside and fries and they did

give us a free starter of avocado vinaigrette straight off the garden tree. The temperature was dropping slightly and we both hoped for a scratch-free cool sleep in the tent.

**Day 124 3/4. Auberge La Maree, Cap Esterias, Gabon**  
**0°37.10'N 9°19.43'W. Miles today 52, Total Miles 11506**

Woke up to heavy rain and miserably tried to muster up the energy to rustle up a cup of tea. Seeing as the rain wasn't about to let up, we thanked the hotel and headed off on the horrible pot holed road towards Libreville. Whoa, what a culture shock. An exceptionally modern city, with the most amazing architectural monstrosities. The Mission Libebermann didn't look all that inviting, and after a quick trip to the BGFJ bank to change some travellers cheques for a silly rate (but by now we are desperate to use these things), we pulled into the Hypermarche Mbolo purely as a laugh. It looks just like a Carrefour straight out of France and has anything any foodie would ever want, at prices no overlander can afford. We decided there was no reason for us to stay in Libreville, as we have done our fair share of big African cities and so headed north for 30km on a horrendous road to Cap Esterias. Here we found the most wonderful Auberge right on the beach, where the French woman let us camp in her garden for free. She then promptly gave us a room to use the shower and loo. Once again, the hospitality of everyone has been overwhelming. I just really wish we could speak French, as communication was very basic. I did manage to grasp that she was confused as to why so many tourists in big trucks keep turning up at her house?



**Day 125 4/4. Auberge La Maree, Cap Esterias, Gabon**  
**0°37.10'N 9°19.43'W. Miles today 0, Total Miles 11506**

We decided to stay on another day here and the French woman was delighted. "My home is your home" were her words to me this morning. We wandered into the small village and bought some bread and coke for lunch and just chilled out by the sea, discussing the rest of our trip. A lovely sunset swim followed by more rice for dinner (we went halves on an enormous 6kg bag with T and M in Yaounde) and another cool nights sleep thanks to our little fans. We both cannot bear to think how bad things would be without these lifesavers.

# **Summary of SLROC Committee Meeting.**

**Date:** Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2014

**Attendees:** Chris Finbow (Chair), Michael Whitting (Minutes), Andy Jeff, Pat Corps, Hannah Jeff

**Apologies:** Dan Rogers, Andy Beevers, David Rolfe

## **Notes from previous meetings:**

Agreed - Proposer: **AJ** Seconded: **HJ**

## **Actions from previous meetings:**

**04-04-14 AP** to write article about the 'Life Saver' bottle for **ST. Ongoing**  
**05-04-14 - 02-05-14 - HJ** to create 'Club in the media' and 'Chosen charities', 'useful links', 'SRR' and pages on the new website. And 'club advertisers' section on the forum. **Ongoing**  
**02-06-14 - CF** to organise a meeting with the Suffolk show organisers re: maintenance to the off road course. **Ongoing**  
**01-08-2014 CF** or **AJ** to take the water meter reading.  
**03-08-2014 CF** to purchase a combination padlock and key locker for the site.  
**04-08-2014 HJ** to contact Jono Rout re: RC cars for the open day.  
**05-08-2014 AJ** to phone Marshalls land rover re: the open day.

## **Membership**

Full members: 204  
Joint members: 96  
Junior members: 35

1 new full member

## **Finance - No Report Received.**

## **Club Site - DR via MW**

Me and another member had a day at the site last Sunday sorting a course for the open day the route is sorted, just needs a few ropes and posts moving to complete it. We also started sorting the overgrown brambles and cleared a lot, I have also been in contact with a member regarding taking over the off road sec role as from the AGM next year, this way it gives me 6 months to bring them up to speed of what their role involves. I'm still awaiting a reply, that's it for now see you all Sunday.

## **Website and Social Media**

**HJ** Facebook, Twitter and the forum are all running smoothly.

**HJ** No photos have been received for the website since the last meeting. Memory sticks were given out at the CCVT to members.

## **Nooze**

**AJ** Ordered: 230.  
Posted: 208.  
Delivered by hand: 6.  
Emailed: 30.

**AJ** The missing copies from printing for last month have been dealt with.

**AJ** more articles are needed for Nooze.

## **Shows and Events**

All shows are now completed for this calendar year.

## **Public Relations** - None

## **Safety and Training**

**PC** The winch training courses have been postponed until next year.

**PC** 2 marshal courses will be run during the next year.

**CF** would like novice driver and novice winch training sessions to be run at some point in the next year.

## **Competitions** – **DR** via **MW**

I have emailed a filled in finance report to Andrew Beevers for the CCVT at Badwell Ash.

Permit received for the tyro trial.

We had 13 entrants for the trial at Badwell Ash a lot of new faces having a go at a trial as well, gave a total of £30 in prize club vouchers and made £29.75 profit from the trial.

Philip Main/PMI Airscan came to the trial and recorded a lot of footage as well as photo's. I have linked photos on the club forum and Facebook. I'll put up the video once I've received it. They have also asked if they can do some recording at Newbourne at an event there if it is possible.

**MW** is running the tyro trial at Newbourne.

## **Correspondence**

None

## **Club Shop**

No report received

## **Rover Rescue**

No report received

## **AoB**

None

## **Summary of new actions**

**01-09-2014 - MW** to talk to **DR** re: Interclub trial.

**Meeting closed 10:09pm**

**Next meeting to be held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 at the club site.**



# **SLROC CLUB SHOP**

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Prices are correct at time of going to print but may be subject to change.

# SLROC CLUB SHOP

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**Now also stocking Rover Rescue items– please enquire.**

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The Club Shop is at most events, and items are also available from:

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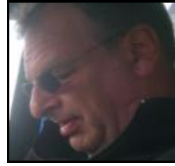
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# CLUB CONTACTS

## **CLUB PRESIDENT**

Ralph Lambourne



## **ROVER RESCUE CHAIRMAN**

Position Vacant

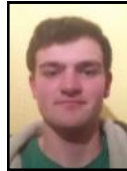
## **CHAIRMAN**

Chris Finbow  
07771 588298  
chair@slroc.uk.com



## **CLUB SECRETARY**

Michael Whitting  
secretary@slroc.uk.com



## **TREASURER**

Andy Beevers  
Tel: 01206 385678  
andrewbeevers@thinkpositive.co.uk



## **VICE CHAIR & CLUB MAGAZINE**

Andy Jeff  
07801 470055  
vicechair@slroc.uk.com



## **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

Alan Pole  
42 Rosecroft Close, Clacton-on-Sea  
Essex CO15 4RE  
01255 431608 or 07771 678282  
membership@slroc.uk.com



**Please note:** Some of the Committee Members have requested that details of their addresses are not published within the newsletter for personal reasons. Please do not let this put you off contacting any of the Committee, they will be only too glad to receive phone calls (as long as they are at a reasonable time of day, say **no later than 9:30pm**).

# CLUB CONTACTS

## **OFF ROAD SECRETARY**

Dan Rogers  
07780 847157  
offroadsec@slroc.uk.com



## **SAFETY & TRAINING OFFICER**

Pat Corps  
07887 500799  
safety@slroc.uk.com



## **SHOW CO-ORDINATOR**

Neil Warden  
07850 168902  
events@slroc.uk.com



## **COMPETITION SECRETARY**

David Rolfe  
compsec@slroc.uk.com



## **CLUB SHOP**

Dave Marriott  
07891 917056  
clubshop@slroc.uk.com



## **CLUB P.R. & PROMOTION OFFICER**

Position Vacant

## **SOCIAL MEDIA & WEB SECRETARY**

Hannah Jeff  
websec@slroc.uk.com



If you have any mail you wish to pass on to a Committee Member then it can be sent via any of the published addresses above. The Committee also respects the privacy of each and every Club member, and to that end, we do not give out details of Club members to any other organisation.



## **Important Information**

On entering the access lane to the site, please adhere to the **5mph** speed limit. Failure to do so, may result in removal from the site with no refund of fees.

**If only watching or socialising, please turn right to park in the rear car park. Do not park in the main car park or proceed to signing-on/scrutineering.**

**Trailers to be parked in designated area in main parking area.**

If taking part in the event please stop at the signing-on hut first:

For insurance purposes, membership cards **must** be available for inspection at **any** club driving event, if requested. Only members holding a full UK driving licence\* and who have **signed on**, may drive at any club event. \*With the exception of 'Tyro Trials' where Supplementary Regulations may allow drivers of 13 years and upwards.

Then continue to scrutineering: **All** vehicles must be scrutineered prior to driving onto the courses. Minimum requirements for recovery points are two-points at the front with bridle, and manufacturer's tow hitch at the rear or two 'Jates' and bridle. Please fit bridle before scrutineering.

Seat belts (inc. lap-belts) must be fitted and worn by all occupants.

**(No belt, no ride.** This is for your own safety).

Once signed-on and scrutineered, you may continue to the parking area.

**All** loose items must be removed from the vehicle before going on the courses. Vehicles will be checked for these items and stickers.

### **15 mph site speed limit**

No driving along the footpath at the bottom of the site, except at the designated crossing point for access to and from the Woodland Course.

**All recoveries under the supervision, and at the discretion of a Marshal. All facets of winching operations may only be carried out by persons aged 18 and over, including rigging.**

**Pedestrians must not walk on the courses, only the access roads- this is for your own safety.**

**Children (under 16's) remain the sole responsibility of parents/carers at all times. Children must wear a Hi-Viz vest whilst outside a vehicle in all areas. Children must be accompanied by an adult in all active vehicle movement areas.**

Dogs must be kept on leads and under proper control at all times.

It is the responsibility of the owner to clear up after your dog(s).

**Do not drive roped-off areas.**

**Do not remove ropes or posts unless instructed by a Marshal.**

Strictly no drinking and driving. No motorcycles or quad bikes.

No tractor, Implement or overly-aggressive treaded tyres.

Please take all your litter home with you.

**The Marshal's decision is final**

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