

Green Lanes in the Lake District.



After a few delays, mainly due to the poor weather and work patterns, the Yorkshire 4x4 Family Club finally joined up for a weekend of green laning. Two Club members had diligently recced the South Lake District over the previous few months and had come up with an interesting and varied route of 25 lanes. So on the weekend of 19/20 March, with the prospect of good weather, we headed off to the Windermere area with a few members opting to make a weekend of it and booking B&B's.

So the weekenders gathered on the Friday night, enjoying an excellent curry and a few beers in Bowness, before retiring to bed. Early the next morning, we drove to our meeting point at Ings Service Station on the A591 and waited for the others to arrive. Breakfast and lunches were purchased, fuel tanks topped up and other facilities made use of, before heading off in a convoy – well, when the constant and steady stream of traffic heading into the Lakes allowed us. Luckily we weren't on the main road too long and soon reconvened on a side road.

We had 15 green lanes lined up for Saturday – the great thing about green lanes in this particular part of the Lakes is that they are very close together and there's hardly any long road sections between them. So with the sun shining (for once) and Spring in the air, we set off. The scenery was fantastic as we drove down various green lanes – through woodland, valleys, high up with extensive views, we had them all. There was a selection of vehicles too – Discoverys, 90's, 110's, a Hilux and a Warrior and a couple of the drivers had even brought their faithful hounds too, who got a lot of fuss made of them – the dogs, that is, not their owners.....

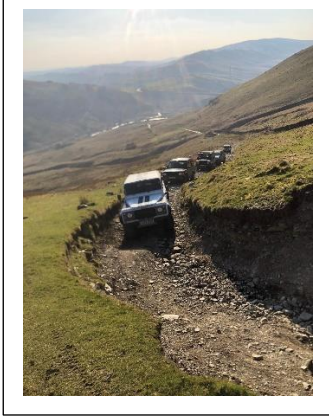


There were a few times where we all juddered to a halt along the narrow country roads, as other road users looked rather alarmed at a string of 4 x 4's heading their way. But we all negotiated our way around each other, acknowledging with laughs and a wave of hands. We headed to a green lane at



Parkamoor, by the side of Lake Coniston, enduring a lengthy wait for alleged vehicles coming down. It turned out that they were waiting for us! So we climbed this rocky, slightly challenging lane, finally coming to a large grassy area where we pulled off for lunch. And what a stop! The views were stunning, up and down Lake Coniston, the sun bringing out the spring colours. We used the outcrop of rocks as seats and

admired the little boats bobbing on the water far below as we ate our sarnies. Despite the sunshine, it was extremely windy and cool, but one of the chaps decided to cook Spam and eggs on a little wood burning portable stove. It seemed quite ambitious at the time and turned out to be wishful thinking. The wind was far too strong for the stove which failed to get going, despite trying to find shelter. Finally, he admitted defeated and joined us to look at the scenery.



After lunch and starting to feel cold, we retraced our steps down this challenging green lane and back into the village and continued our journey. We seemed to zig zag across the southern Lakes. It was very enjoyable, even the endless gates that needed opening and shutting was fun. It was on one of these pulls, that one of the Landys started making a clonking noise as if something was caught underneath – we stopped and several heads

disappeared under the bonnet and the general consensus was a broken fan and a rather dodgy water pump. The convoy escorted the wounded Landy back to the main road which limped down to Near Sawrey to catch the Windermere ferry and head back early to the B&B. The rest of the vehicles headed off to bag the final few green lanes before heading back to our respective B&B's for a quick clean up before heading back into Bowness for another excellent meal and more beers.

The next morning, the sun shone again (we couldn't quite believe our luck here) as we regrouped at Ings again and bought more food and fuel, waiting for the guys who were driving in again. The poorly Landy from yesterday had managed limp to Ings, but was in no fit state to green lane. It was left forlornly in the car park, ready for a call to the AA later on. The owners cagded lifts with the others and headed off. Another 10 green



lanes to be bagged today and again, so close to each other. Our lunch stop was half way down a valley in the Langdales, a stunning backdrop. The wood burning camping stove came out again, but with help of a plastic bag, the stove's carry case and a willing human as a wind shield, he managed to cook the spam and the egg despite the winds best efforts to blow it out. We continued following green lanes, past a Grand Design house and into an area of industrial quarrying on a massive scale – deep scars and discarded slate heaps littering the steep fellsides. It seemed almost natural, part of the landscape, but was totally manmade. We plunged into woodland and chugged out onto high moor,



passing walkers and dogs, cyclists, joggers and other green lane users. The scenery was just amazing. We chugged up to Stile End, a green lane where only the short wheel based vehicles could negotiate. They head off down the lane as the rest of us did a U turn, unable to join them and followed the back roads to meet up with them further down. The hitch hikers got dropped off back at Ings as they passed, to organise

recovery on the back of a low loader, and everybody else went to re-join the short wheel bases. But, unbeknown to the road team, a calamity was striking on the green lane when a Land Rover broke splines on its half shaft while trying to negotiate a steep sharp turn, high on the Breast High Road. Unfortunately the track had gone down into a bit of a cutting with deep sides both ways. There was only one escape route which was backwards, including those stuck behind the Landy, so everybody had to reverse back down to the public road and call it a day.

So everybody said their goodbyes and headed off to their respective homes, having enjoyed an excellent weekend of fantastic green lanes, weather and of course, great company. The Land Rover with the damaged half shaft became a 2 wheel drive vehicle, but got home for repairs. The other Land Rover got a lift home on the back of a low loader to its nearest garage, after a modest wait. It was considered by all to be a very successful weekend and a big thank you to Chris and Ian for the planning and organising of the two days.

